



U.S.  
**SAND SCULPTING CHALLENGE**  
& dimensional art exposition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Port of San Diego's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual**  
**U.S. Sand Sculpting Challenge Returns**  
**Labor Day Weekend on the Downtown Waterfront**

*\*\* "Wonder"ful sand sculptures & more! Tickets on sale now! \*\**

**San Diego, CA. (April 29, 2019)** – Hailed as Best U.S. Labor Day Event in 2018 by *CNN Travel*, a Top 20 "Must See" seaside festival in the world by American Express and *USA Today's* 10 Best, the U.S. Sand Sculpting Challenge and Dimensional Art Exposition will return to San Diego's downtown waterfront for three days of fun, sun, and spectacular scenery, Saturday, August 31 – Monday, September 2.

The Port of San Diego Experiences event will be in its eighth year as one of the world's most prominent sand-sculpting competitions, held on a built-for-the-occasion beach, with **over 300 tons of sand dumped on Broadway Pier**. The theme for this year's event is **"Wonder"** which pays tribute to the Port's Wonderfront 2019 events that also include Wonderspaces, an art exhibit running all summer through Labor Day weekend, and the Wonderfront Music Festival, coming to the waterfront in November.

**World Master Sand Sculptors**

The competition will feature 12 Master Class Sculptors, seven from countries around the world and five from the United States, defending the title won last year by Thomas Koet of Melbourne, FL. There are no more than 50 artists on the planet who compete at this level and those who appear in San Diego are among the very best. They carve museum-quality sculptures made from only sand and water that can reach up to 15 ft. tall and weigh over 20,000 lbs. San Diego's Broadway Pier has been called the most creative atmosphere in the world over Labor Day weekend and you'll never see "pop up" works of art like this anywhere else! Sculptors will interpret this year's theme, "Wonder" as broadly or narrowly as they wish, from ephemeral ideas like "curiosity" to the greatest wonders of the world or Stevie Wonder or Wonder Woman!

International artists returning to Southern California and competing for the top prize are 2018 People's Choice and 2017 2<sup>nd</sup> place overall winner Abe Waterman from Prince Edward Island, Canada; 2016 Sculptor's Choice and 2015 Triple Crown winner Melineige Beauregard from Quebec, Canada, and Jihoon Choi from South Korea. Jihoon came all the way here to compete in 2016, just to have to turn around and go home due to an illness before the competition even began! They will be joined by World Masters Martijn Rijerse and Anique Magee from the Netherlands; Hanneke Supply from Belgium, and Pavel Mylnikov from Russia.

Returning and representing the USA are 2018 Grand Prize and 2017 Sculptors' Choice winner Thomas Koet; 2018 Third Prize Winner Dan Belcher (St. Louis, MO); 2018 World Master Brian Turnbough (Chicago, IL); World Masters Chris Guinto (Key West, FL) and John Gowdy (Atlantic City, NJ), both returning after long absences. Gowdy is a retired Atlantic City Fire Department Captain and is one of the world's leading sculptors in sand and marble. He was a crowd favorite from 2012 – 2015 when he created sculptures around popular themes: *Sandman Music* in 2012, *Late Night TV Twins* in 2013, *Shark Attack* in 2014, and *Bruce Jender* in 2015.



*Late Night TV Twins – 2013*



*Bruce Jender – 2015*

At stake, more than \$60,000 in prize money and national pride. Where will this year's winner be from: the U.S., Canada, Europe, Asia?

### **Team Competition: The I.B. Challenge**

Back by popular demand, the I.B. Challenge team competition will be comprised of three championship teams who won the former U.S. Open Sand Sculpting Competition in Imperial Beach from 2000 until 2011. Each team will include four professional sand artists who will be carving for two days to create an out-of-the-box sand sculpture corresponding to the "Wonder" theme.

### **NEW Features**

- **Expanded Kid Zone** with rides such as European Bungie, Bubble Fun, Bounce Houses and more.
- **A GIANT sandbox** and **professional sculptors** who teach kids how to build sandcastles.
- **VIP ticket holders will receive unlimited access** to the event all weekend long, special accommodations, free beverages, Habit Burger coupon and more!
- **Active duty military, EMT's, fire and police personnel receive FREE admission** with valid ID (individual only).

### **The Dimensional Art Exposition**

No matter how much you love them, you can't take the sand sculptures home. But you can shop for more than 2,000 original works of art such as hand-made clothing and accessories, wood and metal art, beautiful gourds, glass art, jewelry, quilled greeting cards, paper designs and much more. Many of the finest artists in the Southwest from as far away as New Mexico and Montana, will exhibit and sell their amazing one-of-a-kind art on the pier next to the majestic sand sculpture creations.

### **Family Fun -- Live Entertainment, Gourmet Food Trucks, Fantastic Bay Breezes and Views**

In addition to witnessing one of the most important sand sculpture competitions in the world, patrons will enjoy live entertainment from bands paying tribute to the Beatles, Beach Boys, Dylan, Journey and other greats. There will also be special appearances by Elvis on Saturday and Sunday nights!

Families can picnic on the bay with food and drink (including beer and wine) from over a dozen gourmet food trucks and vendors such as Cousins Maine Lobster, The Habit Burger, Eat Your Heart Out, Matheny's Wagon Works, Pomodoro Rosso, Goodness Baked Cookie Company, Cruising Cones, Old School Shave Ice and more!

### **Your Attendance Supports Educational Charities**

A portion of proceeds from the event will go to local charities that support children's education, including the Padres Foundation and e3 Civic High.

### **Stay Downtown:**

The wonderful Wyndham San Diego Bayfront ([www.wyndhamsandiegobay.com](http://www.wyndhamsandiegobay.com)) in the heart of downtown is the official hotel of the Port of San Diego U.S. Sand Sculpting Challenge and Dimensional Art Exposition.

**Admission – Tickets on sale now! Save big online!**

Tickets available at [www.ussandsculpting.com](http://www.ussandsculpting.com)

NEW – Active duty military, EMT's, fire and police receive *FREE admission* with valid ID (individual only)

NEW – VIP ticket holders will be able to visit the event as often as they wish throughout the weekend

**Online early-bird pricing valid only through June 15, 2019**

**Saturday – Monday ticket (1 day admission):**

Adults – \$10

Seniors (62+) – \$8

Kids (2 – 12yrs) – \$6

Toddlers (under 2yrs) – FREE

**VIP package** includes weekend-long admission, cut-the-line privileges, very special shaded seating section in the middle of the bay, 2 free drinks, free Habit Burger post-event coupon, and upgraded facilities (value up to \$70).

All Ages – \$30

**Times:**

Saturday, August 31<sup>st</sup>: 10am – 8pm

Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>: 10am – 8pm

Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>: 10am – 7pm

**U.S. Sand Sculpting Challenge Producers:**

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We invite you to please find more information and pictures at [www.ussandsculpting.com](http://www.ussandsculpting.com).

**Social Media – #USSAND19**

Instagram – [@ussandsculpting](https://www.instagram.com/ussandsculpting)

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