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Magazine

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HOME & DESIGN ISSUE

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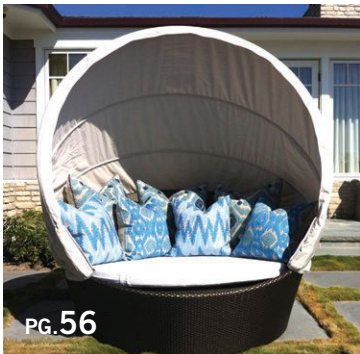
Chefs reap the benefits of freshly picked produce with on-site gardens outside homes and restaurants.
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JODY TIONGCO

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Correction: The February 2014 issue of Laguna Beach Magazine stated that the suit, shirt, tie and shoes on page 65 were from Canali when they were actually from Brioni, South Coast Plaza.



ON THE COVER: A SOUTH LAGUNA HOME OWNED BY ARCHITECT PAUL ZAJFEN; PHOTOGRAPHER: ROBERT HANSEN PHOTOGRAPHY



JODY TIONGCO

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PHOTO COURTESY OF 24 CAROTS, KIK PHOTOGRAPHY

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POWERED BY TAGGAR



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YOU ARE WHAT YOU DWELL IN

AS THE SAYING GOES, YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT. BUT, WHAT I THINK RESONATES MORE WITH AN individual's personality and taste is what they live in. When you walk into someone's personal space, or home, you immediately garner a sense of what they love—their passions, their lifestyles and their panache. For instance, I lean more toward a “beach-meets-shabby-chic” style. I love



reclaimed wood and coastal-inspired decor, yet I also have a faux antique chandelier and rugged farmhouse-style end tables that contrast nicely with some of the more beachy pieces in my home. As a recent homeowner, I'm always looking for ways to spice up my living spaces. My outdoor patio/balcony is my next project, and I've already gathered a few tips from our “Outdoor Escapes” feature (page 56), which takes a look at how you can create a backyard oasis. One takeaway that I'm keeping in mind as I devise the concept for my open-air retreat is to think about mixing and matching furniture, rather than buying standard, multipiece sets.

Additionally, those with little ones will be inspired by this issue's story, titled “Room to Grow,” on well-designed kids' rooms (page 62). From a modern, sleek space to a Hollywood glamour-style bedroom and posh nursery, kids' rooms these days are getting the Cadillac of design treatments. (And I thought having my own TV and purple futon in my room was cool growing up!)

For the architecture geeks in the room, our story that looks at five homes inspired by nature (page 48) won't disappoint. Laguna Beach has some incredible natural surroundings, and it's clear that many local architects have been stimulated by the environment, from the curves of the shoreline to the curvilinear shapes of the hillsides. In fact, you can actually go inside

the homes with LB Mag Plus—a way to interact firsthand with the content through the Taggar app. If you spot a small banner on any of these pages with the words “LB Mag Plus,” it means that images on those pages will take on a completely new life when you view them through the app. Go ahead, give it a whirl!

With the bounty of warm weather and longer daylight this spring, I encourage you to spruce up and renew your home or outdoor spaces in homage to the “spring cleaning” mentality. Reward yourself by having your friends or family over for an alfresco dinner party to relish in your creative labor. If you choose to do so, be sure to check out “Dining on the Deck” (page 34) for some helpful tips for home entertaining.

Good luck!

Cheers,
Alli Tong
Editor, Laguna Beach Magazine
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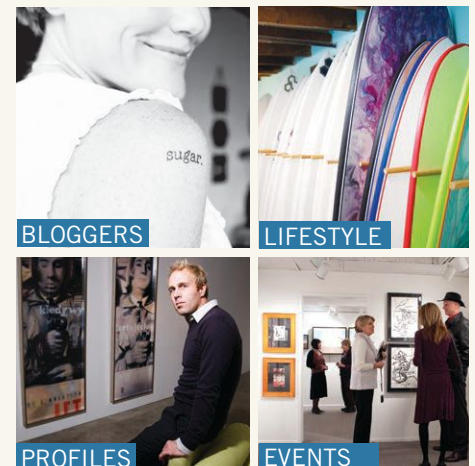
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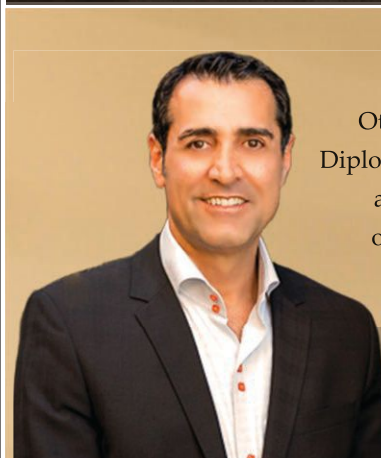
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calendar *of* events

ART | ACTIVITIES | ENTERTAINMENT

APRIL/MAY

JOAN MARCUS



Tony Award-winning musical "The Book of Mormon" comes to Segerstrom Center for the Arts in May.

"THE BOOK OF MORMON"

MAY 13-25; SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS, COSTA MESA

Winner of nine Tony Awards, "The Book of Mormon" has sold out Broadway shows and garnered praise from critics and audiences alike since its 2011 debut. Now, Southern California audiences will be able to experience the hilarity themselves as the show comes to Segerstrom Center for the Arts for a limited two-week engagement. The brainchild of South Park creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the musical will make for a hilarious—and outrageous—grown-up night out. (714-556-2787; scfta.org)

ART

**"WAYNE THIEBAUD:
AMERICAN MEMORIES"**

THROUGH JUNE 1; LAGUNA ART MUSEUM

Renowned painter Wayne Thiebaud, 93, suggested this retrospective exhibit and selected the works to be displayed, including his ever-popular still-life portraits of brightly colored pies, cakes and other desserts—part of the pop art movement—as well as landscapes and cityscapes. Thiebaud lived most of his life in Sacramento, but spent much of his childhood in Southern California, which continues to hold a special place in his heart. The exhibit will include six

prints and a painting, "Jolly Cones," which Thiebaud has promised to gift to the museum. (949-494-8971; lagunaartmuseum.org)

STUDIO ART EXPO AND FUN, FUNKY FURNISHINGS SHOW

MAY 3; LAGUNA CANYON ARTIST STUDIOS

The combined venture of Laguna Outreach for Community Arts and Laguna Canyon Artists mixes the experience of the site's monthly Artist Open Studios with a showing of home furnishings, hand-painted by studio artists. Visitors will be able to browse and purchase works of art—including paintings, sketches, sculptures and

more—directly from the artists. Additionally, the collection of unique furniture designs will please the quirkier home decorator in this one-of-a-kind showing. (949-363-4700; locaarts.org)

ENTERTAINMENT

"SIX DANCE LESSONS IN SIX WEEKS"

APRIL 26 - JUNE 1; THE LAGUNA PLAYHOUSE

Leslie Caron, star of such classic films as "An American in Paris" and "Gigi," will appear in this performance of "Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks." In the 11 years since its Broadway debut, this heartwarming comedy has been adapted to more than 50 productions. Telling the story of Lily, an ill-tempered widow, and her dance instructor, Michael, the production explores their initial conflict and eventual friendship that changes both of their lives forever. (949-497-2787; lagunaplayhouse.com)

LIVE! AT THE MUSEUM: EKPHRASIS

MAY 8; LAGUNA ART MUSEUM

In this latest installment of the Live! at the Museum series, a string quartet will perform the premiere of a piece composed by Alan Chan from 7-8 p.m. The music was commissioned as part of a collaboration between the museum, Laguna Beach Live! and the Laguna Dance Festival to reinterpret art through music as well as dance sequences created by a selected choreographer. The dance component will be unveiled at the dance festival in September. (949-494-8971; lagunaartmuseum.org)

AN EVENING WITH RITA RUDNER AND HER NEW DRESS

MAY 31; THE LAGUNA PLAYHOUSE

Award-winning comedian Rita Rudner has been entertaining audiences with her witty observations on daily life for years now, including ongoing performances in Las Vegas and even a show for the U.S. president. Now, she (and her new dress) will be treating audiences to a rare and intimate act that will leave guests rolling with laughter. (949-497-2787; lagunaplayhouse.com)

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UPCOMING CONCERTS AND SHOWS

ONGOING; THE COACH HOUSE, SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

Queen Nation, April 26, 8 p.m.; Marc Cohn, April 27, 7 p.m.; Simon Townshend, May 1, 8 p.m.; Al Stewart, May 3, 8 p.m.; Y&T, May 9, 8 p.m.; Funniest Housewives of Orange County, May 10, 8 p.m.; Canned Heat, May 22, 8 p.m.; The Marshall Tucker Band, May 25, 7 p.m.; Honk, May 31, 8 p.m. (949-496-8930; thecoachhouse.com)

ACTIVITIES AND CHARITY

HEALTHY GIRL FESTIVAL

APRIL 27; FESTIVAL OF ARTS GROUNDS

The second annual Healthy Girl Festival, presented by Soroptimist International of Laguna Beach, aims to educate young women on the importance of healthy minds and bodies and inspire them to follow their dreams. This year's event encourages attendees to contemplate the lack of opportunities for girls in other parts of the world. Multiple screenings of Malala Yousafzai's eye-opening film, "Girl Rising," will be shown in addition to a live band performance and an interactive public art project. (silagunabeach.org)

MIXOLOGY CLASSES

APRIL 30, MAY 28; THE ST. REGIS MONARCH BEACH

Mixology masters demonstrate how to handcraft perfectly balanced margaritas on April 30, and then, on May 28, they demystify the bloody mary, kicking off the iconic drink's 80th anniversary. Called "the world's most complex cocktail," the bloody mary was created in 1934 by a bartender at The St. Regis New York. Cocktail classes run from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Lobby Lounge. Participants will enjoy delicious drinks, light bites and live music. Reservations are required. (800-722-1543; stregisbm.com)

ART OF GIVING GALA: PUTTING ON THE GLITZ

MAY 10; MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH

Held annually at the Montage Laguna Beach resort, the Art of Giving Gala will once again prove an evening to remember as it raises funds

for the Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach. With a 1920s-inspired theme of Putting on the Glitz, the gala will feature hors d'oeuvres, signature cocktails, dinner, a live auction, performances and a touching presentation highlighting the wonderful work done by the club. (949-494-2535; bgclagunabeach.org)

19TH ANNUAL A TASTE FOR CHARITY MAY 29; SEVEN-DEGREES

Hosted by the Laguna Board of Realtors & Affiliates Charitable Assistance Fund, the annual A Taste for Charity event brings together business owners, residents and artists alike for a good cause: to support some of the community's most-deserving charitable organizations. This year, some of the beneficiaries include the CSP Youth Shelter, First Thursdays Artwalk, two Laguna Beach high school scholarships, Laguna Beach Seniors, No Square Theatre and Laguna Food Pantry. The event will feature a silent auction, raffle, music and more. (949-497-2474; lagunaboardofrealtors.com) LBM



The Art of Giving Gala benefits the Boys & Girls Club.

JODY TONGCO



ONGOING

Laguna's farmers market meets every Saturday.

LIVE! AT THE MUSEUM SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH, 7-8 P.M., LAGUNA ART MUSEUM (949-494-8971; LAGUNAARTMUSEUM.ORG); **SAWDUST STUDIO ART CLASSES** VARIOUS DATES/TIMES, SAWDUST FESTIVAL GROUNDS (949-494-3030; SAWDUSTARTFESTIVAL.ORG); **KIDS' ART STUDIO** THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 2-4 P.M., LAGUNA ART MUSEUM (949-494-8971; LAGUNAARTMUSEUM.ORG); **MONTHLY WINE TASTING PARTY** FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH, LAGUNA CANYON WINERY (949-715-9463; LAGUNACANYONWINERY.COM); **ZEROTRASH BEACH CLEANUP** FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH, 10 A.M. TO NOON, VARIOUS LOCATIONS (ZEROTRASH.ORG/LAGUNA); **FIRST THURSDAYS ART WALK** FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH, 6-9 P.M. (FIRSTTHURSDAYSARTWALK.COM); **FREE YOGA IN THE PARK** MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY, AND SATURDAYS 8 A.M., TREASURE ISLAND PARK (949-494-9928; YOGAINTHEPARK.BLOGSPOT.COM); **LAGUNA BEACH FARMERS MARKET** SATURDAYS, 8 A.M. TO NOON, FOREST AVENUE AND LAGUNA CANYON ROAD; **LAGUNA LAUGHTER CLUB** SUNDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, 8 A.M., AND SATURDAYS, 10 A.M., MAIN BEACH (949-376-1939; LYINSTITUTE.ORG); **NATURE HIKES** VARIOUS DATES/TIMES, LAGUNA CANYON FOUNDATION (949-497-8324; LAGUNACANYON.ORG)

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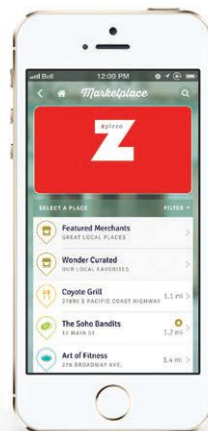
JESSICA CASPERSON

ON THE AIR

Laguna's newest—and only—talk radio station, KX@OneLaguna, debuted in March. In partnership with local station KX 93.5, KX@OneLaguna features “smart talk” programming, including auto trends, parenting, fitness and fashion, in addition to blues, jazz and soft rock, with many of the shows hosted by Laguna's residents. The studio for the new, online-only station is located inside the building of One Laguna, a high-tech, interactive media center for locals and visitors, at 225 Forest Ave. KX@OneLaguna streams online 24/7 at kx.onelaguna.com. (onelaguna.com) —A.T.

WONDER APP MAKES GIFT GIVING EASY

Go green this year with gift giving by using the new Wonder app, created by Laguna Beach resident Gerry Goldstein and San Francisco resident Paige Cattano. Debuted in February, the app gives consumers the convenience of giving e-gift cards to friends and family directly from their smartphones, and the recipient can accept it immediately from his or her phone or computer. Additionally, the virtual gift card is linked directly to the recipients' credit cards via the app, so users never have to frantically shuffle through their purses or wallets to find a gift card. In fact, Laguna-based businesses already have adopted the technology, including The Rooftop Lounge, House of Big Fish and Ice Cold Beer, K'ya Bistro, La Casa del Camino, ZPizza and a few others. “Wonder is all about helping great local merchants access cutting-edge gifting technology to get discovered, and then transact seamlessly with customers,” Gerry says. “... Wonder [also] lets consumers give local, unique and thoughtful gifts versus the generic cards you find on the grocery store gift card rack.” (gowonder.com) —A.T.



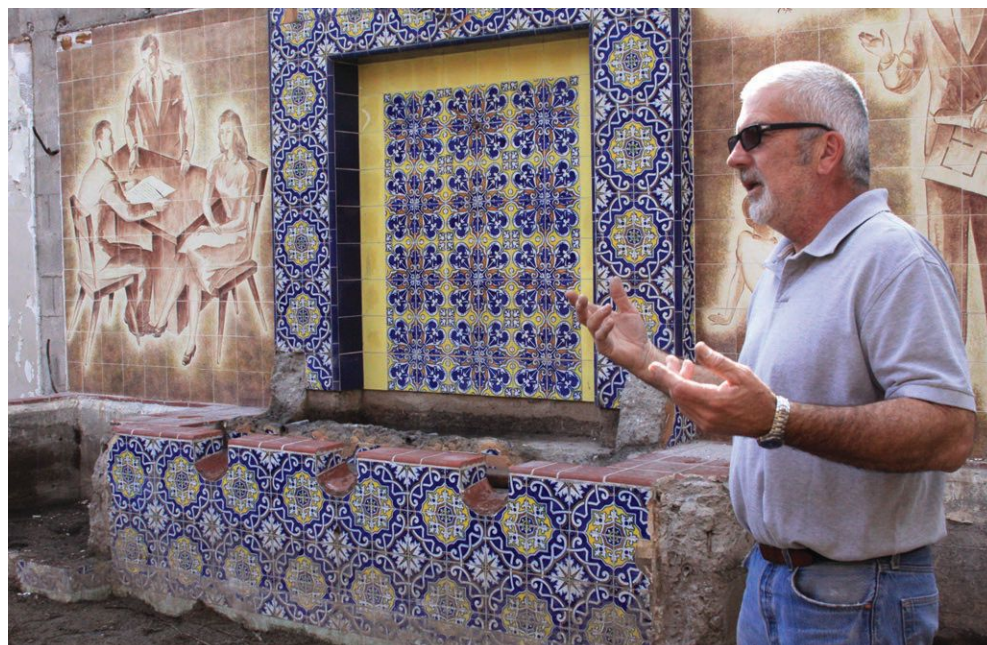
MITCH RIDDER

In February, 56 men and women endured the physically and mentally demanding summer lifeguard tryouts—the first day of what would be many more to come for the majority of participants that successfully completed the series of strenuous events. In addition to a 1,000-meter swim, competitors must go through a series of beach swims and sprints to test their mental and physical capacity. At the day's end, 53 of the participants passed and were admitted

into the lifeguard department's training program, an intensive 100-hour, eight-day training academy that teaches cadets—the lifeguard department's term for rookie lifeguards—the skills to recognize and make rescues, promote beach safety, provide emergency first aid and enforce all local beach ordinances. After the cadets complete the training, the highest-ranking guards are hired to protect city beaches for the summer season, which begins June 21. —A.T.

UNEARTHING HISTORY

Buried treasure still exists: A forgotten landmark, dating back to as early as 1945, was recently unearthed during a renovation of an Ocean Avenue building, originally home to the now-defunct Laguna Federal Savings and Loan Association. While removing a concrete slab behind a wall-sized fountain, about which the construction team already knew, a 4-foot tiled pool was discovered at the fountain's base. This salvaged relic will become part of the newly refurbished building, which will house Dom Demarco's Pizzeria & Bar. The building, designed by Aubrey St. Clair—who also designed City Hall, the Laguna Beach County Water District building and others in town—is one of the first in the city to receive historic status based on restoration plans. Those plans aim to rewind the clock back to 1952 with the design, materials, windows, doors, tile work and roof features, as well as renovating the patio and tile fountain back to their original glory. —A.T.



ANDREA ADELSON

LAGUNA'S SISTER CITY GETS A VISITOR

Laguna Beach's newest city sibling, San Jose del Cabo, in Mexico, received a visitor from its far-flung Southern California relative earlier this year. Christopher Ybarra, a student at the Laguna College of Art & Design, was the first exchange student selected and sponsored by the Laguna Beach Sister Cities Association (LBSCA). Christopher spent 10 days in the vacation destination, where he met the mayor and engaged in the arts scene, including visiting 18 galleries—one of which was Francois Paris' O Gallery, which was featured during the Mexican city's First Thursdays Art Walk on Jan. 9. "In San Jose del Cabo, I did mainly plein-air painting, which was new to me," Christopher says. "Now ... I see a new confidence in the way I approach a painting. In total, I gained a great life experience by navigating through a foreign city and connecting with galleries." In reciprocity, LBSCA plans to host a return visit by a young artist from San Jose del Cabo this summer. —A.T.



THE ST. REGIS MONARCH BEACH, THE RITZ-CARLTON, LAGUNA NIGUEL AND MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH WERE NAMED AGAIN TO THE AAA FIVE DIAMOND LIST OF HOTELS FOR 2014.



DANIELA WALSH

SINGING THE TOWN'S PRAISES

Longtime Laguna Beach resident Mike McCaffrey has penned a melody as an ode to the town he cherishes that may have Lagunans humming along soon. The 80-year-old's aptly titled "Laguna" song, which he wrote and recorded late last year, tells the story about a young girl in love. To bring his vision of a starry-eyed teenage girl to life, Mike enlisted Laguna Beach High School student Marlie Becker. The breezy and beachy tune includes the sounds of guitar, ukulele, drums and Marlie's enchanting female voice that sings about the allure of this magical seaside city: "Laguna, nestled by the sea/is softly calling you and me." Mike plans to give the song out for free, however, Hobie Surf Shop and Sound Spectrum Music & Memorabilia have agreed to stock copies. —A.T.

RENEW AND HYDRATE WITH OBAGI



The Obagi Skin Health Institute recently opened the doors to its ocean-view Laguna Beach office, where Dr. Zein Obagi and his expertly trained staff offer some of the most advanced skincare techniques available. One of their most popular treatments, the HydraFacial, is the perfect maintenance facial to keep skin radiant and healthy as summer approaches. The rejuvenating 60-minute treatment uses a series of cleansers and serums to repair and protect skin while extracting oil build-ups and damaged tissue. As guests relax in the calming facial room, state-of-the-art, crystal-free microdermabrasion infuses a light serum into the skin while simultaneously exfoliating to reveal glowing skin. Much milder than traditional microdermabrasion, the treatment requires no downtime yet still achieves results. Afterward, a soothing plumping treatment restores skin's firmness before skin is exposed to LED lights, which promote collagen production and healing. To calm skin, a soothing dry ice treatment is applied before a hot towel wrap and renewal serum. Suitable for even sensitive skin, anyone looking for a fresh and renewed complexion will surely enjoy this revitalizing service. (949-667-5115; obagiskin.com) —B.B.

TAKING A STAND

As the saying goes, "If you make it, they will come." This statement couldn't be truer at El Morro Elementary School, where an after-school lemonade-selling club has raised the most money in its history for research to cure childhood cancer. Teacher Jennifer Carlson's Laguna Lovin' Lemonade club raised \$408 for Alex's Lemonade Stand, a national charity dedicated to finding a cure for pediatric cancer. The event sold more than 400 cups at \$1 per cup during lunch, far surpassing last year's total of \$250. As part of the club, students learn about fundraising, marketing, advertising, public relations, cost-benefit analysis and other companies with a philanthropic focus, in addition to designing a new logo for the business. At the fundraiser, local apparel company The Soul Project donated shirts for the participants to sport. —A.T.



