# **NEW YEARS EVE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS**

Wednesday, December 31st | At Historic Downtown Monterey | 3:00 PM - MIDNIGHT

# FIRST NiGHT MONTEREY 2026



2 Finales to the New Year! 9 hours of creative and joyful music and art!

# **BUTTONS ON SALE AT:**

Safeway Inc: All Monterey County Stores Andronico's Market, Pacific Grove



Official First Night Monterey Program Guide Published by Monterey County Weekly Program guide is subject to change



Visit for additional info. www.firstnightmonterey.org © Maria Ruiz, CSUMB Publication Design Class, 2025





# YOUR NEW YEAR STARTS THERE IN HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MONTEREY!



Welcome to a night where creativity, community, and celebration come alive! First Night Monterey fills nine unforgettable hours with music, art, dance, and joy as we welcome the New Year together. From jazz and rock to world rhythms, lion dancers, and dazzling fire performances, every corner of downtown will be transformed into a festive canvas of expression. - Ellen Martin and the Board of Directors

# YOUR FIRST NIGHT — PLAN AHEAD FOR FUN!

Make the most of your celebration by planning your night with this guide. Flip to pages 4–5 for the full schedule grid by time and location, and page 6 onward for an alphabetical performer listing. Mix and match your favorite artists, explore new styles, and build the perfect path through the evening. Give yourself a little extra time to move between venues!



## **GETTING TO FIRST NIGHT**

First Night Monterey buses are FREE thanks to the generosity of MST!

- + Park your car at the Del Monte Shopping Center near the back of Macy's.
- FREE buses will pick you up at the bus stop in front of Macy's every 15 minutes beginning at 3:00pm and take you downtown to the Bus Transit Center, Alvarado at Pearl.
- + Catch the bus back to the Del Monte Center at the Transit Center until 12:30am
- → SAFETY FIRST Please leave large purses, backpacks, and oversized bags at home. First Night Monterey is supported by Monterey Police Department officers stationed throughout the event for everyone's safety.
- RESTROOMS Most indoor venues offer public restrooms.
   City parking lot restrooms remain open until 10:00 PM.
   Portable facilities are also available near Wells Fargo Bank at Franklin & Alvarado. Check the map for exact locations.
- + SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES Accessible parking is available in all city parking lots and garages.
- → FOOD AND DRINK Visit the First Night Food Court on Alvarado Street between Franklin and Del Monte Streets. A variety of yummy food to take & go!
- ◆ LOST & FOUND Command Center at the FNM Kiosk in the plaza near the Monterey Conference Center. First Night is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- WEATHER Rain or shine, First Night Monterey will joyfully proceed regardless of weather. 85% of First Night venues are indoors! Dress in layers and comfortable shoes.
- OTHER Stroller space is limited. Bicycles are not permitted inside the venues; please walk bikes inside the FNM footprint.

# THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

To all the **volunteers** who give their time and spirit to First Night Monterey—**thank you!** This celebration shines because of your commitment. *Our community gathers, joy fills the streets, and the arts come alive thanks to you.* 

# **OPENING CEREMONY FREE!**

Join us in the Serra Ballroom as we kick off the Kids' Night Out and our New Year's Eve Celebration!

#### **TWILIGHT PROCESSION**

At 5:30 PM, our Twilight Procession lights up Alvarado Street, moving from Franklin Street toward Pearl Street. Line the sidewalks, cheer on our community groups, and feel the energy as artists, dancers, families, and friends kick off the evening together!

# FINALE TO THE NEW YEAR—COUNTDOWN TO MIDNIGHT

This year, we're excited to offer two indoor finales! Button-holders can pick up a free finale ticket at the Portola Plaza ticket booth beginning at 8:00 PM. Tickets are first come, first served—look for the signs. Both your 2026 First Night button and your finale ticket are required for entry to our countdown celebrations.

#### THE GRAND FINALE!

The grand finale! Live music from featured performers will bring us into the New Year with a countdown to midnight! Special surprise guests may be dropping in to join the band - you never know what might happen at a First Night finale! **Wrockinfoose** will play at the Golden State Theater, and **Everyday People** will be in the Serra Ballroom at the Monterey Conference Center. You can guarantee a fun and exciting time into the New Year!

