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CARLOS AND SALVADOR

SANTANA
A FAMILY LEGACY OF MUSIC





The Mayor of The Mission District

INTERVIEW JULIE CHIARIELLO PHOTOS MIKE ROSATI

Richard Segovia, fondly known as the Mayor of the Mission District in San Francisco lives in a magical house covered in beautiful murals dedicated to the Latino Rock movement. Richard has devoted his life to his music and to his beloved community, I was honored to sit down with him and dive deeper into the history of Latino Rock in the place that it was born, The Mission District.

JC: You live in the Mission District in San Francisco, a place that at one time was 50% Latino. Can you tell us what it was like in the Mission District in the '60s, '70s, '80s, and now? Why do you feel it is so important to protect?

RS: Well, back in the late 60s, when Carlos Santana played Woodstock, the whole Mission District changed. We went from the Battle of the Barrios to the Battle of the Bands. And he set a trend to where the Mission District now had a sound of their own, called Latin rock music. What it did, all the gangs stopped fighting and went into the Battle of the Bands. When we had a problem, we got a hall, St. Peter's, the Mission Y, and we had a Battle of the Bands, and that's how we would settle arguments, is through music.

Back in 1969, when this happened, it took us right into the '70s. The Mission District exploded because now we had something that was our own sound. You could go to every club on Broadway, and there would be lines of people to get into these clubs. Lines, the Basin Street West, The Peppermint

Tree, The Orphanage, The Village, The Condor, all these clubs, Bobby Freeman, all this music started to explode. And we were in that big Latino movement that you can go any given day down Broadway street and see Tito Puente, see all these great stars. Cal Tjader walking down the street, having a cup of coffee, and the whole movement, because of the Latin rock sound of Carlos Santana, set the city on fire.

And what ended up happening, our culture started getting really strong. Then the city started giving us permits to do Cinco de Mayo, to do Carnaval, to do celebrations, the 24th Street Merchants Fair. We started doing all these big fairs, and the whole city was absolutely vibrant. You'd walked down the street, and you'd hear conga players. I guess everybody that was Latino became a conga player, and everybody musically was in the parks. We'd go to Dolores Park, and we would have rhumbas. The whole Latino community had risen now that we had something that we could call our own. And this went on all in the '60s, and through the '70s, there was live music everywhere, block parties, it was a very great and beautiful thing. The violence went down to nothing. People were just excited about this new movement of music called Latin rock.

JC: Beautiful. And why do you feel now that it's so important to protect the Mission?

RS: Well, the Mission has been taken over by corporate companies and techies, and they even have gone as far as having their kids go to our schools now because a lot of our schools, they teach Spanish. These little Anglo kids are learning

to speak our language. Back in the day in the '60s, it was unheard of. My father wanted to name me Raul Segovia, but he knew I was going to be teased, so he named me Richard Raul. Back in the day, it was unheard of to even speak Spanish in the Mission District. Because back then, the Irish, the Italians, the Polacks, the Russians were all controlling this neighborhood. As you know, the San Francisco Mission District was built, as they say by the Irish, for \$5 a day and a bucket of beer. My sisters never learned Spanish. My father rarely talked it. My mother never spoke it, but I was raised by my grandmother that never spoke a word of English.

My second language was learning to understand Spanish, never to speak it, but to understand it because of my grandma.

Now what has happened is the techies have come in here and the real estate companies offering big money. Myself, for instance, my house was bought for \$28,500. They come to my house, and they say, "Hey, I'll give you \$2.5 million for your home." You get somebody that's 60 or 70 years old that figures, well, I'll sell and then I could take that money, go buy me another house somewhere in Brentwood for half a million dollars and have a million, two million dollars leftover

just to live the rest of my life. A lot of people are selling out because these people are coming up and offering them a lot of money to get out. And now this new crowd of people that are coming into our neighborhood are eating up our culture.

Our Cinco de Mayo, our Day of the Dead, our Carnaval, and everything that we have, so now we call these people culture vultures because now they're taking our language, our rhythms, our drumming, our Carnaval, samba, salsa, and they're even having salsa lessons where these people come into the salsa. They get a great salsa band from the Mission that no longer live here, and they give them free salsa lessons. They've taken our culture and everything that we've worked hard for all these years. And to me, that is why I painted my house the way it is because I wanted to let the community and the city know that Latin rock music isn't going anywhere, and I'm going to do my part to preserve it, probably the only thing that we have left.