A GIVING HEART

One Laguna Beach resident is truly wearing his heart on his sleeve. Kelly Cornwell, who is also director of sales for UPS, was among the worldwide shipping company's top employees in the running for UPS' Jim Casey Community Service Award, the highest honor that can be given to UPS workers. As the winner at the UPS corporate office, Kelly received \$1,000. Yet, instead of saving it for his family, the father of two donated the money right back to his favorite nonprofit organization, Community Service Programs (CSP), which runs a children's shelter in Laguna. But this wasn't Kelly's first time giving back—in 2003, the UPS Foundation gave Kelly an unexpected check for \$20,000, a reward for hundreds of service hours that he donated to the community over the past several years as part of the company's Neighbor to Neighbor volunteer program. Yet again, Kelly, who has served as a CSP youth shelter advisory board member and chairman for more than a decade, donated the money toward remodeling the aging kitchen at CSP's Laguna shelter. In fact, through his time, monetary donations and sponsorships, Kelly has helped to raise more than \$200,000 for CSP through local efforts and the UPS Foundation. Now that's wearing your heart on your sleeve. —A.T.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB BREAKFAST



The Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach held its sixth annual Community Partners Breakfast on March 26 at seven-degrees, where approximately 150 leaders and organizations from Laguna Beach and Orange County, including teachers, city councilmen and police and fire department members, gathered to support the nonprofit that empowers young people. After indulging in a breakfast spread, attendees heard from President Bill Wood and Executive Director Pam Estes on the recent achievements of the club and future goals. Moreover, last year, the club served more than 1,500 youths at its clubhouses in addition to giving out over 7,000 meals to children in need. In fact, the Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach accomplished all of this while maintaining a positive cash flow—for the fifth year in a row. Yet, the club acknowledged that without the help and support of all the community volunteers over the past year, none of it would have been possible. —A.T.



1

New STORE OPENINGS

1 SURFWEAR MEETS STYLE

Combining elements of art, surf and retro-inspired fashions, Latitude Supply Co., which recently opened its flagship store at 1550 Pacific Coast Hwy., will give Lagunans another reason to go shopping. Influenced by nautical scenes, the store offers clothing for men and women, including jackets, shorts, T-shirts, dresses and more. “I was born and raised here, and my collections have always been inspired by the imagery and scenery of our beautiful community,” says Jonathan Riff, founder of Latitude Supply Co. “It is an honor to be able to come back and be able to open my first shop in Laguna Beach.” (949-715-5800; latitudesupplyco.com)

2 A PLACE FOR POOCH

Everyone knows that dogs are more than

welcome here in Laguna. And while there are many pooch-friendly places in town, there’s nothing quite like Naked Dog Bistro, at 424 Forest Ave. Conceptualized last summer by mother-and-daughter team Charlotte Bloom and Lindsay Poe, Naked Dog Bistro is a special eatery and retail boutique dedicated to our four-legged friends. In fact, the bistro prides itself on providing nourishing foods and treats (including gluten-free chow), as well as products that aid in overall health and fitness, for dogs. (949-715-9900; nakeddogbistro.com)

3 A FINE FOOTING

A new store featuring Italian shoes, Quattro Passi, has opened at 305 Forest Ave., Ste. 103. Owned by Gabriella Caltabiano, the shop features high-quality and comfortable, yet stylish,

footwear by brands that have been staples in Italy but are unknown in the United States. This spring, Quattro Passi is slated to bring Italian handbags, followed by children’s shoes in the summer. (949-494-6500; quattropassishoes.us)

4 ONE-STOP SHOP

Open since last December, Jasmine Street General Store, owned by local resident Carol Robinson and located at 397 N. Pacific Coast Hwy., brings a feeling of a true neighborhood shop with a selection of toys, gifts, local art, handcrafted jewelry and other items, as well as beach chair and boogie board rentals. “The location is perfect for me—I can walk to work,” Carol says. “To be able to live and work in Laguna is a dream come true.” (949-463-8618; jasminest.com)

5 BEACH COUTURE

Established for the sun-worshipping beach bunny with an eye for style, Ruby Mint, a luxury beach towel and lifestyle brand, merges style with the seashore. The brand offers oversized towels large enough to fit two people with bold, playful prints in exquisite textiles. “First, growing up on the beach, everyone’s beach bag made certain to have the best and most stylish essentials: sun-screen, hats, swimwear,” says Laguna native and founder Erin O’Neil. “But then, people would cruise down to the beach with a ratty, old beach towel that had been passed on for decades. It was the missing piece for the oh-so-chic beach-going gal.” While Ruby Mint does not have a storefront location, products are sold on its website and at Laguna Supply. (ruby-mint.com) —A.T. LBM



2



4

COMMUNITY

SCHOOLPOWER'S DINNER DANCE: SOWING THE SEEDS

1 Mark and Lisa Rossi 2 Jason and Gorjana Reidel, Iva and Andrew Pawling 3 Joanne Culverhouse, Leisa Winston, Betsy and Gary Jenkins
4 Barbara McMurray 5 Kirk and Nina Langton, Amy and Joe Kramer 6 Allison and Tom Motherway 7 David and Holly Wilson



SchoolPower's 29th annual Dinner Dance, Sowing the Seeds, brought together teachers, administrators and families in support of an initiative to equip classrooms with the latest technology for interactive learning. The event, held at Montage Laguna Beach, netted more than \$225,000 for Laguna Beach schools. Attendees participated in a silent auction with prizes that included dining, sports, travel and entertainment experiences as well as items donated by many of Laguna's local businesses. During dinner, a short film paid tribute to Top of the World Elementary School Principal Ron La Motte, who will retire at the end of this school year. The crowd then went on to pledge more than \$140,000 toward this year's SchoolPower Fund-a-Need, which will be used to purchase iPads, Apple TVs and Google Chromebooks for student use. Just when pledging began to slow, parents Holly and David Wilson committed \$37,880, which thoroughly reinvigorated supporters. SchoolPower also presented a video with testimonies from teachers and students about the benefits of technology in the classroom. The addition of new tech tools will build on last year's upgrade to the Laguna Beach Unified School District's wireless network. Dinner concluded with a live auction that included a New York Fashion Week trip from Gorjana and Jason Reidel, a Chef's Table dinner at Studio at Montage Laguna Beach and a stay in a Puerto Vallarta vacation home donated by Holly and David Wilson. Guests then celebrated with music and dancing, a green screen photo opportunity and freshly made mini doughnuts. (lbschoolpower.org) —L.D.



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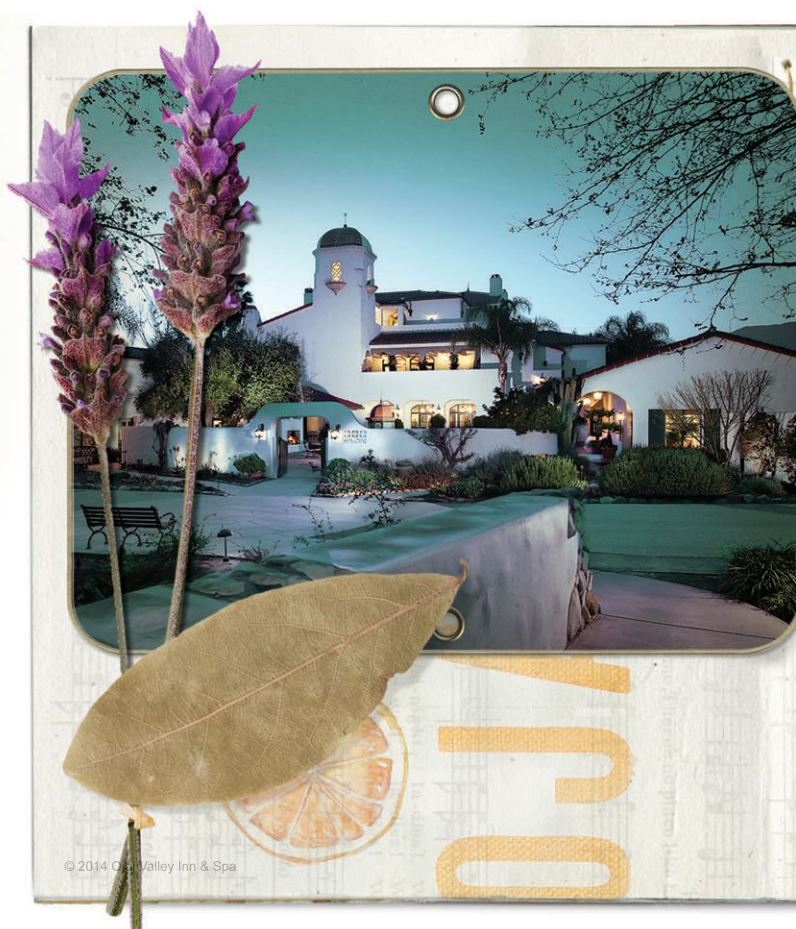
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COMMUNITY

ILLUMINATION FOUNDATION'S TABLE FOR 10 DINNER

1 Executive Chef David Fuñe of Splashes at Surf & Sand Resort 2 Illumination Foundation children's choir 3 Jack Toan, Paul Leon 4 Chef Rayne Frey of Tabu Grill 5 Appetizers by Future Food Farms 6 Spa Grand Ballroom 7 Executive Chef Lindsay Smith-Rosales of Nirvana Grille



In Orange County alone, there are thousands of children without a stable home. Helping remedy this growing problem is the Illumination Foundation, founded in 2007. On March 23 at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa, more than 320 of the organization's supporters came together to raise an estimated \$360,000 that will fund ongoing housing assistance, health care, workforce development and educational services for families in need. At the event, chefs from all over the county created multicourse meals for attendees, and each table had a unique menu and table decor courtesy of one of the participating restaurants. Laguna chefs played an important role in the evening, with a number of notable names cooking in support of the cause: David Fuñe of Splashes at Surf & Sand Resort; Lindsay Smith-Rosales of Nirvana Grille; Casey Overton of The Loft at Montage Laguna Beach; and Noberto Village and Rayne Frey of Tabu Grill. Other event highlights included a touching performance by 14-year-old Maddy Vance, a singer/songwriter who uses music to inspire other young people to stay strong as they face their own challenges. A live auction helped the Illumination Foundation exceed its fundraising goal by \$10,000, with multiple winners taking home chefs packages, specialized bikes and watches, vacation escapes and more. (ifhomeless.org) —A.H.

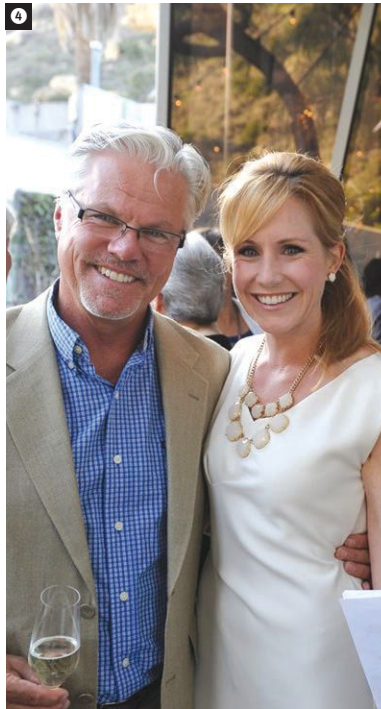
COMMUNITY

LAGUNA BEACH ALLIANCE FOR THE ARTS' ART STAR AWARDS

1 Cindy Prewitt, Sara and Malcolm Warner **2** Carl and Susan St.Clair, Susan Davis, Carol Reynolds **3** Joe Hanauer **4** Mark Dressler, Erika Schindele **5** Cheryl Ekstrom (second from left) and family **6** Louis Longi, Siân Poeschl, Sharbie Higuchi **7** Jodie Gates (third from left) and members of the Laguna Dance Festival



MICHAEL KUNICH



Celebrating the vibrant arts community, Laguna Beach Alliance for the Arts hosted its eighth annual Art Star Awards, attended by more than 260 supporters on April 6 at seven-degrees. Following an elegant dinner and a keynote address by Laguna's own Carl St.Clair, music director of the Pacific Symphony, seven awards were presented in Academy Awards style with trophies crafted by local bronze sculptor Louis Longi. A Lifetime Achievement Award paid tribute to Mark Dressler, longtime performing arts director at Thurston Middle School and Laguna Beach High School. Other awards included Artist of the Year: Jodie Gates, who founded Laguna Dance Festival; Best New Arts Program: Live! Music & Kids (Laguna Beach Live!); Outstanding Arts Collaboration: Art & Nature (Laguna Art Museum and partner groups); Arts Leadership: Rosemary Swimm, for organizing the Plein Air Invitational last year; Individual Arts Patron of the Year: Joe Hanauer; and Corporate Arts Patron of the Year: PIMCO Foundation. Additionally, a \$5,000 inspiration grant went to Cheryl Ekstrom for her Broken/Unbroken/Broken sculpture project, which will depict journeys and adventures in life, broken and unbroken. The evening also included a presentation of "The Sock Thief," a charming animated short film by Laguna College of Art & Design students, featuring a soundtrack performed by Laguna Concert Band under the direction of Ed Peterson, who received last year's grant for this collaborative project. (lagunabeacharts.org) —S.S.

GRILLED CHEESE, PLEASE!

Laguna eateries pay homage to this American classic with savory selections that are all grown up.

By Beth Fhaner | Photos by Jody Tiongco



Tommy Bahama serves up a modern take on a classic sandwich with the addition of succulent pieces of lobster.

AS THE FRENCH KNOW ALL TOO WELL, THERE'S nothing more satisfying than indulging in the simple, but delicious pairing of bread and cheese. And, as April is Grilled Cheese Month, we decided it was the right time to seek out some of the best places around town to enjoy this popular sandwich. No need to order off the kids' menu—from gourmet to traditional-style sandwiches, several Laguna restaurants offer an adult version of this childhood favorite. Whether a delectable grilled cheese sandwich is paired with soup, french fries or a la carte, this comfort fare always hits the spot.

GOURMET LOBSTER

Grilled cheese enthusiasts craving a gourmet version of their favorite need look no further than Tommy Bahama Laguna Beach Bar & Grill, which is located in the Heisler Building in the heart of downtown and features a decadent lobster grilled cheese sandwich on its menu. With succulent pieces of fresh Maine lobster and four types of melted fromage on thick slices of grilled sourdough, this rich, flavorful entree is a must-try for grilled cheese sandwich connoisseurs. Served with a bowl of tomato bisque, this satisfying option is large enough to share—depending on your appetite, of course. (949-376-6886; tommybahama.com)

BEACHSIDE VERMONT CHEDDAR

The Deck on Laguna Beach offers another incredible oceanfront dining experience with a mouth-watering grilled cheese sandwich on its menu. Available as a lunch or dinner entree, the Deck's version of this popular sammie features first-rate aged Vermont cheddar, Nueske bacon and caramelized onions served on grilled French sourdough bread with butter pickles and kettle chips. With appealing flavors and that amazing ocean view, this beachside eatery's grilled cheese is delish and will certainly please any palate. Cheese aficionados with a taste for the white, semi-hard



Bacon complements this grilled cheese at The Deck.

Vermont cheddar will especially appreciate this scrumptious, cheesy sandwich.

"When we set out to create a grilled cheese for our menu, we wanted to focus on simplicity, but utilize choice, quality ingredients," Executive Chef Rainer Schwarz of The Deck on Laguna Beach says. (949-494-6700; deckonlaguna.com)

EUROPEAN STYLE

Further up Coast Highway, at Laguna Coffee Co.—which features an inviting patio—diners can enjoy a grilled three cheese panini consisting of thick slices of Swiss, cheddar and provolone served on a choice of whole wheat, sourdough or ciabatta bread. A scrumptious item on the lunch menu, the cheesy, European-style grilled sandwich is served with a side of chips or sliced carrots. Pair your perfect panini with one of Laguna Coffee Co.'s delicious beverages, and be sure to save room for dessert—freshly made cookies, cupcakes and slices of cake are available for a sweet ending to your tasty grilled cheese. (949-494-6901; lagunacoffeeco.com)

GRUYERE GOODNESS

For another pleasant alfresco lunch at one of the most popular patios in town, grilled cheese lovers should head to Zinc Cafe & Market. Available only as a whole sandwich (not part of the half sandwich plate), Zinc's grown-up grilled cheese consists of delectable, melted Gruyere cheese on grilled sourdough bread with pickles, marinated

Julia Prevost Manhattan Hair Artesian In Laguna Beach

After a decade as the highly sought-after styling and coloring talent at the chic James Bentley Salon of 57th street Manhattan, NY, Julia Prevost has started performing her Hair Artistry here in Laguna Beach.

Challenging the factory-like environment created by many salons and stylists, Julia prefers taking the time with each client to get to know their hair and their personality, with the goal of making one complement the other. Julia is extremely warm and welcoming, making her clients feel at ease and confident in her ability to fulfill their styling needs.

"I'm extremely excited to become a part of the Laguna Beach community."

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At Zinc Cafe, a comfort food classic is all grown up.

onions and tomato served with whole grain mustard and arugula. For those with a heartier appetite, diners can always opt to add a cup of soup or vegetarian chili to their grilled cheese goodness. (949-494-6302; zinccafe.com)

DELISH DUO

Nothing goes together better than the combination of a savory grilled cheese sandwich and a bowl of creamy tomato soup—it's the



Savor a traditional grilled cheese with a side of tomato soup and kettle chips at Hennessey's Tavern.

ultimate comfort food. At Hennessey's Tavern, patrons can find this tasty pairing consisting of a trio of melted fromages, including Irish cheddar, Swiss and Jack cheese on grilled sourdough served with a bowl of tomato bisque and a side of kettle chips. Whether it's a chilly spring day or you're just in need of a comfort food fix, this grilled cheese sandwich and soup pairing is the ticket to food paradise. (949-494-2743; hennesseystavern.com)

TRADITIONAL WHITE CHEDDAR

At The Cliff Restaurant, overlooking the ocean and Main Beach area, lunchtime diners can indulge in the grilled white cheddar cheese sandwich while gazing out at the waves of the gorgeous Pacific. The Cliff's classic version of this sandwich features oozing aged white cheddar cheese on grilled sourdough served with a choice of french fries, pasta salad or fresh fruit. Patrons can also opt for the soup and sandwich combo and get a half grilled cheese sandwich with a cup of clam chowder or soup of the day, served with a side of fries or pasta salad. Either way, you can't go wrong while noshing on a yummy white cheddar grilled cheese and viewing the spectacular scenery. (949-494-1956; thecliffrestaurant.com)

Many other Laguna establishments serve adult versions of grilled cheese sandwiches on their menus, including Madison Square & Garden Cafe, Heidelberg Café & Bistro, Ruby's Diner and Husky Boy Burgers, which boasts grilled cheese options with ham, turkey or bacon. Additionally, Three Seventy Common Kitchen + Drink sometimes features miniature grilled cheese sandwiches on its "bites" menu; an inventive short rib grilled cheese was a recent rendition.

So, whether you intend to honor Grilled Cheese Month or continue the celebration far beyond April with a traditional-style grilled cheese sandwich or something a bit more adventurous, Laguna eateries are armed with an array of options to satisfy your craving for the ultimate bread and cheese indulgence. **LBM**



The grilled cheese made with oozing white cheddar begs to be devoured at The Cliff Restaurant.



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GIVING GYROTONICS A WHIRL

Laguna's Jennine Baillie is inspiring motion.

Section by Somer Tejwani



JODY TONGCO

SURE, YOU'VE TRIED PILATES, BUT EVER HEARD OF GYROTONIC EXERCISE? IT INVOLVES CIRCULAR movements and combines elements of tai chi, yoga, dance and Pilates. Former dancer Juliu Horvath created the innovative Gyrotonic method after studying yoga and meditation following an injury—a ruptured Achilles tendon during his time as a principal dancer with the Houston Ballet. Juliu developed his intensive exercise approach with a mat on the floor, then invented the Gyrotonic Expansion System, also called the expansion tower or pulley tower.

Jennine Baillie of Inspiring Motion Laguna, which offers instruction in Pilates, Gyrokinesis (using a stool and mat) and Gyrotonic (using the tower), has known that she wanted to practice Gyrotonic exercise since the first moment she tried it. While the system is beneficial for general fitness, it's also used to help those recovering from injuries or surgery. Jennine uses her dance background—she previously practiced both ballet and gymnastics—to create engaging workout sessions for her clients. Here, the certified instructor shares her insights on experimenting with the new method.

Laguna Beach Magazine: How did you get involved in Gyrotonic exercise?

Jennine Baillie: In 2007, I was studying Pilates and noticed one of the expansion towers in the studio. I became curious—it looked like a medieval stretching chamber. I tried it and it just felt so good on my body. I was already certified in Pilates and there's a lot of synergy between Pilates and Gyrotonics, so I got certified in it, too.

LBM: Why has it been so great for you?

JB: When I started, I had chronic shoulder problems and the machine has really helped my body. It heals and stretches your body, and is adaptable to fit any ability. From people with disabilities to professional athletes, anyone can do it.

LBM: For those who have never tried Gyrotonics, what advice do you have?

JB: Take a series of at least eight to 10 private classes before trying group classes. There is also Gyrokinesis, which uses a stool and a mat (instead of the expansion tower) that can be done in a group setting.

LBM: Any particular type of gear we need to get?

JB: The studio will have the tower; just make sure you're dressed in comfortable clothes.

LBM: When you aren't doing Gyrotonics, what other types of physical activities do you like to engage in?

JB: I love working out on the elliptical every day, doing Pilates, hiking, playing golf as well as swimming.

LBM: We've heard Gyrotonics can help your golf game. Is that true?

JB: Absolutely, especially with the rotation that happens in golf.

LBM: For readers who have tried Pilates and are thinking about dabbling in Gyrotonics, what advice do you have?

JB: If you like Pilates, you're going to love Gyrotonics. It will enhance your balance, [and] create strength and flexibility.



ULTRALIGHTWEIGHT STRIPED CHI TANK, \$42, at Athleta, Fashion Island, Newport Beach (949-717-6650; athleta.com)



LULULEMON REVERSIBLE BANG BUSTER HEADBAND, \$18, at Spa Montage, Laguna Beach (949-715-6010; spamontage.com)

GEARING UP

Start moving with our top picks for active types.

