

2024 Rancho Mirage Writers Festival to celebrate 10 years of furthering love of reading

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Diana Gabaldon, left, and Anthony Doerr sign books for attendees during the Rancho Mirage Writers Festival at the Rancho Mirage Public Library. February 1, 2023. Jay Calderon/The Desert Sun

The Coachella Valley may be known for its music and film festivals that attract some of the biggest stars in the entertainment industry, but bookworms and writers also get a celebration in the desert.

The 10th annual Rancho Mirage Writers Festival, scheduled for Jan. 31 through Feb. 2, 2024, will celebrate a decade of bringing together writers from around the world and furthering people's love of reading. The lineup for the 2024 event includes filmmakers, journalists, politicians, historians and award winners who contribute to the intellectual vitality of our time.

Here's what you need to know about the upcoming festival.

What is the Rancho Mirage Writers Festival?

The annual festival, dubbed as "Coachella for the brain," is a celebration of the written word that brings writers from all over the world to the Rancho Mirage Library and Observatory each January. It was founded by Jamie Kabler in 2014.

Writers span a variety of topics, including politics, history, humor and health, as well as genres and literary fiction. Many are recipients of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award and the Man Booker Prize, as well as New York Times bestsellers. Author and social commentator Fran Lebowitz and founder of Homeboy Industries Father Greg Boyle were among those who appeared at the 2023 festival.



Fran Lebowitz and Jeffrey Brown have a discussion at the Rancho Mirage Writers Festival at the Rancho Mirage Public Library, February 3, 2023. *Jay Calderon/The Desert Sun*

When and where is the festival?

The 10th annual Rancho Mirage Writers Festival will be held Jan. 31 through Feb. 2, 2024, at the Rancho Mirage Library.

Who's on the lineup

Like in years' past, the 10th annual Rancho Mirage Writers Festival boasts an impressive lineup of writers from all backgrounds and expertise. Some of those include:



Film director and actor John Waters, right, with artistic director Lili Hinstin, left, on the red carpet at the Piazza Grande at the 72th Locarno International Film Festival in Locarno, Switzerland, on Aug. 16, 2019. *Urs Flueeler, EPA-EFE*

- **John Waters:** A filmmaker, writer, actor and artist known for his boundary-pushing cult films, such as "Multiple Maniacs," "Pink Flamingos" and "Female Trouble." He wrote and directed the film "Hairspray" in 1988. He is also the author of "Liarmouth: A Feel-Bad Romance."
- **Lesley Stahl:** An award-winning broadcast journalist who began her 31st season on "60 Minutes" in September 2022. She received a Lifetime Achievement News and Documentary Emmy Award in 2003 for overall excellence in reporting. Stahl is the author of two bestselling books, "Reporting Live," about her work as a White House correspondent, and the more recent "Becoming Grandma."

- **Gen. David H. Petraeus:** A decorated U.S. military general who has served more than 37 years in the armed forces. He was named one of America's 25 Best Leaders by U.S. News and World Report. Petraeus is the author of "Conflict: The Evolution of Warfare from 1945 to Ukraine," which will be released in October.
- **Chasten Buttigieg:** An educator, author and LGBTQ+ activist. He is married to Pete Buttigieg, the current U.S. secretary of transportation, and was an advisor, spokesperson and social media campaigner during his husband's 2020 presidential campaign. Chasten Buttigieg is the author of the memoir "I Have Something to Tell You—For Young Adults."
- **Karl Rove:** An author, columnist and political strategist who was the former senior advisor and deputy chief of staff for President George W. Bush. Rove is the author of "The Triumph of William McKinley: Why the Election of 1896 Still Matters."
- **Ada Ferrer:** The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of "Cuba: An American History," and a Julius Silver Professor of History and Latin American and Caribbean Studies at New York University.
- **James McBride:** An award-winning author, screenwriter, musician and composer who has toured as a saxophonist. He is the author of "The Color of Water" and "The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store."
- **Dave Karger:** A host on Turner Classic Movies, entertainment commentator and the Academy's official red-carpet greeter on Oscar night. He is the author of "50 Oscar Nights: Iconic Stars and Filmmakers on Their Career-Defining Wins," which will be released in January.
- **Jonathan Franzen:** A National Book Award-winning author of six novels and five works of nonfiction, and a frequent contributor to The New Yorker. Franzen is the author of "Crossroads," "The Corrections" and "Freedom."
- **Donna Brazile:** An ABC News contributor and previously a FOX News contributor. Brazile is the author of "Hacks: The Inside Story of the Break-Ins and Breakdowns That Put Donald Trump in the White House."

For a full list of writers and speakers, visit www.rmwritersfest.org/2024-writers

How to attend

Three-day festival passes are sold out at this time. Those who managed to snag a pass will have access to more than 70 sessions, an author signing area, lunch, items from festival writers and valet parking.

Didn't get a pass for the 2024 festival? No sweat. The festival puts on a free Writers Series throughout the year. Upcoming speakers for the month of October include:

- **2 p.m. Oct. 5: Valerie Biden Owens**, sister of President Joe Biden, will discuss her book, "Growing up Biden"
- **2 p.m. Oct. 12: Neil King Jr.**, journalist and editor, will talk about his first book, "American Ramble: A Walk of Memory and Renewal"
- **2 p.m. Oct. 26: Seth Rudetsky**, musician, actor, writer and radio host, will speak about his book "Musical Theatre for Dummies"

For a full list of Writers Series speakers, visit www.rmwritersfest.org/rmwf-events/category/writers-series/



Ben Mankiewicz and Dave Karger have a discussion during the Rancho Mirage Writers Festival at the Rancho Mirage Public Library. February 1, 2023. *Jay Calderon/The Desert Sun*

More information

For more information on the 10th annual Rancho Mirage Writers Festival, visit www.rmwritersfest.org