JC: It is so important. I want to take it back again to Santana because you had the opportunity to sit in with him. The music that Santana created has forever changed the world, helping Latinos everywhere, to see themselves within the rock and roll diaspora. Can you tell us a bit about what his music meant to you and how it inspired your own musical journey as a musician?

RS: Well, that's what I was just explaining, that the Santana family, from the beginning of my career, has been in my life. I

just realized now that back in 1975, I joined a band that was called Mabuhay. I drove our producer down to the studio in my beautiful car. I was the only one that had a nice car back then. I drove us over to CBS Records on Folsom Street, between Fourth and Fifth. He walked in, my producer Brent Dangerfield, who also produced Santana's very first album. Can you imagine that? I hooked up with a guy, and he produced us at CBS Records. And as I'm walking into CBS Records, I looked towards the back, and I could see Carlos Santana dressed all in white, and he had been recording there with John McLaughlin on the Mahavishnu Orchestra album. And I went into the back room. I started playing the timpani drums, you know, those big kettledrums?

JC: Yeah.

RS: And that's when I saw them. I thought, "Wow, those are the biggest timbales I've ever seen." I went back there, and I started playing those drums, boom, boom, to a 6/8. We had this song called Ondale Mariana. It's like (singing), and it's in 6/8. And I started playing those drums, and Carlos came out of the room, "Hey, hey. Stop that. You're going to get in trouble. Get out of here. Get out of here." And I said, "Carlos, I'm just following my dream.

In '69, when you played Woodstock, we were told what you've done to follow your dreams. And I've been following my dreams, and it's amazing that I'm here talking to you right now and having Brent Dangerfield, who produced your first album with me, and what an amazing inspiration you have been for me, how you have changed my life." And he says, "Okay, we'll just go out of the room and keep doing what you're doing. Find your own identity." And that's what I have done. I've been in an original band for my whole life. Puro Bandido, 43 years now, playing original material. Because of Carlos.

JC: Tell us about your band Los Bandidos. When did you guys get together, and what is the intention of the band?

RS: Well, the band that I started was put together by a friend of mine, Jose Majorca, who was killed in an accident. We kept his dream alive because it was our music identity, and all the songs that we were writing were born in the Mission, 25th Street, the Mission District blues. All the songs that I wrote were about our neighborhood and all the situations that have gone on in my life. Every song that we play, I could tell you, it's not just that I came up with the song. Every song that I've ever wrote, it was influenced by Carlos Santana, him telling me, "Find your own identity, be your own musician. Don't ride on my coattails. Be your own man." We were a part of the Latino Rock sound.

We call our music Border Rock because Puro Bandido is Border Rock, it means that it crosses all borders and it has no boundaries, border rock music. That's the sound of



Puro Bandido. All these years, I've kept to myself. I kept to my own identity. That's what Puro Bandido is all about.

And through the years, because of that, we have opened up for Carlos. We've opened up for Eddie Palmieri. We've opened up for a Poncho Sanchez. We did the benefit for AIDS with Bill Graham. He booked us with Linda Ronstadt. He's put us in all these great positions. We opened up for The Tower of Power, Sheila E., all these great bands, even for Little... What's his name? From Texas. What's his name? Little Joe. We've opened up all these shows. We've done Carnaval. We helped on the 24th Street Merchants Fair. We've kept to our identity, and we ended up working in 2002 with Jorge Santana. We ended up as the headlining band for the Heineken Regatta in St. Maarten in the Caribbean, and because of our original material, and it has influenced people like Karl Perazzo.

He used to come and see me play when he was eight years old, and he has told me, "I remember going to Dolores Park as a child, and I remember that song," (singing), and that was maestro Richard Segovia up there playing timbale all the way around him. See, you never know who's going to be watching you. I never knew until the time we played the Cow Palace when he came up to me and said, "Richard, when I was growing up, I wanted to be just like you." Because I took the time to talk to Karl Perazzo, he still to this day stays in communication with me, and like I said, it's all about making a difference in one person's life. Like Carlos told me, "If you can change one person's life, Richard, you've done your job."



