



Jason Mraz

*TALENT SCOUT

Twelve years ago, Michelle Clark was on a rickety old bus in St. Thomas, squeezed shoulder-to-shoulder with reps from 30 radio stations on their way to the Hard Rock Café. It might not have been the most comfortable ride of her life, but she was a woman on a mission. And the dreams of nine bands were riding on her.

"The sound system at the Hard Rock was so bad, it almost blew up," says Clark, an independent radio producer who created Sunset Sessions as an unconventional forum for putting musicians in front of record labels and industry greats. "But there we were—good friends and adventurous radio programmers, relaxing on the beach and bonding over great music. We knew then it was magical."

The first artist of Clark's new industry-only concert format was a blues singer/songwriter from Boston named Susan Tedeschi. She has since sold more than a million records and been nominated for four Grammys. Other Sunset Sessions alumni include Jack Johnson, Five for Fighting, Edwin McCain, Colbie Callait and Ziggy Marley.

Like *American Idol* but without the fluff and commercials, Sunset Sessions shines a light on undiscovered talent. Last year, the Zac Brown Band opened the three-day event, then went on to win the Grammy for best new artist.

In February, Clark hosted her 13th Sunset Session, where she brought together 37 musicians at Rancho Bernardo Inn Resort & Spa. Golf carts—not rickety buses—whizzed leather-clad artists between Spanish-style guestrooms and a packed 10,000-square-foot ballroom. The sound system was sharp. Deejays from KPRI sat on the terrace, broadcasting live over the three days. And Jason Mraz popped in after winning two Grammys to make the crowd swoon with nothing more than his guitar.

"We now have about 600 attendees," says Clark. "Being able to take music I love and share it with other people is my all-time high. Then I watch James Blunt singing 'You're Beautiful' on my stage, or sit at Chris Isaak's feet while he sings 'Wicked Game' ... and I can't help but cry."

—SOPHIE KELLEY

[NewsBeat]

Endorsement Escapades

All three candidates vying to be the county's next sheriff are Republicans. All three were eager to have the endorsement of the county's Republican Party. All three were vigorously vetted and awaiting a decision.

All three were disappointed.

Party committee members recently voted not to endorse a candidate in the June primary. The party's rules say if there's more than one Republican running, an endorsement is issued only if one of the candidates receives two-thirds of the committee's vote.

"It's not a big deal from our end. The next sheriff is going to be a Republican, that's the bottom line," says party chairman Tony Krvaric. "We reserve the right to consider endorsement after the primary."

Insiders say this benefits former Deputy Sheriffs Association president Jim Duffy the most. It's more of a blow to the other two candidates—Bill Gore (who had the backing of influential Republicans Bonnie Dumanis and Jerry Sanders) and former California Assemblyman Jay LaSuer. They were more likely to win the party's support.

At February's Republican Party meeting, attended by all three candidates just before the decision not to endorse, some Gore supporters were irritated that Krvaric repeatedly referred to their candidate as "acting sheriff."

Gore was appointed by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors to finish out retiring Sheriff Bill Kolender's term, giving him the official title and the incumbent's edge. Technically, Gore is the sheriff, not acting sheriff. But if he chooses to mention his position on the ballot statement, he'll have to note that he was appointed.

—KELLY THORNTON