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## Your Future in the Hamptons, via Psychics

By T.J. Clemente

The role of psychics is once again moving front and center as people struggle with stress and the tough decisions they must make in this ever-changing, fast-paced world. Legends like the Oracle of Delphi in Greek mythology show that decision makers have often had a track record of covering all their options. To investigate this metaphysical phenomenon I interviewed leading East End psychics to learn about Tarot card readings, who goes to them, who gives them and what one can expect by having one.



Sansone-Braff, left, with Gina. Photo : T.J. Clemente

This summer on Route 114 on the corner of Bay Street in Sag Harbor, Gina has been sitting in front of her shop, Spiritual Oasis. She has been offering palm readings, Tarot card readings and other options. Her shop, which has artifacts from all over the mystical world, sells various accoutrements for those inclined to purchase items to effect, create, or instill energy. A single mother, Gina says her main role is to help people "understand themselves." She thinks of her work as spreading good energy and being a catalyst for positive change within the individual.

I brought renowned psychic Cindi Sansone-Braff, author of Grant Me a Higher Love, the ultimate "spiritual relationship book" to meet Gina. Both Gina and Sansone-Braff told tales of clients whose lives they have helped by instilling confidence and presenting new ways of looking at problems. They both explained that they do not manipulate clients nor pressure them to buy anything or sign up for another reading. In fact they explained that once the clients understand how Tarot card readings work they become fascinated. There are, according to Sansone-Braff, countless varieties of Tarot cards with new decks being created every day. Sansone-Braff uses the Ryder-Wait deck created in 1910, which is one of the most popular and influential Tarot decks of this era and is based on some of the oldest decks dating back to ancient Egypt. An average deck has 78 cards, and each card represents timeless themes and challenges everyone faces such as death, love and finances. Shuffled decks are influenced by myriad metaphysical forces that somehow open doors to explain one's past, present and perhaps future. The Tarot card reader does not predict the future but is skilled at interpreting what the Tarot card sequence portrays. That is the value one gets when they go to a Tarot card reader-otherwise they could just buy their own deck and flip cards. Both have been hired as entertainment at social events, doing readings for the guests. Many times this is how novices are introduced to the world of Tarot cards.

Sansone-Braff has been doing Tarot card readings for over 15 years. She started with her interest in all things metaphysical. "I just had a very natural understanding of the concepts and the process," she said. "I have read over a thousand or so spiritual books in my quest for understanding. It is the passion in my life."



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Gina also has been reading Tarot card for a while-25 years. She also has a practice on the west side of New York City in midtown. She has gambled on the high rents of Sag Harbor and said, "It was at first difficult, but my clients have really been wonderful, and I am happy with things right now."

It must be noted that Tarot card readings, like religion itself, is not for non-believers. There is a leap of faith involved in both practices. Sansone-Braff said, "It's just not for everybody. I find women are more interested than men. Men become equally devoted, but they are more skeptical at first." Sansone-Braff said her client list is made up of corporate accounts, celebrities, as well as people from all walks of life. "They just call saying a friend said they should call me," she explained. "I don't advertise that much and right now I work practically seven days a week."

Gina also says her practice has her working seven days a week. "People call when they feel a need for a reading," she explained. Readings can be done over the phone, although some people insist on in-person readings. Sansone-Braff closed by saying, "Like everything else, buyer beware. The skill of the practitioner is supremely important."

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