

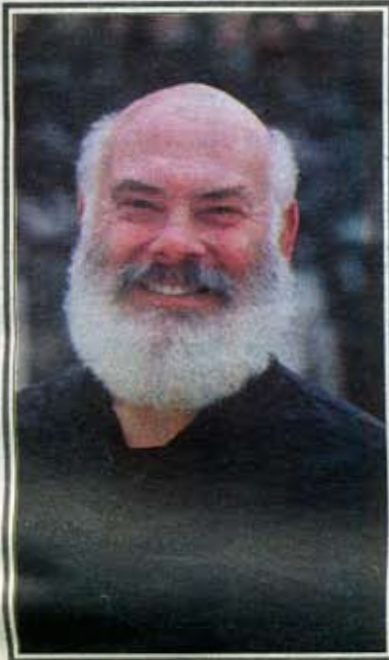
## Arts Flourish in Mammoth

Music, theatre, wellness part of area's lexicon

Even without a performing arts center, Mammoth is a wonderful place for culture as well as recreation. Barry Sternlicht's simple declaration of his vision of Mammoth as a wellness resort is gaining cachet in the community.

During a brief visit to town last February, Sternlicht (the visionary behind Starwood Capital Group that purchased MMSA last year) said, "It's time for Mammoth to step out and do things of a high-quality nature...."

MMSA pulled no punches launching two high-quality events in the fall.



INTERNET PHOTO  
Dr. Andrew Weil will be featured at the debut Mammoth Life & Wellness weekend, Oct. 20-22.

On the premise that without health nothing else matters, Mammoth Life & Wellness was a mammoth presentation the weekend of Oct. 20. The welcome letter told us, "The natural world has much to teach us about the process of change. As one season moves to the next, the earth is full of activity—vibrant and alive—in a constant state of transformation. And so it should be with our lives. Personal transformation is what Mammoth Life & Wellness is all about: expanding horizons; gaining fresh perspectives; interacting with some of the world's leading authorities on health and well being."

Talks, workshops, keynote addresses were made by well known people in the field of health and wellness—fitness trainer Kathy Smith, stress reduction expert Dr. Richard Carlson and integrative medicine pioneer Andrew Weil, were the big draws, and did not disappoint. The organizers did a great job of integrating local practitioners with the star power.

While the event drew a select group of people actively engaged in healthy living, the potential is great to create an ongoing event. For a first time event, it was superb.

On a spectacular weekend, Sept. 15-17, MMSA presented Mammoth Wine & Jazz, a wonderful day of music and wine tastings at Sam's Wood site.

According to Jim Vanko, organizer of both events, Mammoth Wine & Jazz was a huge success, with twice the number of people attending than were expected. Several of the 31 wineries participating began to run out of wine

by the tastings' end at 5 p.m., but the music was enough to keep the buzz going indefinitely—Lavay Smith and her Red Hot Skillet Lickers, Tito Puente, Jr., the Rippingtons and Tower of Power.

Many of the musicians commented on being out of breath (imagine playing all those horns at an oxygen-deprived altitude of 8,000 feet). Comments ranged from "awesome" to "fantastic." Rusty Gregory had such a good time, he said, "Put it on the calendar for Sept. 15, 2007."

So it's a safe bet that the first annual Mammoth Wine and Jazz will become the second annual; it was that good.

There was no dearth of music in Mammoth during the year, with Jazz Jubilee,



Tito Puente Jr. and his 14-piece Latin Jazz orchestra town.



The Felici Trio

Bluesapalooza, the fantastic Villagestock (which brought killer tribute bands to the Village on a blustery Saturday in July, and much more.

On the classical side, we were treated to excellent music by two festivals, the Felici Trio's Mammoth Lakes Music Festival and the Sierra Summer Festival. Through the town's resident piano trio, the winter was made colorful by monthly chamber music concerts and some fine holiday music presented by students of the Felici Trio.

Sierra Classic Theatre's three productions in 2006 were a fabulous panoply of tragic-comedy. Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*, *Beyond Therapy* and the hilarious murder mystery dinner theater, *I Do, I Die*.

Mammoth's consistently fine theater presentations by Sierra Classic Theatre were augmented in 2006 by Theatre Neo, a membership-based theater company from Los Angeles, which was started to give actors a chance to polish their acts. In June, Kathy Joosten (of *West Wing* and *Desperate Housewives* fame) directed eight actors in four performances under the stars in the Village Events Plaza in performances of monologues. Each skit had an arc, a range of emotions and surefire aim. Theatre Neo returned later in the summer for Art a la Carte, continuing to distill the world into nuggets of comedy and tragedy.

Tony Barrett produced an evening of live theater under the tent in the Village. The Equity Theater production of *Friends Like These*



Theatre Neo

was absolutely time well spent—a hilarious play by Tom Dulack that giddily skewered "friends" behaving badly. It was directed by the talented Chris Hart and brought Donna Mills back to Mammoth.