

# Art in the Redwoods continues the tradition

The Top Hat Dinner once again kicks off the annual Art in the Redwoods festival (AIR) this year celebrating the 50th anniversary of the show originally designated as an art and garden show. Many of the activities organized in that first event still survive, albeit in different guises.

For example, The Top Hat Dinner is now a gourmet catered affair limited to 100 patrons. The \$150 ticket includes VIP festival pass and a sneak preview of the exhibit; \$100 of the cost is tax deductible. The original food offerings consisted of potluck donations, but over the years more elaborate feasting took place.

Before moving to the current location in August of 1998, AIR celebrated the weekend at one time with an Artists Ball held in the Gualala Hotel with dancing across the street at the now burned down Ocean Song restaurant. In the '80s the dinner was called "Feast and Frolic."

The meal was sometimes in the hotel and sometimes catered in the Community Center. There were al fresco cafes like Le Cafe Foret and Redwood Garden. The Lions Club barbecued at Bower Park and the Renaissance Faire had appropriate menus. Some years the evening concluded with musical presentations and other with dramatic performances. The Top Hat Dinner is carrying on a longstanding tradition.

The Friday Champagne preview from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. costs \$10 and allows participants to view the artwork at a leisurely pace. The award presentations and judges critique will take place at the outdoor amphitheater at 6 p.m. The practice of inviting qualified judges and offering critiques was firmly established by the time AIR returned to the Community Center in the '70s.

One important consideration has remained from the very first show. AIR has always been non-juried and has always encouraged everyone from the beginner to the accomplished master to enter. There was always a Best in Show, Best Local Work and Most Popular award. Many years saw a Young Artists division and in some years a separate showing for students at The Dolphin.

The majority of the entries are from Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, but a number of nearby Marin, Lake and San Francisco Bay Area artists also participate as well as entries from other areas of Northern California and from as far away as Fort Meyers, Florida and Minneapolis.

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# Welcome

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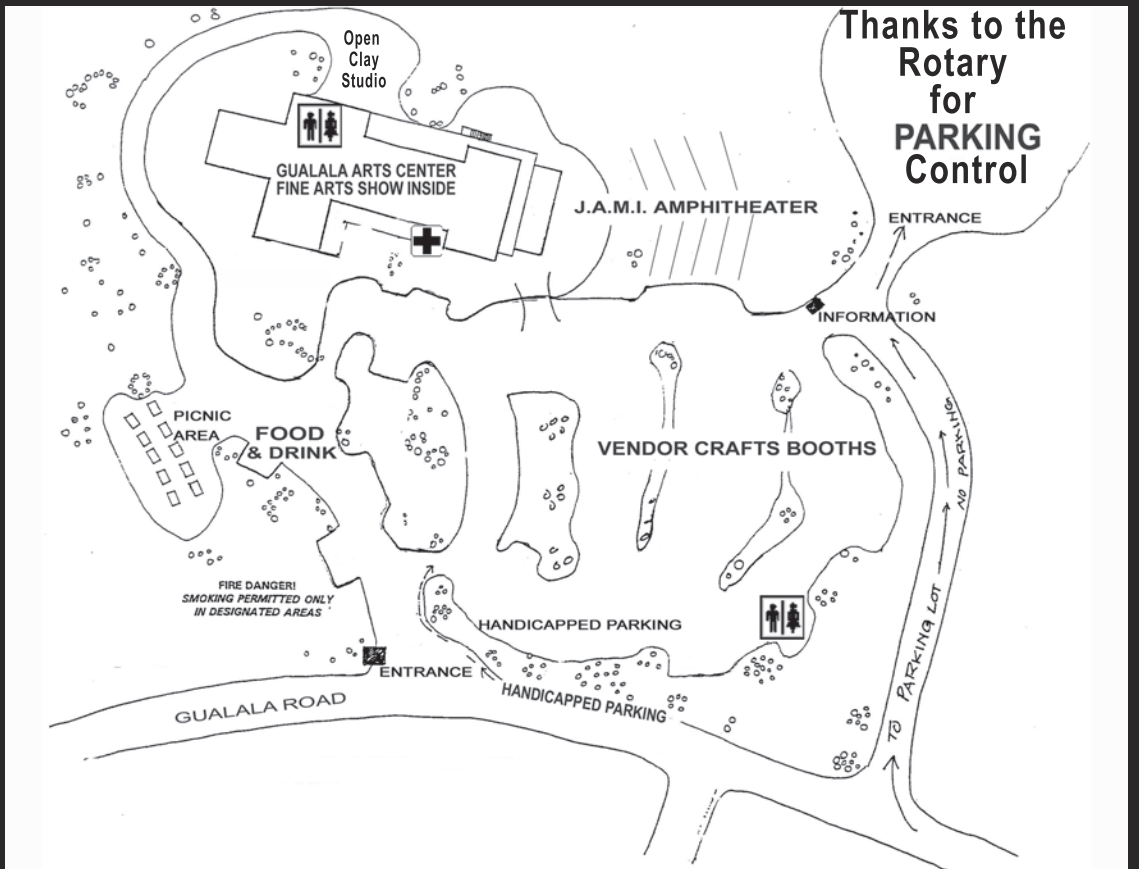
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All photos courtesy Gualala Arts unless otherwise noted.  
1961 cover photo courtesy Betty O'Neil.

**Driving to the Festival**

The Art in the Redwoods Festival is held at Gualala Arts Center, 46501 Gualala Road in Gualala, California. At the south end of Gualala, turn onto Old State Highway. About a quarter mile up turn right and look for a parking attendant to direct you to our expanded parking area.

**Art in the Redwoods**  
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