

Phoenix Hosts First-Ever Yoga Festival

Written by Alyssa DeMember



It was a weekend of spiritual bliss, personal growth and restoration at Phoenix's first ever luxury yoga event, Namaste AZ Yoga Festival. Created by Sumit Banerjee, national yoga instructor and the mind behind the hybrid yoga style dubbed "Sumits," the Namaste AZ Yoga Festival took place this past weekend at the sophisticated The Camby Hotel in the heart of the Biltmore area in Phoenix.

With top yogis having arrived from across the country, this four-day event (Oct. 6-9) offered a wide variety of yoga classes throughout The Camby Hotel grounds virtually nonstop from morning until night. In addition to dozens of classes, guests had the opportunity to mingle with vendors selling essential oils, incense, yoga/athletic gear, jewelry and more. Nearly one hundred independent vendors were in attendance, says Sumit Banerjee.

A man who exudes a simple joy for life and great pride in what he does, Banerjee says the Namaste AZ Yoga Festival is about "the community coming together to grow, to love and to have fun."

"Yoga makes me a better person," he says. "There's no better joy than sharing that experience with others so they can better themselves."

From "Chakra Flow and Guided Meditation," "Yin," "Warrior Flow," and "Tantra Yoga," to "Chakra Meditation" and "Peace Chants," this inclusive gathering encouraged individuals of all skill levels to take part in the festival.

Jenn Chiarelli, founder and creator of Anahata Soul, a yoga retreat and teacher training program, led the "Peace In. Peace Out. Sunset Flow" class. Located on the pool deck at the top floor, the class had a more upbeat nature to it, with fast-paced music and heavy beats. As the sun set beneath the horizon, the deck became illuminated by pillar-mounted lights, the practice transitioning slowly into a yoga flow under the deep blue night sky. After more than an hour of guided practice and meditation, guests melted into Savasana. The energetic music faded out and the session concluded with vibrating gongs and gentle humming that seemed to envelope you from all sides.

Chiarelli says she's excited the Namaste AZ Yoga Festival was made possible, explaining that a large-scale yoga festival in Phoenix has been a long time coming. For Chiarelli, practicing yoga means taking simple steps to connect to oneself on a deeper level, encouraging others to take those steps on a daily basis as well. "The world needs peace," she says.

To learn more, visit namasteazyogafestival.com