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Rhinestone the Curses

*As Project Nunway returns with Night of a 1,000 Curses
Sister Prudence, Pride of Perfection talks monsters,
matchmaking, and the fund that keeps people in medication.*

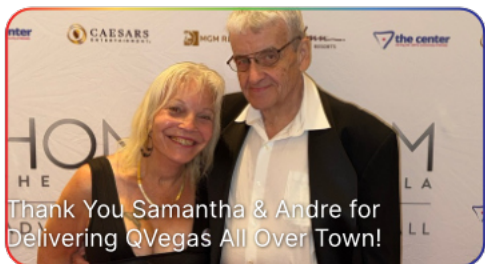


Photo: Shane O'Neal

With a proud publishing legacy that dates back to 1978, QVegas has been at the heart of Las Vegas' LGBTQ+ community for over four decades. What began as a grassroots newsletter has evolved into a dynamic weekly publication that informs, celebrates, and amplifies queer voices across Southern Nevada. QVegas is available in print at over 30 LGBTQ+ establishments, community nonprofits, and partner advertiser locations, making it a vital part of the local scene.

Beyond the printed page, QVegas connects with readers through a robust digital presence—on the web, across all major social media platforms, in our dedicated iOS app, and through weekly email blasts that keep the community in the know. Our coverage spans nightlife, entertainment, politics, health, advocacy, and the everyday stories that make up the diverse LGBTQ+ experience in Las Vegas.

As an advertiser-supported publication, QVegas is the most effective way to reach LGBTQ+ locals and visitors alike—offering unparalleled access to one of the city's most loyal and engaged audiences. In an era where equality rights are under attack nationwide, QVegas stands as a strong and unwavering community partner, committed to visibility, representation, and celebrating the power of queer voices.



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One of Them Refuses to Change, the Other Insists On It, and Both Are Right.

Two men in this issue, five thousand miles apart, are answering the same question: what does it take for a thing to still be itself after twenty years?

Oberdan has run Restaurant Luna in Amsterdam since 1990. I asked how long and he said "over 35," then did the arithmetic in front of me and landed on 36. When the Argentinians arrived in the Netherlands in the '70s and '80s and lit their grills, the Dutch — who had never had serious imported beef — responded with what he called an explosion. Then, one by one, those restaurants sold. To owners from Pakistan, Australia, Indonesia. The names on the awnings stayed Argentinian. The kitchens didn't. By his count, Luna is one of about two left that are the real thing.

Billy Piero has spent 21 years as Sister Prudence, and the thing he most wanted on the record was about leaving (but not any time soon). He's building bench strength. He's trying to hand over the reins of a persona he invented out of a *Charmed* rerun and a sin nobody else wanted. "Anybody that thinks they can do it forever," he told me, "is going to be the demise of it." He's prepared to let Project Nunway end, or Red Dress, if something better takes their place.

So one man survived by refusing to change and the other intends to survive by insisting on it. Both are right, and the reason they're both right is the same: neither one is protecting the *name*. Oberdan isn't guarding a word on a sign,

he's guarding what happens on the grill. Piero isn't guarding a fundraiser, he's guarding a drug assistance program that catches people earning one dollar too much to qualify for help.

We didn't expect the paradox when these two pieces landed in the same issue. The substance comes before the show. Oberdan will talk about fire for a while, and then tell you the fire is second — quality is first, where the cow lived, whether it ate grass. He trims the tenderloin for the empanadas by hand. "I am not a chef. I am a grill man." Prudence has spent two decades in the corner of the room instead of on the microphone, because the corner is where somebody tells you they've just been diagnosed. "You don't have to be the loudest or the most shocking sister to make an impact."

Project Nunway comes to Gipsy on September 12 — *Night of One Thousand Curses*. Twelve designers, seventy-five dollars each, and a mandate to build something gorgeous out of what was already lying around.

And never pass on the chance for dinner with Jen Kober.



Russ White & Garrett Pattiani
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via QVegas

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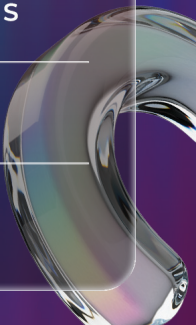
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Rhinestone the Curses

*As Project Nunway returns with **Night of a 1,000 Curses** Sister Prudence, Pride of Perfection talks monsters, matchmaking, and the fund that keeps people in medication.*

Twenty-one years in, Sister Prudence has learned that the most useful place to stand at a party is the corner.

