

THE JOY OF 'OLD STUFF'

A WONDROUS COLLECTION OF WESTERN AMERICANA
AWAITS VISITORS TO KIMOSABÉ.



Kimosabé Western Americana is a mecca for art and antique collectors from all over the world, as well as decorators from Aspen to Santa Fe,” relates Cindy Spray, a co-owner of the eclectic shop located just off of the northwest corner of Taos Plaza. Housed in an 1860s adobe building on Teresina Lane, a charming brick-lined side-street, Kimosabé exudes a kind of magic befitting old Taos.

Step through the front door and one is immediately surrounded by a broad display of vintage ethnographic art, principally from the American Southwest. Classic pueblo pottery and Navajo rugs and blankets, old pawn jewelry, historic American Indian baskets, beadwork and New Mexican furniture fill the floors, corners and display cases. Numerous early paintings from noted Taos, Santa Fe and Western American painters, old Wild West show and Western movie posters, and funky New Mexican

BY DAULTON PALTROW

folk art hang from the gallery’s uneven walls and ancient *vigas*. Kimosabé has been showcasing the rich art history of Taos, Santa Fe and the American West in this small but soulful space for more than twenty years.

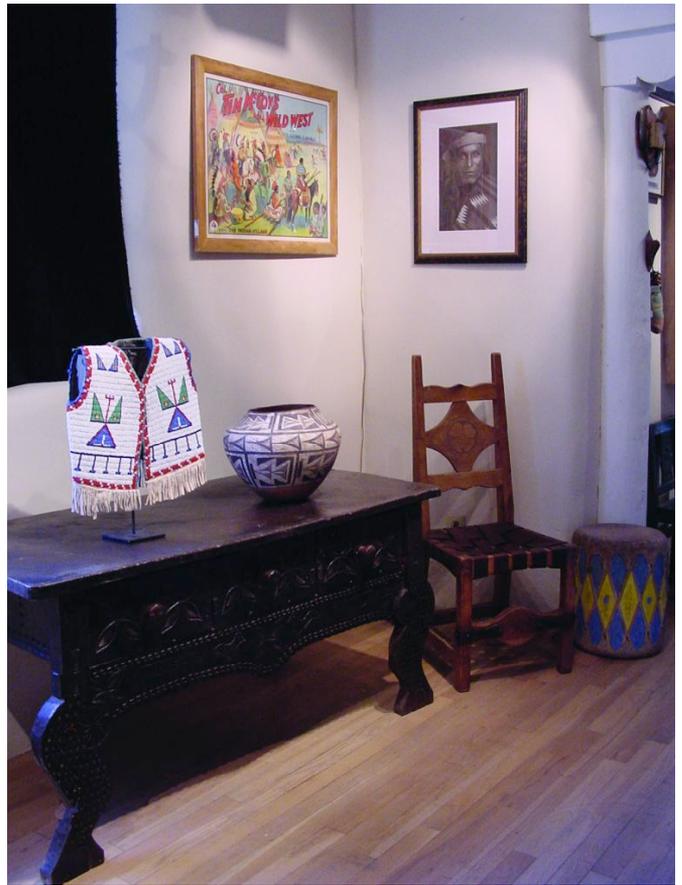
The evolution of Kimosabé began when Spray moved to Taos twenty-five years ago and quickly realized the era of the old-time trading post was coming to a close. Speculating on both this and the concern that much of Taos’s original, very rich tradition would soon be lost, she opened an antique shop of sorts. The principle goal was to offer locals and visitors an opportunity to experience the look and feel of ‘old Taos,’ steeped in the extensive history of its Pueblo and Spanish cultures while attempting to integrate the much more recent arrival of Anglo influences. This has remained Spray’s focus and vision for two decades and has included, very importantly, her

desire to provide 'old Taos hospitality,' one that embraces the sincerity and warmth with which New Mexicans have welcomed visitors for centuries.

Spray explains that during Kimosabé's existence there have been ongoing periods of ups and downs. But recently an important event occurred that gave her faith in the gallery's future—Robin Rew literally walked into her life. In 2004 Rew moved to Taos from Pendleton, Oregon, where he had managed his family's ranch for thirty years. He arrived in Taos hoping to find an opportunity where he could exchange his passion for collecting Old West paraphernalia and memorabilia, historical items with which Spray was intimately familiar, for a way to make a profit off the same. "He walked into the shop, told me what he wanted to do, and that was that," recalls Spray. "I made him my partner.

"Robin has a keen eye coupled with a tremendous knowledge of 'old stuff.' He knows a lot about Plains Indian art and even understands the intricacies of their beadwork. Plus, he has first-hand experience with the 'cowboy' end of things." The pairing blends Spray's and Rew's individual areas of expertise with their remarkably compatible personalities, and provides Kimosabé with not only a wealth of knowledge but a truly harmonious environment.

The inventory at Kimosabé is constantly changing; the quality of the materials and items on display however is always high. "We're adamant about keeping to the serious old items," says Spray. "There are very few places where you can still get important, original Western Americana. We have some things that are frequently only found in museums."



In addition to its wide-ranging collections the gallery is noted for its reasonable prices. This affordability factor attracts many sophisticated collectors, as well as new clientele, from Santa Fe because they have become only too aware of what Spray refers to as "exorbitant Santa Fe prices." In their efforts to keep up interest for existing clientele and to lure additional patrons, Spray and Rew also must constantly be on the lookout for historically significant and sought-after items to fill Kimosabé's burgeoning display areas. Some of the items they come by are a direct result of their appraisal services, which they offer at no charge. They purchase both individual pieces and entire collections in their efforts to ensure that the shop always has something unique to offer.

Kimosabé's now long-standing reputation for authentic Western Americana is the business's backbone. However Spray, who has a strong art and design background, is moving more and more into helping clients decorate their homes, offices and/or businesses. This adjunct to the shop's offerings is a welcome progression for its customers. "The Western feel and way of life is so specific and unique," explains Spray. "It is a fulfilling extension of Kimosabé to move into the area of helping clients make the inherent history and beauty associated with the West become part of their homes—the everyday world in which they live."

Kimosabé Western Americana is located off the northwest corner of Taos Plaza at 108 Teresina Lane. 758-8826. By appointment at 770-2531 or 779-2608.

