



BURNING MAN 2005

Imagine a place where strangers coax you into their homes to pamper you and shower you with gifts and treats. All they want in return is to bask in the joy of giving. Could this be a dream? Perhaps, but once a year for one week the collective dream of more than 40,000 people becomes reality in the unforgiving climate of Nevada's Black Rock Desert. Just two hours north of Reno, a utopian Mecca called Black Rock City rises like a phoenix from the talc-like ashes of a dry lake bed called playa. This surreal backdrop of flat, dusty earth and open skies is the site of Burning Man, which takes place the week before Labor day. What is Burning Man? Just imagine Mad Max meets Vegas, a neon-lit adult playground, a cutting edge art space and a stage for radical self-expression, where anything goes and nothing costs money.

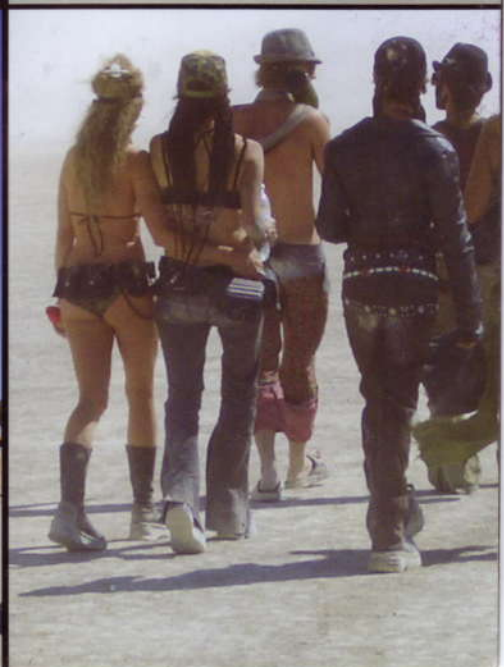
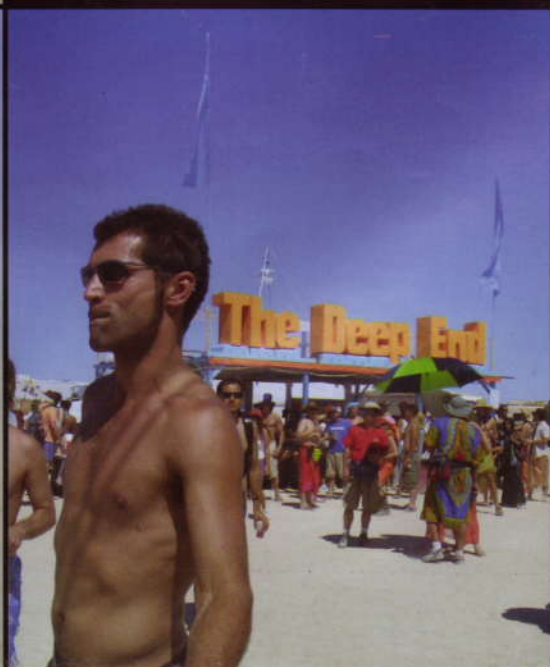
Burning Man rejects commerce and functions as a gift economy. The only things sold are coffee at the Center Camp Café and ice. While you can leave your wallet at home it's no cheap vacation. The average ticket price is \$250 and with camp dues, camping, traveling, and costume expenses it can





add up. But it's an experience money can't buy. People offer massage, Reiki sessions, bike repair, yoga classes, drinks, food, theater, tarot reading, beauty treatments and a bevy of classes for free. They pass out homemade gifts and trinkets on the streets. This is all done in the spirit of participation. Everyone offers something to the playa community. A week is simply not enough to experience all that is offered.

This environment is not for everyone. Low humidity, the punishing sun and day temperatures between 90 and 100 degrees F threaten to turn people into raisins. But it doesn't stop anyone from riding their bikes around the town (a collection of tents, domes and shade structures) to different theme camps and events. Nor does it keep the alcohol or recreational drugs at bay. Typical attire is short shorts and lingerie for women and skirts and sarongs for men. Many people wear nothing at all. At night the fishnets and fake furs come out as the temperature falls between 30 and 55 degrees F. The sleepy daytime heat gives way to fabulous light displays, bikes decorated with EL wire and parties that would shame Ibiza. And yes, whatever happens at Burning Man stays at Burning Man.