"When I'm out as Prudence, people tell me things," Billy Pierro says. "I get coming-out stories. I get transitioning stories. Being diagnosed with HIV — all of those things get shared with me on a regular basis." While other sisters work the microphone, Prudence has spent two decades huddled off to the side of the room with somebody who needed a minute, explaining what the order can actually do for them.

That instinct — the quiet corner, the long conversation, the practical offer — is the engine underneath everything the Sin City Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence do, including the loudest thing they do all year. Project Nunway returns to Gipsy Nightclub on September 12 with a theme built for the moment: *Night of One Thousand Curses* — *Monsters, Witchcraft & Pop Culture*.

The three P's

The name came from television.

Pierro was working at Bellagio and had never done drag when he told his coworkers he was becoming a sister. As a founding member, he'd drawn a sin — one of the seven — and had to build a name around it. "I happened to be Pride, which is funny because I was the newest and

the youngest one," he says. "And I feel like Pride is one of the best sins to have. Nobody wanted it."

He was deep into *Charmed* at the time. Prue Halliwell became Prudence, Perfection rounded it out, and the three P's nodded at the show's *Power of Three*.

There's a wrinkle he only caught later. The six founding members took the deadly sins — Wrath was retired, because the sister who would have carried it had agoraphobia and couldn't be out in the world with it. Everyone who came after the founders takes a virtue, and virtues are effectively unlimited. Except one.

"What I didn't realize is that Prudence is a virtue," he says. "So we had to retire Prudence as a virtue that somebody from our house can take. I unknowingly took a virtue and a sin in my name."

Two decades on, the name has become a second person. Billy is the organized one, the professional, the networker. Prudence turns the filter down — "more outgoing, more outrageous, more willing to approach somebody." He isn't the most shocking sister in the room and doesn't try to be. "You don't have to be the loudest or the most shocking sister to make an impact."

Why monsters, why now

The theme leans into witches, hexes and creatures — not a neutral choice in 2026.

"Monsters and witches have always

represented the people in society that don't quite fit," he says. "They are feared, misunderstood, exaggerated, and sometimes blamed for everything that's wrong in the world. That actually feels really kind of appropriate right now."

But Nunway is not a lecture. "It isn't meant to be a depressing political lecture," he says — "although Prudence does that sometimes." The plan is to take the imagery and make it fabulous. Or, as he puts it: take the curse and rhinestone it.

Twelve designers, \$75, and whatever's in the garage

The format has been the same since year one and it's still the best hook in local nightlife: designers build a runway look out of recycled and found materials on a shoestring budget — roughly \$75 — and a sister walks it.

Twelve designers, twelve looks, twelve walks, with the recycled-materials mandate built into the judging criteria. Designer wrangling falls to Victor Rodriguez, which means the sisters walking are genuinely in the dark about what everyone else is wearing.

"I'm not privy to any of the other designs," Pierro says. "I can only talk about my designer." His this year is a retired sister, which has changed the conversation. "He really gets it. He's having conversations with me that some of my previous



Hosted by
Akasha L'Statt



Performance by
Sin Licencia

designers did not — about how I'm going to design my face, how I'm going to do the walk. He understands Prudence."

Pairing designers with sisters is part matchmaking service, part sisterly interference: personalities, aesthetics, body types, and the practical reality that nobody is being paid. "We're not Project Runway. We're not trying to throw a huge challenge at people," he says. "If we can pair somebody up within the scope of what they can do — I mean, none of these people are getting paid."

The one real format change this year is about credit. A traditional fashion show puts one designer behind every look; Nunway has twelve, and past attempts to spotlight them with pre-recorded video ran into the eternal problem of AV in a nightclub. So this year each designer submits a short blurb about the concept, read aloud by them or by the host, then joins their sister onstage for a photo after the walk.

"That's the moment," he says. "That's when people put it on social media, and that's when you get highlighted as designing that outfit."