JC: Well, and that leads to the next question. You do a lot of work within the community. Can you share with us the amazing philanthropies that you have begun and the projects that you are working on currently?

RS: Currently, I have a foundation that I've been working with since the early 2000s. It's called Stars for The Future Giving Back. And before that, in 1995, my daughter was living up in Clear Lake, and she was five years old, and she showed me the situation that happened to Polly Klaas, when she was abducted by Richard Allen Davis and killed in Cloverdale. They found her body. And she said to me, "Papa, you got to do something about it." What I did is I went to the Missing Exploited Children, and I picked up the eight steps of awareness from the Missing Exploited, and I took that eight steps, and I built a 25-minute seminar. And I used the blues.

Like for instance, I asked the kids, "You know anything about the blues?" "No, what's the blues?" I said, "You ever went home and didn't do your homework, and your mother wouldn't let you go out and play?" "Yeah." I go, "There's the blues." I took blues, I took Latin jazz, and I took Latin rock, and I took different genres of music, and I put the eight steps in between those genres. And we did a 25 minutes seminar, and we went into schools to teach the kids the buddy system, certain things they need to do when they're away from mom and dad, to be careful about those bad guys that are out there. And I caught some child molesters, and I was invited back to the school, and they gave me a Certificate of Honor, showing that my system works.

What we're doing now, we're getting ready, as soon as this

COVID slows down, to go back into schools, teach our kids from K-5 more about the buddy system. If anybody touches them in a certain way, they can talk to their parents. They can talk to their family, and we can catch some more of these bad guys. That's exactly what I do. And then, at the same time, here at my house, I teach kids music, percussion. I have a band right now. They are incredible. They're going to be doing my show on October 16th. They're called Midtown Soul. These kids are like —I call them kids— but they're in their mid-twenties, and they are phenomenal. They are... This girl, Vanessa Lovato from Los Banos, she's an all-over great musician, a great leader, and they're going to be performing. I work with kids. I teach them music. I help to give them the resources and enchant to record and develop their artistry.

I help them with their very first songs, then I take them into the studio, and listen to them and help them along. I put time into these kids. I do a lot of community service for these kids, and I don't ask for any money. All I ask is that they bring their parents and they get to know who I am. I want them to know that they're safe here. I don't want them to think that I'm after their kids for anything. I clear that right off the table right away. Family and encouraging kids is so important to me.

JC: That is wonderful work that you do within the community, Richard. I love and honor it. Your house is called Casa Bandido and has one of the most amazing murals devoted to Latino rock in the world. Can you tell us more about it?

RS: Yes, from '93 to '94, I moved Michael Rios downstairs into my garage. And what we did is I hooked up. My friend had hit the lottery, Dennis Sanfilippo, for 33 and a half million dollars. And I hooked him up with Michael Rios and Carlos Santana. And we started a company called Heaven Smiles. And what we did is we did all the artwork for Carlos Santana. T-shirts from Miles Davis Foundation, John Coltrane, Bob Marley, Carlos Santana, John Lee Hooker. And we started developing T-shirts. And through all that time, we started doing Carlos Santana's album coverage from Sacred Fire, Absoluteness, Dance of the Rainbow Serpent, Milagro, and also Supernatural. Carlos Santana was running in and out of this house from 1993 to '97. When I decided to come home in '97, Michael did not want to leave. Goes to show that the house next door was for sale, right?

I told Michael, "If I can continue to do my music, I think I can get my \$33 million lottery guy to buy the house for you, Michael, next door." And guess what happened? We bought the house next door, and I moved Michael next door. We controlled the block. Steve Winwood, Al Hendrix, all these people started coming through the house. When I moved back home in '97, in a year, and then I decided in '98, because Bandidos were practicing at my house, people started saying, "Hey, what times practice at Casa Bandido, with Casa Bandido?" We decided to call the house after the band, Bandido, the Casa



Bandido, because my mom had passed away, and I called the house Casa Bandido after that. Hey, we practice at Casa Bandido tonight? Hey, is the party at Casa Bandido's tonight? We trademarked the name of the house, Casa Bandido.