# FIRST NIGHT \* \* \* \* \* MONTEREY BUTTONS Buy your buttons before New Year's Eve & save!

Buttons give you access to all indoor events and performances at First Night Monterey in J. Historic Downtown Monterey.

#### **ADULT BUTTONS (16+)**

\$32 Advance Purchase Price (Dec.15-30)

\$35 Full Price (Day of Celebration, available at Event Kiosks)

## **YOUTH BUTTONS (AGES 6 TO 15)**

\$18 Advance Purchase Price (Dec.15-30)

\$20 Full Price (Day of Celebration, available at Event Kiosks)

#### Children 5 and under are admitted FREE!

Purchase online at www.firstnightmonterey.org before 12/28 to secure advance pricing.



### FIRST NIGHT MERCHANDISE

Shine bright tonight! Pick up glow-in-the-dark goodies and other fun items at our merchandise booth. Every purchase helps fund First Night Monterey's community arts programs.



#### **OUTDOOR VENUES**

- 5 Monterey Firefighters
- 7 Galleria Álvarado St.
- **8** Just Sing & Dance Stage **8A** Resolution Venue, Alvarado St.
- 8B Sunset Center Make and Take!
- 9 Bonifacio Stage, Alvarado St.
- Selfie Spot, Alvarado St.Franklin St. Stage, Alvarado St.
- 4 Illumination Stage, Alvarado St.

#### **INDOOR VENUES**

- **1-4** Kids Night Out Monterey Conference Center
- 11 Golden State Theater
- **15** Monterey Center for Spiritual Living
- **18-23** Monterey Conference Center: Serra Ballroom, Serra Lobby, Steinbeck 1, Steinbeck 3, Stevenson 2

#### **EVENT KIOSKS & FOOD**

- 6 FNM Buttons & Merch Kiosk
- **13** Food Vendors
- 16 FNM Buttons & Merch Kiosk
- 17 Will Call until 8pm, at 16 after 8pm



WEDNESDAY

DECEMBER 31, 2025

3:00 PM - MIDNIGHT
AT HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MONTEREY