Hosting duties this year go local. Nunway has brought in national names before — Chad Michaels performed, Alexis Mateo hosted for a couple of years — but the order is deliberately pulling the budget down so more of the night's revenue clears through to the beneficiary. Akasha

Lstatt takes the mic, with performances from Sin Licencia and Poison Munro, both drawn from the local bar circuit rather than the touring roster.

"We're at Gipsy this year, where we have this huge platform," Pierro says. "We thought it would be a lot more special if we can showcase some of the local talent."

The reason any of it exists

Every dollar Nunway raises goes to SADAP — the Sisters' AIDS Drug Assistance Program — and Pierro is emphatic that it isn't an abstraction. "This assistance is for people in our community that need help accessing HIV-related care and medication," he says.

The gap it fills is narrow and specific. Public assistance cuts off at 400% of the federal poverty level — somewhere around a \$65,000 salary. Make a dollar more and you're paying for your own medication, which can run thousands a month, more on injectables. "That's a rent payment," he says. "I mean, that's rent and car."

So SADAP catches the people sitting just above the line: between jobs, newly employed, earning too much on paper and not nearly enough in practice. "We can't help everybody. We help people that fall right above that."

About five years ago the program expanded into PrEP, working through the

The Pairings

Twelve designers, twelve sisters, twelve walks:

Jon Parsons

Sister Pru

Jim McCoy

Sister Fairness

JewDi Vine (Justin Liming)

Sister India

Chris Cope

Novice Irma

Cecil & Mathew Kester-Shatswell

Postulant Devotion

Audrey Stroth

Postulant Temptation

Tawney Bubbles (worldinflated)

Sister Faith

Josie Cavalleri

Guard Wisdom

Nakita LaFem & Helen Twelve Trees

Guard Maxx

Angelino Barragan

Sister Gloria Areola

Derek Daniels

Sister Candy (LA)

Victor Rodriguez (showcase only)

Postulant Devotion



The Panel

Six judges score the looks, with recycled and found materials weighted into the criteria:

Aaron Berger

The Neon Museum

Suzanne Chabre

The Smith Center for the Performing Arts

Meliton Kleinor

Mr. Las Vegas Pride 2026–2027

Jerry Lambert

best-selling author and producer

Jerry Metellus

Jerry Metellus Photography

Michele Madole

Nevada Ballet Theatre



Center and other local agencies rather than routing patients to a volunteer organization. The per-patient cost is far lower, but Pierro argues cost sensitivity is higher. "If somebody is negative, they don't have the same urgency," he says. "And if there's any cost barrier, they're even less likely." Twenty dollars is enough to talk someone out of it.

His elevator pitch is a public-health one: a negative partner on PrEP and a positive partner undetectable on treatment means the virus isn't moving. "We're not going to be the ones funding a cure," he says. "There's money that goes to that. We need to help people in our community who are affected by this."

The rest of the calendar

Nunway is the marquee event, not the only one. Red Dress lands in March, and OINC has run monthly at Fun Hog Ranch for roughly eighteen years, including through the pandemic. Then there's the work that isn't fundraising at all. "We don't always have our hand out," he says. "The community doesn't always have money." A quarterly meal at the nunnery, run with the Las Vegas Court, rotates themes — a chili cook-off, a barbecue, a soup night.

His favorite is World AIDS Day, when the sisters run a bar ministry across town in a single night, lighting a candle at each stop and carrying a white veil anyone can write a name on. Back at the nunnery, they burn it.

"There are a lot of World AIDS Day vigils, and I love that they exist," he says. "But some people are going to be at the bar,

and they're going to find their comfort a different way. And we're going to them."

Handing over the veil

The sisters were honored at this year's HRC gala, which still seems to startle him. "For an organization like HRC to recognize our little local organization is mind-blowing."

But the thing Pierro most wants on the record is about leaving. "I love that I'm the abbess," he says. "But I'm really trying to make sure it's set up for the future, because I can't do it forever. And anybody that thinks they can do it forever, I think, is going to be the demise of it."

He's building bench strength and as much system as a volunteer order can sustain, with an eye toward eventually handing Prudence's reins over — something he wouldn't have been comfortable with a few years ago. That means being willing to let traditions end. "As much as I love the history and the legacy the Sin City Sisters have built over 21 years, it doesn't do us any good if we're continuing to beat a dead horse," he says. If Nunway runs its course, or Red Dress does, he hopes somebody replaces it with something better. The Velvet Circus, newly launched at the nunnery, is on its second edition, and if it eventually eclipses what came before, fine.