Stretch, strengthen and work on your posture during a Gyrotonic workout. Gyms that choose to focus on this up-and-coming method will have the necessary equipment to complete the exercises, but it's also important to dress comfortably. With a few simple pieces of gear, you'll be ready to get longer, leaner and stronger in no time. **LBM**



MANDUKA 25-OUNCE STAINLESS STEEL WATER BOTTLE, \$18, at The Pearl Laguna boutique, Laguna Beach (949-715-1674; thepearllaguna.com)



YOGITOES SKIDLESS MAT TOWEL, \$64, at YogaWorks, Laguna Beach (949-415-0955; yogaworks.com)

BEYOND YOGA ESSENTIAL LEGGING, \$69, at Ritual Yoga Arts, Laguna Beach (949-715-7005; ritualyogaarts.com)



DINING ON THE DECK

Top event stylists offer their best tips for a backyard soiree.

Section by Somer Tejwani

COURTESY OF 24 CARROTS, SILVER FEATHER PHOTO



Heather Murphy of Storied Rentals recommends neutral bases with pops of color for an elegant table setting.

NOW THAT SUMMER IS ALMOST HERE, IT'S TIME to take your dining—and entertaining—outside. From creating the perfect ambience to the tablescape and decor, our local event experts are full of tips and tricks for masterminding the perfect soiree.

Start with creating the right environment. For the color palette, Heather Murphy of Laguna's Storied Rentals, which rents vintage glam pieces

for events, says a neutral base with pops of color is a good option. The larger pieces of furniture can be tan, black or white and then add colored pillows or chairs that tie in with the dishes, glasses or even the specialty drink you're serving. This way, you can change the look of your outdoor space without spending a lot of money.

To help with the transformation, furniture is a key component and sets the mood for a dinner

party. Arpi Torosyan, creative art director at 24 Carrots—an Orange County company that plans events everywhere from the Laguna Art Museum to private homes in Laguna Beach—suggests a long wooden table paired with garden chairs for family-style dining or, if you're looking for a more glamorous feel, try a mirrored table. As Heather says, "Lounge seating makes your guests feel welcome and want to stay and, when you're sort of in a party environment outside, I think it makes the environment so much better."

On the table, the centerpiece doesn't have to be flowers—but if you can create a presentation based on fresh cuttings from your garden, consider yourself lucky. "Flowers can transform any space," Arpi says. "If you're having an intimate party, stick to low arrangements to allow for easy conversation," she says. If you can't splurge on flowers, Arpi suggests adding herbs that are potted, in mixed jars or wrapped in burlap to your table. "They will add a rustic look to your party and it's a great way to create a theme around a certain herb you've used in your dishes," she says. Another option is to choose items already on hand, such as beautiful bowls, candles and vases.

An advantage to outdoor dining is the opportunity to hang items from backyard trees like cafe string lights. "They are fairly inexpensive and add a fun element to the party," Arpi says. "Or light your table with votives and tea lights and hang lanterns from trees or fixtures."

Once the atmosphere is set, make sure the table has enough room to actually entertain—think wine, salt and pepper all within easy reach—just as you would inside the home. For the tableware, don't be afraid to bring in outdoor-specific melamine dishware in different colors. "It's a great alternative to china, and a lot of designers have created beautiful patterns," Arpi says. Hosts can also add outdoor touches to linens by tying napkins with lavender or labeling rocks or leaves with a white pen and using those as place cards, suggests Arpi.

Whichever style your outdoor party embraces, both Arpi and Heather recommend creating an environment that speaks to your personal style. There isn't one cookie-cutter approach to backyard entertaining, but developing a base with the right large furniture pieces and adding accessories and tableware that can be changed out will keep the space feeling fresh.

The **MONTEGO OUTDOOR DINING TABLE** is perfect for alfresco dining, with a striking mix of solid ipe wood and stainless steel. Left untreated, it will develop a beautiful silver patina, \$999, at Room & Board, South Coast Plaza Village, Santa Ana. (714-549-5995; roomandboard.com)



Outdoor entertaining doesn't have to be stuffy—create a whimsical tablescape with the **MARIPOSA FLIP FLOP SERVER**, \$74, at Laguna Colony Co., Laguna Beach. (949-497-8919; thecolonycompanies.info)

TAKE THE PARTY OUTDOORS

Create an inviting backyard oasis for entertaining made easy.

Whether you're starting with a clean, blank slate or you need a few additions to make a backyard entertaining space even better, we've cultivated stylish and functional finds from local decor destinations to get the job done. **LBM**



With a bright color and relaxed structure, the **UNION RED DINING ARM CHAIR**, including an outdoor Sunbrella fabric cushion, makes for easy backyard seating, \$249, at Crate and Barrel, South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa. (714-825-0060; crateandbarrel.com)



Late-night storytelling by candlelight is made even more romantic with the Italian pewter **MATCH CANDLESTICK HOLDER**, \$150, at Stephen Frank Garden & Home, Laguna Beach. (949-494-2014; stephenfrank.com)



Create regal garden seating anywhere with the antique serpent-and-grape-pattern cast iron garden benches with **TEAK-SLATTED SEATS AND BACKS**, price upon request, at Trove Gallery, Laguna Beach. (949-376-4640; trovegallary.com)

SHAVE MASTERS

Started by two bewhiskered boys on a mission to create the ultimate in shaving creams, Cremo Co. is taking the skin care market by storm—one stubbly face at a time.

By Alli Tong



Cremo Co. co-founders Kyle Schroeder (left) and Mike Boone at Bubbles, the first retail store in Laguna Beach to carry their shave cream products

KYLE SCHROEDER AND MIKE BOONE LIKEN THEIR working relationship to a tortoise and a hare. “Kyle is the tortoise, and I’m the hare,” Mike says. “So together, we’re average speed.” And the two Laguna Beach-based entrepreneurs who started Cremo Co., a skin care company known for its no-fuss, affordable shave cream, Cremo Cream, are completely fine with growing their business at a slower pace and being the small guys in a multibillion-dollar global market.

In fact, that’s what makes Cremo Co. so humbling. While the company’s roots have been embedded in town since its founding in 2007—local retailer Bubbles was the first shop to carry

its products—the brand also has paved a countrywide route, landing its products on the shelves of Walgreens, CVS and Walmart, among other national chains. “We’re probably going to have to get an office [in town] soon,” Kyle shares, adding that the two business partners work mostly out of their homes so that they can still enjoy their personal hobbies. “We’ve grown organically, so that’s why it’s taken us [a while].” Whatever speed they’re moving at, however, it seems to be working.

Laguna Beach Magazine: How did you guys meet each other?

Kyle Schroeder: After I graduated [from

business school] ... I got my first job, ... but long story short, I kind of hated it. Then I started modeling ... and ended up coming back to LA and was bartending at Neiman Marcus in Beverly Hills, and Mike and I randomly met. We just became friends, and he told me how he had this shaving cream. He gave me a sample, and I loved it. At the time, he had started [the business], but hadn’t done much with it. We were friends for a while ... and eventually it got to the point where he hired me. That was in 2007.

LBM: Mike, since the product was your invention, what was your inspiration behind it?

Mike Boone: Well, I used to buy a very expensive product a while ago that was made with mink oil, and it was a shave cream, and it gave the most extraordinary shave. But it was hideously expensive, and it was also troublesome to think that minks were involved. ... One year, I went to order it, but the company had gone out of business. ... I then went to Neiman Marcus and Barneys and bought all the best shave creams they had, only to find out that they were all made the same way, just packaged differently.

LBM: I'm guessing that Cremo Cream is not made with mink oil, then?

KS: No. ... It's [also] not animal-tested. We're not certified vegan, so we can't say it, but we can say we're vegetarian.

LBM: How did you guys come up with the perfect concoction?

MB: [We work with] a very high level of chemists. ... The key to [our product] is to make it slippery, which, when you look at what's out there right now, everything's not slippery—it's foamy. Foam is filled with air; air is not a good lubricant. So we're creating a better, more useful product versus something that looks pretty and smells pretty. We also use moisturizers that are different, lubricants, skin conditioners [and] emollients.

LBM: Where can shave cream seekers find Cremo Cream in town?

KS: CVS across from the Montage, and Bubbles. Cathy [Wilkinson, the owner of Bubbles,] has been so generous and has continued to carry us.

LBM: Cremo Co. also offers ladies' shave cream as well as face moisturizers and face washes. What's next for the company?

MB: I think what our positioning is ... we're a solutions provider. We're going to be coming out with a razor that's in the works. ... It'll be the best in class ... really well-priced that does the job. **LBM**



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LIVING OFF THE LAND

The couple behind Bluebird Canyon Farms shares the story of their journey toward sustainability.

By Sharael Kolberg | Photos by Jody Tiongco

When Scott Tenney and his wife, Mariella Simon, purchased a 15-acre plot of land in 2010 in the Bluebird Canyon neighborhood of Laguna Beach, their vision for a certified organic, biodynamic urban farm started to become a reality. Over the past four years, Bluebird Canyon Farms has grown from an overgrown and neglected plot of land into a thriving experimental growth site that also serves as a research center to learn more about hybridizing seeds, fertilizers, crops and tools.

“It has always been our intent to honor the land and use the property to inform and inspire others by offering hands-on opportunities to learn, plan, develop, operate and sustain community-scale urban agriculture projects,” Scott says. “Our philosophy is to share the experience and knowledge of our associates, allowing others to learn by doing.”

A COMMUNAL EFFORT

Scott, Mariella and about eight associates have been working tirelessly to turn the property into a research site and educational meeting place where experts can gather to share ideas, perform interactive demonstrations and provide in-depth knowledge on a variety of subjects related to urban agriculture. In the meantime, the couple has welcomed interns and apprentices to gain hands-on experience on a working farm.

One of the associates who has been helping to restore the farm is 23-year-old Connor Dorais. With a degree in environmental science from the

University of Redlands and interests in resource conservation and sustainable agriculture, he felt that this was a project he had to get involved in.

“Being a part of something new and having your foot in the door—before the door is fully finished—is a neat idea,” he says of his decision to join the couple in developing the farm. “It’s great to see things from the beginning and be able to give input. I’m passionate about urban agriculture and enjoy helping to bring food closer to the community.” Connor lives on the property and says his typical duties change daily, but some of his responsibilities have



Scott Tenney, owner of Bluebird Canyon Farms, has built a thriving agricultural site in Laguna Beach.





Scott Tenney and Mariella Simon hope their urban farm will be influential in how others live.



Seeds for new crops ensure the cycle of life continues.

included restoring plants and applying organic fertilizers, re-clipping chickens' wings, checking on the farm's resident honeybees, assisting with maintenance work and keeping the property clean for visitors.

Connor is just one of several associates who have contributed to the renovation of the property. In fact, when the pair originally purchased the land, they worked with several organizations and individuals to come up with a master plan.

"Our biggest challenge [involved] the constraints of the site because of how badly the site was damaged," Scott says, adding that the farm has spearheaded an ongoing ecological restoration project to repair the erosion-damaged hillsides. The initiative will also restore the weakened population of California sage scrub impacted by the introductions of invasive, non-native plant species prior to 2010.

Along with Mariella, he worked with experts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, San

Juan Capistrano's Tree of Life Nursery and the University of California, Davis to improve the health of the terrain, create habitats for native animals and increase the site's overall productivity. "My wife and I are very passionate about regenerative landscaping and restoration ecology," he says. "We find it very gratifying to have converted this property from a broken-down condition into a healthy and thriving site."

FLORA AND FAUNA

The farm now blossoms with a variety of organic produce, heirloom hens and hybridized bees. With an apiary that houses nine beehives, Scott wanted to create a stable location where a population of bees could be kept to act as a breeding colony because he believes that colony collapse could be caused by poor genetic diversity.

"We want to develop a local Laguna honeybee hybrid that is a cross between wild local bees and domestic honeybees," he explains. "Honeybees are



The farm is home to an apiary that houses nine beehives.



Top: Heirloom black copper marans, a rare breed of fowl; bottom: on-site composting



Fresh eggs are available from 17 hens at Bluebird Canyon Farms.

threatened, and local bees are a great source of genetic diversity. We reason that by hybridizing a local bee, we can produce a honeybee with many of the qualities of domestic bees but one who thrives like the wild bees in our region. Wild bees are hardier and cleaner, and are more disease-resistant in the hive.” In the future, Scott plans to seek permission from the city to expand the apiary to fit 10 or more hives.

In addition to the raw honey they harvest from the beehives, Scott and Mariella also enjoy fresh eggs from their 17 hens. And, in true Bluebird Canyon Farms’ style, these are not just ordinary backyard chickens—they’re heirloom black copper marans, one of the rarest breeds in the U.S. “We chose to support genetic conservation of heritage breeds,” Scott says. The black-and-white hens lay dark brown eggs with creamy yolks that are highly sought-after by gourmet chefs.

In an effort to make the hens more tranquil and establish order in the flock, the couple also keeps one rooster. To shield their neighbors from its early morning crow, the two keep the rooster inside the chicken coop until nearly 9 a.m. The chickens are free to roam the coyote-proof enclosure during the day and bed down in

the safety of their custom-made coop—which also features double-paned windows—at night. Raising chickens on the farm is not all about the eggs; Scott says it’s also a way to demonstrate the technique for those who want to try it in their own backyards.

The produce grown on the farm is just as impressive. According to Scott, they cultivate crops across 3 acres including a nearly 1-acre garden where heirloom seasonal produce is grown using a proprietary compost-based, biodynamic fertilizer. The additional acres operate under a rotating cover crop regimen to further improve the soil. “We strive to demonstrate how to grow and nurture healthy soil ecosystems that support sustainable agricultural practices,” Scott says.

Depending on the time of year, you’ll find raspberries, strawberries, asparagus, kale, broccoli, tomatoes, lettuce or cover crops of fava beans or oats that are tilled back into the soil to maintain its fertility. The garden’s terraced walls were made from recycled concrete that came from a demolition project in Lake Forest, and the space even includes an outdoor kitchen complete with a pizza oven and barbecue.



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A 1-acre garden on the farm grows seasonal produce.

ECOLOGICALLY MINDED

Much forethought goes into designing the practices that are put into place on the land, which include composting, gray water irrigation, rainwater harvesting and green construction. “We seek to influence the ‘farm of the future’ by helping to reduce energy intensiveness of current agricultural practices in this post-peak oil economy,” Scott says. “And we hope that through our efforts, we will encourage others to fiercely protect and steward the land and natural resources entrusted to them.”

The farm includes a large-scale composting and vermi-composting area, where the couple recycles scraps from the garden, eggshells and shredded paper. Once the compost has undergone the decomposition process, it’s returned back to the garden to nourish the plants and soil.

In terms of sustainable irrigation, the number of sophisticated water and energy conservation features built into the site includes systems to harvest water and manage rainwater runoff. The farm’s water sink allows recycled water to run into the brush and orchard. A 3,000-gallon cistern on the property, meanwhile, catches rainwater that can be used to irrigate the plants and trees.

The effort to protect and preserve also extends to the historic architecture that came with the property. When the twosome took over the land, it was home to six dilapidated structures in dire need of repair. Rather than tear down the buildings, the pair decided to keep the original framework and use reclaimed lumber to renovate the buildings and turn them into an apiary, workshop, bungalow, greenhouse, “flower chateau” and the Bluebird Canyon Lodge, the property’s main structure.

“This is old California, specifically old Laguna, which is quickly disappearing in front of our eyes,” Mariella explains. “It was important to our team that the site look and feel Californian, especially like old Laguna. We wanted people to have an



Scott and Mariella preserved and restored historic architecture on the farm that had become dilapidated.

experience when they come to the site that it is unique to the history of the area.” Today, the two-bedroom Bluebird Canyon Lodge reflects her Bavarian heritage with spruce floors, cedar walls and a quartz fireplace and bar that give it a distinctly rustic feel.

The lodge was used as the site of Transition Laguna Beach’s annual Harvest Celebration last year. Likewise, the twosome welcomes the opportunity to be a community resource for guests. With permission from the city, the husband and wife team envisions operating a system in which up to a dozen neighbors could pay or barter for a weekly basket of fresh produce grown on the farm.

Additionally, they hope to run a weekly or biweekly product exchange, which will offer neighbors an opportunity to come to the farm and exchange something of value for produce or other items made on the farm, such as furnishings created from repurposed materials; biodynamic horticultural supplements used to recondition soil, nourish plants and control pests; or fresh eggs and honey. “Philosophically, we are keenly interested in the ‘world made by hand’ concept,” Mariella says.

In the not-too-distant future, Scott and Mariella hope to be able to work with the city to host more community events and hands-on workshops. If their hopes for Bluebird Canyon Farms are realized, Laguna might just become a leader in urban agriculture and an inspiration to other cities looking to become more self-sufficient and less dependent on the fossil fuels needed to import water, food and energy. **LBM**

GREEN MACHINES

In 2012, the Bluebird Canyon Farms team designed and built a prototype of a solar-powered hydroponic system, nicknamed the “Green Machine.” Hydroponics is a horticultural technique that uses mineral nutrient solutions to grow plants in water, without the use of soil. Typically, this type of system would require electrical power to pump the water, but the prototype was built with an environmentally friendly solar-powered pump. Using tanks, pumps, timers, tubing and an air mover, the Green Machine was able to grow approximately 200 plants in a 20- by 10-foot space.

“It was developed as a standardized, food production unit in a ‘box,’ ” says Scott Tenney, owner of Bluebird Canyon Farms. Our inspiration was to build something that could be deployed to an urban area such as Detroit, which has seen better days and struggles with food security and supply issues.”

Always looking to improve, the team is currently developing a larger, commercial-sized unit called “Farm of the Future” that incorporates a forward-thinking food system called aquaponics (a technique that uses aquatic animals such as snails, fish, crayfish or prawns in tanks to feed plant life). Additionally, aquaponics allows more produce to be grown than conventional methods, and very well could become the means by which we get our fruits and vegetables in the future.

GOURMET GREEN THUMBS

Chefs reap the benefits of freshly picked produce with on-site gardens outside homes and restaurants.

By Ryan Ritchie | Photos by Jody Tiongco

Most people choose restaurants based on criteria like location, menu items and wine selection. As important as these attributes are to an enjoyable dining experience, an often-overlooked element of a successful restaurant is the food itself—or, more specifically, where that food comes from. Not surprisingly, eateries with private gardens provide guests with the freshest ingredients available.

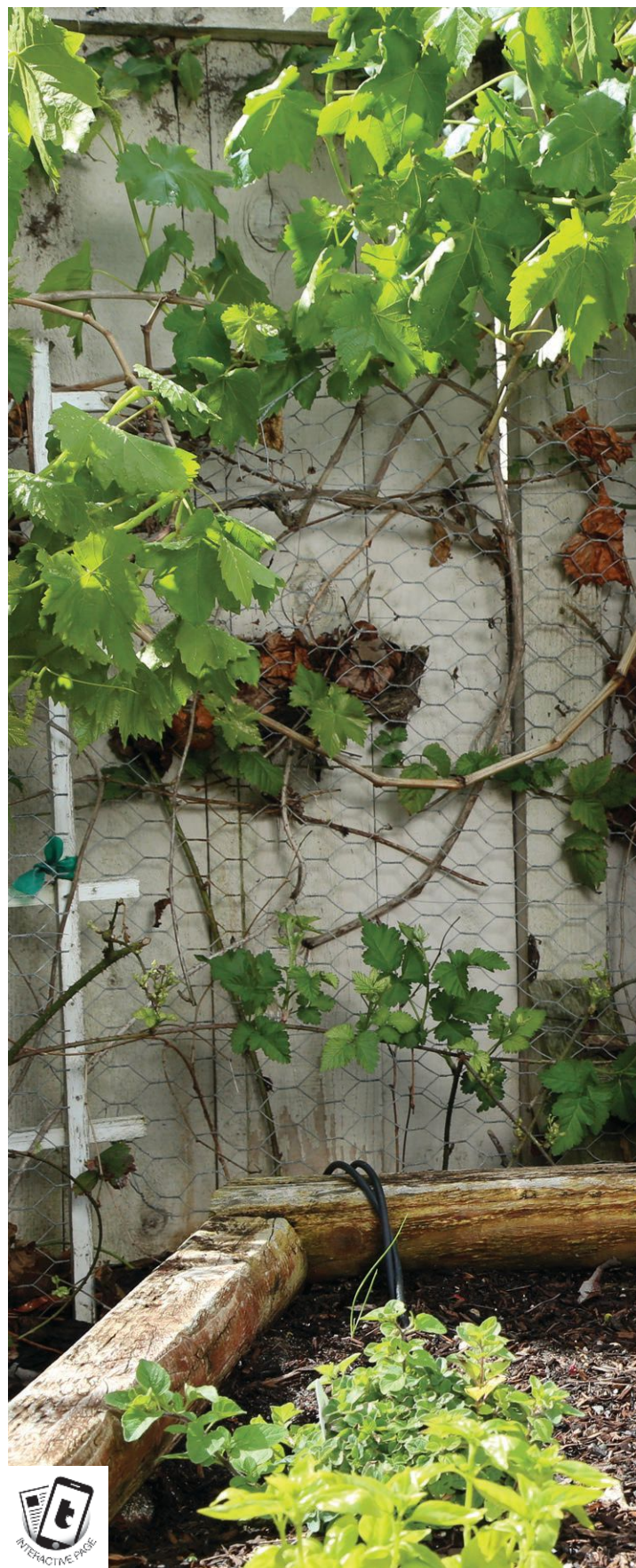
In a perfect world, all restaurants would have customized gardens to suit their culinary needs. Nothing is perfect, however, and plenty of dining establishments are unable to grow their own produce due to lack of space or enough time to do so.

Luckily, three local restaurants do have the space and time to grow their own ingredients. Sapphire Laguna, for instance, relies on chef Azmin Ghahreman's backyard garden for herbs and fruits, while Studio at Montage Laguna Beach sources food from an on-site garden and chef Craig Strong's backyard. Wherever the ingredients originate, customers enjoy delicious plates while employees gain a sense of pride from knowing that the dishes they serve contribute to a unique culinary experience.

SAPPHIRE LAGUNA

You might know Azmin Ghahreman as the owner and head chef at Sapphire Laguna, a restaurant beloved for dishes like Chianti-braised short ribs, oven-roasted lamb sirloin and crispy skin barramundi. But what you might not know is that the 53-year-old gourmet also has a green thumb. This passion for gardening is hardly a recent development; in fact, Azmin says a test he took before he even became a chef predicted his future interest. "The first thing [the test] said was that I wanted to be a chef," he explains. "The second thing it said, if I wasn't a chef, was that I'd be a farmer. So growing things from the ground up is my love and my forte."

