

DINING GUIDE
SEE INSIDE FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS

THE BAR D CHUCKWAGON EXPERIENCE
LEGENDARY CHUCKWAGON SUPPER & WESTERN SHOW

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM
LEAVE THE FLOWERS, TAKE THE MEMORIES

DURANGO

Magazine

FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE DURANGO

SUMMER / FALL 2023
EST. 1986



DURANGO BOTANIC GARDENS
VISIT & TOUR THE GARDENS

DAVID YARROW
GAUGES SUCCESS & THE POWER
OF STORYTELLING

DURANGO TO CORTEZ
A PRIMER ON TOURING FOR FUN,
ADVENTURE & HISTORY



Heidi Chowden

YARROW

GAUGES SUCCESS & THE POWER OF STORYTELLING AT SORREL SKY GALLERY

by Joy Martin

On the coldest morning of the year, dawn softened the charcoal swirls rising from #481's smokestack. A bewhiskered cowboy held the reins of a horse in one hand and a shotgun in the other. The world's highest-paid supermodel dared onlookers in her frost-kissed fur coat, her devious brows flickering toward the staged train robbery. Photographer David Yarrow knelt on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad tracks, snow crunching underfoot, one eye closed, and trigger finger clicking wildly.

"The weather moves around so much this time of year that you just have to take the rough with the smooth," Yarrow said, his gravelly Scottish accent rumbling with aplomb. "I like to think snow gives you an added narrative for free."

At \$100,000 per day for the two-day shoot in Durango, "free," winter weather is the unsung hero that makes Colorado one of Yarrow's most significant markets worldwide; he sold more than \$15 million of art in Colorado in 2022 alone.

"People from Colorado don't want to buy pictures of Greece, Turkey, or even Montana," Yarrow said. "They want their box canyons, their peaks, their people."

Yarrow first shot in Durango in February 2021, drawn initially by the region's brazenly photogenic mountains, a classic train, and a (mostly) reliable airport. During that trip, he also connected with Shanan Campbell, owner of Sorrel Sky Gallery in downtown Durango. Campbell is a distinguished art consultant with a 30-year resume that features clients ranging from the Smithsonian Institution to the Franklin Mint. Her galleries, Sorrel Sky and Sorrel Sky Santa Fe, represent more than 100 artists who specialize in fine art, sculpture, and jewelry.

"I'm a hard woman to impress," Campbell said. "We get hundreds of artist submissions yearly, and I might take one. When David first contacted me, I told him we're not a photography gallery. But he's persistent; he invited me to a photoshoot."

Campbell accepted his offer and arrived at the Diamond Belle Saloon expecting to meet a charming man with a camera. The rest - the green room, supermodel dressing rooms, and collection of old Western costumes - was mind-boggling.

"It was like walking onto a movie set," Campbell said. "Him



Heidi Chowden

managing all those characters and positioning them in the right places with the right stances...The whole concept and juxtaposition of rough-and-tumble characters with eye patches next to these gorgeous, polished supermodels, and then the wolves; I was blown away by the magnitude of the production."

Campbell needed no further persuasion. Sorrel Sky Gallery would not only represent Yarrow's work; in early 2023, Campbell added 50% more display space to the 21-year-old gallery to accommodate his larger-than-life photographs.

"We work hard to bring his work justice," she said. "He requires a lot of square footage to really tell these stories."

"It's all about telling stories," Yarrow said. "With photography, you have to tell a story in

a split second, so I try to cram as much into an image as possible. I want something for everyone to look at, a frame with enough going on so people can immerse themselves and find their own story."

Yarrow learned this core value behind his craft on the field of Mexico City's Estadio Azteca during the 1986 World Cup final. More than two million people filled the arena as Argentina celebrated beating West Germany 3-2. The wide-angle image Yarrow snapped of Diego Maradona basking in the historic moment is published more than all of Yarrow's other photos combined.

Nearly 40 years later, Yarrow's kaleidoscopic portfolio includes powerful portraits of wildlife in their natural and not-so-natural habitats. He's waited in the frigid waters off the coast of South Africa for 30 hours to capture a great white shark taking down a seal. He's posted up in snowfields while bison stampeded straight for the camera. He's followed mustangs around the plains and gazed through the lens at the world's largest elephants, lions, tigers, and bears. His recent projects bring endangered predators indoors to mingle with beautiful women in Yarrow's favorite environment: seedy saloons from yesteryear.

Yarrow pointed out that planning these complex narratives, scouting locations, and identifying local talent isn't possible without behind-the-lens input from his dedicated posse. When Yarrow finds a person he works well with, whether they are a professional model or a distinctive face, that subject becomes a permanent muse for his projects. Nowadays, his entourage rolls



at least 40 deep, with folks flying in from all over the world to join the photographer at exotic destinations, from Iceland to the West Indies and all the wild, wind-scraped landscapes between.

“They’re a mad group of characters I thoroughly enjoy working with,” Yarrow said. “We’re all just normal people having a laugh.”

While in Durango, the motley crew stayed at the Strater Hotel, capping off the long workdays with whiskey lowballs at the Diamond Belle. Lodging, transportation, and logistics calculate to a \$200,000 investment for the two-day shoot, much of which goes straight into the coffers of local businesses, restaurants, and services.

“If I fail to take something creative or engaging that day, we won’t have any luck recouping that investment,” Yarrow wrote in his book “Storytelling”. “It is a dynamic that serves to focus the mind, and it hints at why we start exploring creative ideas long before the shoot. Our financial investment is matched and surpassed by our emotional investment.”

Yarrow’s philanthropic passions are part of that emotional investment; his photographs have raised more than \$11 million for charities since 2017. All proceeds from “Storytelling” benefit pediatric cancer patients and research. The book and 30 of Yarrow’s most famous images are on sale at Sorrel Sky.

“He’s the most successful photographer in the world, but he’s so much more than a photographer; he’s a brilliant artist and

storyteller,” Campbell said. “It’s rare in a true sea of artists when one stands out with something really interesting.”

After the February 2023 photoshoot in Rockwood Canyon on the car ride back to the Strater, Yarrow scrolled through the morning’s frames, a line resembling a smile flirting with the edges of his mouth. For the moment, he was satisfied.

“I’m not sure people who want to be artists are tough enough on themselves,” Yarrow reflected. “I’m tough on myself because there is no permanency in market leadership; the permanency will only come through hard work. I don’t care about the picture I took last week; I care about the pictures I’ll take next week.”

While Yarrow relished the temporary triumph, his 19-year-old son and production manager, Cameron, juggled two phones, already focused on logistics for the next photo shoot at St. Moritz in Switzerland, where they’d fly the following morning.

“It’s been an intense 15 years,” Yarrow said. “I really got going [with photography] when I was around 40. I knew I had to hurry. I always want to get better, look for new ideas, and make sure I don’t bore people. I don’t think I’ve found success for those reasons. I once heard someone say that he measured success by whether his adult children wanted to hang out with him. I’d say, for me, that resonates.”

To view Yarrow’s work and purchase a copy of “Storytelling”, visit Sorrel Sky Gallery in downtown Durango at 828 Main Avenue. 📍

WORLD-RENOWNED PHOTOGRAPHER
DAVID YARROW



"Parts Unknown" | Available in Standard or Large

*Sorrel*Sky*
GALLERY

Durango, CO | 970.247.3555 * Santa Fe, NM | 505.501.6555 * www.SorrelSky.com