"You better have something new, though," he adds. "Don't stop something that's successful if you don't have something new."

The corner of the room, it turns out, is also where you learn how to leave.

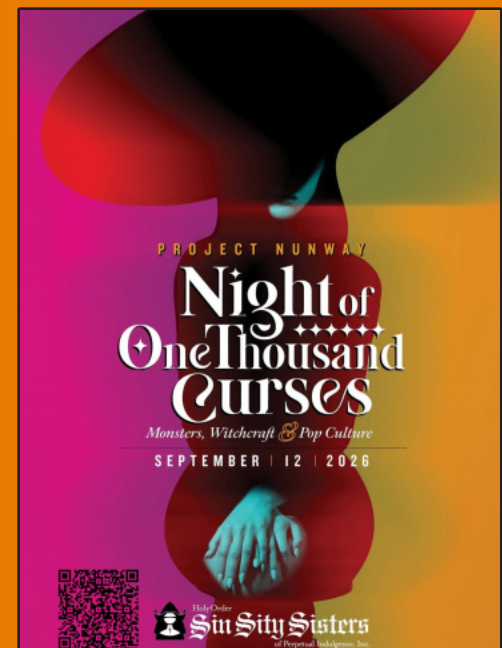


So You Want to Be a Sister?

"It's easy to start the process," Pierro says. "It's harder to continue with it."

Talk to any sister and you'll be connected with the Mistress of Novices, then asked to sit in on a single meeting — a deliberate reality check. "You see us in all of our makeup, having fun, giving a blessing. That's the culmination of six months of work," most of it unglamorous and all of it volunteer.

From there it's a ladder. Aspirants learn the order. Postulants begin whiteface and cultivate a look. Novices develop color and character, and complete a novice project — nearly anything, so long as it proves you can conceive of something and finish it.



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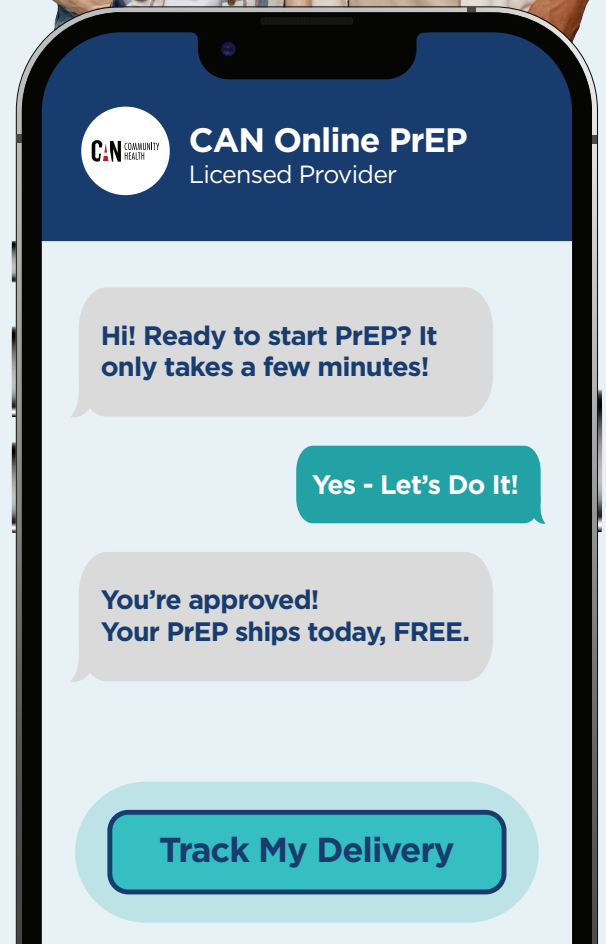
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Amsterdam, Revisited.

Jen Kober was in Amsterdam. So was I. Dinner was happening.

Those of you following along at home know I'm on a two month journey through Europe, one that began with the OUTbound WorldPride Cruise into Amsterdam. What I didn't know when I set out was where the trip would actually take me.