These days, Azmin has an approximately 15-inch raised garden in his backyard, which features seasonal fruits, greens, vegetables and herbs such as thyme, oregano and bay leaves. The chef turns these bay leaves into powdered seasonings for various meats; the powder is so fresh, he says, that he typically uses only one bay leaf as opposed to five from a grocery store. "With my bay leaves, definitely you can tell a difference—definitely," he remarks. "Bay leaves are more pungent, so if I was to give 1 pound of other bay leaves and 1 pound of mine, mine would kill."





Chef Azmin Ghahreman's backyard garden provides ingredients for many dishes at Sapphire Laguna, from lemon thyme vinaigrette to plum chutney.



Mint is a handy herb to have growing in the yard.

GARDEN TO TABLE

Many people can't afford multi-acre properties to start personal gardens overflowing with all of their favorite fruits, vegetables and herbs. Luckily, you don't need a massive plot of land to enjoy fresh food. Instead, you need innovation and the desire to plant a few seeds. With these in place and a few tips from two of the area's best chefs, even city slickers can feel like they're on a farm.

A gardener since childhood, chef Craig Strong of Studio at Montage Laguna Beach is thoroughly versed in raising homegrown crops. "If you grow mint, don't put it in the ground because it takes over and grows like crazy," he says. "I have mine in a wooden barrel, and it's more than enough for the restaurant.

"... Also, tomatoes, beans and corn are things that plant well together because tomatoes take nitrogen out of the soil and beans put it back in," the chef adds. "If you plant those together, they work in a symbiotic relationship. For a nice hedging around your garden that keeps bugs off your plants, any alyssum attracts the bugs and you don't have to use pesticides."

Azmin Ghahreman of Sapphire Laguna, meanwhile, suggests repurposing plantings. "If you have extra herbs, never throw them away," he advises. "Put them in your vinegar bottle because they enhance the flavor of your vinegar. Or chop them up, put the herbs in a couple of ice cube trays, put some water in and freeze them. When you need it, you can throw it in a soup."



Azmin incorporates homegrown herbs in Sapphire Laguna's dishes.

He estimates that Sapphire Laguna cooks with approximately 100 pounds of thyme and 500 pounds of basil a year, which means the restaurant has to buy ingredients from outside sources. That said, Sapphire Laguna does use as many of the chef's backyard fruits, vegetables, greens and herbs as possible. For example, Azmin's plums find their way onto diners' plates in the form of plum chutney on curries and plum-sugar-vanilla pancakes with Devonshire cream. For those who want to sample his homegrown food, Azmin says holidays such as Valentine's Day, when the restaurant featured lemon thyme vinaigrette, are times

when he's known to use his backyard ingredients.

A restaurant that produces its own ingredients is obviously a boon for diners for reasons of freshness, but Azmin claims that having a personal garden also helps his business. Not only has gardening taught him the ins and outs of cooking, but it has also created a healthier working environment for his employees. "The staff is proud to say, 'This thyme dressing came from the chef's garden,'" he says. "That is a positive reinforcement of connecting back with people."

Although Azmin has been a chef for more than 33 years, a recent trip to Tahiti, Bora Bora, Cooks



Craig Strong, executive chef of Studio at Montage Laguna Beach, uses fresh fruit from the restaurant's garden.

Island, Tonga, New Zealand and Fiji reminded him of why he makes the extra effort to grow his own food. While in Auckland, New Zealand, he heard a saying that goes, "Always be faithful to quality—words to live and eat by." It's a mantra he continues to apply to his personal and professional lives.

STUDIO AT MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH

It's true—mothers really do know best. Just ask Craig Strong, executive chef of Studio at Montage Laguna Beach, who says his passion for gardening and cooking can be attributed to his mom, a woman he describes as a "wonderful home cook."

"I had two older brothers, and we had to do yard work," Craig says. "I was too young to push the lawn mower but not too young to pull weeds and to garden. My mom had this beautiful garden with drip irrigation, and because I was pulling weeds and watching corn, squash and tomatoes grow, it was a natural progression to see where it went next. A love for cooking started from there."

At home, the 42-year-old chef, his wife and their daughter enjoy an approximately 100-square-foot garden featuring arugula, habanero peppers, African basil, lemon verbena, kale, chamomile and "lots of lettuces." But it's not all herbs and greens at the Strong household, as their backyard garden also includes trees growing grapefruit, oranges, Meyer lemons, limes, kumquats and figs. With so many crops grown on-site, it comes as no surprise when the chef estimates that 70 percent of his family's fruits and vegetables come from their own backyard. It's also no surprise that much of what Craig grows at home is served at Studio.

"The lemon verbena comes to the restaurant," he says. "I have three plants, and there's no way I'd ever use that much [at home]. Also, the mint at my house is the mint I use for the restaurant."

Craig's love of gardening isn't limited to his home, as Studio features its own 1,000-square-foot garden with five raised stone beds in front of the restaurant. The bounty of herbs, fruits, vegetables and flowers also benefits the restaurant's staff, as Craig and his co-workers are able to enjoy a hands-on experience that adds to the quality of the cooking process.

"There's a connection between the chef and the food," he explains. "The greatest benefit of having the garden is what my chefs see and the effort that it takes to grow. They have more respect for that product, and that will spill over into our guest experience."

The chef likens the difference between fresh

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Executive Chef Camron Woods can grow ingredients for unique dishes in The Ranch at Laguna Beach's garden.

ingredients from a local garden and store-bought items to a group of musicians adept at playing together and a mish-mash band of players who are out of tune. An average person might not have a culinary background, but he or she typically knows whether the food he is eating is fresh.

"I can't play any instruments, but I can hear when music is out of tune," he says. "That's the same thing as food that is perfectly ripe and seasoned just right. When you don't know exactly what it is that's making something amazing, often that's just the taste of quality."

THE RANCH AT LAGUNA BEACH

At what point does a garden become a farm? It's a question asked often at The Ranch at Laguna Beach (formerly known as Aliso Creek Inn and Golf Course—the property re-launched as The Ranch at Laguna Beach in April after a private investment group led by Laguna Beach resident Mark Christy, Laguna Beach Golf & Bungalow Village, purchased the property last year), where a 1-acre plot of land is dedicated to growing fruits, vegetables and herbs. Food from the garden—or farm—will find its way onto guests' plates sometime around September, a month after the property reopens following a 10-month renovation process.

The garden is just one part of a 2.5-acre



Peppers are among the vegetables grown by Azmin.

revitalization project called Scout Camp. The land was previously a Girl Scouts' camp—hence the name—and, in keeping with tradition, The Ranch at Laguna Beach plans to use the area as a place for visitors to educate themselves about gardening while having a good time.

"It'll be very functional for the property," says Jim Tolbert, director of sales and marketing at The Ranch at Laguna Beach. "We can also have it as a space adjacent to the event area that can be interactive. We're thinking about doing gardening classes and things of that nature, so it will be

a fully working, operating minifarm."

Jim expects the garden to be an asset for guests looking for the ultimate in farm-to-table dining, as on-site crops will be served at the main restaurant, at the pool, at the bar, for room service, at Ben Brown's 10th Hole eatery and for catering at banquet events. In addition, he believes having a garden will be a positive experience for Executive Chef Camron Woods, who will be able to grow exactly what he wants to produce unique dishes. Jim says that they plan on growing fruits like lemons, limes and oranges; vegetables such as heirloom tomatoes, peppers, fennel, sugar snap peas and beets; as well as herbs including sweet and Thai basil, Italian parsley, mint and thyme.

Jim adds, "We'd love to be as sustainable as possible. It's something that's become pervasive in the community and everyday life. If you can do it, why wouldn't you?"

Whether it's fruit, herbs, vegetables or peppers, it's hard to argue with the idea that fresher is always better. And we hope this is a trend chefs will keep rooted here that will continue to grow. **LBM**



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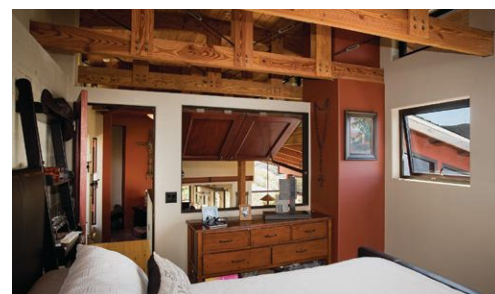
ARCHITECTS HARNESS THE BEAUTY OF LAGUNA'S NATURAL SURROUNDINGS
WHEN DESIGNING EXQUISITE HOMES. *By Peter A. Balaskas*

The magnificence of Laguna Beach inspires artists of all kinds: painters, novelists, filmmakers, poets and, in particular, architects. When it comes to designing a home, an architect creates more than a dwelling; he crafts a 3-D work of art that's often-times an extension of the homeowner's character. In many other cases, the architect or the resident chooses to design a home that captures the natural beauty of the property's setting. Take, for instance, a local home whose two

main pavilions highlight the exposed rock outcroppings that serve as the foundation for these structures. Another project in south Laguna showcases flat grass roofs bedecked with succulents that match the surrounding green hills, while a neighboring multilevel home features rusty roofs and red stucco walls—complementing the California pepper trees that populate Rim Rock Canyon. Here, we explore just a few of these examples of residential art whose elaborate designs are enhanced by the splendor of Laguna.



STANDOUT FEATURE:
THE HOME'S
RUST-COLORED
ROOFS AND A
BEDROOM WING
COMPOSED OF
RAMMED-EARTH
WALLS



PHOTOS BY ROBERT HANSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

MODERN RUSTIC

CENTRAL LAGUNA

When designing his own home, Laguna Beach architect Kirk Saunders' chief priority involved enhancing the rural tone of the "country lane"-type street on which the property is located.

"A modern barn was the strongest image I had while formulating the look and feel of the home," Kirk says. "The barn aesthetic carries through

to the interior with high ceilings, heavy wood trusses, simple materials and an open plan."

The unusual steepness of the property helped Kirk execute an open-plan design for a multistory home that's not only composed of a main house and a guest unit, but also provides a 180-degree view of the ocean and Bluebird Canyon, thanks in large part to the expansive windows and multiple

outdoor spaces for entertaining.

Kirk also used repurposed materials throughout the home: a bar top recycled from an old sofa that he and his father made 25 years ago, interior doors from an old bank, floors sourced from Costa Mesa's now-defunct Kona Lanes bowling alley and cabinetry salvaged from the offices of his mentor, architect Chris Abel—each piece carrying a story.



STANDOUT FEATURE:
THE LIVING
ROOF, WHOSE
CONTOURS
BLEND WITH
THE CURVATURE
OF THE
SURROUNDING
HILLSIDE

ROBERT HANSEN PHOTOGRAPHY



HILLSIDE HAVEN

SOUTH LAGUNA

Step inside the contemporary property designed and owned by LA-based architect Paul Zajfen and constructed by Laguna Beach-based home builder Ken McMurray, and it becomes immediately apparent that an emphasis was placed on taking advantage of the property's hillside location. Paul accomplished this by creating a home that "flows" from inside to outside, a task that involved not only building usable living spaces in an outdoor courtyard, but also adding stacked and double-glazed sliding glass doors in the living

room and master bedroom suite.

"The transparent layers of interior and exterior space create an atmosphere [that] evokes a sensation of spatial generosity, visual stimulus and peace," Paul says. "Quite simply, it feels wonderful to be in this house. It establishes a precedent in Laguna Beach for designing an appropriate, contextual and sustainable dwelling."

In the vein of sustainability, the home's features include full-length glass walls that provide natural light and ventilation, thereby eliminating day-time use of electric lighting and air conditioning;

motorized exterior sunshades controlled by sensors, which block 86 percent of solar radiation; concrete floors with a radiant heating system; and photovoltaic and solar hot water panels that dramatically reduce electricity usage.

The floor plan is centered on a living room that's separated from the kitchen and dining room area. A bridge connects both pavilions, crossing an outdoor courtyard that acts as a central space for the homeowner to see all parts of the house. The result is an understated escape that combines artistic aesthetics with an eco-friendly mentality.



Carving a Niche

For certain homeowners looking to enhance their living space, the ho-hum of commercial woodwork simply will not suffice; these individuals desire something more unique and customized to their specific homes and tastes. This is where Orange County native and master woodworker Dan Luna, who specializes in making carpentry dreams a reality, comes in.

Dan's intense passion for creating things was evident from the time he was a child. "Even as a kid, I was always tinkering around in my dad's upholstery shop," he shares. Introduced to woodwork at the age of 15, Dan has made quality, custom projects his life's work for the last 35 years.

From custom cabinetry and expertly carved furniture to full libraries and home entertainment centers, Dan and his 17-man crew at Dan Luna Woodworking are experts in their craft. Dan not only has an extensive knowledge of his trade, but also incredible relationships with other professionals in the industry, including architects, builders, interior designers and more.

While Dan and his team are able to skillfully execute custom cabinetry, architectural millwork, staircases, wall paneling and furniture, he has a special place in his heart for the projects that let his creativity flourish. "I love challenging projects that are unique," he shares.

A recent project in Irvine Cove required Dan to think outside



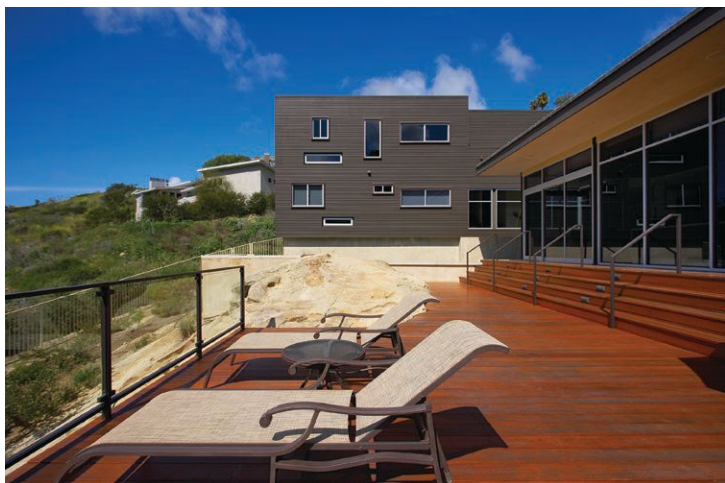
of the box as he completed projects in nearly every room of the home. "Everything we built was functional art," he says, making special note of an ornately carved door he created for the owners. Although the intricate carving at the end of a long hallway appears to be a piece of artwork, it is actually an exquisitely sculpted, full-functioning door.

Dan Luna Woodworking can impressively create any request to turn a home into a livable work of art.



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STANDOUT FEATURE
THE L-SHAPED
POOL THAT
LIES BETWEEN
THE TWO MAIN
PAVILIONS



CONTRASTING ELEMENTS

CENTRAL LAGUNA

One of the main challenges that local architect Horst Noppenberger faced when creating this Laguna home involved trying to incorporate the site's natural geology into the house's design. But instead of matching the home to the surrounding property, Horst took a different approach.

"We were not trying to match the site's natural features, but to introduce counterpoint to enhance the presence of the site's natural features," he

explains. "Simplicity and restraint would be essential in accomplishing our design goals."

Horst and his team kept this concept of simplicity in mind as they divided the house into two square pavilions, creating what he describes as the image of two wooden crates that have fallen from an airplane; one rests horizontally and the other vertically on the property's sprawling stone outcroppings, while the house's glassed-in entry serves as a sort of umbilical cord between the two

square structures. In between the pavilions is a slim, L-shaped pool that flanks the central courtyard and offers a pristine view of Catalina Island.

Horst says that the natural rock formations, stone aesthetics and wooden construction of the home are perfect complements. "The hard, earthbound qualities of the exposed stone are enhanced by the soft textures of the wooden boxes," he says. "... The simple forms and materials will lead to a timeless and enduring expression of architecture."



STANDOUT FEATURE:
THE DOUBLE
PALMS AND
INFINITY POOL
THAT APPEARS
TO TAPER INTO
THE PACIFIC
OCEAN

PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE BY JERI KOEGEL



TWIN PALMS

SOUTH LAGUNA

Inside a sun-bleached coastal community called Three Arch Bay, the home belonging to Laguna Beach architect James Conrad was built to incorporate stone, stucco and clay tiles in tones that match the San Onofre breccia rock indigenous to the area. Sixteen months of excavation and construction finally paid off, resulting in a stone hamlet that's reminiscent of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth and looks as though the dwelling

sprouted from the knoll itself.

Additional creative nuances include an infinity pool that melts into the horizon, a spacious open-air patio, a covered area for lounging near the outdoor fireplace and stone paths that offer 270-degree views of the coastline from San Diego to Palos Verdes.

The crowning touch for James, however, is the pair of palms trees that tower over the infinity pool and can be spotted as far as Main Beach.

The trees have become something of a local landmark, and James says that dreaming up design signatures like the palms has only added to his passion for the craft.

"It was a privilege to have the opportunity to build this home," he remarks. "Architects rarely have the opportunity to take on a site like this. The fact that the home was going to be my own allowed me endless opportunities to do what I really wanted to do."



STANDOUT FEATURE
PICTURE-
PERFECT VIEWS
OF THE OCEAN,
CLIFFS, COVES
AND TIDE POOLS
THAT ARE
VISIBLE FROM
ALMOST EVERY
ROOM IN THE
HOUSE



PHOTOS BY ROBERT HANSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

PRESIDENTIAL GETAWAY

CENTRAL LAGUNA, NEAR WOOD'S COVE

Many people dream of living next to the ocean, but few ever get to experience the reality of a sea-side home. One couple harbored this same dream until finally discovering a house that's not only situated directly on the coast, but also comes with a unique history dating back to the 1920s.

"The current [house] was built by Col. [Edward M.] House's brother as his vacation home," says Laguna architect Morris Skenderian. "Col. House was the aide to [President] Woodrow Wilson. Col.

House, Woodrow Wilson and numerous world dignitaries visited the home during his presidency."

Built in the style of an East Coast estate, the home consists of a primary residence, guest cottage and garage. With Morris' principal design, E. M. Sumrall Interiors' assistance with the space planning, Larry Steidle's landscape architecture and Keith Gallo's construction, many of the exterior characteristics of the main house were maintained even as the floor plan was expanded and the interior rooms' development modified to take advantage of the ocean views, including a circular

patio where 180-degree views can be seen. The revamp also entailed enhancing the aesthetics and functionality of several outdoor patio terraces, pools and entertainment areas, resulting in a home that has been adapted for the homeowners' needs while preserving the historical elements of the overall estate. **LBM**



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NEWPORT FLOOR COVERING

Woven Into the Fabric of the Community

Newport Floor Covering, serving the community for more than 55 years from its Corona del Mar shop, is moving to a larger showroom in Costa Mesa this spring as the current building is being sold. Although their address will change, the one-stop interior design center will continue its longstanding commitment to customers in the Corona del Mar area, helping these “good neighbors” find the best in flooring—from carpet to hardwood, tile, vinyl and laminate—and Hunter Douglas window coverings, including custom shades, blinds, shutters and sheers.

These quality products go hand in hand with competitive prices at Newport Floor Covering, part of the Carpet One Floor & Home cooperative, which boasts the purchasing power of nearly 1,000 stores to negotiate with mills for the lowest possible price. “People think we’re too expensive because we’re in Corona del Mar, and we’re not,” says Debbie Gilia, the shop’s office manager and a certified Hunter Douglas specialist. “We can compete with the big box stores.”

Newport Floor Covering provides a free measurement and design consultation, as well as Carpet One’s warranty: “You will love the way your new flooring looks or we will replace it for free—installation included,” the warranty states.

That guarantee is backed by a knowledgeable, service-minded staff; owner Steve Terpstra has been in the business for more than 40 years and each employee has at least a decade of experience. “We’re focused on building relationships and helping



PHOTOS BY BACEKAMP

people solve their flooring needs. No job is too small,” explains Debbie, who enjoys teaching clients about the benefits and features of products so they can make a better-educated decision.

For example, she says, the increasingly popular wool carpet is durable, flame retardant, hypoallergenic and acts like a natural humidifier to keep the room cooler by capturing moisture and releasing it back into the air. “Wool is a forever carpet,” Debbie says. “You put it down once and never have to worry about it again.”

Other flooring favorites are porcelain tile and luxury vinyl tile that look like wood planks. The shop’s wide variety of flooring options—including custom-designed area rugs—are paired with an expansive selection of window treatments with ultraviolet protection to help prevent floors from fading. One of the best-sellers is the Hunter Douglas Silhouette shade, a sheer fabric allowing visibility while still providing optimum ultraviolet protection. “The reason we offer window coverings is to protect your investment on the floor,” Debbie says.

With these premier products, Newport Floor Covering has helped three generations transform their living spaces—while also donating to local charities—since opening in 1956. As Debbie says, “We will continue to support the Corona del Mar schools and community organizations as well as reach out to our new neighbors in Costa Mesa and Newport Harbor.”

(CURRENT ADDRESS)

3500 E. Coast Hwy., Corona del Mar

(NEW ADDRESS, BEGINNING LATE APRIL OR MAY)

333 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa

949-675-1636

NewportFloorCoronaDelMar.com

NewportFloorCoveringDoesWindowsToo.com





Experts suggest mixing outdoor furniture pieces—as seen in this seating area designed by Michael Fullen—using stone, wood and woven materials.



OUTDOOR ESCAPES

*Laguna's top tastemakers reveal tips and tricks
for creating the ideal backyard oasis.*

By Somer Tejwani

There's something about stepping outside to greet the day with a cup of coffee and returning to toast it close with a glass of wine that make for perfect bookends. This spring, take advantage of the year-round outdoor living that Laguna Beach affords and bring the indoors out with backyard spaces that double as intimate spots for relaxing and entertaining. We tapped the masterminds behind some of Laguna's best-designed spaces, including Sheldon Harte, Natasha Harris, Lisa McDennon and Michael Fullen, to share their advice for making sure all of the creature comforts of your home's interior remain blissfully at your fingertips, even as you enjoy nature's elements.

When Sheldon, a Laguna-based designer and owner of Harte Brownlee & Associates, sets out to design an outdoor space, he first starts by looking through an interior window toward the yard. "We're indoors more often than out, and we're programmed to look outdoors," he explains. "I like to be sure that the indoor and outdoor spaces have a relationship, a design feature that connects them, whether it's style, color or direction."