And then next thing you know, in 2002, we did an album for Deacon Jones, which you heard, If Blues Were Money (I'd Be a Millionaire). Next thing you know, I was producing Eddie Money, Gregg Allman, Johnny Hooker, Lester Chambers, Lydia Pense from Cold Blood and all these people that were on the album.

And next thing you know, I started getting on the phone and calling Tiran Porter from the Doobie Brothers, who's now in

the Hall of Fame. Dale Ockerman from the Doobie Brothers. I started calling up all these great musicians, Donny Baldwin from the Starship, to record on this album. Next thing you know, I was producing all these people. Wow, I couldn't believe it, in 2002. And next thing you know, after all these years working with Eddie Money, I started producing Eddie.

I go, "Hey, Eddie. Remember when I used to work for you? Now you're working for me." He told me to shut the F up and pull, push, record. I got the opportunity. Art Agnos started showing up at my house. Elvin Bishop. We started recording. I started... I mean, David Stone from Huey Lewis and the News. I had all these musicians, platinum players that I was producing on that record that you heard. Next thing you know, the house started, became a life of its own, and started growing and growing and growing.

And then it became a sanctuary for people that if they had a problem, if they needed something to eat or if they were going through a divorce and they were going through something, they would come and visit me. And I became this therapist for not just children, for adults. It became a safe haven for people that were having problems. Regardless if it was drinking or if it was drugs, I would help them get through this. That's what I felt, that being part of the community and being the mayor of the Mission, it would be my job without any strings or without any money attached to it. Just from the kindness of my heart to try and help somebody get on the right track.

JC: Last question. I believe that a Renaissance is taking place on the planet and that cannabis and other plant allies and medicines are an intrinsic part of helping to wake up and heal humanity, so we can continue to evolve and knit a better world together. Can you tell us about your relationship with cannabis and your artistry and also about your brand Galletas and why you have entered the cannabis space?

RS: Well, let me explain to you. I was diagnosed in 1977 with stage four cancer, right. I was 103 pounds. I went into the hospital for surgery, and they had to give me blood transfusions because I had lost so much blood. I had a 15-hour operation and just went on to six or seven operations, right. When I got out of the operations at first, my mother was totally against marijuana. When I was at that age in my late twenties, my mother was already in her late 50s, almost 60 years old. She was retired from work already. What ended up happening, they had me on Dolaren. They had me on a morphine pump. They had me on nothing but drugs and I would not eat. I somehow convinced my doctor to wheel me out of the hospital, into the hallway, and I smoked a joint.

Guess what happened? I started eating everything in sight. I came back home, and the drug dealer was coming to my door. My mother was buying weed. I had gained 15 or 20 pounds in two months. And my mother said, "I don't care what they said about marijuana because marijuana saved my son's life." Basically, I was one of the first ones back in the late seventies to experience what marijuana does, as far as appetite and being

able to eat and getting me off of the Dolaren and the morphine pump. And I was just smoking pot and eating like you would not believe. My goals were to start this company, Galletas, realizing that out of the 57,000 people in the California cannabis industry, that less than 200 of them were people of color, which I want to make a stand and make a difference in this regard.

I figure with Galletas, we can do a special brand and message for Latinos. My goal is to make enough money so that I can take that money, my portion, and invest it back into my community. Instead of calling the corporate people to, "Give me money, give me money." I'd like to build a company that can basically take care of all of that for me. And then be able to help our children, help our kids, help cancer victims and use that money to help our community and then spread out and start helping other communities with their problems and do something special for our people and leave something here that will be a legacy. So when I do go, I go out the right way. And cannabis, to me, has saved my life, and I know that it will save a lot of people's lives, too. And they'll get everybody off of prescription drugs, pain pills, and all that other stuff with the healing properties of marijuana, regardless if you're eating it or utilizing CBD, because that's what works for me, CBD works excellent for me.

It calms me down. It relaxes me and puts me to sleep instead of sitting there taking a bunch of sleeping pills. Galletas is going to help me take care of my community. I want to build schools for the kids here. I want to be able to give them guitars, to give them whatever they need, and tell their parents, "I'm giving you this instrument, but you're responsible for it. When I get it back, I want it in good shape. You're responsible." I want to give these kids opportunities because this house has that kind of feel to it. I mean, you've been here. You understand that.