# FIRST NIGHT MONTEREY 2026

NEW YEARS EVE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS

	istoric bowntown monterer						01 11127	<u></u>				9)		
9	Site # Venue Name Inside Outside Klosk	3:30 3:45 4:30 4:45	5:15	5:30 to 6:00	KEY:	G 5 1				, –	· Fino-	A SUBHT		
	KIDS' NIGHT OUT IN THE MONTEREY CONFERENCE CENTER! FREE TO ALL 3-5PM				Rock, Blues, R&B Indie/Rap	R&B INDICATE DULLUM OD: TOT U MINUTALITY TEUL S EV								
,	1 Serra Ballroom, Conference Center	Indian Council Mugen Daiko White Hawk Indian Council Mugen Daiko White Haw Indian Council Mugen Daiko White Haw	K .	*	Americana/ Country/Folk Jazz/Latin	celehrat	ion with 9	Hours o	f musi	c art and	BAXXXXX		3	
*	2 Serra Ballroom, Conference Center	Bubble Stomp			Dance/ Performance World Music		Finales **				11 12 1E SE	7 6	5	
	3 Art Station 1, Serra Lobbby, Conf Ctr	Celebration Hats ★ New Year's Crowns			Activities	9	0	(A*						
2	4 Art Station 2, Serra Lobby, Conf Ctr	Carmel Sunset Rotary Drum Making  Monterey Fire Fighters												
1	5 Monterey Firefighters	Hot Chocolate and NY	E Cheer!	1	6:30	7:36	8:13	9:15	10:00	10:12	11:12	11:4	1 ZIMI	
7-	SS Shuttle Stop, Munras St at Alvarado St.	op, Munras St at Alvarado St.  Park FREE at DelMonte Center and Ride the Shuttle to FNM  Buttons & Merchandise			Park FREE at DelMonte Center and Ride the Shuttle to FNM – Last Return Bus at 12:30am									
<b>+</b>	6 FNM KIOSK Alvarado St at Pearl	Buttons & Mer NYE Light		l ī		Merchandise - NYE Light U							*	
	7 Galleria, Alvarado Street				White Hawk M B Healing Tao Indian Council MPC Taiji Qigo		DiFranco Dance Project	Monterey Bay Lion Dance	Monterey Bay Lion Dance	Monterey Bay Lion Dance			*	
	8 Just Sing & Dance Stage, Alvarado St.	Buy Buttons		<b>.</b>		Just Sing and Dance Like	e Its 2026!!! Karaoke				LIOUP			
	8A 2026 Resolution Venue, Alvarado St.	Safeway - all Monterey County Store Andronico's - Monterey	es	n		Color Your New Year's Ro					Pick up your Finale Ticket	; <b>5</b>		
J.	8B Sunset Center Make and Take!	Grove Market - Pacific Grove		T	Sunset Center's Marjorie Evans Ga	An Interactive Art Experience: allery presents local artist Johan		pting			Finale Ticker at the Plaza Kin after 8pm	JSK	Δ	
+	9 Bonifacio Stage, Alvarado Street	Online at www.firstnightmonterey.or	9	_	Zach Frietas Band	Zach Frietas Band		Al James Band	Al Ja	ames Band	Ol go.		P	
	10 FNM 2026 Selfie Spot, Alvarado St.	Family Pack Special Offer Available online only before 12/28			Selfie Backdrop First Night Monterey 2026 – Take A Selfie!								P	
6	11 Golden State Theatre			R		Bad Machine	Bad Machine	Bad Machine		Wrockinfoose	Wrockinf FINALE		У	
	12 Franklin St Stage, Alvarado Street	So. County HS Rock Band		0	So. County HS Rock Band	Drum Circle Asl	he Ensemble Drum Circle	Ashe Ensemble	Drum Circle Ashe	e Ensemble				
7	13 FOOD COURT Alvarado Street	Food Vendor	Food Vendors  E											
3	14 Illumination Art Stage, Alvarado St	, AT		E		hpoint Fire Show	Flashpoint	Fire Show	Flashpo	oint Fire Show		1	W	
	15 Monterey Center for Spiritual Living			S	Stu Reynolds Saxtet		eynolds Kevin C extet Quar			Kevin O'Neal Quartet				
•	16 FNM KIOSK Del Monte Plaza	Buttons & Merchandise - NYE Light Ups			Buttons & Merchandise - NYE Light Ups									
17	17 WILL CALL Conference Ctr Lobby	WILL CALL		1	WILL CALL Conf. Ctr. Lobby until 8pm; Mo								E	
D-	18 Serra Ballroom, Conference Center					Sou	uthBound 101	SouthBound 101		Everyday People	Everyday F FINALE		R	
2	19 Serra Lobby Art Station 1, Conf. Center	December Debeile ab			Celebration F	Celebration Hats ★ New Year's Crowns ★ Make a Resolution							1	
4	20 Serra Lobby Art Station 2, Conf. Center	Program Details at www.firstnightmonterey.org		N	Carmel Sunset Rotary Drum Mal									
	21 Steinbeck 1, Conference Center				Brice Albert	Brice Albert Brice	la Pearl & Singing	Wood Singing	Wood	Singing Wood		180 D	*	
1	22 Steinbeck 3, Conference Center		7	*	Grumbling Ginger		mbling Black	Irish Black	Irish	Black Irish			*	
*+	23 Stevenson 2, Conference Center	FNM Event Office   Volunteer Check-in			Brice Albert Brice Albert Brice Albert Singing Wood Singin Singing Wood Singing Wood Singing Wood Singing Wood Singing Woo									
	Site # Venue Name Inside Outside FNM Kiosk	3:15 3:45 4:10 4:45	5:00	5:30 to 6:00	6:30 6:45 7:15	7:45	8:30	9:15	10:00	10:30	11:15	11:45	12Min	
	* 1 34 + 3	1 + 2	<i>□</i> *	6	* 6 + M	2	+	+	2	M		6		

