

## Coachella has redeemed themselves

By Solé Scott  
Editor-in-Chief

This year's Coachella was by far their best festival and was reminiscent of the cultural impact that originally made the event iconic.

After several lackluster lineups, Coachella is finally living up to its name, as headliners Sabrina Carpenter, Justin Bieber and Karol G transformed the desert of Indio, California into an unforgettable experience.

Starting on April 10 and April 17, Carpenter recreated the essence of a Broadway production with her large and decorative sets. Both weekend one and two performances were amazing, as her live vocals and special guests energized the crowd.

Weekend two was a superior show compared to weekend one because she brought out the one and only Madonna to sing "Vogue" and "Like a Prayer," which forced me to scream as if I was in the audience.

Bieber headlined April 11 and April 18, and at first, I was not a fan of the direction his performance took.

I was on a musical

high from the previous night with Carpenter, and here came Bieber with a laptop, memes and a minimalist set. This set was lackluster like his Grammy performance earlier this year.

However, weekend two was an improvement, as his experimental performance seemed to be constructed better.

He left the stage to join his fans in the front row and sing multiple times with live vocals that were consistent with the previous weekend. The special guests, SZA, Big Sean and Billie Eilish, were fantastic.

To sum up Bieber's performance this year as a headliner, it was for the fans that were with him when he first was on YouTube uploading covers. I am happy for the childhoods of so many being relived again.

Karol G was the first Latina to headline the festival in all its 26 years, which is an abomination. Her set was vibrant, energetic and emotionally powerful, proving exactly why she belonged in that headlining spot.

She was joined by Becky G for the song

"MAMIII," and both women were electric.

Their chemistry on stage made the performance even more powerful, creating one of the most unforgettable moments of the festival.

Other performers that I enjoyed were PinkPantheress, Tinashe, and Addison Rae.

Rae is someone I would completely skip over on my playlists, but I do have to say her set was engaging and reminiscent to the early days of Britney Spears.

The Strokes is a band that I knew of but never listened to their music.

They put on an impressive performance weekend two to close out their set.

During the song "OBLIVIOUS," footage of political crimes by the United States such as the deaths of Martin Luther King Jr., prime minister of Congo Patrice Lumumba, president of Bolivia Juan Torres and the description of Gaza University were displayed on the screens.

Overall, this Coachella was pleasurable, and I regret not buying a \$1,000+ ticket, but at least I enjoyed the experience on my couch for free.



PHOTO | TEEN VOUGE

Sabrina Carpenter, Justin Bieber and Karol G were this year's headliners for Coachella.



PHOTO | INSTAGRAM

Coachella attendees enjoying the the festival in Indio, California.

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## Turning pack pulls into profit margins



PHOTO | JAY'MI VAZQUEZ

An example of the glass display cases with Pokémon cards in them.

By Jay'Mi Vazquez  
Managing Editor

Last weekend, I walked into the Hard Hitting Card Shows event in Berlin, Connecticut, expecting a room full of collectors. Instead, it felt more like a fast-moving marketplace.

It was my first card show, so I did not have a prior experience to measure it against. Still, it did not take long to pick up the rhythm.

Rows of vendor tables were arranged like small businesses, each lined with glass cases of graded and raw Pokémon and sports cards, all carefully priced and displayed.

What stood out most was how natural it all felt to everyone else, pointing to a deeper connection within the community.

The trading card scene has shifted in recent years from a nostalgic hobby into something that overlaps heavily with investing and resale culture.

With grading services, online marketplaces and price-tracking tools, cards now have a kind of liquidity they did not when I was a kid.

It is only when stepping back that the scale of this market becomes clear. Reports have shown that the trading card market has grown into a multi-billion-dollar industry, far

beyond what it used to be.

That scale becomes clearer when entering the realm of a card show. People buy, sell and evaluate cards in real time, often with the same mindset used for stocks or sneakers.

At one table, a kid negotiated over a Pokémon card with surprising confidence, going back and forth over just a few dollars.

A few tables down, two adults debated the value of a graded sports card, checking recent sales on their phones before agreeing on a price.

The language was specific, almost technical, but the goal was simple: get a good deal.

Moving from table to table, that language became easier to understand. Conversations centered on condition, scarcity and timing.

A card tied to a popular set could rise or fall quickly depending on demand. The market felt reactive, even volatile at times, yet clearly expanding.

More people are entering the space, especially younger collectors who seem just as interested in value as they are in the cards themselves.

Shows like this are becoming physical hubs for what is otherwise a

largely online ecosystem.

Across North America, card conventions and local shows have seen surging attendance, with major events drawing hundreds of thousands of collectors annually.

What used to be niche gatherings are now central hubs that includes retail, online marketplaces and live trading events.

Instead of scrolling through listings, people meet face-to-face, making deals in real time.

That human interaction brings an energy that is hard to replicate digitally. And even with all the focus on money, the personal side of the hobby has not disappeared.

Some people dug through boxes chasing specific cards. Others were there to trade, talk and share a common interest.

That balance is what defines the hobby now. It is no longer driven solely by nostalgia, but nostalgia still plays a meaningful role.

Walking out of the show, collecting Pokémon cards no longer felt like a niche hobby.

Being surrounded by hundreds of people who share the same passion made it clear that collecting has become part of a bigger resale scene that will keep growing.

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