The Crested Butte Center for the Arts will open its new, state-of-the-art home this winter. From its start as a renovated maintenance garage in 1985, the Center has grown from 8,000 attendees that year to over 40,000 attendees in 2018. In the works since 2016, the town of Crested Butte is excited to welcome a brand-new, reimagined Center for the Arts. The Center hosts a gamut of performing, culinary, literary, and visual arts throughout the year.

Crested Butte’s new facility promises cultural enrichment for locals and visitors to the valley alike. The new theater has increased the seating capacity from 200 to 400 which will allow the Center to bring in bigger acts and better performers as well as selling more seats to parents to watch their kid’s dance performances! In addition to performing arts, the Center offers courses and workshops which are curated to immerse participants in an educational experience unrivaled on the Western Slope.

We recently had the opportunity to sit down with Scott Clarkson, marketing director for the Center, to bring you the scoop on Crested Butte's hottest commodity.

**By the Community, for the Community**

It’s no wonder the Center invests in programming to benefit the community. The Center is a product of community teamwork. A reimagined center was simply a dream in 2008. In 2016, the community of Crested Butte came together to launch a fundraising campaign for an all-new Center for the Arts.

The new facility needed to be large enough to meet the desire for multiple art forms within the Crested Butte community. Since then, donations, goods and time flooded to the Center from local residents and business owners, second homeowners and frequent visitors.

**The Center - Unrivaled by none**

The Center for the Arts is truly a hub for the creative sector. Much like the jagged peaks towering over the Valley, the Center’s architecture was thoughtfully designed to resemble the mountain peaks of the West Elk Range. The building’s blue stained siding echoes a Colorado bluebird sky. A copper finish nods to a history of mining nearby. Valley subcontractors were employed in all phases of the building to erect the Center using an impressive 90% local services.

On-site is the Steddy Theater, a brilliant display of architectural mastery. Unlike the classical right-angle walls found in a typical theater, the Steddy features elements of textured bricks pitched at a delicate 3 degrees, elaborate woodwork balconies and curved ceiling panels capture and return sound back to the audience. A cutting-edge surround system by Intel® artfully distributes impeccable sound to the theater’s farthest corners.

**It wasn’t all smooth sailing…**

The Center for the Arts encountered a huge setback when a Belgium warehouse storing the theater’s custom high-tech seating caught on fire. The fire destroyed 400+ seats which were scheduled to be delivered just shy of the Center’s mid-summer opening. Despite a 4-month setback, in true Crested Butte style, life rolled on. Summer events were moved to other venues around town and the Community Celebration stayed on schedule for a ribbon cutting ceremony on July 1.

**Curated with our planet in mind**

The new Center building is proud to hold a highly regarded green building certification, the Leadership in Energy and
Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification. The facility reduces environmental stress by encouraging energy and resource-efficient buildings. The Center focuses on energy conservation, uses less water and other resources when possible. One example of this is that the Center installed a cooling system to recycle mountain air throughout the building. This eliminated the need for compressed air conditioning which is expensive and wasteful.

On a more visible level, Alpenglow - the Center’s free outdoor concert venue in the summer, said goodbye to single-use plastic cups and hello to reusable plastic tumblers. As our landfills overflow with plastic waste, it is inspiring to see a Crested Butte community leader at the helm of a much-needed conservation movement.

So, what’s on the schedule?
For starters, visual arts classes and workshops are offered year-round on a weekly basis. A consortium of rooms exists at the Center to fill the calendar with events that can happen simultaneously. According to Clarkson, a live music performance can take place in the Steddy Theater while a Watercolor & Wine class is in progress in the Hawk Visual Arts Classroom on the third floor. Meanwhile, there might be a School of Dance show in the Jones Performance Hall. The Center’s multi-purpose allure will make it a prime gathering hub for Crested Butte locals and visitors.

The draw is magnetic for traveling artists as well, since capacity has increased by 70% to 400 seats at the Steddy Theater, the Center has welcomed an influx of performance requests to bring the community an eclectic lineup of talent. As of this writing [November 2019], this winter’s roll call includes:

- Matisyahu with special guest Bedouin Soundclash (12/6)
- Leftover Salmon (12/27 & 12/28)
- BoomBox (1/2)
- The Motet (1/3)
- Classic Albums Live – Damn The Torpedoes (1/23)
- Martin Sexton (2/14)
- Trigger Hippy (2/15)
- Galactic feat. Anjelika Jelly Joseph with Naughty Professor (3/15)

A remarkable event space
Crested Butte is teeming with beautiful venues and event destinations. The Center is joining the ranks by offering a fabulous location for weddings, business meetings and special events. For the ultimate centrally located event spot, check out the Comiskey Terrace which boasts expansive views of Paradise Divide and Mount Crested Butte.

Get involved
During your stay in Crested Butte, stop by the Center for the Arts. Catch a live music show, sign up for a workshop or explore a new exhibit. If you’re a local or frequent visitor to Crested Butte, consider a Center for the Arts annual membership and capitalize on the diverse spectrum of the Center’s year-round events.

For more info
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