

LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

October 23, 2026

timesofsandiego.com/lajollavillagenews

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LA JOLLA
2026

LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS
SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE



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Night of the Stars



Mira Sorvino (left), who received the Virtuoso Award, and Erika De La Cruz, wearing designer Rick Owens, on the red carpet at San Diego International Film Festival's Night of the Stars on Oct. 13 at The Conrad. (Photo by Diana Cavagnaro/Special for Times of San Diego)

COVER STORY

Stingray injuries in La Jolla drop, but stinging season may continue as warmer ocean temperatures will keep visitors at the beach

According to data obtained through the Public Records Act, La Jolla beaches are on track to have a four-year low in stingray stings since 2023. So far in 2026, La Jolla Shores, Blacks Beach, and Scripps Beach saw close to 400 stings, with three months in the year remaining. In 2024, those same beaches had 763 reported stings. The bad news: the warmer temperatures have extended stingray season, meaning more reports are likely to come. To prevent being stung by a stingray, beachgoers should do the “stingray shuffle,” always keeping both feet in contact with the sand while sliding forward. **PAGE 6**

GOVERNMENT

City seeks EMS bids despite former chief's role with potential bidder

Despite potential conflicts of interest from one of the largest ambulance providers, American Medical Response, which now employs the city's former fire chief, Colin Stowell, San Diego still plans to seek bids from that private company to run its Emergency Medical Services system. Two years ago, Stowell kicked off the city's effort to remake its EMS system. He told a City Council committee he and a consultant would issue a request for proposals to companies capable of reorganizing and improving San Diego's troubled ambulance service. **PAGE 2**

BUSINESS

Mahj Theory Collective features open play, lessons, and leagues

Mahj Theory Collective, an American Mah Jongg studio and boutique in La Jolla, features open play, lessons, leagues, tournaments, events, and curated Mah Jongg accessories. The collective is a social club founded by mother-daughter duo Deb and Sam Solomon of La Jolla. The pair have created a welcoming, community-focused space for players of all levels in a studio blending gameplay, instruction, retail, and social events in a refined atmosphere. **PAGE 7**



City will seek EMS bids despite former chief's role with potential bidder

By Andrew Keatts
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO — The city of San Diego still plans to seek bids from private companies to run the city's Emergency Medical Services system.

The city is doing so despite potential conflicts of interest from one of the largest ambulance providers, American Medical Response, which now employs the city's former fire chief, Colin Stowell.

Two years ago, Stowell kicked off the city's effort to remake its EMS system. He told a City Council committee he and a consultant would issue a request for proposals to companies capable of reorganizing and improving San Diego's troubled ambulance service.

"I will bring you, along with a consultant, bring you back options of what the future EMS system should look like," Stowell said at the committee meeting. "And that's what we hope to do here by the wintertime of this calendar year."

Stowell retired in August 2024 and in March 2025 started working for AMR — the city's former EMS provider and now a supplemental provider — as a consultant. In late 2025, Stowell took a role as AMR's Director of Fire Partnerships.

The consultant Stowell referred to in the committee hearing was AP Triton, which worked with the city on EMS-related issues for years.

In September of 2024, AP Triton officially agreed to finalize the city's bid for ambulance services.

There's no evidence that Stowell discussed working with AMR while he was with the city.

In a January 2026 interview with Times of San Diego, Stowell said he complied with all regulations and was hired for his years

of relevant experience and that he never discussed any city-related work or interacted with city officials until a year after his retirement.

"To my knowledge, no one knows what the (request for proposals) will look like," Stowell said.

AMR backed also said that the company was not aware of any information that would prevent it from competing for the city contract, whenever the city releases it.

"We want to be clear, at the time of [Stowell's] departure from the city, no draft of the RFP had been created — the third party to develop and run the RFP for the city had not been hired, nor had any written material or preparatory content been produced," a statement from a spokesman reads.

But the city and AP Triton actually had released some written material ahead of the potential RFP.

In June 2024, while Stowell was still the fire chief, AP Triton completed a 135-page EMS optimization and feasibility study. The report described its scope as analyzing "possible EMS models for ambulance transport services."

That report outlined recommendations for the city to include in its new system and a timeline for issuing the RFP.

The report recommended implementing "nurse navigation," a service that uses registered nurses to triage some 911 calls to reduce ambulance trips.

"Nurse navigation," however, is the specific name of an AMR product, rather than a generic industry term.

“

To my knowledge, no one knows what the (request for proposals) will look like.”

Colin Stowell

City's former fire chief

In public hearings, Stowell often outlined the importance of increasing the city's use of nurse triage to manage the 911 system. He said that just reflects the collective understanding that the city's next contract needed to take advantage of it.

"Nurse Navigation is a specific term for a general type of service," he said. "It's getting some 911 calls out of the system, which is something we've always battled in San Diego. That was always in our discussion."

Candace Hadley, a spokesperson for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, said in August that the city has not changed its plan to issue an RFP this year.

"The city's request for proposals process is a structure, standardized system designed to be fair, competitive and transparent," she wrote in an email. "All proposals are considered and evaluated against predefined criteria to ensure impartial, merit-based selections that best serve the needs of the city, the Fire-Rescue Department and the public."

But it is not always obvious when a public official's involvement in a contract or project could violate a broad state law called Government Code Section 1090, a conflict-of-interest law that prohibits public officials from having a financial interest in any contract made in their official capacity.

A relevant, recent local example came in 2020, when the newly formed utility San Diego Community Power could not hire its top choice for its new CEO.