Natasha, who operates local decor boutique and consulting service Seaside Interiors with her mother, Gina Harris, agrees, adding that a well-designed coastal property treats the outdoor space with just as much respect as it does the interior of the home. "Select furniture and accessories that will make the outdoor space feel like a seamless extension of your interior space," she advises.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Today almost anything goes when creating the backyard of your dreams, from full-service designer kitchens and high-tech entertainment centers to fire features and luxury swimming pools. Lisa, whose new decor shop, Nuance, opened this April, notes that the most important aspect of designing an outdoor space involves maintaining balance.

"Remember to soften all of those structural items with softness," she says. "Adding a billowing canopy over your sitting area, framing a dining pavilion with diaphanous draperies and layering seating with sumptuous pillows will complete the space and provide a welcoming place to relax and enjoy for hours on end." Another way to create an inviting outdoor space, she adds, is to update the home's existing loggia or any other covered area already in place with new outdoor seating and drapes that can be placed on a rod to shield the area from the routine dampness that occurs after the sun sets.



Lisa McDennon's design mixes outdoor furniture for a layered look and adds a pop of color.

For Lisa and many other designers, this concept of balance extends to furnishings as well. To avoid overkill, Lisa, who has designed spaces in Laguna, Thailand, New Zealand and Fiji for more than 16 years, encourages clients to toss away the idea of buying a multipiece patio set. "We avoid purchasing matching sets for indoors," she says. "[So] take your time to mix and match your outdoor furnishings for a layered look. Don't be afraid to mix a teak sofa with woven side chairs [or] a stone coffee table, and complete your vignette with one-of-a-kind side tables and accents."

Chic outdoor spaces are stylish and functional areas to entertain and, in a coastal community, it's nearly impossible to resist the pull of an evening spent on the patio. "Go with modular outdoor furniture that can be moved around and into a variety of configurations," Natasha advises. "The key is to have versatile seating that can accommodate your entertaining needs."

When working with larger outdoor spaces, treat them just as you would the rooms inside your home. Lisa does this by using planters, other containers and even faux walls to create drama, structure and balance. "Think of the yard as another room," says Michael, owner and principal designer of Michael Fullen Design Group in Laguna. "Create a comfortable seating group for socializing or just lounging in the open air."

No matter which pieces you choose, be sure to select furnishings whose fabrics and materials will withstand the wind, rain and seawater. "Choose durable outdoor furniture and hardy outdoor fabrics that can stand up to the elements

while still creating a warm and inviting vibe," says Natasha, whose design projects have included outfitting spaces in coastal cities like Laguna, Santa Monica and San Francisco.

"Just like the elements are hard on the skin, they're [also] hard on appliances and furniture," Sheldon adds. "Even resin fades."

ADDING IN ACCENTS

Selecting color swatches for a space isn't just an aspect of designing a bedroom or living room. When choosing your outdoor color palette, put



Natasha Harris suggests modular pieces that can be moved around for versatile seating arrangements.

just as much thought into the hues as you would when making decisions for the interior of your home. Natasha advocates sourcing inspiration from your natural surroundings; for instance, muted blue and gray fabrics might reflect the colors of the surf and wet sand while deep orange umbrellas are reminiscent of a vibrant sunset.

Most importantly, don't fear experimenting with color. "With the strong California sun, colors can be easily washed out," Michael says. "Be brave and use saturated colors and bold patterns."

Furniture doesn't have to live on concrete or



Draperies and fabric tablecloths can soften a space, like this seating area designed by Natasha.

HOME &
DESIGN

von Hemert
Interiors since 1920

A Legacy of Luxury

For the team at von Hemert Interiors, outfitting some of the area's most elegant escapes is a family affair. A fourth-generation operation, the company has been in business since 1920, the year Anna von Hemert Martin opened her first design studio in the heart of Los Angeles. Over the past 94 years, that studio has grown into a Southern California institution with three locations in Laguna, Costa Mesa and Torrance.

"People have come in for generations," co-owner Carrie von Hemert says of the Laguna shop. "We've worked with the parents of the children that we're working with today." The company's 11 in-house interior designers bring an unmatched level of expertise to the table, giving von Hemert Interiors the ability to satisfy a host of client requests that include assisting with furniture selection, designing custom furnishings and drapery treatments, and replacing upholstery.

The design staff is thoroughly versed in a variety of styles ranging from traditional to modern, and the von Hemerts are especially known for their broad selections of Italian imports and furnishings sourced from around the world. Pieces by American heritage brands like Stickley and Baker are juxtaposed with contemporary statement-makers by relative newcomers such as American Leather and Marge Carson—a delightfully eclectic mix of aesthetics.

Best of all, these pieces are sold directly from the showroom floor, giving clients immediate access to a trove of gorgeous treasures. It's hardly a surprise that the company's team has designed



everything from Hollywood film sets to a personalized retreat for a Saudi Arabian prince.

For this Laguna home, Mary Larez, one of the company's certified interior designers, imagined a classic contemporary scheme with clean, sleek lines and minimalist decor. Capitalizing on the home's myriad glass walls and windows, Mary incorporated the colors of the natural landscape using neutral tones and shades of blue and green.

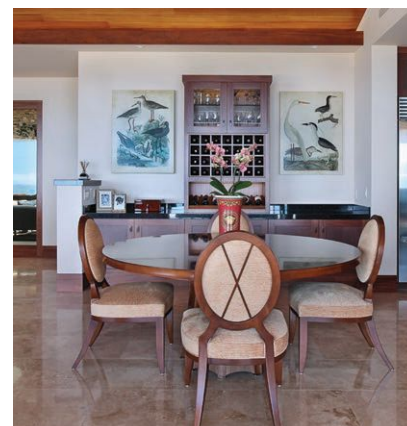
In the living room, a glossy Parsons cocktail table by Lillian August showcases natural burl wood while an understated leather sectional provides space for relaxation. The Baker designer collection's Encircle dining table with its fluted base, meanwhile, serves as a focal point in the dining room, which also features smooth marble flooring. These personalized touches continue into the master bedroom, where a platform mahogany bed, luxe chenille linens, ebony wood nightstands and cloisonné lamps add subtle elegance.

"I love that we can help people realize their dreams of living in a beautiful environment," Carrie adds. "We can turn that dream into a reality."



VON HEMERT INTERIORS
INTERIOR DESIGN
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VONHEMERTINTERIORS.COM

INTERIOR DESIGN BY MARY LAREZ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERI KOEGEL



grass, and boldly colored textiles can infuse a space with personality and charm. Just as you would for the interior of your home, choose an area rug that ties the space together and adds dimension to your backyard. In recent years, the indoor-outdoor rug selection has expanded dramatically, and the choices currently available are extensive, according to Lisa. “For something subtle, try a sisal look or, for a pop of color, check out Dash & Albert or Jaipur rugs,” she shares. “Not only are they easy to care for, but they inexpensively add a cozy feel to any outdoor space.”

Likewise, one of the most often overlooked aspects of outdoor design is lighting, which can be just as stylish as it is functional. “There are many options for outdoor lighting, including table and floor lamps, lanterns and hanging fixtures, to make your space unique,” Michael says.

“I always say lighting will make or break your space,” Lisa adds. “There’s something magical about landscape lighting—sitting under a twinkling chandelier above, while the foliage of the surrounding landscape is dappled with gentle uplighting.” Complete the ambience with strategically placed candlelight, she says, and you’ll be able to create a warm and welcoming space—even outdoors.

EXPERIMENTING WITH ENTERTAINING

You’ll no doubt want to share your revamped space with friends and family; luckily, high-tech tools and installations have made backyard



Outdoor lighting can be both functional and stylish, as seen in this patio area designed by Sheldon Harte.

soirees increasingly easy to plan and execute. No good party is without music, but don’t worry if you’re unable to afford built-in speakers. “With today’s mobile platforms, it’s easy to bring your favorite music along with you,” Sheldon says of streaming services like Spotify and Pandora. And leave the television to the indoors—not only will a TV-free setting induce conversation among guests, but, according to Sheldon, outdoor systems rarely hold up well in Laguna due to the constant moisture and sea salt in the air.

When designing a space for entertaining,

don’t forget to include places for storing beverages and areas for preparing and cooking food.

“Barbecues and outdoor kitchens are usually sited near the kitchen in the main house so that you have access to what you need from the indoors,” Sheldon says. “Outdoor refrigerators are mostly for drinks. Food is usually kept inside because if you keep it outside, you’ll forget about it and it will rot.” When selecting outdoor countertops, he adds, stay away from dark stones because they tend to spot and calcify. Instead, opt for materials like quartzite, limestone and travertine, which all weather the elements remarkably well.

Even if you don’t have the luxury of starting with an entirely bare canvas when designing your outdoor retreat, consider making gradual updates to the space or adding understated accessories. Simple additions like patterned throw pillows or found objects like a driftwood sculpture on an antique coffee table can transform a space without breaking the bank. Or, spruce the space up with fresh flowers or potted herbs from the garden set on tabletops. When the weather allows, add a stack of design, travel or other coffee-table-style books to make the space feel lived in.

But consider yourself warned: If you succeed in making your outdoor space as enticing as the interior of your home, you may just never want to leave. Sheldon adds, “I’ve had clients specifically ask if the outdoor living room I’m designing for them could be warm enough to sleep in at night.” **LBM**



Outdoor entertaining is enhanced when elements of the kitchen are brought from the indoors out.



Hang Arteriors' [BRECK CHANDELIER](#) from a loggia to create an outdoor luxury environment, \$1,400, at Tuvalu, Laguna Beach. (949-497-3202; tuvaluhome.com)



Embark on a backyard staycation with Tommy Bahama's Island [ESTATE LANAI ACCENT CHAIR](#), starting at \$2,500, at Tommy Bahama, Laguna Beach. (949-376-6881; tommybahama.com)

MAKEOVER MUST-HAVES

Designers often talk about bringing the outdoors in, but how do you bring the indoors out? Start with this curated collection of decor finds that will have your backyard space ready for entertaining, relaxing or cooking.



Dine in style on the outdoor [CIUDAD PARSONS TABLE](#), \$450, at Pier 1 Imports, Laguna Niguel. (949-661-9890; pier1.com)



Counter the coastal breeze with the [LAGUNA CONCRETE VENTLESS FIRE COLUMN](#), starting at \$129, at Restoration Hardware, Fashion Island, Newport Beach. (949-760-9232; restorationhardware.com)



Go gourmet with [WOLF'S OUTDOOR RANGE WITH GAS GRILL AND BURNERS](#), price upon request, at Kiva Kitchen & Bath, Irvine. (949-221-0600; kivahome.com)



ROOM *to* GROW

*Though they may
be for little ones,
these four kids' spaces
are big on style.*

By Margie Monin Dombrowski

Children's bedrooms can take on multiple personalities and the design options are endless, but the planning phase often leaves parents stumped. After all, when will your son outgrow that video game theme, and just how soon will your tween tire of today's color scheme before she moves on to the next one? What suits your children now may be less relevant as the years go by, and the ability to design with this knowledge in mind is an acquired skill.

From whimsical wonderlands to sophisticated retreats, local designers share their thoughts on creating stylish spaces for children of all ages, along with tips on how to make their rooms grow with them.



SCOTT SPORLEDER

petite sophisticate

A nursery doesn't have to be filled with pastel colors and cartoon characters—it can take on a more grown-up and minimalist aesthetic. And, when you consider how many hours you'll be spending there too, you may eventually realize you're designing for yourself as much as for your bundle of joy.

According to Laguna-based interior designer Lisa Berman (her maiden name was Gutow), principal designer for Lisa Gutow Design, you can strike a perfect balance with carefully chosen furnishings, accessories and materials.

"Parents with new babies spend so many hours in their nursery," she says. "There's no reason it shouldn't make you happy to spend time in there as well."

In fact, Lisa and her husband Gary wanted to communicate a certain type of design and feeling into their son's nursery after moving from a big city to Laguna Beach. "[We] wanted to capture some of that urban sophistication, but still keep it casual because they now live at the beach," Lisa explains.

Inside the space, gray camouflage wallpaper takes center stage on a feature wall behind a modern, white crib. Add a graphic rug and a

large "L" initial on the wall, and the room begins to reflect the kind of funky, metropolitan vibe that also makes for a soothing environment for a tot. Highlighting a statement feature such as a wallpaper print or rug pattern, Lisa says, is one simple way to make a bold impact in a space.

As a new parent, keeping everything in your baby's nursery as healthy and toxin-free as possible becomes an important concern. That's why Lisa committed to keeping virtually everything in the space eco-friendly, organic or nontoxic.

"There are so many details to think about—the glue, the paint, the dyes in the textiles, the foam in the chairs, everything," she muses. "That was the biggest challenge, because there are so many things that people aren't aware of that are toxic."

Accordingly, the designer focused on sourcing stylish pieces that just so happen to be green: The crib sheets are organic, the dresser drawers are coated with a pop of nontoxic blue paint, the area rug is made with nontoxic dyes, and even the wallpaper glue is nontoxic. These details combine to create the functional yet eclectic look the couple was looking for without sacrificing style. Lisa adds, "We just tried to make it fun."



GREY CRAWFORD



SCOTT SPORLEDER

Modern touches in this nursery, designed by Lisa Gutow Design, reflect the tastes of the parents (above, with their baby), who moved to Laguna from a big city.



In this boy's bedroom, designer Arianna Noppenberger selected furniture with added storage to make the most of the small space.

flexible functionality

All an 11-year-old boy really needs in a bedroom is a place to sleep, an area to study and do homework, and space to play. When you're working with a smaller room, every functional area and piece of furniture matters, so as soon as Arianna Noppenberger of Aria Design got to work on this compact space, her main priority became making the most of the room's limited square footage.

"We shaped the room for any need," she says. "Everything is moving, opening and closing." The bed, for example, doesn't take up much space in the room and serves a variety of purposes. With a pullout trundle bed underneath, it's the perfect accessory for a sleepover; meanwhile, extra built-ins on the side of the bed

maximize storage areas. A homework desk retracts into a cabinet space in the wall, opening up the area for play—and creating the kind of cool-kid trick an 11-year-old can appreciate. "You can get the most out of the space with custom built-ins," Arianna continues. "[With kids,] the flexibility has to be there."

Lighting is an often-overlooked aspect of designing children's bedrooms that Arianna was sure to address. During the day, the space gets plenty of natural sunlight through a bank of windows along one wall, but the dark wood ceilings overhead could easily make it difficult to study at night. Arianna's solution was to include recessed halogen light fixtures on dimmers that point toward the ceiling to indirectly

illuminate the room. Table lamps also provide up-close task lighting so there's never an excuse for unfinished homework.

The bedroom's overall look is streamlined and subdued, which will make it easy to graduate to a more mature design scheme later on. Keeping materials like carpeting and dark wood uniformly neutral throughout the space makes the room more like a blank canvas that can be updated with accessories as time progresses—for now, however, a few bright accents work just fine. Wall shelves that currently display childhood trophies can later show off collections or other ephemera. By designing a space with options, Arianna adds, "You can create a room that grows with them."



Versatility is key in this girl's room designed by Nagwa Seif, which features neutral beach-toned colors that should last through the teen years by swapping out the bedding and artwork.

tropical hangout

Designing stylish, themed kids' rooms calls for using a little restraint. For Nagwa Seif, owner of Nagwa Seif Interior Design in Irvine, pulling together this bedroom was a lesson in controlled creativity. "One of the first things [the clients] had asked for was the theme," Nagwa says, adding that the clients' 8-year-old daughter wanted mermaids integrated into the space. The designer's challenge was giving the 8-year-old the themed room she wanted while creating a space that she can still enjoy in a few years.

Settling on an aqua color scheme for the ombre walls instantly satisfied the beachy request—plus, the shade is tame enough to withstand the tween and teen years. Coral printed drapes and a bamboo study desk that's been painted white capture

the desired coastal flair but are neutral enough to mix in with other decor styles. "In the pieces that you have to invest the most in, find something neutral," Nagwa says. "It's not going to go out of style or be anything she'll outgrow."

Furniture versatility is much more important in children's bedrooms than in adult spaces because the selected pieces typically need to be multifunctional. "We opted to go with a daybed because with kids it's not just about sleeping—it's about playing and having their own space," Nagwa says of the room's furnishings. "We also thought it'd be perfect to use as a sofa so when she had her friends over they could use it to lounge or play." Side tables with shelving provide spots to discreetly stash belongings in colored baskets that add vibrancy;

the current baskets can also be swapped out with something new. "It's all about versatility and having ways to change the room," Nagwa adds.

Custom wall art the designer created by mounting and framing an aqua-colored decal of a mermaid silhouette corresponds with the theme without being overly kitschy. Best of all, removing the mermaid art is all it takes to switch the theme.

Nagwa's advice for designing a children's room is multidimensional: "Start with the color scheme, then figure out where you can take the least risks with the most expensive elements in the room," she says. "Look for versatility in those pieces, and then decorate with everything else in a way that works with your child at that age—those things can be changed later on."

Shades of aqua and lavender combined with glamorous accents make the perfect tween space for Lola Bernard (pictured at far right). White headboards and cabinets make it easy to update the room as she grows.



FOR THE KIDS

With more exciting design tools and decor selections available than ever for children's rooms, these kids' spaces can be bold, sophisticated, playful and even a bit bohemian. No matter the style of your child's space, these pieces can add the personal touch you're looking for.

Blabla Apple Tree Dream Ring, price upon request, at Little Bohemian, Laguna Beach (949-376-8101)



Urban Cowboy by Glenna Jean four-piece crib set, \$299, at Beds Plus Kids Stuff, Laguna Hills (949-544-5244; bpkidsandcribs.com)

Monte Carlo pink leatherette bed, \$669, at Modern Studio Furnishings, Laguna Beach (949-376-0103; modern-furnishings.com)



BOTH PHOTOS BY SCOTT SPORLEDER

girly glam

Sometimes, what a tween girl wants in a bedroom is a little bit of glamour. After outgrowing her previous bedroom style, 11-year-old Lola, daughter of Taryn and John Bernard, who own home a decor shop called ModShop by RoomService at SoCo in Costa Mesa, wanted to have a little more say in the colors and design. “The only thing she was very particular about was to not have pink in it,” Taryn says.

Working together, mom and daughter came up with a feminine yet sophisticated theme. “We chose a girly Hollywood Regency style, with a crystal chandelier, a bed accented with crystal nailhead trim and mirrors to reflect the light in the space,” Taryn says. “Lola is by no means a girly-girl; anyone who knows her knows she’s the perfect combination of princess and tom-boy, preferring horse riding and hip-hop to your usual 11-year-old girl’s ballet, et cetera. This room was meant to be her special place to hang out with her friends and get away from her three brothers.”

The room’s former pink-and-yellow color scheme was replaced with aqua walls and accents of lavender for a more tween-appropriate look.

“We travel often to places like the Caribbean and Mexico, where the ocean color is similar to the shade of paint we used, and Lola loves the water,” Taryn adds.

One wall features two Hollywood Regency-style beds with upholstered headboards, creating a striking focal point. As a unique solution, “We chose to squeeze two full-size beds into her room because she loves to have her friends over for sleepovers.”

Other eye-catching furniture pieces include the lavender balloon chair that’s popular with her friends and a small desk with a dainty mirror above. “This can serve double duty as a place to do homework and paint her fingernails.”

Major pieces such as the upholstered headboards and cabinetry are neutral in white so they’ll last longer, while fun accents like the custom painting of Lola and her dog, Buddy, and a graphic Buddy pillow add personality.

Designing for kids is tough, especially when their tastes are constantly changing, just like they are. However, with a few smart choices, you can give their spaces enduring style and functionality that will last a lifetime. **LBM**



George Nelson Elihu the Elephant Zoo Timer wall clock, \$180, at Vertigo Home, Laguna Beach (949-494-7547; vertigohome.us)

Bringing the LIGHT

THIS SPRING, ECHO MEDITERRANEAN STYLE WITH AN
ARRAY OF TEXTURES, DEFINED SHAPES AND WARM COLORS.

PHOTOGRAPHER: DAVID JAKLE
FASHION DIRECTOR: JULIE FRENCH
LOCATION: A PRIVATE RESIDENCE AT CRYSTAL COVE,
COMPLIMENTS OF Z COLLECTION

Opposite page: Black and snake print
front zipper dress, \$1,190, necklace,
\$1,145, shoes, \$770, all available at
Barbara Bui, South Coast Plaza



Red fringe top, \$1,190, jeans, \$990,
both by Tom Ford, gold hoop earrings,
\$275, bracelet, \$350, both by
Eddie Borgo, all available at Neiman
Marcus, Fashion Island; sunglasses,
\$335, by Céline, available at Saks
Fifth Avenue, South Coast Plaza





Black-striped blouse, \$1,595, pants, \$1,095, slide sandals, \$840, all available at Chloé, South Coast Plaza



Long white dress,
\$7,490, earrings,
\$995, ring, \$795,
pendant necklace,
\$715, all available
at Roberto Cavalli,
South Coast Plaza



Opposite page:
Fuchsia dress,
\$2,695, available
at Lanvin, South
Coast Plaza

Dark rust and purple
wine liberty flower
Jacquard long dress
with black satin belt,
\$3,500, available at
Gucci, South Coast
Plaza; copper shoe,
\$725, by Manolo
Blahnik, available
at Neiman Marcus,
Fashion Island

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LEMONS AT
NEXT MODEL
MANAGEMENT;
HAIR AND
MAKEUP: HARPER,
FOR KEVYN
AUCOIN AT
EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS
MANAGEMENT;
DIGITAL TECH:
JOHN TEICHERT;
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ASSISTANT:
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CRYSTAL COVE
ALLIANCE

DIGGING Deeper

Citizen science projects at Crystal Cove State Park engage visitors and students alike in research that helps preserve this special place.

By Sharon Stello | Photos by Jody Tiongco



Local
Boy
Scouts
study top soil.

CLASSES AT CRYSTAL COVE

Learn more about the ecosystem or pick up some outdoor skills and enjoy the breathtaking scenery at Crystal Cove State Park by attending one of the following classes this spring, offered by REI outdoor gear store and Crystal Cove Alliance.

