



TOM BREWSTER

By Robert Menifee

Taken from Gallery Scene 2001, November 2001 Next Magazine
(The Desert Sun, A Gannett Newspaper)

Sought-after commercial photographer Tom Brewster makes his living through glossy magazines and creates his art photography on his travels, near and far. Photographs in his biennial shows at Palapas of Araby Cove in Palm Springs encompass images of Ireland to desert wildflowers snapped in the spectacular spring of 1998. Works in his 2000, 50th birthday show (“50 years, 50 photos”) ranged from his rock’n’ roll-concert days to desert landscapes. Come mid-October, he heads to the Sierras to shoot the aspen trees as they turn color, and then he is off for a dose of Tuscany in December.

Brewster, who came to Palm Springs from Missouri via Los Angeles 20 years ago, particularly likes the seasonal rhythm here (i.e., it gets blazing hot, people leave, etc.). “Because there is a seasonal aspect to the work here if there is some down time, I can take a break from my commercial work and develop my personal work,” he explains.

“There are moments when I can’t think of any place more beautiful than this area. I have said this to other photographers it is sometimes very difficult to capture the essence of the desert because the valley floor can be very nondescript, with no prominent features. You have to go to it, you have to go into the canyons, up the mountains. It is difficult to get a good image, so it is a challenge,” he says.



Nevertheless, Brewster is bullish on the local appeal of desert photographs. “In selling my images, the ones that are the most popular are the ones that are the most local,” he says. “People will see shots of Ireland or Utah or northern Arizona, but the ones they are interested in are the ones taken here. In the next couple of years I am going to concentrate on the desert. People don’t come here to see images of other places, they come here to see images of the desert.” ■