

Second to None

El Paso is Slowly Cresting the Wave
of an Economic and Spiritual Rebirth

By Georgina Hernandez-Escobar

While El Paso INDUSTRY was researching and working on the "Best Inventions" and "Best Relationship Moments of All Time," we came across some little known Best of (and even Worst of!) lists particular to our area.

As a great many of us have heard and read, our community seems to be a magnet for good and bad-natured jibes suggesting that we are a city of some ill repute and "worst of" fame. Unfortunately, our sister city, Ciudad Juarez, has had its own share of bad publicity and—much like a teenager in a classroom of bullies—El Paso and Juarez have been, for some time, victim of the "ugly duckling" syndrome. Even with their nearly 2 million combined population (El Paso, Juarez and Las Cruces), our cities have been slumbering giants, awaiting their moment to rise.

That moment might well be here. From all directions and angles, it seems, El Paso and Juarez are fighting back and gradually growing out of their own identity issues to embrace our differences, which, ultimately, are exactly what makes our area unique and strong.

So what are these things that make this city feel like such an ugly creature in a world of swans? And does this city have the capacity to turn the tables, strengthen its self-esteem and prove that with "worst of" also comes "best of?"

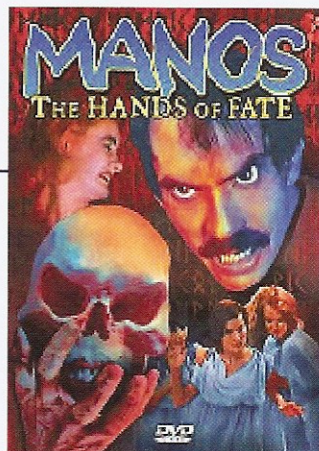
HOLLYWOOD BOOM AND BUST

WORST OF....

In 1966, El Paso fertilizer salesman Hal Warren made a bet that he could direct a movie. The result made film history—the film history hall of shame, that is. *Manos: The Hands of Fate* is considered the "Worst Movie Ever Made" by *Entertainment Weekly* and averages a generous two stars in the International Movie Database website. Oops!

BEST OF.....

El Paso shares with the world the talents of its native Don Bluth, one of Hollywood's most prestigious animators and independent filmmakers. A short list of his remarkable films includes *The Secret of Nimh*, *The Land Before Time*, *All Dogs Go To Heaven* and *Anastasia*.



D IS FOR DATING, DANCING AND DAVINCI

WORST OF...

El Paso was named 5th worst city to find a date in the "Best Cities for Hooking Up in America," released November 2005 by Axe Body Spray. The criteria: Divorce rate, ratio of women to men and the number of date-suitable coffeehouses and bars.

BEST OF...

Our sister city has us covered in this one: dancing. The most genuinely Cuban Salsa bar in our area, Ciudad Juarez's Tumbao, mixes live salsa music with tantalizing dancing that would be hard to find anywhere else. There is also the tantalizing prospect of the upcoming "I heart Art" coming up at the El Paso Museum. On any given day, the museum is a terrific place to interact with like-minded art aficionados, and this event will only amplify your dating prospects.

We have also joined the ranks of the internet dating craze. In addition to the standard match.com fare, El Pasoans have an option all our own. <http://elpaso.date.com> is a site that strikes us as a bit more real and less gimmicky than the run of the mill dating...mills, and may be a welcome refuge for those interested in reaching out.

FLAB THAT GOES FAB

WORST OF....

According to the First Coast News' 2005 "Flab" index, El Paso is near the bottom of the nation in its percentage of overweight residents and incidence of diabetes (San Francisco and Honolulu placed as best "Ab" cities). Ouch!

BEST OF....

El Paso has more than 35 fitness centers throughout the city, including Expert Cycling, 915.585.8926 and Southwest Racquet Ball Center, 915.363.3058. Not to mention the Get Fit El Paso! program that offers activities, projects, events and even facts and stats provided by the American Heart Association. www.getfitelpaso.com.