But Burning Man is much more than a party or a peep show. Tolerance, kindness, friendliness and inclusion are supreme virtues shared by almost all. It's like the whole city is on a week-long ecstasy trip. The love and blind acceptance is enough to make any misanthrope think twice. The creativity and work people put into their camps, costumes and art projects boggle the mind. Buses become pirate ships, cars transform into flying carpets and bikes change into camels. Even people become art. A man named Dickie was a living art installation. He spent the week stuck in his glass house, a comment on isolation.

Some gentlemen would say the highlight of Burning Man is the Critical Tits topless bike ride on Friday afternoon, as thousands of women bear their painted chests in a sign of female solidarity. It is not all fun and games though. Burning Man bummers include the hike to the Port-o-Potties (though they are kept very clean), dust that gets into every crack and crevice, and long lines and waiting lists for everything during the holiday weekend.





Burning Man culminates in the burning of "the man" (a large wooden edifice) on Saturday night and a raucous party ensues. Sunday night is the more spiritual temple burn, which this year was built in the style of a Japanese pagoda. Burningman 2005 was marked by mild, uncharacteristically gorgeous weather both day and night and the dust storms were at a minimum. Harsh elements aside, the hardest part of the Burning Man experience is reentry into society. There are many decompression parties in San Francisco to help ease the shock. But the only thing that comforts some burners is the dreams and plans for next year on the playa.

— ANGELA

Editor's Note:

It was hard choosing photos for this article... Burning Man is such a huge universe of creativity, it needs a thousand page bible to justify it. But we did our best to bring you a piece of the experience.



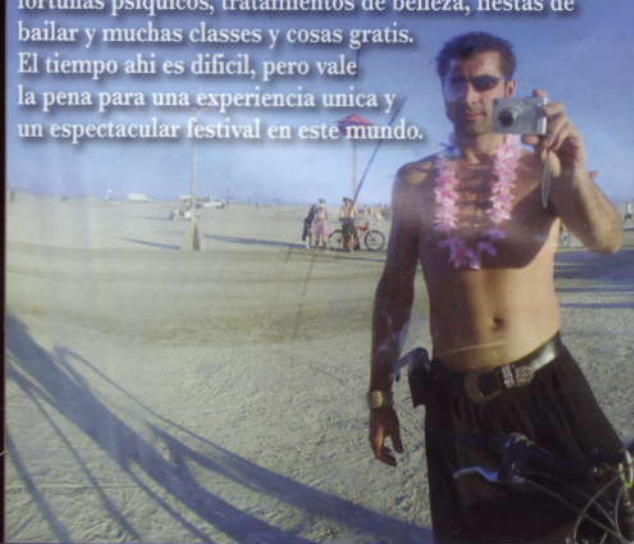
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Burning Man es un festival anual que lo pase en los fines del Agosto en un lago seco y polvoriento en el desierto de Black Rock, dos horas al norte de Reno, Nevada. Aproximadamente 35,000 personas construyeron una ciudad usando tiendas y muchas luces para solamente una semana. Durante el fin de festival todos observan como el hombre gigantesco de madera se quema. El festival consiste de arte, musica, fiestas, disfraces, mucha desnudez, mas luces que Las Vegas, bailarines de fuego, exposiciones y muchas cosas gratis. Despues de pagar \$250 para la entrada, las cosas solamente que son posible comprar es hielo y cafe. Personas ofrecen masaje, arreglar bicicletas, clases de yoga, bebidas, comida, teatro, fortunas psicicos, tratamientos de belleza, fiestas de bailar y muchas clases y cosas gratis. El tiempo ahi es dificil, pero vale la pena para una experiencia unica y un espectacular festival en este mundo.



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