

# True West

## A rugged man is hard to find.

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There's no Wild West anymore. So says Austin (Nick Ferrucci) to his brother Lee (Ben Newman) in *True West*, the final production in Profile Theatre's season of Sam Shepard. The pair is cooped up in their mother's home in Southern California, where the Ivy League-educated Austin is working on a screenplay and Lee is—well, doing whatever it is Lee does. A smalltime crook, he's cagey when Austin asks him how else he spends his time. But when he happens upon a meeting between Austin and producer Saul Kimmer (Duffy Epstein), Lee takes the opportunity to invite the man to golf and pitch him an idea. Saul likes it. And is so often the case when men play golf, jealousy, violence and moral depravity ensue. As directed by Adriana Baer, both men begin unraveling, Lee like a scroll and Austin like a sweater. Exactly who is successful, free and good becomes muddled. Whether intimidating Austin or trying to get his typewriter to work, Newman moves like the pitbull Lee claims to once have owned. Ferrucci plays the quiet judge and indignant, entitled brat well, but he turns to a ham when pushed further. The chemistry between the two leads is dynamic, and their careful negotiation through *True West*'s wide emotional range is a thrill. But with the countless laments about the Decline of White Male Ruggedness since *True West* premiered more than 30 years ago, the play feels dated. Is there any need for cowboy eulogies in 2014?