Here's one of the surprises. Just as we were pulling into Amsterdam for WorldPride, a post came across my feed from comedian Jen Kober, saying she and her wife Brooke were headed to Amsterdam for World Pride, too. Jen, as you may remember, was one of our cover models back when she was the resident comedian at Mad Apple. We've stayed friends online ever since. You don't pass up a coincidence like that. Dinner was happening.

Which raised the question of where. My first trip to Amsterdam was August of 2010, on an Atlantis cruise, and that's the trip where I met Michael Barbieri, who would go on to become QVegas's feature food writer. On our last night in the city, Michael and I ended up at an Argentinian restaurant. Sixteen years later, I couldn't resist finding out whether it was still there.

It is. Restaurant Luna has been serving Amsterdam since 1990, and not much has changed — which, as it turns out, is the entire point.

Owner Oberdan sat down with us after the dinner crowd subsided, hesitant his English wasn't good enough. This absolutely charming man went from shy to exuberant when he started talkabout Luna. When I asked how many years the restaurant had been open, he started with "over 35," did the arithmetic, and landed on 36.

I wanted to know about fire. Argentinian grilling depends as much on the fire as on the cut, and I was curious what had to change to make that work in a Dutch kitchen. His answer reordered my

assumptions. The fire matters, yes, and the grill has to be at a good heat — but quality comes first, above everything. Where the cow came from. How fresh it is. The breed: Aberdeen Angus.

And Dutch beef, he says, is good — just not the same, for a reason I hadn't considered. In Argentina the cattle are outside. Here they're inside nearly all year, eating potatoes and carrots rather than grass. "It's strange," he admitted, "but that is why the tasting is good." He's fond of American beef too, though his ideal animal lives almost its whole life outdoors and finishes on grain for three or four months at the end.

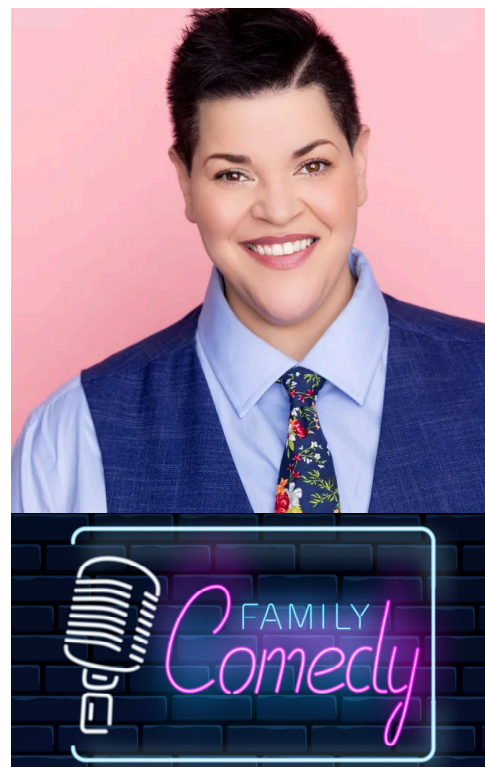
The cultural math is different as well. Argentina runs on meat. The Netherlands, he points out, is a fishing country.

Amsterdam is not short on Argentinian restaurants, so I asked what makes Luna stand out. The answer was history. The first wave of Argentinians arrived here in the '70s and '80s, and when they opened their grills, the Dutch — who had little exposure to serious imported beef — responded with what Oberdan called an explosion. Luna was among the first of them, in 1990. Over the decades, most of those restaurants were sold off to owners from Pakistan, Australia, Indonesia. The names stayed Argentinian. The ownership didn't. By his count, Luna is one of only about two left that are still the real thing.

Customers order the tenderloin for the tenderness. He prefers the rib eye, because flavor. And the empanadas are filled with tenderloin he trims and sets aside himself, cut by hand, never machine.

He's been cooking for about 35 years and also runs a second, more exclusive restaurant across town.

"I am not a chef. I am a grill man. And on the grill I make everything. Fish, vegetables, meat. Doesn't matter."



Catch Jen Kober at Henderson's Family Comedy Night at the Water Street Plaza Amphitheater on September 12 at 7:30pm. Tickets are only \$15, so grab yours before they're gone!

