

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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**The Hermitage Artist Retreat**

**presents the**

**2020 Artful Lobster: An Outdoor Celebration!**

**Saturday, November 14, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.**

**Sponsorships and Tickets Now on Sale!**

**New Health and Safety Protocols Implemented**

*This popular annual event on Manasota Key, now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, raises valuable funds for the Hermitage's nationally renowned artist residency program. The Artful Lobster features a lobster feast, a performance by a renowned Hermitage Fellow, and this year an added celebration of Nelda and Jim Thompson, longtime Hermitage supporters.*

(September 9, 2020) Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO of the Hermitage Artist Retreat, recently confirmed the organization is moving ahead with plans to hold its signature fall fundraising event, The Artful Lobster: An Outdoor Celebration! Now in its 12th year, the Artful Lobster raises valuable funds for the Hermitage's nationally and

internationally renowned artist residency program. The event, which takes place outdoors beneath a large tent on the Hermitage's environmentally pristine beachfront campus, is scheduled for Saturday, November 14, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m., at 6660 Manasota Key Road, in Englewood, Florida. Guests will enjoy a luscious lobster feast by Michael's On East and a performance by a celebrated Hermitage Fellow (to be announced). Several new health and safety protocols have been implemented for this year's celebration, and the Hermitage has published these at **[HermitageArtistRetreat.org/Safety](https://HermitageArtistRetreat.org/Safety)**. The event's co-chairs are Flora Major and Leslie Edwards. Sponsorship packages and tables range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Single tickets, at \$275, are extremely limited due to capacity, and will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Bookings may be made online at **[HermitageArtistRetreat.org/ArtfulLobster2020](https://HermitageArtistRetreat.org/ArtfulLobster2020)** or by calling 941-475-2098, Ext. 5.

"While productions and performances around the world may be on hold, the creative process and artistic development are more essential than ever," says Sandberg. "This year's Artful Lobster is an opportunity to celebrate and champion the artists who will ultimately give us a reason to return to theaters, concert halls, and museums when it is safe to do so."

He adds that the Hermitage team is taking extra measures surrounding this year's festivities. "The health and safety of our guests, artists, and staff are our top priorities," says Sandberg. "As one of the first events of the fall season, we are taking extra precautions to ensure a safe and enjoyable outdoor celebration." All activities will be held outdoors under open-air tenting, and capacity will be limited to accommodate greater social distancing. Sandberg explains that the Hermitage has been safely and

successfully operating its artist residency program since late June. The Hermitage team, along with everyone at Michael's On East, are taking significant steps to ensure that this year's Artful Lobster: An Outdoor Celebration! is as safe as any trip to the grocery store or outdoor dining experience.

"We understand the decision attend an event like this is a personal choice," the Hermitage team notes in a statement. "If you are not able to join us in person – or feel it is too soon to decide – we hope you will still consider supporting the Hermitage in this critical season as we work to provide a safe and inspiring home for artists who are creating the extraordinary music, theater, visual art, and literature that will enrich our lives for years to come."

This year's Artful Lobster Weekend will also celebrate the legacy of longtime champions of the Hermitage and Manasota Key, Nelda and Jim Thompson. In addition to toasting the Thompsons at Saturday's Artful Lobster luncheon, there will be "an intimate beachfront celebration" dedicated to honoring the Thompsons on Friday, November 13. *For more information about this event, please call 941-475-2098, Ext. 5 or email [info@HermitageArtistRetreat.org](mailto:info@HermitageArtistRetreat.org).*

Sponsors and partners for "The Artful Lobster: An Outdoor Celebration!" include the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, CHUBB, Key Agency, Herald-Tribune Media Group, Sarasota Magazine, and WUSF Public Media. A full list of this year's Artful Lobster sponsors, benefactors, and partners can be found at

**[HermitageArtistRetreat.org/ArtfulLobster2020](https://HermitageArtistRetreat.org/ArtfulLobster2020).**

The Hermitage hosts artists on its Gulf Coast Manasota Key campus for multi-week residencies. Artists come from around the world and across multiple disciplines

create and develop new works of visual art, theater, music, literature, and more. As part of their residencies, Hermitage Fellows are asked to participate in community programs, affording audiences in our region the unique opportunity to engage with some of the world's leading artists and to get a "sneak peek" into extraordinary projects and artistic minds before their works go on to major galleries, concert halls, theaters, and museums around the world. These free programs include performances, lectures, interactive experiences, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

*For more information about the Hermitage, visit **[HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://HermitageArtistRetreat.org)**.*

### **About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:**

The Hermitage is a nonprofit artist retreat located in Manasota Key, Florida, inviting accomplished artists across multiple disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Hermitage artists are invited to interact with the local community, reaching thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors each year with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage Fellows have included nine Pulitzer Prize winners, along with multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and MacArthur Fellowship award winners. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theatres, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. Each year, the Hermitage awards the \$30,000 Hermitage Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, and the Aspen Music Festival awards the annual Hermitage Prize in Composition. For more information about The Hermitage Artist Retreat, visit [HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://HermitageArtistRetreat.org).

### **The Hermitage is supported by:**

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