

Neon Desert lit up downtown El Paso

Viridiana Villa
Tejano Tribune

With a combination of national, international and local artists from diverse musical genres the Neon Desert Festival has brought a new musical experience to our border community.

Last Saturday May 25, the downtown streets will hosted 5 stages, 28 artists, local food and art vendors in order to receive thousands of music lovers for its third consecutive year.

The 11-hour festival provided 34 acts with a wide variety of music genres from indie rock, to latin and electronic music.

Some of the artists included Mexican rock band Molotov, Interpol member Paul Banks, Latin Grammy Award Winner Carla Morrison, DJ Martin Solveig and local talent like Bosnian Rainbows and The Royalty.

True to the eclecticism of the festival, crowd's reactions to their favorite performers varied from stage to stage.

From mosh pit fights breaking out at Molotov's set, to the high-waisted, hat-clad hipsters who watched and sang along with Best Coast's set, to the Martin Solveig-inspired fist pumping, the festival did not lack in energy.

Unpredictable events also took place, such as a wedding proposal at the middle of Molotov's show, Teri Gender Bender from Bosnian Rainbows crowd surfing, Nortec Collective exchanging garments with the public, and Carla Morrison performing despite health issues that led to a hospital visit before finishing her following concert at Austin.

In its third year, Neon Desert Music Festival proved to attract El Pasoans, Juarenses and even out-of-towners with its varied lineup and economical ticket pricing, all key aspects of a seminal music festival.

In an interview for the Tejano Tribune Zach W. Paul, organizer of the Neon Desert tells more about the foundation of the music festival.

"There wasn't a mu-



Latin Grammy award winner Carla Morrison performing at the Budweiser stage of the Neon Desert Music Festival in Downtown El Paso.

Photos by Viridiana Villa



Best Coast performing at the Splendid Sun Stage.



Carla Morrison fans watch her performance at the Budweiser stage.

sic festival within a 500 mile radius of El Paso. We wanted to bring more attention to downtown El Paso because of its beauty, history and culture."

Zach is a 4th generation El Pasoan, graduated from Coronado High School in 1999, went to Texas Tech and has lived in San Diego, Denver, Connecticut and now Aus-

tin.

Besides being one of the main organizers of the Neon Desert, his main job is in television working for ESPN.

The first Neon Desert took place back in 2011 but its first conception was in 2009.

"[The Neon Desert project] began in Novem-

ber of '09. My partners, also El Pasoans, wanted to put on a festival in El Paso since there was not one there currently there with our genres of music." He said

"We knew people in El Paso, Juarez, Las Cruces and all the surrounding cities would support it."

According to Zach, the

artists' selection process begins with a long list of prospects and the Neon Desert team decides as a group who they want to go after.

"We book latin, indie, electronic and rock music and we go after the bands that we can afford and the bands that are available."

Some of the plans for

the future of the Neon Desert include turning the festival into a two-day fest.

"As long as people keep supporting it we will continue to work hard and make sure that it is here for years to come." said Zach

Contributions by
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