APRIL 27: Introduction to GPS Navigation at Crystal Cove

MAY 18: Kayak tour of Crystal Cove

MAY 18: Stand-up paddleboard tour of Crystal Cove

MAY 18: Hiking Crystal Cove State Park with a naturalist guide

To sign up for these classes and outings, go to rei.com/stores/tustin

Strolling around the new Berns Environmental Study Loop trail at Crystal Cove State Park, visitors can become scientists for the day, measuring wind speed, peering into a bladderpod bush to find brightly colored harlequin bugs, or listening for the distinct calls of threatened California gnatcatcher birds and recording how many they count.

These are just some of the citizen science projects in which thousands of community members, schoolchildren and youth groups will take part this spring and beyond, providing data for research that helps preserve the park while learning about the environment.

Visitors counting harlequin bugs learn that this indicator species provides insight into the ecosystem's health. The bugs' survival depends on bladderpod plants, which are sensitive to temperature variation, so scientists study both in hopes of better understanding how climate change may impact plants and animals in the park. That effort includes tracking the bugs' population.

Crystal Cove Alliance (CCA), the state park's nonprofit partner committed to protecting the

site's cultural, natural and historic resources, coordinates more than a dozen of these types of citizen science projects.

This unprecedented effort to host hands-on projects on public lands is seen as a model that could be replicated throughout California's vast state park system. The outdoor lessons complement classroom instruction and textbook reading to teach science, technology, engineering and math, bringing to life these so-called STEM subjects that have seen a great many students fall by the wayside.

"A lot of people talk about it, but this is a place where they're actually doing something about it," says Maj. Gen. Anthony Jackson, the state parks director. "This is a model park. I wish I could bottle what this community has ... and take that bottle to all 280 state parks. [The system] would run itself."

Harry Helling, president and CEO of CCA, sees the park as a proving ground for innovative teaching methods to provide educators with engaging ways to meet new curriculum standards. "We truly have turned Crystal Cove into a laboratory for testing these new approaches," he says.

Moro Canyon, nestled within Crystal Cove State Park, turns into a research center where students learn about conservation and sustainability.



ON THE TRAIL

When venturing out on the trails at Crystal Cove State Park, hikers may come across a wide range of plants and animals as the park provides habitat for all kinds of wildlife. Here are a few of the species that might be encountered, as shared by Sara Ludovise, education manager with Crystal Cove Alliance.

PLANTS

BLADDERPOD:

With yellow flowers, green seedpods and a strong smell, this plant provides food for the harlequin bug, a species monitored to learn whether park restoration is working.



ELDERBERRY: Acjachemen Indians call it the “tree of music” as they make clapper sticks and flutes from its branches; also used for medicinal purposes and provides food for wildlife.

MUSTARD: Introduced by the Spanish to mark the El Camino Real in the 1800s, mustard has since spread all over Southern California. CCA seeks to remove this invasive plant from the park.

WHITE SAGE: This light-colored plant, with light purple flowers in spring, is important to the Acjachemen, who burn it in purifying rituals and religious ceremonies.

ANIMALS

BOBCAT: These shy, spotted felines are rarely seen by people, but paw prints or scat may occasionally be seen on the trail.



CALIFORNIA

GNATCATCHER: A threatened species, this dusky gray bird is difficult to spot, but its distinctive “zeeer” call is easy to recognize.

WESTERN FENCE LIZARD: Notable for the bright blue coloring on its underside, these small reptiles often sun themselves on rocks or along the trail’s edge.

DUSKY-FOOTED WOOD RAT: As nocturnal creatures, wood rats are rarely seen during the day, but observant hikers might find one of their nests hidden along the trail.



Students participate in the field study stations.



A student logs data as part of a citizen science project.

COURTESY OF CRYSTAL COVE ALLIANCE

INTERACTIVE INITIATIVES

Since 1999, projects primarily have focused on the beach side of the park, with experiments looking at ocean acidification, boat cruises to study sea life and water quality, and box kits that children can borrow to scout for dolphins and report back in exchange for a free book. But, with the February opening of the Berns Environmental Study Loop in the park’s Moro Canyon section, several inland projects were added.

The half-mile trail—made possible thanks to a \$1 million donation from Laguna Beach residents Michael and Tricia Berns—is part of the 35-acre

restoration of a former trailer park. In addition to the walking path with eight mini field science stations, new features include an amphitheater, fire pit and student staging area for campfire programs, Junior Ranger courses and guided walks.

“The Environmental [Study] Loop is a place where the kids can get their hands on real science,” Anthony says. “... With the thousands of kids that will go through here, you’re going to get the next great scientist.”

While students and community members hone their science skills, they also contribute to real research. Crystal Cove is an attractive study

SOUTH12TH PHOTOGRAPHY



Local Boy Scouts compare soil samples they have collected to learn about where water goes in Moro Canyon.

site due to the largely untouched habitat—particularly in the backcountry—and ongoing restoration. “Crystal Cove is at the very tail end of one of the last remaining pristine watersheds in Orange County,” says Sara Ludovise, CCA education manager. “... It’s a chance for us to understand how a watershed in its purest form is working and how it’s supposed to work.”

Researchers from top universities have conducted studies at Crystal Cove for years, but their efforts weren’t widely publicized. “It turns out that there’s a lot of great science that happens in this park—that, in fact, happens in every park,” Harry says. By seeking help from visitors, an extensive amount of data can be amassed. As Harry says, “The power of citizen science ... is that you have many eyes at all times in the park focused on many things.”

STUDENT SCIENTISTS

Some of those citizen scientists are students from El Morro Elementary School, located right next to the park. An after-school citizen science club of fourth- and fifth-graders met twice a week over two months this winter, visiting the park to collect data, then analyzing and presenting their findings. Fifteen students used special tools to measure soil moisture and plant transpiration—water released through leaves—to examine where water goes in Moro Canyon and whether the type of landscape affects the water’s path. Students say they enjoy the experiments and trips to Crystal Cove.

“They’re really fun,” says fourth-grader Sherwin Riahi about the projects. “... I like how they’re kind of complicated, and I like that we get

to take the information and put it on iPad minis.”

“I kind of like working with the plants because I like nature, and I like finding out what they’re called,” fourth-grader Colette Reed adds. “And I like to be able to point them out to my dad when we go hiking.”

While the students are having fun, they’re also discovering. “I learned that [there are] different plants in different climates and they all have a different way to survive,” says fourth-grader Theo Coffey. “... If other plants come in that weren’t originally here, they’ll just destroy the ones that were already here.”

University of California, Irvine graduate

student Jennifer Long, who leads the El Morro group, is studying whether citizen science projects help children complete the scientific process from hypothesis to presentation and grasp difficult concepts such as water cycles.

Notably, data collected by the students contributes to research by Travis Huxman, a UCI professor of ecology and evolutionary biology. Travis has been exploring water’s role in an ecosystem, how it moves through Moro Canyon from rain to stream to underground aquifer and back to the ocean, and how much is used and transpired by plants. “The park is a great place to look at this,” Travis says. “... It’s one of the very few watersheds that’s mostly intact that drains into the ocean.”

Answering big picture questions—like “where does the water go?”—may help the land’s administrators make restoration decisions. Bringing research and education together, Travis says, benefits both students and scientists. As he says, “Crystal Cove is one of these unique places in the world where building science there just really enriches the experience.”

Reimagining these public spaces with science projects allows students to explore parks in a whole new way, Sara says. “It helps them see that a lot of the things they’ve been learning in school have a real-world application,” she adds. “Seeing that moment when they tell you they get the concept for the first time ... when they light up like that, it really inspires me.”

For students at Dana Hills High School, skills learned at Crystal Cove will be applied in an Earthwatch Institute trip to study brown hyenas in South Africa next year as part of a Global Sustainability Project. Dolores Dang-Wright,



Motion-sensor trap cameras track animals and help citizen scientists learn more about the natural habitat.



Students prepare their trap cameras for learning about wildlife.



Girl Scouts learn about water conservation during World Water Day on March 22.

who teaches environmental science at Dana Hills High, was one of four local teachers selected for the project.

Nearly 20 juniors and seniors in Dolores' class have laid the groundwork for the trip by learning how to use motion-sensor trap cameras, necessary equipment for the expedition. Students used cameras donated by the Irvine Ranch Conservancy to determine where animals live in Crystal Cove. These students won't be among the 11 selected for the trip, but set the stage for next year's students and learned how to operate the cameras, design the setup, collect data and communicate their findings—skills needed for scientific research. "They're getting real, hands-on research [experience] using tools that we don't have normally in a classroom," Dolores says.

Junior Sarah Haghi says going to the park every couple of weeks and setting up the cameras, then reviewing the photos of wood rats, rabbits and birds, and telling the public about this work at the loop trail opening were memorable experiences.

"I think it's so much fun to be a part of such an important concept and an important goal," she says. "These areas are so valuable because it really preserves the wildlife there."

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Beyond schools, other youth groups also are involved in these science projects. Local Boy Scouts camp at the top of Moro Canyon to study soil and water conservation while Girl Scouts visit Crystal Cove to learn about animal habitats and more. On March 22, local Brownies participated

in World Water Day at the park, discussing water conservation, the current drought and ways to solve the problem.

However, not all of the participants are children. Companies in the region will be sending volunteer groups of employees to remove invasive plants, and adults from the Braille Institute of America's Anaheim center have helped count birds by listening for their calls and made audio recordings of water in the park.

Linda Becker, who teaches a sensory awareness class at the institute, brings blind and visually impaired students to the park to use hearing as well as olfactory and tactile senses to learn about their surroundings. Her class was invited to check out the Environmental Study Loop before it opened to the public.

Linda says this helped students fine-tune their listening skills because they had to pick out the gnatcatcher's call from the sounds of quail, crows and other birds, as well as rushing water, wind through the trees and people walking and talking along the trail. And, helping with research to preserve this special place means a lot to Linda and her class. "This is our way of giving back," she says. "It was just a magnificent feeling that we could help with research on a different level."

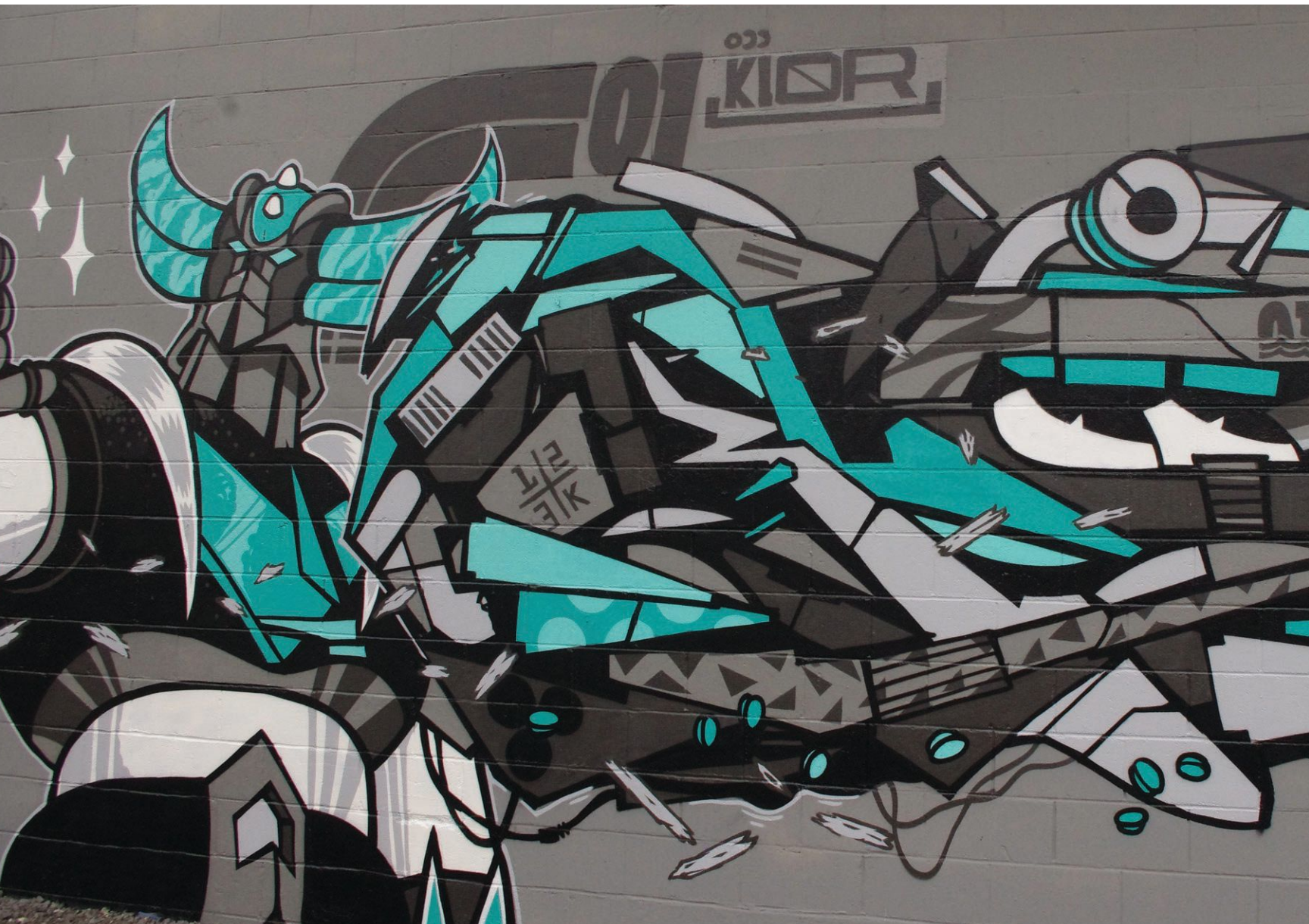
It's clear that Crystal Cove has touched the lives and hearts of people throughout the community. Now, with the many educational opportunities at Crystal Cove, there's an abundance of ways that visitors can continue that connection and, literally, dig deeper into the history and natural habitat to help preserve it for years to come. **LBM**



FIREBRAND MEDIA, IN CONJUNCTION WITH CRYSTAL COVE ALLIANCE, PRESENTS A SERIES OF SIX ARTICLES IN 2013-14 EXPLORING THE MANY ASPECTS OF CRYSTAL COVE. VIEW THE ARTICLES AT CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK IN HISTORIC COTTAGE #46.

THE FOURTH OF SIX ARTICLES
IN A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN:





A colorful mural by 123Klan, a creative studio, graces the wall of a building in Kakaako.

URBAN ALOHA

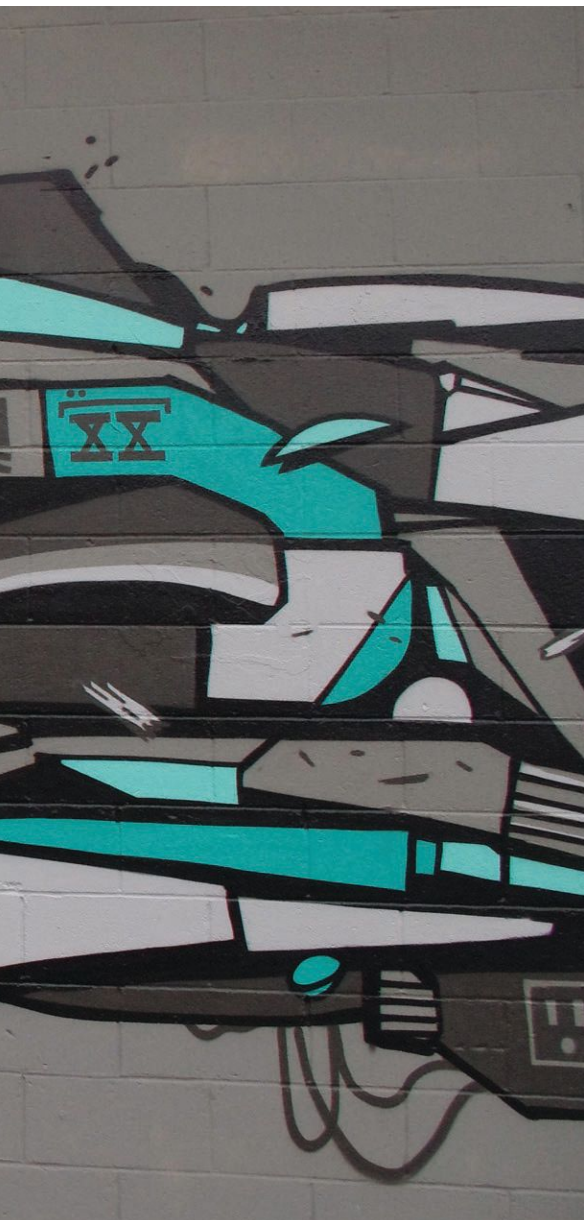
Beyond surf and sand, Oahu has a thriving urban culture that embraces creativity while staying rooted in tradition.

By Linda Domingo

A trip to Hawaii without setting foot on a beach could be considered heresy. Especially on Oahu, where the surf lifestyle reigns and the island's shores consistently rank at the top of "world's best" lists, the allure of soft sand and warm, impossibly blue waves is what brings most travelers from all over the world. But while the beach lacks naught, there's much to be discovered away from it—in the urban centers of Honolulu where locals shop, play and dine.

COLORFUL KAKAAKO

Just northeast of Waikiki lies Kakaako, a neighborhood that was once a grouping of stark gray and tan warehouses. Over the past four years, artist and curator Jasper Wong has invited more than 100 of his closest artist friends to paint the town whatever colors they choose. The initiative is called Pow Wow Hawaii, an annual festival in February that leaves welcome traces of creativity in its wake, and has transformed the former blank canvas into an outdoor gallery of murals that is worth viewing year-round.



Clockwise from top: Art initiative Pow Wow Hawaii in Kakaako; taro chips at Highway Inn; Iolani Palace historical landmark; Honolulu Night Market



“By flying people from all over the world to Hawaii, we are exposing international arts to the local audience and vice versa,” Jasper explains. “We’re trying to create bridges to different parts of the world.”

Along with an eclectic group of businesses that have taken up residence in the district in recent years, Pow Wow Hawaii has helped to reinvigorate Kakaako, making it into a unique shopping, culture and dining destination for both tourists and residents. Conveniently walkable, Kakaako offers glimpses into an urban Hawaii that is on the forefront of cool without forgetting the area’s rich history.

On the culinary side, home-brewer-turned-pro Geoff Seideman converted an old warehouse





Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa

WHERE TO STAY

HYATT REGENCY WAIKIKI BEACH RESORT AND SPA

Directly across from the beach, the Hyatt Regency Waikiki's guest rooms have stunning mountain and ocean views. The resort features world-class shopping at the Pualeilani Atrium Shops and gourmet restaurants including the elegantly decorated Japengo, which focuses on Hawaii's local products and fresh seafood. (hyattregencywaikiki.com)

THE MODERN

Voted among the top boutique hotels in Honolulu by Hawaii Magazine's readers, The Modern's sophisticated accommodations are only enhanced by irresistible pools, renowned dining, including Morimoto Waikiki—conceived by Masaharu Morimoto of the “Iron Chef” TV show—and The Study, a speakeasy-like bar hidden behind a wall of books. (themodernhonolulu.com)

HILTON HAWAIIAN VILLAGE

Situated on Waikiki's widest stretch of beach on 22 oceanfront acres, this resort boasts no less than 20 restaurants and bars, five pools, a fabulous spa and the opportunity to view exotic wildlife and lush gardens. Daily on-site activities range from lei making to lessons in hula dancing or playing ukulele. (hiltonhawaiianvillage.com)

SHERATON WAIKIKI

Oceanfront views and a breathtaking infinity pool add to the experience at the newly renovated Sheraton Waikiki, which also features nightly poolside entertainment, a wide variety of water sports and cultural events, and first-rate dining at Kai Market, Yoshiya, RumFire and the Edge of Waikiki bar. (sheraton-waikiki.com)



LINDA DOMINGO

Homecoming is one of the boutiques making Chinatown a fashion hot spot on the island.

into Honolulu Beerworks, the island's newest craft brewery (set to open soon), while England-born bartender Christian Self and local disc jockey Timo Lee joined forces to create Bevy, an undeniably hip eatery that takes its mixology as seriously as its music and art. Also nearby is Shokudo Japanese Restaurant & Bar for Asian fusion cuisine, and Highway Inn, a 67-year-old institution that serves authentic Hawaiian dishes, including “laulau” (pork wrapped in taro leaf) and “poi” (a sticky, nutritious food made from taro plants).

Saturdays bring some of the country into the city—the Kakaako Farmers Market takes over a strip of Auahi Street with fresh produce year-round and is a good spot to grab a cheap breakfast. Then, every third Saturday of the month, vendors, entertainers, locals and visitors gather in Kakaako for the Honolulu Night Market, essentially a big block party where you can eat, drink, be merry and even catch a game of futsal, a version of soccer played on a smaller field.

And the vibrant area continues to grow, as

landowner Kamehameha Schools has started construction on a mixed-use development featuring independently owned shops, restaurants, bars and galleries that's slated for completion in 2015, adding yet another dynamic to the ever-changing Kakaako District.

DOWNTOWN CULTURE

A hub of office and government buildings, downtown Honolulu also houses some fascinating attractions, including Iolani Palace, a grand historic landmark (and the stand-in for the police headquarters in the original “Hawaii Five-0” TV show). The Honolulu Museum of Art, a structural maze surrounding tranquil green spaces, showcases a broad collection of works from around the world, from ancient to modern times. For more art, the museum's extension, Spalding House, is located just outside of Waikiki in the residential Makiki Heights neighborhood. The house is one of Hawaii's hidden treasures for not only its collection, but also its gorgeous views and Zen environment.



LINDA DOMINGO

The Honolulu Fish Auction is a lively experience.