# **EVENING PERFORMING ARTS**

# **EN=ENTERTAINMENT | CO=COUNTRY**

AM=AMERICANA | DA=DANCE | IND=INDIE/ROCK | JZ=JAZZ/LATIN | RB=BLUES/R&B | WM=WORLD MUSIC



# Al James Band | RB

Site 9: Bonifacio Stage, Alvarado St 9:00-9:45 | 10:00-10:45

Singer, guitarist, and composer Al James from Seaside delivers a rootsy, soulful sound inspired by Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Wonder. Backed by a stellar band, his unique compositions and vibrant stage energy captivate every audience.



# Ashe Ensemble | WM

\*\*NEW TO FNM\*\*

Site 12: World Stage, Alvarado Street 8:00-8:45 | 9:00-9:45 | 10:00-10:45

Ashe Ensemble, led by Jayson Fann, brings together a world-class group of musicians and dancers who blend African rhythms, soul, jazz, Brazilian and Afro-beat traditions, Caribbean influences, and spoken word with powerful, expressive dance.



# Bad Machine | IND

\*\*NEW TO FNM\*\*

Site 11: Golden State Theater 7:45-8:15 | 8:30-9:00 | 9:15-9:45

Bad Machine brings rock back to the throne-loud, fearless, and built to shake foundations. Brazilian-born guitar powerhouse Joao Brandi leads the charge with explosive, arena-ready riffs.



## Black Irish Band | AM Site 22: Steinbeck 3, Monterey **Conference Center**

8:45-9:15 | 9:30-10:00 | 10:15-10:45

Black Irish Band has been performing for 34 years and recorded 27 albums. As First Night Monterey's longest-running act, they draw happy crowds with their fun, spirited music that entertains and educates. Their repertoire includes original and traditional Celtic, Maritime sea shanties, and Americana.



### Di Franco Dance Project | DA Site 7: Alvarado Street Galleria 7:30-8:00 | 8:15-8:45

The DiFranco DanceProject will present an energetic. fun and eclectic program of dance, based upon a variety of cultural influences; American Jazz, African, Latin, Caribbean, and even Celtic. Featuring youth and young adult dancers from Dianne Lyle's Afro-Latin Jazz classes at the Pacific Grove Recreation Department.



### Everyday People | JZ RB \*\*NEW TO FNM\*\*

Site 18: Serra Ballroom, Monterey **Conference Center** 

10:15-11:00 | 11:15-Midnight

Everyday People is an electrifying 11-piece band based in Salinas, delivering a vibrant and powerful musical experience that bridges generations and celebrates diverse styles. Their setlist moves seamlessly from the soulful vibes of Evelyn "Champagne" King to the rich rhythms of Buena Vista Social Club and the iconic sound of Lydia Pense & Cold Blood.



# Flashpoint Fire Show | EN

Site 14: Alvarado St. Illumination Art 7:30-8:00 | 8:45-9:15 | 10:00-10:30

The Flashpoint Fire Show is a cutting-edge, must-see spectacle! Watch talented fire dancers perform elegant maneuvers to exciting music, bringing light and magic to First Night Monterey with an unforgettable performance.



# Grumbling Ginger | AM Site 22: Steinbeck 3, Monterey

**Conference Center** 6:30-7:00 | 7:15-7:45 | 8:00-8:30

This group recreates the atmosphere of a British folk club; with songs, storytelling, and humor and has been described by the press as "indie folk-rock with a Celtic twist."



# Kevin O'Neal Quartet | JZ

\*\*NEW TO FNM\*\*

Site 15: Monterey Center for Spiritual Living

8:45-9:15 | 9:30-10 | 10:15-10:45 Kevin O'Neal is a Grammy winning bassist, composer, producer and educator. His credits include multiple films, along with recordings and performances with Outkast, LaVern Baker, Nnenna Freelon, Solomon Burke, Tracy Chapman, Barry Harris, Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis Jr., and as a solo artist.





