

WELCOME TO MONTECITO: A NEW ERA OF SOAP OPERA BEGINS APRIL 22nd

Daytime TV Favorites Join New Premium Audio Soap Opera Series



Los Angeles, California Apr 19, 2025 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - **WELCOME TO MONTECITO: A NEW ERA OF SOAP OPERA BEGINS APRIL 22nd**

Montecito, a gripping, all-new audio soap opera, premieres April 22nd, bringing explosive drama, betrayals, and unforgettable characters to your ears every week.

Set in the sun-drenched enclave of the ultra-wealthy, *Montecito* presents a dark paradise where shattered romances, hidden family secrets, and scandalous affairs hide behind manicured hedges and the shadows of towering palm trees. Each 20-minute episode immerses listeners in a world of deception—an experience designed for today's soap opera, podcast and audiobook audiences.

This 10-episode audio-only drama marks a bold reinvention of the American soap opera—reviving the

genre in its original radio form, but with a modern twist. The trailer is available now—watch it [\[here\]](#) and subscribe to *Montecito* on all major podcasting platforms so you never miss an episode.

"We are entering a new era of the American soap opera," says series creator and Emmy nominated producer Grant Rutter. "Soaps began 95 years ago on the radio. We've seen the genre expand and contract over the years, but there's new life with the premiere of CBS's *Beyond The Gates* being the first new daytime drama in 25 years. *Montecito* brings the genre back to its original form as a premium audio serial. We've cast the show with daytime TV favorites and are proud to bring in new voices as well. What's old is new again. However, don't expect to hear organ chords, *Montecito* is modernizing the soap opera across music, dialogue, and storytelling."

With the arrival of CBS's *Beyond The Gates*, soap fans are buzzing about the return of daytime drama, while new audiences are discovering the medium for the first time. WBEZChicago is launching a soap history-focused podcast called *Making: Stories Without End* this April. *Montecito* kicks off a new era of soap opera, delivering a fresh, unfiltered take on the genre that began it all. Under the shadows of *Montecito*'s towering palm trees, there are those who fight to maintain success—and those who plot to steal it. A malignant narcissist infiltrates the lives of longtime residents, ensnaring them in a web of deception, sex, and scandal. Loyalties will crumble, families will fracture, and no secret is safe.

Soap opera fan favorite Rick Hearst (*General Hospital*, *The Bold and the Beautiful*) lends his unmistakable voice as the series announcer. The series features performances by Daytime Emmy winner Crystal Chappell (*Venice: The Series*, *Days of Our Lives*, *Guiding Light*) as Helena Granville-Belasco, a fiercely protective matriarch who isn't afraid to get her hands dirty. Daytime Emmy winner Vincent Irizarry (*All My Children*, *The Young and the Restless*), plays Bradley Belasco, the alpha businessman and ageless playboy. Daytime Emmy winner Mike Manning (*Beyond the Gates*) portrays JJ Roman, a reckless, alcoholic nepo-baby whose destructive choices threaten his family's legacy.

Hallmark and Lifetime movie favorite Peter Porte (*Days of Our Lives*) plays brooding Deacon Granville, a gay man burdened by his moral compass and his toxic marriage to a woman. Chelsea Rendon (*Vida*) simmers as Mina Rast-Granville, a treacherous narcissist with an iron grip on her *Montecito* lifestyle and marriage of convenience. Emme Rylan (*General Hospital*, *Guiding Light*) steps into the role of Bethany Gina Roman-Quinn, the overachieving COO of the family business who's as sharp as she is relentless. Marc Anthony Samuel (*General Hospital*) returns to the genre as Gio Carreri, an even-keeled resident confronted with ghosts from his past. Additional performances include Daytime Emmy winner Kelly Thiebaud (*General Hospital*) as the straight-talking Dr. Layla Carreri and Jake Getman (*American Dad!*) as Diego Granville, a young man growing up in the eye of the storm.

Montecito is created and executive produced by Emmy nominee Grant Rutter, with Andrew Pemberton-Fowler serving as Executive Story Editor and Trae Budde as Supervising Sound Editor. The series is independently produced. Together, they bring the intrigue, intensity, and glamour of soap operas into a bold, audio-first serial. The first two episodes of *Montecito* premiere Tuesday, April 22, 2025 with a Tuesday release thereafter. The official trailer and teaser are available now. Subscribe to the feed and find out more about the series on [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#).

Q&A with Grant Rutter, Creator and Executive Producer —

Q: What inspired you to create *Montecito*?

A: The cancellation announcement of *As the World Turns* and *Guiding Light* in 2009 had a profound effect on me. Shows that were considered institutions were going off the air after 70+ years on radio and

television. Around this time, independent web series were popping up and bringing familiar daytime faces to the internet before streaming became the industry norm. There have been many iterations of *Montecito* over the years, and while the concept has evolved, I always wanted to tell a story featuring a dominant and manipulative female character to serve as a protagonist alongside an ensemble of flawed characters. Throughout my career as a digital content producer, I have believed that the soap opera genre could adapt to the digital space and wanted to be a part of the journey to keep it alive.