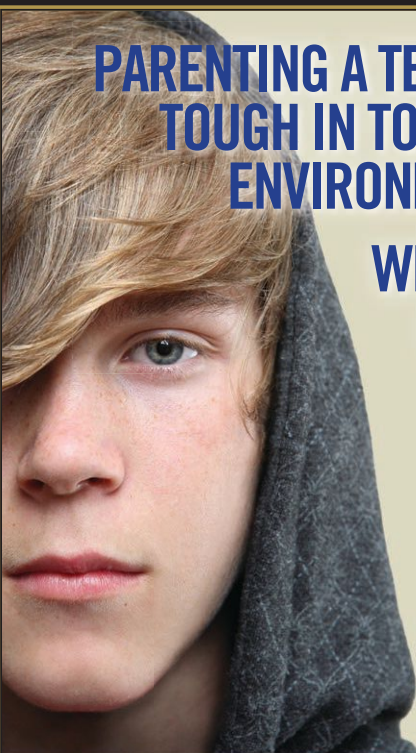
In what many might consider an entirely different demonstration of artistry, the Honolulu Fish Auction is a great reward for those who rise early enough to witness it. Buyers gather as an auctioneer rings a brass bell at 5:30 a.m. and bidding begins—hundreds of tuna, mahi mahi, swordfish and more make up a magnificently fresh culinary display. It's not only a unique experience, but also an informative look into an important part of locals' lives. "Hawaii has become a foodie destination," explains Brooks Takenaka, assistant manager of the United Fishing Agency, which operates the auction. "Fishing for us is important not only from a cultural perspective, but a food and survival perspective."

The Hawaii Seafood Council leads tours on Saturday mornings by reservation. If you go, be sure to wear clothing appropriate for temperatures of about 48 F and closed-toe shoes with which you don't mind stepping into a half-inch of sanitizing solution.

FASHION-FORWARD CHINATOWN

A particular section of downtown is perhaps one of the most obvious examples of Hawaii's multicultural identity: Chinatown. This historic district juxtaposes traditional Asian goods merchants with new retailers that showcase Hawaii's youth and artistic talent. The Arts at Marks Garage is a good starting point for tourists, with resources such as maps and directories, and a gallery space.

It's easy to bring home a mass-produced cliché from any one of the Hawaiian islands, but



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LINDA DOMINGO

Ramen is the star dish at Lucky Belly in Chinatown.

in Chinatown, you'll find some true gems—boutiques with fashionable pieces that maintain the local flair. Barrio Vintage features a curated collection of one-of-a-kind pieces for men and women, while Roberta Oaks' retro-inspired outpost even makes the aloha shirt cool, with sharp fits and eye-catching prints. Other shops like Homecoming and Milk & Honey contribute to Chinatown's spreading reputation as the island's fashion hot spot.

Of course, the biggest draw to most Chinatowns across the globe is that of the culinary variety. Lucky Belly is a staple in the neighborhood, with decor that blends rustic with industrial, and a relatively simple menu of which ramen is the star. Just down the street is The Pig & The Lady, the brainchild of 2012 Hawaiian Rising Star Chef Andrew Le, who gets help—and inspiration—from his mother, Loan Le, lovingly referred to as "Mama Le" by regulars. The restaurant's Vietnamese-inspired dishes are some of the most flavorful bites found in Oahu. Meanwhile, for apertifs and digestifs, check in with Brandon Reid and Justin Park, who lead a squad of bartenders at Manifest. No one goes thirsty at this beautiful bar, enhanced by exposed brick and concrete, not to mention one of the best whiskey lists in Hawaii, making it the perfect place to toast the end of an idyllic trip to the island—and make plans for a swift return. **LBM**

ISLAND TOUR

Overflowing with natural beauty, many of the Hawaiian islands offer unique experiences.

THE BIG ISLAND

Home to one of the world's most active volcanoes, Kilauea, and the largest volcano by volume, Mauna Loa, it's no surprise that the Big Island of Hawaii continues to grow. Nearly twice the size of all the other islands combined, the Big Island is home to resorts, golf courses, historical sites and beautiful beaches alike. Red hot lava flows from Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, while history is preserved at the birthplace of King Kamehameha I. Coffee plantations take travelers inside the process of harvesting the rare 100 percent pure Kona coffee, but those more interested in just sampling fresh brews—and other Hawaiian delicacies—can visit downtown Hilo to find restaurants, shops, art galleries and museums.



Hawaii
Volcanoes
National Park

MAUI

Hikers enjoy the view of the craters at Haleakala National Park.



Hanalei Pier and the Napali cliffs

KAUAI

Known as the Garden Isle for its dense greenery and miles of undeveloped terrain, Kauai is where you'll find some of Hawaii's most spectacular scenery. On the South Shore, explore sunny Poipu, a resort destination brimming with beautiful beaches, the Mahaulepu Heritage Trail and an emerging dining scene. Traveling up the coast, the 3,000-foot Napali cliffs and waterfalls are pieces of untouched paradise. The North Shore boasts the lively Hanalei Town, with green taro fields alongside shops, galleries and restaurants, in addition to some of the island's best beaches, Lumahai and Kee. Across the island, there's ample opportunity to sunbathe, golf, dine and embark on new adventures to explore Kauai's tropical rainforests.

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Men's & Women's Laguna Open Competitions begin at 9 am at Main Beach Park
Open Warm Up Games will be held at The Deck - 627 Sleepy Hollow Lane, Laguna Beach

Facebook.com/LagunaBeachVolleyball
The Deck Reservations & Info - DeckonLaguna.com

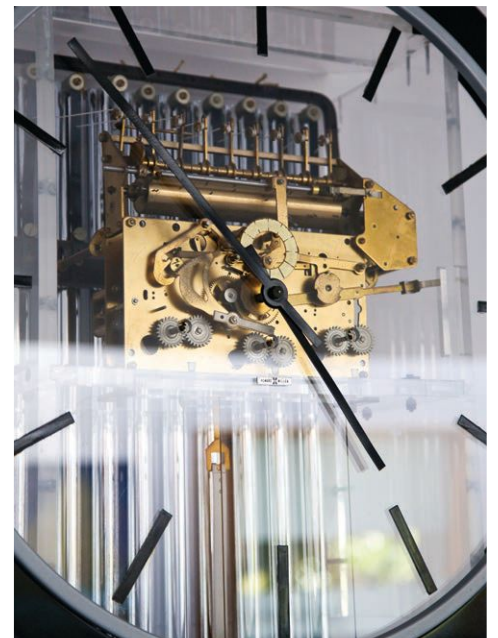
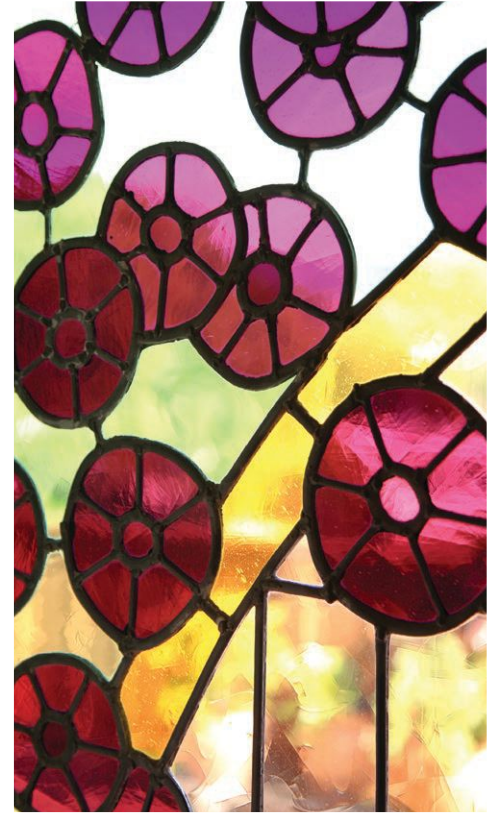


LAGUNA'S HABITAT

PRIVATE PARADISE

Exclusive Allview Terrace houses a quaint hillside community and one of the area's most beloved landmarks.

By Sharael Kolberg | Photos by Jody Tiongco



Situated in the hills of north Laguna, the Allview Terrace neighborhood is perhaps best known as the home of the Hortense Miller Garden. Residents have benefited not only from the beauty of the garden, but also from the entrance gate that was installed when Hortense deeded her property to the city of Laguna Beach in 1976. Following her donation, locals became concerned that their single-street community would see an influx of traffic as a result of visitors flocking to the area to see the garden; in response, the homeowners association had a gate installed at the entrance to the neighborhood, and the garden is now available to be viewed by appointment only. "Our secluded neighborhood doesn't go anywhere, so there's no through traffic," longtime resident Pat Payne says. "It's quiet compared to nearby areas."

Over the years, the gate has become somewhat representative of the tranquil community in the hills. "The gate is a symbiotic situation with residents and the garden," says Ruth Stafford, an Allview Terrace homeowner and member of the Friends of the Hortense Miller Garden.

Here, we go behind the gate and inside the stories of three historic Allview Terrace properties.



FAMILY FACTS: Pat Payne and Ruth Stafford **DAY JOB:** Pat is retired from the retail furniture business; Ruth works as a clinical psychologist and is on the boards of the Suzi Q Senior Center and the Friends of the Hortense Miller Garden. **SPACE:** 2,250 square feet, three bedrooms, three bathrooms **HOUSE TIMELINE:** Built in 1957, purchased in 1974, renovated in 1998 **FABULOUS FEATURE:** The custom woodwork pieces built by Pat

WOODWORK WONDERLAND

When Pat Payne and Ruth Stafford moved into their Allview Terrace home in 1974, the interior looked entirely different than it does today. Pat retired from the retail furniture business in 1985 and has spent the past 30 years customizing the home with various woodworking projects. “I always admired the really nice, high-end furniture, but we couldn’t sell it because we didn’t have the right clientele,” he says. Upon retiring, he subscribed to *Fine Woodworking* magazine and started copying what he saw in its pages.

His first order of business was to remodel the bathroom into a room made almost entirely of wood. From there, he went on to build custom doors, window frames, walls covered with

curly redwood, kitchen cabinets made from koa wood, dressers, bookshelves, a pullout bed, desks, mahogany tables, a maple staircase and just about anything else that Ruth asked him to create. “I love my husband’s touches,” Ruth says. “[They’re] so unique, but I have toned him down over the years. His stuff used to be so massive.”

Likewise, Pat is quick to credit Ruth for the property’s personalized aesthetic. He insists that her design input has made the home what it is. “It was just a house when we bought it,” he muses. “Ruth turned it into a home.”

The home’s present design shows the progression of Pat’s work, his dedication to the craft and just how much his skills have improved over the years. “Our home has evolved from functional

to artistic,” Ruth says. Some of Pat’s most recent work, which includes custom mirrors and doors, is comparable to what one might find at the Festival of Arts, but you’ll be hard-pressed to see Pat selling his wares—he creates purely for the love of the process and makes items for family only. To complement his woodwork, he also mastered the art of making stained-glass windows, which can be found throughout the home.

One of the things that drew Pat and Ruth to the home was its location. The expansive ocean views and friendliness of the neighbors were big selling points for the couple. Ruth says she especially enjoys the fact that residents often come together to celebrate holidays, birthdays and other special events. As she says, “The neighbors are wonderful.”

FAMILY FACTS:

Wayne and Louise

DAY JOB:

Wayne is senior vice president of Hall Wines; Louise is a retired flight attendant.

SPACE: 4,800 square feet, two master suites, one office, 2.5 bathrooms**HOUSE TIMELINE:**

Purchased in 1984, completed second story in 1986, added office in 2005

FABULOUS**FEATURE:** A pair of 700-year-old Tibetan temple guard statues that keep watch over the home

CONTEMPORARY RETREAT

When Wayne Wright first walked into the house he now calls home, he knew he just had to have it. After a year of negotiations, Wayne finally convinced the owner to sell it in 1984 and has since enjoyed life in his dream home with his wife, Louise. “I was smitten from the moment I walked onto the property,” he recalls. “The view was stunning and ... as I walked around I realized how very private it was. We couldn’t see a neighbor’s window from anywhere on the property. ... The location was unbeatable at any price, and I knew right then we had to have it.”

Inside the home, contemporary decor accents a neutral color palette and clean lines. Gray carpet and granite as well as purple marble add

touches of understated elegance to the home’s muted design scheme. The kitchen and formal dining room also highlight shades of silver and gray, with a sparkling collection of crystal dinnerware taking center stage. One of the home’s most head-turning features is the pair of 700-year-old Tibetan temple guard statues that arrived courtesy of Louise’s cousin. “They were shipped to us from Tibet, with all the good karma still intact—at least we like to think so,” she says of the duo. “Asian elements combine well with a contemporary home.”

Since purchasing the property, the Wrights have embarked upon several renovations including adding a second story, second bedroom and office, thereby increasing the square

footage of the home from 2,300 to 4,800. Outside its doors, expansive ocean views are a backdrop for the pool area.

The grounds also feature a large, grassy yard with roses bordering its perimeter and a 1,200-square-foot guest cottage with one bedroom and one bathroom. Wayne’s favorite part of the estate is that it houses two separate three-car garages to store his vintage car collection, which includes his favorite automobile: a 1966 Mustang convertible.

“I enjoy having a flat piece of land, car garages and privacy,” Wayne says of his home in Allview Terrace. “People in this neighborhood are great—we have made some best friends. Coming home is enjoyable.”



FAMILY FACTS:
 Jonathon and Theresa Allen, Powder (French bulldog) **DAY JOB:** Jonathon is a group executive for Citi Personal Wealth Management; Theresa is an investment adviser for First Republic Private Wealth Management. **SPACE:** 3,200 square feet, three bedrooms, two bathrooms **HOUSE TIMELINE:** Built in 1992, purchased in 2011 **FABULOUS FEATURE:** None of the walls are 90-degree angles.



ART MEETS OCEAN

Designed by award-winning Laguna Beach Architect Mark Singer, Jonathon and Theresa Allen's home in Allview Terrace is a juxtaposition of clean, contemporary design surrounded by rugged, wild, open space. "I like the flow of the house," Jonathon says. "It is a unique, contemporary home with vaulted ceilings and lots of interesting edges—none of the walls are 90-degree angles—with unobstructed views of Boat Canyon and the ocean."

The home was the last one built in Allview Terrace and has a coveted location on the edge of the neighborhood overlooking Boat Canyon with no neighbors' homes blocking the views. "I love sitting on the balcony listening to the birds, watching people enjoying the hiking trails

behind our house, seeing the ocean, it's just beautiful," Theresa says. The view is especially spectacular from the master bedroom that has floor-to-ceiling windows and from the master bath that has an infinity tub up against a large corner window.

The decor of the home matches the architecture and can be described as minimalist modern with dark French oak floors and white walls, and black granite countertops with white cabinets in the kitchen. This is not the original interior. The Allens gave the home a "face-lift" when they purchased it, which included new flooring, custom kitchen cabinetry and updates to the master bath and garage. An eye-catching feature to the home is the large-scale artwork by

local artist Shane Townley.

As for the neighborhood, Jonathon and Theresa feel lucky to live there. "We came from Del Mar where we didn't know our neighbors," Theresa says. "Now we have nights where we have dinners, go lawn bowling together, do yoga classes at our homes, have book club meetings ... it's very social. We thought we were just buying a house. We didn't plan on getting a social life with it."

Jonathon agrees, and says he enjoys the diversity of the neighbors and their homes. "No two homes are the same in Allview Terrace," he says. "And we have so many unique people with diverse backgrounds and experiences that make for a wonderfully eclectic neighborhood." **LBM**

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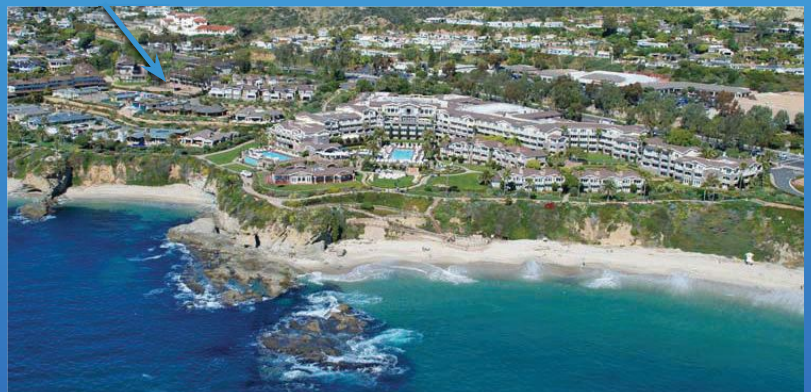


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welcome.

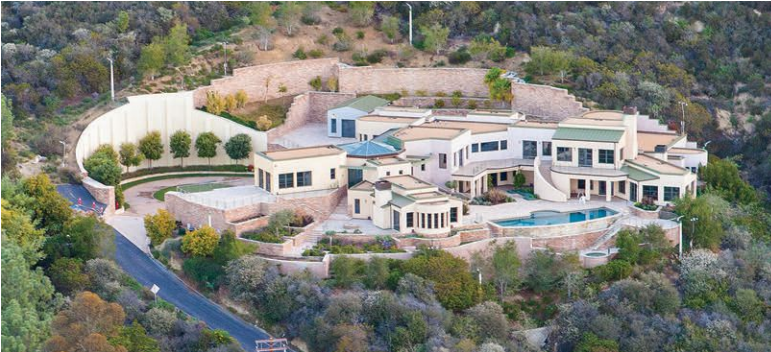
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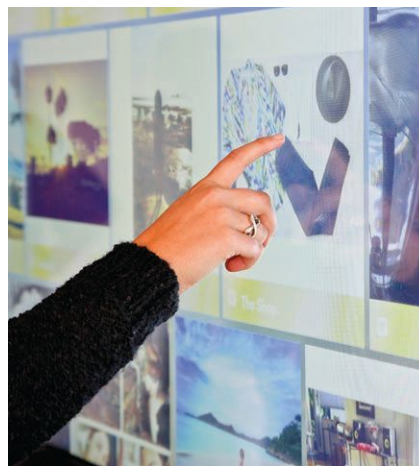


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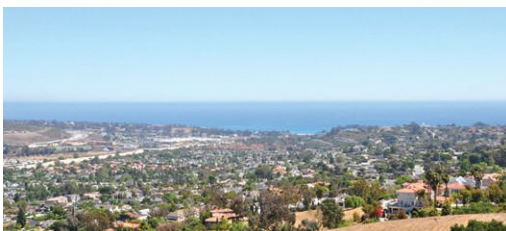
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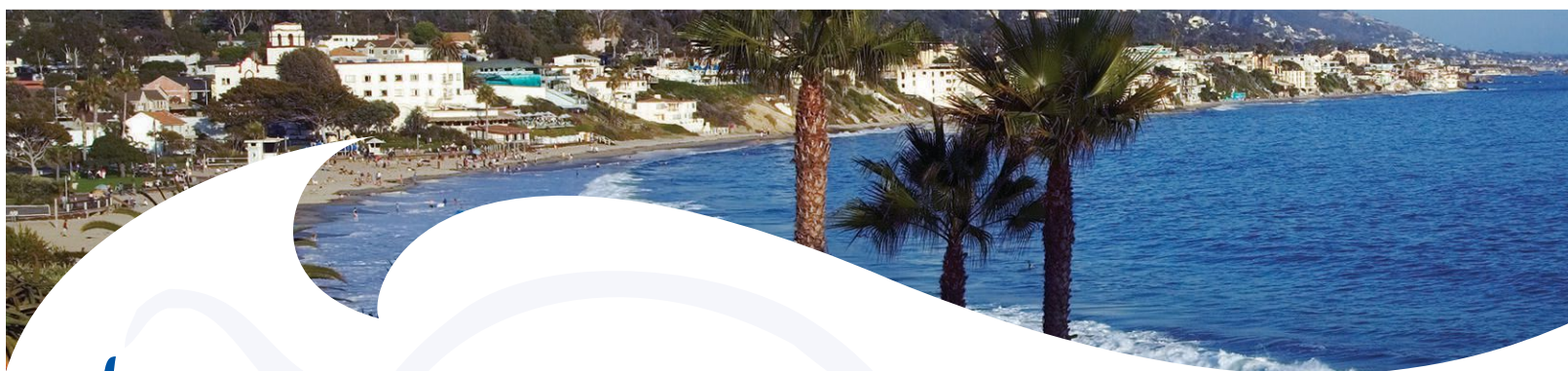
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tivoliterrace.com

Tacos at Tommy's

Tommy Bahama Bar & Grill, whose laid-back yet sophisticated atmosphere has made it a favorite among locals, will be adding a little something special to its menu during the month of May. To commemorate the start of summer—not to mention Mother's Day, Cinco de Mayo and Memorial Day—the eatery will be offering a new "Tacos and Tequila" menu from May 1 to June 12. Comprising island-inspired versions of these California summer staples, the "Tacos and Tequila" menu will feature dishes such as the vegetarian-friendly roasted portobello tacos, savory hangar steak tacos and craft cocktails such as the mango-habanero margarita. The menu also will include a spiked guacamole and fire-roasted salsa appetizer, which is perfect for sharing, as well as carnitas street tacos, and shrimp, tuna and whitefish versions of the Mexican classic. (949-376-6886; tommybahama.com) —B.B.



Blackened fish tacos, on the "Tacos and Tequila" May menu, at Tommy Bahama Bar & Grill



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"Salade Liègeoise" (in back), made with warm string beans, bacon, potatoes, onions and white wine vinegar sauce, and white asparagus with hard-boiled eggs (an off-the-menu item)



Belgian chocolate lava cake with creme anglaise



One of Brussels Bistro's most popular dishes is mussels—including this yellow curry variety—and fries.

TO BELGIUM AND BACK

Brussels Bistro brings a taste of the European lifestyle to the heart of Laguna Beach.

By Alli Tong | Photos by Jody Tiongco

UPON ENTERING BRUSSELS BISTRO LOCATED ON FOREST AVENUE, diners walk down a set of stairs to an entrance below street level and are immediately greeted by a little boy peeing into a fountain basin—a statue of a little boy, that is. The Manneken Pis sculpture, which means Little Man Pee, is a famous 17th-century bronze landmark in Brussels that's riddled with legends. Hilariously, one tells the tale of a boy who saved the city from a destructive fire with his mighty bladder. This is just an example of the experience that patrons of Brussels Bistro will have—fun, casual and distinctly Belgian. "I try to give people the same feeling as Belgium," says co-owner and Executive Chef Thomas Crijns, who moved to Laguna Beach from Belgium 10 years ago to start the eatery.

In fact, diners can indulge in one of the country's most distinctive dishes: "moules-frites" (mussels and fries). Bartender-server Mondher El Ouair says diners from around the world—including about 40 percent from Europe—come to the brasserie-style restaurant for the mussels. "The mussels are from Vancouver, ... [but] they taste like European mussels," he says. The shellfish, flown in fresh daily, can be served eight ways with complementary ingredients ranging from white wine and garlic to grain mustard, cream, bacon and cognac. For a true taste of Belgium, Mondher

recommends the cream and garlic or yellow curry mussels.

