

## **VEGAS INDIE FILM FESTIVAL (VIFF!) fills the void of the late Dennis Hopper's festival darling - CineVegas**

Since the CineVegas International Film Festival was put on hold in 2010 after an 11-year run, Las Vegas has been in need of a solid replacement. Emmy award-winning television producer and award winning filmmaker Derek Stonebarger thinks his VEGAS INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL! (VIFF!) is filling that void.

"VIFF! is a festival created by independent filmmakers, for independent filmmakers, looking to carry on with the same passion, excitement and energy that made CineVegas so great," Stonebarger said. "I've been fortunate to screen my projects at many festivals, good and bad all around the globe before starting VIFF! I'm using that knowledge to make VIFF! the most prestigious festival in Las Vegas."

VIFF! takes place in the "Entertainment Capital of the World" usually in May and boasts a variety of events from parties, seminars, networking events and of course screenings. The festival, which has been held at the Century Orleans, The Palms Theater, theatre7, Cockroach Theater, Arts Theater, Indie Film Factory and several other venues around the city, aims to screen a broad range of dynamic and engaging independent features, documentaries, short films, student films, music videos and more. The international event offers a unique opportunity for all of its winners of Golden Bulbs, which are certified to have come directly from the world famous 'Welcome to Las Vegas' sign.

"Just as the golden bulbs have been hand selected to make our unique trophies, the films and screenplays of VIFF! are chosen by myself and a team of filmmaking judges," Stonebarger said. "We've been able to secure some amazing films, and VIFF!'s future is quickly looking brighter than the bulbs we give out as awards."

Launched by an enthusiastic group of movie and art lovers, CineVegas had its debut in 1998. The festival screened fewer than 30 projects and less than 5,000 people attended. Dennis Hopper assumed the position of Chair of the CineVegas Creative Advisory Board in 2004 after receiving the festival's prestigious Marquee Award in 2003. By 2006 the event was named one of the top five gem festivals in the world by Variety.

VIFF! had an even quieter beginning. There was no festival in 2010, but the event was born when Stonebarger decided to give golden bulbs, certified to have been taken directly from the world famous 'Welcome to Las Vegas' sign, to the four films he had signed on to screen at his upcoming arthouse theatre, which later launched in March 2011.

"The festival is now going to the next level," Stonebarger said. "And it's going to levels other festivals don't go to. We plan on screening other VIFF! selections throughout the year and some of the winning films will receive arthouse distribution in hopes of helping jumpstart major distribution for these projects."

VEGAS INDIE FILM FEST!  
VIFF.net