JC: Absolutely. It's pure magic, as are you. You have created something filled with so much beautiful heart and inspiration. I'm so thankful to have met you. Thank you so much for this interview, Richard. And I know you have more music to create today, so I'm going to let you go.

RS: Can I say one more thing?

JC: Yeah.

RC Okay. I forgot to tell you that in 2017, I was approached by the California Art Commission. They wanted to do a mural on my house because they realized the publicity and what this house meant. And they came up to me and said, "We want to do your house as a mural, but we want you to do the mural the way you want it done." My friend, Ishmael Versoza, gave me the picture of the Fabulous Malibu's that turned into Malo, and that's when I decided to make this house into a house of Latin rock. Then I got together with my friend Richie Barron and we formed BS productions so that we could begin this project on bringing the brand Galletas to life, so I want to give a special thank you to Barron Law Corporation, Richie aka Dr. Tequila and Deborah Barron for their tireless hours of hard work and dedication towards making this Galletas dream a reality. 🌿





Michael Rios COVER ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

PHOTOS MIKE ROSATI

Michael V. Rios is a native of Oakland, California, born on December 10th, 1947. While in his sophomore year at Oakland's Fremont High School, Michael's artistic talents caught the attention of his teachers, and he received a scholarship to the prestigious San Francisco Academy of Art College, which he attended from 1964 to 1966.

Upon graduation from the Academy, Michael worked as an illustrator for the famous San Francisco men's clothier, Roos Atkins. Rios then opened his own commercial art and graphics studio in North Beach (the Italian neighborhood of San Francisco). He also created children's books, billboards, Fuller/O'Brien paint ads, and other "high-end" commercial art. It wasn't long before this thriving young commercial artist became one of the hottest prospects in San Francisco's advertising world. This next period of his life found Michael as the creative partner in Union Street's "Winston, Rios & Brown."

In the seventies, Michael became proficient in numerous mediums, from acrylics to watercolors. After returning from an extensive trip to Europe, he found his way to the Mission District (the Hispanic neighborhood of San Francisco). Rios began taking an active interest in his new environment. His years of creating billboards were a natural transition for his new "mission in the Mission." Rios created some of the first large murals that made

the Mission District famous, and his effort to "beautify the place I live in" brought him national attention.

It was inevitable that Michael Rios and Carlos Santana would come together, but it wasn't until 1986 that these two supreme artists really took notice of each other. Celebrating the 20th anniversary of Santana, Rios created the mural Inspire To Aspire, located on South Van Ness and 22nd Streets. Musical heroes, icons, and symbols common to those who lived in the Mission are represented in this creation that spans three buildings. It was the inspiration for what became a beautiful friendship and a long, artistic collaboration between the musician and the painter.

Michael's work for Carlos Santana has included concert backdrops, custom clothing designs, guitars, and several record album covers, including the Grammy Award-winning "Supernatural." Michael's commissioned artwork has appeared on several recordings, including Grammy Award Winner Poncho Sanchez's "Latin Spirits" and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Inductee Steve Winwood's "About Time."

Michael Rios has created original artwork for such clients as the Latin Recording Academy, the Mars Family, the Andre Agassi Foundation, Sony Signatures, LP Percussion, and AGInteractive. Today, Michael Rios' work continues to cross boundaries and is highly regarded for its power, vision, and color. 🌿



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CARLOS AND SALVADOR SANTANA

A FAMILY LEGACY OF MUSIC

INTERVIEW JULIE CHIARELLO

The Santana family legacy of music is immense, powerful and beautiful and Salvador Santana himself sat and learned music on his father's knee. In this special issue we celebrate both father and son and the work that they are each doing within the global cannabis community respectively with their brands Mirayo and Vaya. We also learn about a deeper history within this incredible family of music that spans across the last century.

JC: The story of Santana is the origin story of Latino Rock, and the story of music in your family doesn't just begin with your father. It goes back to your Grandma and Grandpa as well. As you say about your family, "Music is in our DNA. This is who we are. This is what we do." Your story is the story of La Raza, the Chicanos, the slaves, the afro-Caribbean sound, jazz, blues, rock, and Afro Cuban. Can you tell us about your family history & the different cultural influences that shaped you?

SS: Thank you. I honor and appreciate that. For me, it all starts with my grandfathers.