# Miranda Perl & Brice Albert | JZ

\*\*NEW TO FNM\*\* Site 21: Steinbeck 1, Monterey **Conference Center** 

6:30-7:00 | 7:15-7:45 | 8:00-8:30

Miranda and guitarist Brice Albert (also a MJF alum) perform the best of the American Songbook, featuring fresh takes on jazz standards, and classic hits from legendary artists Stevie Wonder, the Beatles, and more.



# Monterey Bay Lion Dance Team | DA Site 7: Alvarado Street Galleria 9:00-9:30 | 9:45-10:15 | 10:30-11:00

Celebrate the New Year with traditional Chinese lion dancing, featuring martial postures and rhythmic drums, cymbals, and gongs. The Lucky Lion and Happy Buddha symbolize life, humanity, and good fortune, bringing prosperity for the year ahead.



# **Monterey Bay Healing Tao &** MPC TAaiji Qigong | DA

Site 7: Galleria, Alvarado Street

Times: 6:45-7:30

More than just physical exercise or a fitness routine, MPC Taiji Qigong students perform a short, early-form Yang-style seguence known as Taiji Qigong I.



# Shinsho-Mugen Daiko | W

Site 1: Serra Ballroom, Monterey **Conference Center** 

3:15-3:45 | 4:00-4:45

Experience the power and precision of Shinsho-Mugen Daiko, a Taiko drumming group founded in 1999. Combining traditional Japanese drumming with martial arts elements, Taiko—meaning "big drum"—has long been featured in festivals, religious rituals, and orchestras of the Imperial Palace.



# **South Monterey County High** School District Rock Bands | IND

\*\*NEW TO FNM\*\*

Site 12: Franklin Street Stage

5:00-5:30 | 6:15- 6:30

This South Monterey County High School District band brings a blend of '90s grunge grit and fresh pop rock. Rock fans can enjoy performances by these talented young artists from King City High School.



# Singing Wood Marimba | WM

Site 21: Steinbeck 1

8:45-9:15 | 9:30-10:00 | 10:15-10:45

Singing Wood plays the Shona style of marimba. This music offers exceptional melodic and polyrhythmic variety, from the very simple to the extremely complex, and its ancient spiritual roots strike common chords in all people who are open to it.



# Southbound 101 | CO

Site 18: Serra Ballroom, Monterey **Conference Center** 8:00-8:45 | 9:00-9:45

Get ready for high-energy country hits guaranteed to keep the dance floor buzzing all night long. Formed in early 2020, Southbound 101 unites some of the Bay Area's finest country musicians, each bringing a wealth of talent and a deep love for the genre.

# **EVENING PERFORMING ARTS**



# Stu Reynolds Saxtet | JZ

\*\*NEW TO FNM\*\*

Site 15: Monterey Center for Spiritual Living 6:30-7:00 | 7:15-7:45 | 8:00-8:30

Stu Reynolds brings over 50 years of jazz experience to the stage, playing various saxophones and clarinets. The 'Saxtet' presents their interpretation of well loved jazz standards & original compositions.



# White Hawk | DA

Site 1: Serra Ballroom, Conference Center 3:00-3:15 | 3:45-4:00 (Open to All) Site 7: Alvarado Street Galleria 6:15-6:45 pm

White Hawk seeks to provide safe environments where youth can develop trust, to enhance the quality of life within their families and community and to develop a spiritual awareness through participation in traditional ceremonies and cultural arts.



# Wrockinfoose | RB IND

\*\*NEW TO FNM\*\*

Site 11: Golden State Theater 10:15-11:00 | 11:15-Midnight

Wrockinfoose delivers a unique blend of original music and obscure covers, with sounds that are genrebending yet deeply rooted in American traditions. Band includes musicians Luca Fredericksen, Sam Nilsson, Joe Johnsson, Mike Shannon, Paul Tarantino, Brian Stock.



