

Tucson's Famous Giant Tiki Sculpture is Resurrected

Written by Jackie Stahl

A historic event took place on August 29 along 4th Avenue, as more than 1,500 Tucsonans and Tiki fans from around the country attended the great unveiling of the giant Tiki head that has been totally renovated and resurrected.



This well-known 40-year-old Tucson icon was once home to the now closed Magic Carpet Golf property. Although the late home has shut its doors, the iconic symbol was not left to die with it. A large team has worked for more than 18 months to bring the massive, three-story Tiki sculpture back to life with backing from the "Save the Tiki" fundraising group, according to the *Tucson Citizen*.

Tucsonans and visitors can now see their celebrated Tiki at The Hut, a Hawaiian grill on 4th Avenue. The unveiling was celebrated with a Grand Tiki Dedication and Street Party on August 29. The event featured The Martini Kings, The Del Reys and a Tiki unveiling fire performance by Flam Chen and the Mission Creeps.

It was a "unique presentation unlike any seen before. The music for the performance "Nightmare on Tiki Island" was heard as fire came out the Giant Tiki Head with a large video backdrop as Flam Chen performed." *Tucson Citizen*



Lee Koplin is the original designer of the Tiki (Moai) Stone Face but was fabricated by Koplin's employee, Mike Kautza, who worked for him almost 40 years ago. After Magic Carpet Golf closed down, local artist from Amado, AZ, Tom Prevatt, re-designed and renovated the now seen Tiki head on 4th Avenue. The entire process was a team effort by: Galileo Construction, Division 2 Construction, Broderick Engineers, Parson Steel Erectors, Marcos Crane, Caid Industries, Lanning Architects, and The Hut, according to the *Tucson Citizen*.

There was recently a grand Tiki Convention held in San Diego, Calif. where the two headlining bands who performed at The Hut Street Party also played. The convention and musicians unmistakably brought fans to Tucson as the unveiling was publicized on their Web site (www.tikicentral.com), which encompasses more than 250,000 members, according to the *Tucson Citizen*.

The Magic Carpet miniature golf, once located at 6125 E. Speedway, closed its doors in December of 2007. Its famed statue was highly regarded and even featured in Sven Kirsten's "Tiki Modern" book in 2008.

"[Sven Kirsten] is the author of "The Book of Tiki" considered the best reference material on the subject." *Tucson Citizen*

The Hut
305 N. 4th Ave.
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