Saunders King –

An amazing blues and jazz guitarist, singer, bug band leader, and preacher from a little town outside of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

His sound and style on the guitar were the inspiration for other blues guitarists like B.B. King and T-Bone Walker. His family and ancestors came to the U.S. by way of the Atlantic slave trade.

Jose Santana "El Farol" -

An incredible violinist and mariachi band leader. His family came from a little village in Auztlan/Halisco Mexico.

He, along with my grandfather Mi Abuelita Hosephina, my father and all my aunts and uncles, like so many, came to the U.S. by making the dangerous journey to cross the border in search of a better life.

And also my grandmothers. Both of them would always remind me that I am the best of all my family and that I am the culmination of all the miracles, blessings, and prayers from my ancestors.

JC: Counterculture movements in the last century have often paired rebel thinking with the use of cannabis and psychedelics. From the French salons with Gertrude Stein and Alice B Toklas, to the Beat Poets, to the Jazz and Blues musicians that Harry Anslinger profiled and on to the hippies.....

SS: Right on! You know, it's like what John Lewis said,

"Make good trouble... necessary trouble."

The difference is instead of trouble I make music.

JC: We are picking up where they left off, and with this new generation, it is key that we take it further and continue to build on the good work that they did. Tell us your thoughts on carrying the torch forward and continuing to be of service to humanity and our continued evolution?

SS: It is an honor and a blessing to continue to be of service to humanity and for the future. If you love what you do and do what you love... it is not considered labor or hard work. It's a pleasure and a joy. This was instilled in me very early on by my family members and those that inspire and influence them. I love to continue to work with others that share this way of life.

JC: You grew up learning to play music on your father's knee...what other musical memories do you have from when you were first introduced to music?

SS: I can remember first learning how to play the drum set while sitting on my father's lap. He'd control the foot pedals since, at that time, I wasn't tall enough to reach them. He taught me at an early age the same philosophies his mentors shared with him. That it's very important to first learn and understand everything about rhythms and tempos.

I remember listening to records and watching VHS tapes of Olatunji Drums of Passions (African Drumming).

Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley & the Wailers, Herbie Hancock, Keith Jarrett, McCoy Tyner, Chick Corea, Wayne Shorter, Amando Peraza, etc. All the greats! The Mount Rushmore of musicians. Also growing up and watching my grandfathers perform live towards the end of their careers.

JC: Can you tell us about The Mission district, why it is so important, why it should be protected and how the

movement it birthed shaped you?

SS: Throughout history, there have been certain sounds and styles of music that were born in different cities and areas all around the world.

New Orleans for jazz, Havana for Afro Cuban, Kingston for Reggae, the Bronx NY for hip hop... and the Mission District for the SF Bay Area for Chicano rock.

It's the place that raised my father and his family when they first came to this country from Mexico. My grandparents, my aunts & uncles, and most of my relatives. It's the melting pot of so many different cultures, food, music, art, and people. The low riders, the street fairs, festivals, and most important L.A. Mission has a real community.

Orale! The Mission District deserves to be honored and protected like a national monument. And yeh, absolutely. I think the movement is one of the many reasons why I'm here today. And for that alone I'm deeply grateful.

JC: The Latino Rock movement was also the fight for a better way of life. Growing up myself in a small town on the Central Coast of California, it was filled with Oaxaqueños. My Cuban grandparents taught English as a second language and were in service to helping people rise to achieve their dreams of safety, health, and prosperity for their families. I grew up with my Grandparents teaching me about Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta Emiliano Zapata, and the Zapatistas and the importance of their fight for justice. This was also the energy of the mission in the 1970s, this was the hunger of the Latinos to come up, and this again is what we are all still fighting for now as we face a massive depression post-pandemic. La lucha continua, and as Emiliano Zapata said, we will die on our feet, not on our knees. Can you speak about this thirst and this fight that drives the passion behind the Latino Rock movement?

SS: Si! The movement is the fight for justice and equality!

I think that's exactly what the Chicano movement is all about.

Music that makes you wanna dance and at the same time there are real messages about histories and opportunities to educate ourselves. And I think that is hella awesome that you're grandparents taught you about all these incredible people in La Raza history! I believe that this new generation of activists and advocates is inspiring change, and a lot of people are starting to wake up now.