# Zack Freitas | IND

\*\*NEW TO FNM\*\*

Site 9: Bonifacio Stage, Alvarado Street 6:30-7:00 | 7:15-7:45 | 8:00-8:30

An indie alt-rock powerhouse; the grit of Nirvana and Foo Fighters with a modern, introspective edge. His guitar-driven anthems explode with distorted riffs, melodic hooks, and lyrics that unpack heartbreak, mental battles, and the wild ride of life on the road.

# **BUY BUTTONS TO ACCESS ALL THE FUN!**



THANK YOU TO OUR SPON



























MONTAGE





# **VENUE HOSTS**

City of Monterey, Del Monte Center, Golden State Theatre, Monterey Center for Spiritual Living - Carleton Hall, Monterey Conference Center

# SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR **OUTREACH FUNDERS**

Harden Foundation, Monterey Peninsula Foundation, The Arts Council for Monterey County, Yellow Brick Road, The City of Greenfield, Pebble Beach Foundation

## THANKS TO OUR BUSINESS CONTRIBUTORS TO FIRST NIGHT

Starbucks, Safeway, Costco, Red's Donuts, Cardinale Moving, Grocery Outlet.

## THANKS TO YOU WHO BOUGHT A BUTTON!

Your purchase directly contributes to the performing and visual arts fees for the activities you enjoyed at this year's celebration. And the local retailers who sell them- Monterey County Safeway stores, Andronico's, and Grove Market.

# **KIDS' NIGHT OUT 2026!**

# CELEBRATION HATS / NEW YEAR'S EVE CROWNS

Site 3: Serra Lobby Stn1, Conference Ctr. 3:15-5:00 (Free Activity) Site 19: Serra Lobby Stn 1, Conference Ctr.

6:30-9:15 (Button Venue)

Creativity and fun go hand in hand at First Night! Create your own festive New Year's top hat by transforming a paper grocery bag with tulle, beads, pipe cleaners, and imaginative details. A joyful, allages activity that adds instant First Night Style.

#### **PAINT IT! COLOR YOUR RESOLUTION**

Site 8A: Alvarado Street 6:15–10:00 (Free Activity)

A collaborative public art project where First Night participants paint a shared art wall with vibrant images and inspiring words—color your resolution.

#### **BUBBLE STOMP**

Site 2: Serra Ballroom, Conference Ctr 3:30–5:00 PM(Free Activity)

Who can resist squishing and twisting bubble wrap? Jump, hop, stomp, do the electric slide or break dance your way to popping every single bubble!

#### **DRUM MAKING EXPERIENCE** WITH CARMEL SUNSET ROTARY

Site 4: Serra Lobby Stn 2, Conference Ctr. 3:30-4:45 (Free Activity)

Site 20: Serra Lobby Stn2, Conference Ctr. 6:15-7:30 (Button Venue)

Carmel Sunset Rotary has got the beat! Join them to create colorful, one-of-a-kind drums-then grab your rhythm and jump right into the First Night fun!

#### INTERACTIVE ART EXPERIENCE WITH SUNSET CENTER

Site 8B: Sunset Center Make & Take, **Alvarado Street** 

6:15-9:15 (Free Activity)

Sunset Centers Marjorie Evans Gallery presents "We've Got The Beat: Flowers Are the Music of the Earth"

- Seed Pod Sculpting Hands-On All Ages
   Shape clay Shape hope
   Shape the New Year

Join local ceramic artist Johanna Keefe and a team of Sunset Center volunteers for a hands-on creative experience. Sculpt a one-of-a-kind clay seed pod to take home and plant—an artwork that grows

IN MEMORIAM - Sunny McCauley was a passionate supporter of First Night Monterey whose warmth, creativity, and generosity helped shape the spirit of the celebration. Her belief in the power of the arts to bring community together continues to inspire our work and lives on through First Night. Sunny was the first volunteer, the first admin staff and first in the lives of many at First Night.

# A landmark hospital. And so much more.



Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula is the beating heart of Montage Health. Today, we're much more than a hospital. We're urgent care centers, wellness centers, primary care doctors, health insurance plans, and a groundbreaking mental health program for youth.

Through it all, we remain an independent, nonprofit healthcare organization. Locally owned. And accountable only to the communities we serve.



montagehealth.org

**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026!**