To wash it all down, guests can sip on more than 30 types of Belgian beer, including the Leffe Blonde, Chimay Blanche, Maredsous 8 and the Chouffe Houblon. Opt for the tasting flight and try all four—it's really the only way to pay homage to the centuries-old beer-brewing traditions of the country.

Another traditional treat is the "Salade Liègeoise," a standard dish from Liège, Belgium, made with warm string beans, bacon, potatoes, onions and white wine vinegar sauce. The tang from the white wine vinegar cuts through the heaviness of the bacon and potatoes, giving freshness to the hearty dish.

End on a sweet note with the "gateau moelleux au chocolat," a Belgian chocolate lava cake with creme anglaise. And after dinner, if customers aren't quite ready to step back into Southern California culture, they can come back around 10:30 p.m. (Friday and Saturday nights, at least) when the restaurant turns into a Euro dance club with music played by a disc jockey.

Beer, chocolate and tasty fare—is there anything this country doesn't do well? It's safe to say that a meal at Brussels Bistro may have diners never wanting to eat any other cuisine again or, at the very least, leave them with wanderlust. **LBM**

BRUSSELS BISTRO

222 Forest Ave.;
949-376-7955;
brusselsbistro.com

HOURS: Open for dinner
Monday-Thursday,
4-11:30 p.m.; Friday,
4-9:30 p.m.; lunch and
dinner Saturday, 11:30
a.m. - 9:30 p.m.; Sunday,
11:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.; happy
hour Sunday-Saturday,
4-7 p.m.

TIP: Order the off-the-menu "asperges a la flamande," a traditional Belgian dish made with boiled white asparagus, chopped hard-boiled eggs and parsley.



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Cajun prawns, seasoned with 16 spices, including ghost pepper



Bright decor creates a warm, inviting atmosphere.



The Jamaican jerk salmon, which is grilled to order, pairs well with Eva's Knockout Rum Punch.

ISLAND FARE

Eva's Caribbean Kitchen serves up mellow moods and bold flavors.

By Karlee Prazak | Photos by Jody Tiongco

IT WAS AN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY COLD EVENING WHEN WE first walked through the doors of Eva's Caribbean Kitchen. But upon entering, chef and owner Eva Madray warmly greets everyone along with the scent of simmering island cuisine. The calm yet lively atmosphere, a product of both the people and brightly colored decor, proves every seat in the house is a good one.

The crowd is full of regulars and Eva, a 30-year Laguna resident, can easily point out the lucky few tables occupied by tourists. She treats every customer like a guest of her own dinner party, expertly navigating the tables, offering a suggestion here or accepting a compliment there. Her charm makes it hard to turn down a menu full of rum-based libations—specifically Eva's Knockout Rum Punch, which perfectly balances fruity notes with cinnamon, clove and ginger to complement the bold rum.

To begin, Eva suggests tapas-style Cajun prawns—a dish she began recommending as a “date icebreaker” when the south Laguna restaurant first opened under her name in 1999. Those who like heat will appreciate this dish, seasoned with 16 spices, including ghost pepper, and then marinated for four months. To temper the spice, Eva suggests dipping bread in the accompanying grilled pineapple, roasted pepper and passion fruit relish.

Eva's main menu is filled with fresh Caribbean dishes inspired

by her mother's eclectic takes on African, Dutch and Indian cuisines. “I grew up on the Atlantic coast [after moving from South America], and as the fishermen would come in, they would give first choice to my mom, so I realized how important that freshness is,” she explains. “Everything I serve is fresh, not frozen.”

This is best illustrated by the West Indian curried snapper. Unlike other curries, Indian curry requires no coconut milk or water. After a seven-hour prep, the resulting complex flavor profile produces a flaky snapper filet that marries well with the accompanying fresh vegetables, rice and fried plantains. The grilled-to-order Jamaican jerk salmon is another standout catch. This dish can also be served with a rib-eye steak or chicken if those proteins appeal more. Each entree is crafted to allow for leftovers or leave diners satisfied, but not weighed down by heavy ingredients—meaning there's room for a final course.

Dessert is just one more chance for Eva to impress diners with exotic ingredients in traditional treats. Take the coconut creme brulee, for example; its perfectly caramelized custard gives just the right ratio of milk and sugar to coconut in every bite.

Yet the best thing about Eva's Caribbean Kitchen might just be that she serves satisfying island food without the burden of being on “island time.” **LBM**

**EVA'S
CARIBBEAN KITCHEN**
31732 S. Coast Hwy.;
949-499-6311;
evascaribbeankitchen.com

HOURS: Tuesday-Sunday,
5 p.m. to close

TIP: Be sure to try Eva's exclusive dessert-libation Amarula, a liqueur made with sugar, cream and the fruit of the African marula tree, which is notorious for intoxicating curious animals upon consumption.



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Stonehill Tavern is located at The St. Regis Monarch Beach and is open for dinner Wednesday through Sunday. For reservations, visit stregismb.com or call 949.234.3900.



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Hearties' Happy Times breakfast features fried chicken and vegan, house-made waffles.

NEW OPENINGS

Meat lovers and vegans, long at odds over where to grab a bite to eat, may finally agree on a dining destination thanks to the opening of **Hearties** in south Laguna. Aptly named for its selection of heart-friendly fare and satisfying flavors, the innovative eatery serves delicious dishes made from organic and sustainable produce. The menu features an impressive selection of vegan and vegetarian meals—such as the chickpea-sweet potato burger—alongside organic pasture-raised beef and free-range chicken dishes. (949-281-7383; hearties.com)

Señor Fish, whose fresh take on Baja-style fare has long been renowned as one of the best in Southern California, has finally made the move south to Orange County. First opened in LA during the late 1980s, the eatery is known for its handmade tortillas and made-to-order specials. Señor Fish serves Laguna with simple, delicious grub, including the grilled fish tacos and carne asada burritos, alongside bottled beer—an ideal meal after a day at the beach. (949-497-9200; senorfish.net)

A relative newcomer in the “upscale Mexican” restaurant world, **Tortilla Republic** has been impressing discerning palates in West Hollywood since 2012 and Hawaii since 2011. Now, the island-inspired Mexican fare will be readily available to Laguna Beach, as the eatery’s third location is slated to open this year at the space formerly occupied by Asada. The restaurant’s darkly glamorous decor, reminiscent of Javier’s in Newport Coast, is sure to draw crowds and make Tortilla Republic the new go-to spot for date night, happy hour and weekend brunch. (tortillarepublic.com) —*B.B.*

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610 N. Coast Hwy.; 949-342-1210; umami.com

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evascaribbeankitchen.com

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peonycuisine.com

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BATTLE OF THE BEVERAGES

Once again, beer and wine went head to head at the third annual Beer vs. Wine event on March 7 at Surf & Sand Resort. With a five-course menu spearheaded by Executive Chef David Fuñe, the event garnered approximately 100 guests who showed up to the resort's pool deck to partake in the culinary debate. This year, the event featured five interactive stations, with one dish and one wine-and-beer pairing at each. Some of the delectable tastings included pork schnitzel and waffle poutine; a sustainable flatfish terrine with spring garlic puree; and strawberry shortcake with strawberries, cream biscuits and Chantilly cream. Stone Brewing Co. provided beer pairings while Constellation Brands offered the perfect vino complement. The stations offered guests a chance to mix and mingle on the poolside deck overlooking the Pacific Ocean while they thoughtfully savored each pairing. (877-741-5908; surfandsandresort.com) —A.T.

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425 S. Coast Hwy.; 949-494-1151; hotellaguna.com

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1464 S. Coast Hwy.; 949-715-9881; selannesteaktavern.com

SLAPFISH (OPENING SOON)

211 Broadway; 949-715-9200; slapfishrestaurant.com

Springtime at Broadway by Amar Santana

Spring is in the air at Broadway by Amar Santana—the eponymous chef/owner is debuting his new springtime menu that's chock-full of fresh ingredients. A few of the new additions include crispy sweet-breads, a sweet pea ravioli with balsamic brown butter and dehydrated tomatoes, and an asparagus and Meyer lemon orzo risotto with chicken accompanied by a fermented black garlic sauce. Guests will also want to try the roasted and marinated beet salad with grilled fennel, herb goat ricotta cheese, toasted pistachio and arugula. Additionally, the perfect drink to complement each dish is not to be forgotten. Bar manager and star mixologist Gabrielle Dion has concocted a few seasonally inspired cocktails, including the Mind Your P's, which features Junipero Gin, spring peas, Suze, mint, lime and soda. Another unique libation is the Lady Stark, made with Clément V.S.O.P. Rhum, rhubarb thyme syrup, zucca (squash) and lemon. (949-715-8234; broadwaybyamarsantana.com) —A. T.



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THE JOURNEY TO INSPIRATION

Globe-trotting painters Mada Leach and Jacobus Baas find inspiration in locations around the world, filling their artwork with culture and beauty.

Section by Ashley Ryan



"Ancient Circle, Hidden Spirits" by Mada Leach at Sandstone Gallery

MADA LEACH (SANDSTONE GALLERY)

HOME BASE: Grew up in Raleigh, N.C., but now lives in Laguna Niguel

BACKGROUND: Studied printmaking and art education at School of the Art Institute of Chicago, going on to teach art—first in the public school system and then in the community through partnerships with Laguna's Festival of Arts (she co-founded the festival's art education program) and Laguna Outreach for Community Arts

MEDIA OF CHOICE: Acrylic paint on paper or canvas; mixed media collages combining acrylic paint with paper, silk as well as cotton

PREVIOUSLY SHOWN IN: Southern California; Sedona, Ariz.; Cincinnati; Franklin and Louisville, Ky.; and Toronto

WORK: Each unique series that Mada creates is based on the things that interest and inspire her. After traveling to Europe, Mada painted "The Romance of France," which consists of fun paintings of French buildings and restaurant signs. Her more recent series—"Let's Eat!"—features vibrant fruits and vegetables from Michigan and beyond, including cabbage, cucumbers, pumpkins and peaches. "A Light in the West" reveals Mada's abstract side, full of rich colors and a certain fluidity not found in realist paintings. This is also a series where she brings in her collage techniques.

While in France, Mada visited the Lascaux Caves and found inspiration in cave paintings. Upon returning to the United States, she traveled to Winslow, Ariz., where she viewed the petroglyphs of the Hopi tribe. Her project, "Magic Visions, Ancient Hands," is a series of realist paintings that serve to recreate and preserve these cultural images, especially given the vandalism that occurs in the caves. Patterns of shadows and the use of light helped her to create images that look more like photographs than paintings while holding on to the spiritual feel of the original drawings from the caves. "The images are mysterious—we don't know what they mean, but they're beautiful. I wanted to preserve that," Mada says.

Mada's "Magic Visions: Ancient Hands" series will be on display at Sandstone Gallery beginning April 30 and running through June 2. (949-497-6775; sandstonegallery.com)



"Surfers Under the Palms" by Jacobus Baas

JACOBUS BAAS (PACIFIC EDGE GALLERY)

HOME BASE: Born and raised in Holland, Netherlands, he moved to Southern California when he was 12; he now splits his time between Laguna Niguel, Maine and Hawaii.

BACKGROUND: Attended art classes while in high school, then further developed his appreciation for art while traveling through Europe and began creating jewelry to sell alongside his paintings at festivals before opening a jewelry store in Laguna Beach

MEDIA OF CHOICE: Oil paint on linen, sometimes on canvas

PREVIOUSLY SHOWN IN: Los Angeles and Orange County; Maui, Hawaii; and Maine

WORK: Jacobus started painting "en plein air" after a 1994 trip to New Mexico and the style has stuck with him ever since. With vibrant colors, bright light and patterned shadows, his landscape paintings are a vivid picture of nature's beauty across the globe.

According to Jacobus, light plays a very important role in his work. "I look at the way the light strikes something or the way the shadows form patterns," he explains. From the soft light of sunset to brilliant midday light, his work is a fusion of varied luminosities with unique backgrounds.

To capture that light, he paints both on location and in the studio, creating larger images from photographs or smaller paintings. With clean strokes and a large palette of color, Jacobus is able to recreate stunning coastline scenes. In addition, he recently traveled to the Italian countryside to capture the beauty of Tuscany's vineyards. His paintings reflect breathtaking landscapes from around the world as well as scenes of people in their natural environment. Some of his coastal paintings are dotted with bodies enjoying the summer sunlight. Others, from his travels in Europe, depict people milling around beautiful buildings. Every painting has something new to offer.

Pacific Edge Gallery will host a solo show presenting pieces of Jacobus' artwork painted in California, Maine, Hawaii, Italy and Holland. The series will open May 17. (949-494-0491; pacificedgegallery.com)



"Where it's At" by Robert Mars at JoAnne Artman Gallery

THE BACK ROOM

The JoAnne Artman Gallery is switching things up with the exhibit "The Back Room Spring Celebration." After months of visitors raving about the enchanting artwork in the back room, the gallery has decided to feature these artists in the front gallery space in an attempt to bring these treasures to light. The showing will feature hidden masterpieces ranging from the fashion portraits painted by Anja Van Herle to pieces focused on American popular culture by Robert Mars. Other artists infiltrating the front gallery include Alberto Murillo, Stallman, Pedro Bonnin and James Verbicky. The back room art will make its move May 15 and will be on display until the end of June. (949-510-5481; joanneartmangallery.com)

ON THE HORIZON: THE FESTIVAL OF ARTS

Each summer, art lovers flock to the Festival of Arts—an event that transforms the already artsy community in Laguna to a full-fledged artistic experience. Although the festival is known for the world-famous Pageant of the Masters, where art truly comes alive through performances of "living pictures," it also features a fine art show. Visitors can take in a vast array of paintings, printmaking, sculptures, ceramics, photography and other handcrafted goods created by local artists. In addition to perusing artwork, attendees may tap into their own inner artist with a range of workshops and demonstrations. Guests also can catch the latest clothing designs at the festival's runway fashion show, enjoy diverse tunes at the Sunday in the Park music series or learn to create nutritious and delicious culinary treats in Art of Cooking chef presentations. For young guests, the Junior Art Exhibit serves as a link between the community and local schools to express the importance of art education and artistic enrichment at an early age. The festival will run from July 6 to Aug. 30. (949-494-1145; foapom.com)

a&g

ARTISTS AND GALLERIES

GALLERY EVENTS

ARTISTS REPUBLIC 4 TOMORROW

The latest exhibition, "Baggage Claim," will showcase artists Russ Pope and Neil Blender, two artists whose work fuses the world of art with skateboarding, producing unique and distinct images that set them apart from others in the art world. View these two series before April 27. (949-988-0603; ar4t.com)

COASTAL EDDY, A GALLERY

Jon Ginnaty's solo show, titled "Generation Z (The New Silent Generation)," will bring smiles to Laguna residents and visitors with a series of rubber ducky sculptures. These fun and innovative clay projects will be on display through April 27. (949-715-4113)

DAWSON COLE FINE ART

Visit the gallery during the month of April to view an exhibition of plein-air painter Nancy Bush's most recent works in which she strives to capture the feeling of each location through its physical components. (888-972-5543; dawsoncolefineart.com)



"Unmade Bed" by Marc Whitney at Whitney Gallery



"Generation Z-2" by Jon Ginnaty at Coastal Eddy, a Gallery

INDIAN TERRITORY ART GALLERY

In celebration of the gallery's 45th anniversary, a collection of more than 200 pots created by the late Native American potter Maria Montoya Martinez will be on display, serving as a combination of native and fine art. (949-497-5747; indianterritoryart.com)

JOANNE ARTMAN GALLERY

A solo show featuring painter Rimi Yang will blend history, mythology and art in "Cosmic Dance," an exhibition focused on human experience versus the unexplainable. Though the show will run through May 15, an intimate artist reception will be held May 1 during the ever-popular First Thursdays Art Walk in Laguna. (949-510-5481; joanneartmangallery.com)

LAGUNA GALLERY OF CONTEMPORARY ART

As a part of the Intimate Artist Biography Series, the gallery will host a humanitarian artist lecture featuring pop artist Jello Pop, surreal painter Christiana and body form photographer Adeeb Howrani. Each artist will share how he or she got where they are today and where they plan to

take their art in relation to humanitarian causes around the globe. The event is planned May 22 from 6-9 p.m. (949-715-9604; lgoca.com)

PETER BLAKE GALLERY

A group show will feature contemporary art from Matthew Deleget, Hadi Tabatabai and Don Voisine, on display from April 26 to May 31. (949-584-1224; peterblakegallery.com)

SANDSTONE GALLERY

Printmaker Anne Moore's "Beneath the Surface" presents a series of monotypes that will run alongside painter Lynn Welker's "Imagined Narratives," featuring abstract narratives that combine imagination with reality. Both series will be on display until April 28. (949-497-6775; sandstonegallery.com)

WHITNEY GALLERY

Throughout April and May, artist Marc Whitney will be showing a new series of paintings depicting everyday life, attempting to recreate a unique sense of emotion resulting from his interpretations of unmade beds, flowers, table settings and seascapes. (949-497-4322; marcwhitney.com) LBM

FIRST
THURSDAYS

Art Walk

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WHY NOT IN LAGUNA?

A Laguna Beach Magazine editor proposes a progressive restaurant week where Laguna's chefs showcase their culinary prowess and diners just show up to the table.

By Alli Tong



Prix fixe menus would be a thing of the past at Laguna's innovative restaurant week.

Local companies could sponsor a restaurant for a week to dream up dishes.

I DON'T HAVE MANY PASTIMES OR HOBBIES, BUT I would say that if eating could be considered one, I'd have it down pat. Most of all, I love experiencing new restaurants, whether in Laguna Beach, Orange County, or another state or country.

Eating is meant to be a shared experience. And that's why I think restaurant weeks make for great opportunities for shared experiences—not only for the diners, but also for the chefs. I know some of you may groan at these two words, as they likely bring to mind images of your favorite spot crowded with tourists (aka residents from neighboring cities). But restaurant weeks have the ability to offer more than foot traffic during slower months and exposure to restaurants not typically in the media limelight. For chefs, a restaurant week could be an opportune time to beta test new dishes or techniques, team up with other local chefs to build collaborative menus served exclusively during restaurant week, or just try something out-of-the-box for fun. For diners, such an event poses an opportunity to try something new other than the old standbys.

Now, I know there's more than what meets the eye. Those in the business often loathe restaurant week for many reasons: high volumes of people that can't be accommodated for, forced promotions that yield no returns and fees to local tourism bureaus or restaurant associations (Orange County Restaurant Association charges the more than 100 restaurants involved in the countywide event an average fee of \$500 to cover its costs). And, since there are nearly 20 Laguna restaurants that participate in the OC Restaurant Week, including K'ya Bistro, Lumberyard, 230 Forest Avenue and more, why not just create our own?

But Laguna's wouldn't have to be that way—this city has never really liked to be a follower, anyway. Participating restaurants wouldn't be obligated to offer promotional prices or prix fixe menus if they didn't want to; they would just be obligated to create or do something that inspires them. And if the event were organized under an overarching nonprofit organization like the Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce, whose mission is to help local businesses grow, there would be no need for

unclear "fees." Other local businesses such as hotels and media companies (like Firebrand Media, which publishes Laguna Beach Magazine) could sponsor the restaurant week to help with marketing costs. Or, they could even sponsor specific restaurants to help a creative vision come to life for a week.

While similar foodie events in Laguna have gained traction, I think there's room to improve. Visit Laguna Beach's now-defunct Laguna a la Carte (resuscitated this year as Celebrate Good Taste), a four-day event filled with seminars, set menus and promotions around town, has drawn solid crowds in the past, yet it seems to be lacking staying power. Laguna's more organic restaurant week would focus on the food and having a good time. No one likes to patronize local businesses more than Laganans themselves, so come on, Laguna—we are a city of firsts. From electing the first openly gay mayor in the U.S. in 1982 to being the first OC city to ban plastic bags in 2013, we can start the first Laguna Beach Restaurant Week. I'm more than happy to be the guinea pig. LBM

Alli Tong is editor of Laguna Beach Magazine.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'VE SEEN IN ANOTHER CITY THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IN LAGUNA BEACH? WRITE TO US AT EDITOR@LAGUNABEACHMAG.COM. YOU COULD BE OUR NEXT GUEST COLUMNIST.

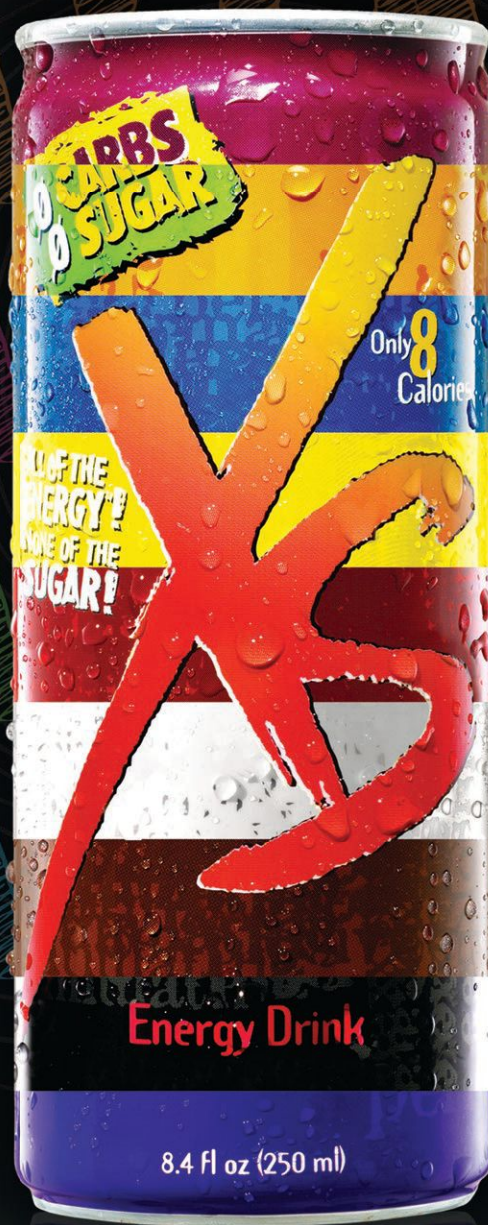
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