Q: What was the most challenging thing about creating a soap opera for the ear?

A: The biggest challenge was writing a soap opera for an audio-first medium. Traditionally, these shows rely heavily on dramatic visual cues, reveals, cloak and dagger moments and dramatic entrances and exits. Our task was to maintain these heightened moments and adapt them to the audio medium while keeping the audience engaged. We also favored the characters and sound design doing the heavy lifting over the use of narration. This gives the audience freedom to visualize the show in their head, creating a unique experience for each listener. The idea was to replicate broadcast quality soaps in the form of audio so we wanted to stay true to that format and consumer experience.

Q: Tell us about the casting process...

A: Utilizing daytime TV actors was the cornerstone of the vision behind the series. Over the course of my career, I've worked across multiple soaps and can confirm that soap actors are the hardest working actors in the business. We wanted to tap into the incredibly loyal fandom of each actor. Some actors have appeared across multiple soap operas since the 80's and 90's, others have followings from the primetime, TV movies, and the independent world. It was also important to bring in new voices to the space to diversify the listening experience.

Q: Tell us about writing the show. What was your process? How long did it take?

A: The show evolved over many years, but it wasn't until I met Andrew Pemberton-Fowler at an industry event in LA that it began to take shape in the form of an audio series. Andrew's deep knowledge and reverence for the soap opera industry and his specific understanding and experience writing for the genre got this show off the ground. Together we broke the 10 episodes, crafted outlines, breakdowns and drafts starting in 2021. There was no ego, as we always focused on what was best for the show and stayed true to the nearly 100 year old genre we both love.

Q: What are some unique elements to the story?

A: A lot of research went into writing for a malignant narcissist for the character of Mina. Mina is a wife, a mother, a daughter-in-law and a businesswoman, each providing different social behaviors for someone who possesses that personality disorder. Chelsea Rendon (*Mina*) delivers a wild ride from minute-one and tackles the prickly character beautifully. We hope listeners love her or hate her as she maneuvers Montecito on a mission to grab what she wants! Other topics such as alcoholism, parental alienation and narcissistic abuse are covered. Additionally, we wanted to explore how a gay man could remain married to a woman in 2025. Peter Porte (*Deacon*) and Marc Anthony Samuel (*Gio*) effortlessly showcase navigating a LGBT relationship tortured by moral obligations and ghosts from their past.

Q: Your sound design is very sophisticated. How did you and Trae work together?

A: Broadcast quality sound design was always paramount to the production value of the series. In the spirit of modernizing the daytime soap opera, there was a concerted effort to utilize the traditional

elements of music, while balancing it with a modernized score. The immersive sound design is different across every scene as it builds the world of *Montecito* and contributes to the emotional beats of the story. We feature some original music from the Supervising Sound Editor Trae Budde, Patrick Emile, Steve DeConti and Dan Moretti. Original elements like this elevates the sound design and keeps each episode fresh for the audience.

Q: Which soap operas did you grow up watching?

A: My mother started watching *Guiding Light* in high school until its cancellation in 2009. She could have never guessed that the show she watched after school would have such a profound effect on me. We would watch *Guiding Light* and attend the fan club luncheons as a family growing up. Once I was in high school I decided I wanted to find my own soap and sampled all of them, but remained loyal to CBS Daytime. I admired the production value of *The Young and the Restless*, and fell in love with the glamour of *The Bold and the Beautiful*. When I discovered *Passions* on NBC, I found a soap I could call my own and remained thoroughly entertained by the madness of that show until its end in 2008. Each show had its unique personality and an online fandom to match. I discovered the Daytime Confidential podcast and the community of soap fans that cared about the industry and its comings and goings and behind the scenes rumblings as much as I did.

Q: What's next for *Montecito*?

A: Like all soap operas, the plan is to tell a story without end and continue the series. The first 10 episodes serve as a pilot series to go to the market and connect with the highly online and engaged audiences of daytime TV and those who enjoy audio dramas and support independent projects. We want to bring the genre back to its roots in audio form and present a new offering to audiences whether they grew up watching soaps, or want to experience a dramatic audio serial with a messy narcissist ruining the lives of Montecito's residents. To be continued...

Grant Rutter is an Emmy Nominated Podcast Producer. For over 14 years, he has created, produced and distributed original podcast programming. Grant developed HBO's *The Official Gilded Age Podcast*. Notably, Grant created and produced the Webby Award Winning podcast, *The Good Place: The Podcast* for NBC. The podcast was recognized with an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Creative Achievement in Interactive Media Within a Scripted Program. With a love and respect for soap operas, he created and produced the official companion podcast *Inside Salem: Days of Our Lives* for NBC/Corday/Sony.

Montecito is produced independently by Grant Rutter of Studio G with production support by [SoapKast](#). Grant Rutter serves as the creator and executive producer. Andrew Pemberton-Fowler serves as Executive Story Editor. Trae Budde is the Supervising Sound Editor. For press inquiries, contact [Christy Olson](#) at Christy@christyreports.com.



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