



Crafting Community photos

VACATION

CRAFTING FAMILY TIME

Palm Springs getaway is like a maker camp for parents, kids lead by top design bloggers

By Chantal Lamers

The customary family sojourn received a modern makeover seven years ago when Los Angeles artist Karen Kimmel started Crafting Community at the Ace Hotel and Swim Club in Palm Springs. The whimsical weekend retreat for artsy clans to unplug, play, craft and reconnect has now swelled from just handful of friends to roughly 150 families, including some of the coolest designers and influencers from San Francisco to Brooklyn.

The concept of the art and recreation experience is simple: Among an inspiring backdrop of soaring palms, bright bougainvillea and desert mountains, curate a colorful event chock-full of art supplies, communal poolside meals, sunrise yoga and desert disco. Then, under the direction of some of the brightest bloggers and makers, allow families a rare opportunity to immerse themselves in a thoughtful collection of modern art projects.

"Crafting has always just been the vehicle for our larger goal of infusing creativity into the everyday lives of families," says Kimmel, the event's creative director. (Kimmel has also organized workshops for Creative Growth in Oakland, which serves adult artists with disabilities.) "We firmly believe that aesthetics aren't lost on kids, so we brought in our talented friends from the art and design worlds to collaborate on crafts that engage the parents and children equally."

San Francisco artist and founder of Yellow Owl Workshop Christine Schmidt is among eight or so artisans teaching classes when Crafting Community returns to the Ace Hotel May 1-2. "I teach a lot of classes to either adults or kids, and this is my favorite event, because it allows parents and kids to learn together," says Schmidt, who'll demonstrate how to design and carve rubber stamps, along with basic relief printmaking.

"Despite the fact my studio and house are littered with art materials, we need this time to make things together," says Schmidt, who hopes to be joined by husband Evan Gross and 3-year-old daughter, Emmy, at this year's event. "Because the logistics — from lodging to meals, events and even fully stocked toy areas — are planned, parents can really be at ease and just enjoy the time without the considerations that make family travel annoying." The time also allows artists



Artisans lead classes at the family-centered getaway where both parents and kids alike can learn to make things together.



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Crafting Community is May 1-2 at the Ace Hotel and Swim Club in Palm Springs. Tickets start at \$1,800 for a family of three and include lodging, meals, crafts recreational activities. www.craftingcommunity.com.

like Schmidt to connect with like-minded makers, an essential component when it comes to building indie brands. This year's lineup of instructors includes designer Justina Blakeney, who created a popular series of foliage face portraits using flowers, leaves and vines, and textile designer Janelle Pietrzak of All Roads, who will teach families to create of-the-moment woven wall hangings.

Then there's the opportunity for artists to interact with customers, clients and Instagram followers, which, for some, tops 100,000. "The community part is not fluff," says Schmidt. "One of the best parts of the weekend is watching peers bond regardless of age."

Jordan Ferney, who writes the design and party blog Oh Happy Day, made the trek from San Francisco to Palm Springs with her family a couple of years ago. She says

she can't think of another vacation environment that fosters a similar experience for families.

"I kept comparing the weekend to a trip to Disneyland," Ferney says. The difference? At Disneyland "you stand in long lines, eat mediocre food and pay a lot of money for the privilege of doing so." She says the art-themed getaway is better for parents and kids. The artists "give some guidance and show examples that set people up for the highest chance for success to make projects that they will actually use and keep."

Stacy Bernstein, a mother of three and Crafting Community chief operations officer, says raising families in dual-working households, with relatives spread across the country, makes it challenging to carve out meaningful family time.

"It's really amazing to see what inspiration can foster between parents and their children when we give them some raw materials, some encouragement, and the gift of time together."

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