

# the Taos HUM

In our new monthly column, people-watcher extraordinaire Tania Casselle zeroes in on the people who make Taos hum. Her colorful side-kick, photographer Lenny Foster captures their image so that you, too, can recognize these not-so-ordinary folks of Taos.

story by **TANIA CASSELLE**

photos by **LENNY FOSTER**



## Allegra Huston

London-born creative powerhouse Huston is the author of *Love Child: A Memoir of Family Lost and Found*, a frank exploration of her upbringing as daughter of filmmaker John Huston, sister to Anjelica and Tony. Now her short film *Good Luck, Mr Gorksi* is also winning recognition at international film festivals, after Huston raised \$43,000 to produce her script via \$20 donations, bake sales, and raffles. "It's inspired by a really good joke, people would laugh, and I'd invite them to contribute \$20. It went viral, donations from Indonesia, Australia, the Netherlands..."

Huston left her London publishing career, working with lit stars including UK Poet Laureate-to-be Andrew Motion, to dedicate time to her own writing, although relocation to New Mexico wasn't originally on her mind when she visited Taos for a six-month stay. She knew she wanted to move out of the city, possibly to England's West Country, but landed up farther west than anticipated, settling in Taos in 1999.

"I discovered this beautiful place full of interesting people. I spent a lot of time in Mexico as a kid and Hispanic culture feels comfortable to me. Americans who've lived all over the world live in Taos so it's very cosmopolitan." She'd also met Cisco Guevara "my husband that I'm not married to" and they now have a son. Huston wrote the first draft of her memoir at Wired? Cafe – "If I'm at home I end up doing a lot of laundry" – and she recharges her batteries by rafting, hiking Italianos Canyon, and watching *Dancing With The Stars*. "I'm trying to convince Anjelica to do that so I can go and clap. It would be so much fun." She's a passionate board member for Taos Shortz ("In line to become one of the top short film festivals in the country") and the Northern New Mexico Birth Center. "People come here from New York to have their babies. I believe it would be a better world if women had their babies under midwifery care."

See *Good Luck, Mr. Gorksi* in a download at [allegrahuston.com](http://allegrahuston.com).

## Cisco Guevara

"The European side of my family came here in 1540 with Coronado and married with the local Indian population and we've been here ever since," says Guevara, owner of Los Rios River Runners. Guevara relishes the variety in Taos's terrain and weather—not to mention its culture. "It's never dull, never boring, there's always something new to discover. I love this town because it's a small town, really traditional... but it has theatre, poetry, writers, movie makers, a nice balance of talent here that's easygoing, not pretentious." After 45 years rafting the Rio Grande and Rio Chama, his favorite stretch of river is "Pretty much whatever stretch I'm on." He notes that his customers often think of their fathers while rafting. "They say I've got to bring my dad here, I wish my dad could do this. It's something about Old Man River, or being with a grizzly guide..."

Guevara performs regularly at the Taos Storytelling Festival since a rafting customer first invited him. "I said 'I'm not a storyteller' and he said 'Oh, yes you are! I've been on your raft trips.' The first time on stage was horrifying, as nerve-wracking as being on top of the boat-eating rapids." Now he steers a story as confidently as he navigates a river. Come evening, it's beer and dinner at Guadalajara Grill or Orlando's, or dancing at the KTAO Solar Center. The biggest surprise this Taosño keeps tucked under his signature river-battered hat? "I'm a former New Mexico state champion country western dance dude." He also teaches dancing. "That's how Allegra and I met. I was asked to teach lessons in Taos Ski Valley and Allegra's brother brought her by to learn how to two-step." Was she a good student? "I pretty much didn't care," says Guevara, who after meeting Allegra Huston, apparently had other things on his mind.

To run the rapids with Guevara go to [www.losriosriverrunners.com](http://www.losriosriverrunners.com).