JC: When did cannabis first enter your life, and what role did it play in your family? Also, please speak to us about creativity and cannabis, your artistry, and your thoughts on lighting up, getting active, and doing something meaningful and productive?

SS: Cannabis, just like music, has always been my life from early on. I remember as a kid going to my dad's concerts and always



getting a big whiff of this funny-smelling smoke I'd see coming from the audience. Then one day I was in high school, I first lit up with some of my musician friends after school. I remember one of my buddies lived close to school. So after we walked over and got to jam out on some jazz standards in the garage. It was the first time I'd played music, and I wasn't thinking about playing the music. I was just playing. That's

when I learned how with the right time and environment, cannabis weed can not only take the edge off but enhance the creative experience. This was a game changer. For my musical journey. And now I can get to do this for a living. I get to create music and sometimes use cannabis as a tool for inspiration during the creative process. I really believe that I didn't choose this life, but this way of life chose me. I'm hella cool with that!

JC: Within the Cannabis industry, you consider yourself an advocate, not just a businessman who has a brand. This greatly aligns with the values at Skunk, in which we believe that we should be nourishing a Green Renaissance, not a Green/Greed Rush. Those of us who are stewards within the industry believe that cannabis and hemp are not only here to help create wealth but, more importantly, to create environmental justice, social justice and help right the wrongs of the last hundred years of prohibition. We know it's our responsibility to help write a better narrative because of the systemic racism that was interwoven into every aspect of prohibition. It is all of our responsibilities to help the Latino community, the Black community, the Native community, the Asian community, and the LGBTQ community to come in and have equal representation, as opposed to the current extremely whitewashed industry with 81% white males in positions of ownership and leadership. Can you speak to your devotions as an advocate and how you have aligned these values with the work in your brand Vaya?

SS: Absolutely! I was told myself at a young age if I was ever to get involved in the cannabis industry, it was gonna be about making a change. To rearrange the overall narrative. To shift and alter perceptions and conversations we have about cannabis and weed consumption. And how people since the beginning of time have been using this ancient and magical plant for its powerful healing purposes and medicinal benefits.

So for me, the idea was started simply to honor the ancient wisdoms and combine the modern advancements in science. It's really no different than who I am as a musician and my family's DNA. My grandfather Saunders said, "We are here to make spiritual traction." That also means in some cases we have to stand up and fight for justice and equality. And let's make some amazing and impactful art too! And, hopefully, inspire and educate as many as we can in the process.

JC: Tell us more about Vaya, what you are working on, the product line, and your Afro Cuban grower? Your music is amazing. As a Cuban, I love all of the Latin sounds that you bring into it. Can you tell us about any projects or collaborations that you are working on?

SS: Awe, thank you. I appreciate that. What an honor! And yeh, I have a couple of different projects I'm currently working on.

One is my solo album. I'm taking my time with this one because I've really been enjoying the creative process. I figure if the rhymes and melodies make me wanna get up and dance in the studio, then the listeners are gonna do the same.

And the other projects I'm working on is with mi hermano, amigo y compadre Asdrú Serra from the band Ozomatli. We've joined forces and are working on part two of our recently released album and band called "The Remixikanz (RMXKNZ)". I've always enjoyed collaborations. And getting together with Asdrú is always a blast and memorable. Stay tuned!

JC: What do you hope for the cannabis industry over the next ten years?

SS: My vision for the cannabis industry is that one day we won't have to keep convincing outdated lawmakers that it's been proven time and time again that cannabis has medicinal benefits.

That there'll be fewer obstacles for black and brown, Asian, women, LGBTQ... everyone that isn't a rich white male and continues to implement systemic racism. And that the overall narrative and view of cannabis consumption is rearranged into change for the highest good.

JC: From your heart, what is the message that you would most like to share with humanity at this time?

SS: From my heart to you, thank you. I am honored and grateful. I'll leave you all with this simple mantra that has gotten me to this point in my life...

Relax, believe, enjoy.

Amor y paz. 🌿



Carlos Santana's Mirayo by Santana - a cannabis line centered in spirituality and inspired by his Latin heritage - now available in Cannabis Mobile Shopping App

Carlos Santana, the ten-time GRAMMY Award-winning guitarist, is one of the most recognized and celebrated musicians of our time. His life as a musical icon and spiritual flame-keeper is built on determination, discovery, and self-actualization. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the longtime cannabis advocate launched Mirayo by Santana last fall - a line of premium sun-grown products focused on the spiritual effects of cannabis.