LGBTQ+ Resources

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thecenterlv.org

ACLU
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ADL
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ALCOHOLICS TOGETHER
alcoholicstogetherlasvegas.com

BEARS LAS VEGAS
bearslv.org

HENDERSON PRIDE
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hrc.org

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ircdei.org

LAMBDA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
lambdalv.com

LAS VEGAS MEN'S CHORUS
lvmenchorus.org

LAS VEGAS PRIME TIMERS
lasvegasprimetimers.com

LEATHER UNIFORM CLUB OF LAS VEGAS (LUC OF LV)
thelucoflv.com

MAMA DRAGONS
mamadragons.org

NEVADA GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION
ngra.com

THE PRIDE TREE
thepridetreelv.com

SILVER STATE EQUALITY
silverstateequality.org

SOUTHERN NEVADA ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER QUEER SOCIETY
snapiqs.org

YOUNG: EQUAL
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COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
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HUNTRIDGE FAMILY CLINIC
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SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT
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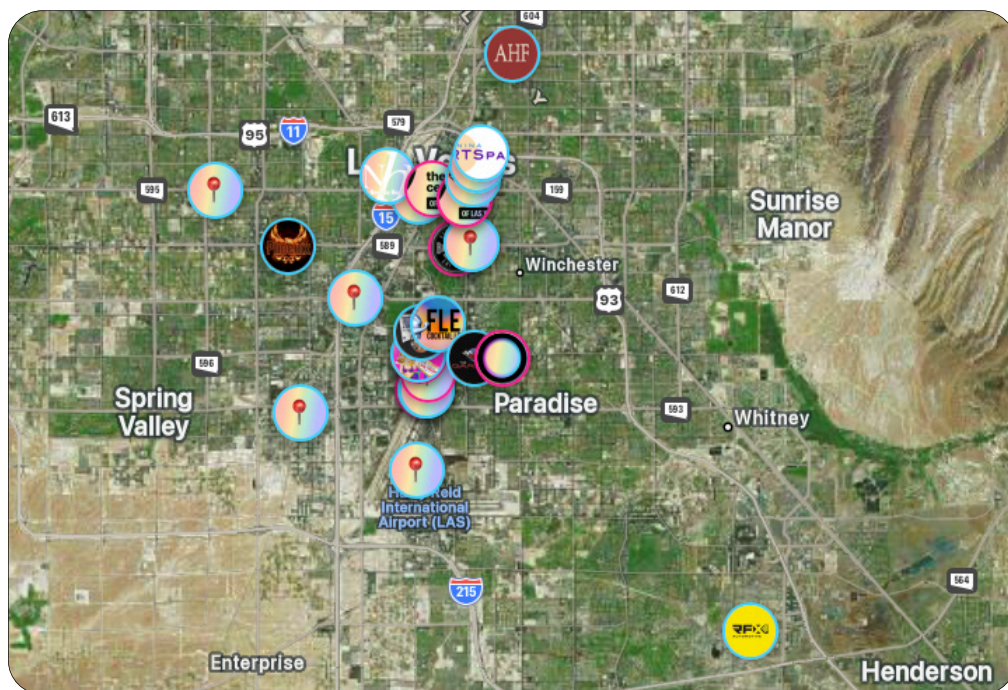
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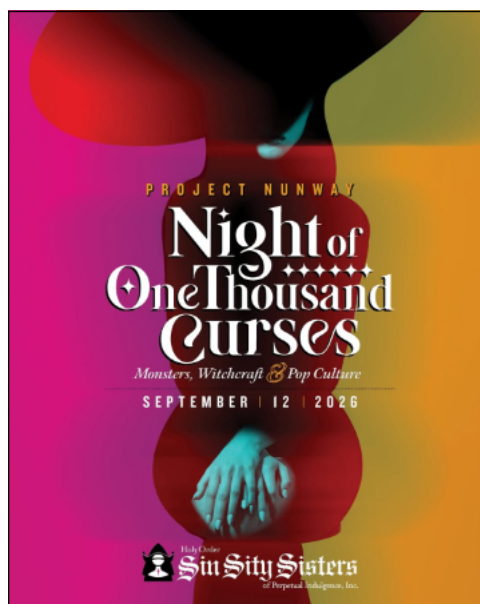
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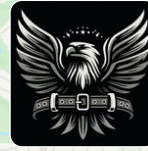
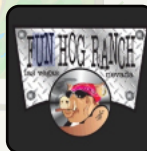




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