"In my experience, cannabis has special properties that enhance meditative reflection and creative expression. It can dispel negative doubt to reveal the everlasting gift of our uniqueness," said Carlos Santana. The story of Mirayo begins in Mexico, where Santana's mother used cannabis in her regimen of holistic solutions. The name Mirayo is a combination of "my" and "ray" in Spanish, honoring Santana's Latin heritage and empowering you to "follow your light."



The lineup includes 3.5-gram and 7-gram jars of whole flower, and 5-packs of 0.5-gram pre-rolls - available in the following strains, or categories of consciousness:

Radiance: A Sativa that is intended to expand one's energy outward, reaching for divine wisdom

and inspiring creative expression.

Symmetry: A hybrid aimed at harmonizing the inward and outward, mind and body, for elevated perception.

Centered: An indica meant to nudge users toward inner peace, insightful stillness, and transcendence of the physical state.

Essence: A CBD-rich variety intended to dispel the veil of stress from the mind and body for clarity and calm in your divine light

Mirayo products are available for purchase in-store through The Parent Company's retail channel, Caliva, in addition to select retail partners in California. On-demand delivery is also currently offered across the Greater Los Angeles, the Bay Area, South Bay, and the Greater San Diego markets via www.Caliva.com and using the newly launched Caliva Mobile App, available for iOS via the Apple App Store and on Android soon.



We started with a simple idea: create a Cannabis company that would protect the plant, respect the consumer, and promote a conscious and ritualistic culture around Cannabis consumption while honoring the Black and Brown Cannabis culture and heritage.

Rooted in the California tradition of growing natural, organic, and good weed, we are committed to delivering the best flower to our consumers.

Learning from our ancestors' wisdom and implementing modern and environmentally conscious techniques, VAYA was founded on the belief that human connection to nature through Cannabis is the key to personal development and growth.

Created by black and brown entrepreneurs, VAYA has diversity as its core, and it is our guiding principle in how we conduct ourselves, the communities we want to create, and the fight for social justice in an industry that for too long has neglected the contribution of Black and Brown communities.

We believe that Cannabis is a powerful tool for human development. We want everyone to be able to benefit from the grounding, healing, and uplifting qualities of this sacred plant.

We want to create a future where people can access the renewing and uplifting qualities of plants for a conscious path of self-development, creativity, and ultimate bliss.

Inspired by the wisdom of our ancestors, we want to promote a thoughtful and ritualistic approach to Cannabis consumption to enhance the grounding, healing, and uplifting qualities of this sacred plant.

And in the process, we want to help to build more connected, sustainable, and ethical communities of empowered producers and consumers.

We are here to create a future where the Cannabis plant is accepted as nature's tool to help us navigate our emotions, build community, and honor ancient wisdom.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VAYA



For me, working on La Santana Familia mural was a labor of love for San Francisco and the Santana Family. It was created at Jorge Santana's request. He wanted it to represent the beginning of his musical family, showing his parents Don Jose and Josephina, his brother Carlos and his nephew Salvador.

Then Jorge passed into the light before he had a chance to see what he had inspired. The mural became a tribute to him and the wonderful music Jorge and his family have blessed us with.

My spiritual and artistic growth began as a young boy here in the Mission. My father, artist Vaughn Bode, lived and died in the Mission in 1975. As an artist, I could only dream that one day I

would have a chance to do a mural for the Santana Family on such an epic scale and show my love and respect for the Mexican culture. Que lindo, what a beautiful culture. The emotion hit me in the heart when I placed Don Jose, and Josephina Santana images up on the wall. If it were not for them, we would not have La Familia Santana's music. When I saw them holding hands looking out over the Mission with pride, I cried tears of joy as I was painting.

I rejoice that I had a small part in bringing them back to this physical plane. I am forever grateful to Jorge, Carlos, Don Jose, Josephina, and Salvador Santana. I also want to thank Lisa Brewer, Randolph Bose. And Michael Rios for his ongoing encouragement.

Artist Muralist, Mark Bode 🎨