San Diego Community Power issued a letter to the state's Fair Political Practices

Commission asking if its top choice was eligible for the job. The commission said she could not be hired, because of Section 1090. Since she had helped draw up the organization's bylaws, which included the creation of a CEO position, the commission concluded that she had in essence "made" the position she was seeking.

An FPPC spokesperson confirmed that the city of San Diego has not requested an advice letter on whether Stowell's employment with AMR would constitute a conflict of interest, or a Section 1090 violation.

But the court case that the commission relied on in its advice to San Diego Community Power reinforces how broad Section 1090 is.

"We have held that the 'making' of a contract for the purposes of section 1090 includes 'planning, preliminary discussions, compromises, drawing of plans and specifications and solicitation of bids,' and not just the moment of signing," reads the 2017 California Supreme Court ruling in *People v. Superior Court*.

For the city and Stowell, then, the question would be whether his role bringing in a consultant to craft a request for proposals for the city's new EMS contract qualifies as "making" a new contract that his new employer would compete for.

Scott Cummings, a legal ethics professor at UCLA, said earlier this year that it could present a conflict of interest, or the appearance of one, but that it would all come down to factual details on the timing of specific decisions, Stowell's personal role in crafting the process and how independent AP Triton was while shaping the RFP, all of which could make the issue less concerning.

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Israeli scholars bring expertise in politics to San Diego college campuses

By Noah Perkins

SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – What does Israel look like beyond the headlines?

At UC San Diego, San Diego State University, and the University of San Diego this year, students will have a chance to consider that question with Israeli scholars whose specialties range from terrorism and warfare to climate justice and women's health.

"People do not understand the size of Israel, and they definitely don't understand the complexity of the population," said Professor Keren Agay-Shay, an environmental epidemiologist at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan who will teach at UCSD during the winter 2027 semester. "I live in the Galilee, where we are 50 percent Jewish and 50 percent Arab. The diversity within Israel is huge."

Agay-Shay is part of the largest-ever cohort of Israeli-visiting faculty coming to San Diego universities through the Murray Galinson San Diego-Israel Initiative. Ten professors will teach at local campuses during the 2026-27 academic year.

At UCSD, the two professors will approach Israel from very different academic disciplines.

CASE STUDIES

Professor Eitan Shamir will teach "Insurgency and Terrorism" and "Politics and Warfare"

this fall in the Department of Political Science. Shamir is the managing director of Bar-Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies and heads the university's master's program in security and strategy.

His courses will pair broad theories with Israeli case studies, including the theory of deterrence and its application in Israel's national security doctrine.

"The last three years have been history in the making," Shamir said.



Keren Agay-Shay, an environmental epidemiologist from Bar-Ilan University. (Courtesy photo)

The Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attacks and the prolonged conflict that followed will be part of the context for discussions of warfare, terrorism and national security. But Shamir said the point of bringing Israeli scholars into San Diego classrooms is not simply to discuss current events. It is to give students sustained access to researchers who study these subjects.

"Israeli researchers bring a very high level of scholarship," Shamir said. "Even when we talk about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or war, we bring scholarly rigor."

Shamir had planned to spend his sabbatical in the United States when San Diego became his preferred destination through previous visits, friendships and academic connections. He will also hold office hours and make himself available to students outside the classroom, including for informal conversations about events in Israel.

"I'm happy to sit with a group of students for coffee and talk to them about the elections," he said. "I'll do my best to give them a clear picture of what's going on."

Agay-Shay will approach the subject from a very different academic lens.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

An environmental epidemiologist at Bar-Ilan's Azrieli Faculty of Medicine and head of its Health and Environment Research Lab, she studies the relationship between environmental exposures and pregnancy outcomes, child health, stress and cancer incidence across diverse ethnic groups.

At UCSD, she will teach "Climate Justice"



Eitan Shamir is the managing director of Bar-Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies. (Courtesy photo)

and "Climate Change Seminar: Women's and Girls' Health" in the Department of Anthropology.

Agay-Shay lives and works in Israel's Galilee, where Jewish and Arab communities live side by side. She hopes connecting UCSD students with her own students in Israel will create opportunities for questions and discussion. She also expects to learn from the exchange herself.

In her climate courses, Agay-Shay will examine how climate-related harms can fall disproportionately on people with fewer resources, including those who cannot afford air conditioning or whose jobs require them to work outdoors. Students will also consider environmental interventions such as adding greenery and improving the built environment as ways to reduce health disparities without relying solely on individual behavior changes.

The other eight visiting faculty members will teach subjects including peacebuilding, Israeli LGBTQ films, photography, public health, history, geography, economics and management at San Diego universities.

"This is our largest cohort to date, bringing unprecedented expertise about modern Israel to our San Diego campuses," said Susan Lapidus, the Galinson initiative's founding director.

Since its inception, the initiative has placed tenured and tenure-track professors from Israeli colleges and universities as visiting faculty in 22 academic areas across five local university campuses. The initiative facilitates the placements, supports the professors and funds their participation.

Agay-Shay sees the exchange as a two-way experience.

"I become a much better researcher and a much better person when I go to a different country," she said. "It makes us better people when we are exposed to diversity."

Text messages reveal how Gloria’s office reacted to its trash fee error

By Dorian Hargrove
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – Public records obtained by Times of San Diego show city leaders were days late to learn about a billing glitch that overcharged more than 43,000 residents for trash service.

On Sept. 18, residents logged on to their local Nextdoor website after spotting higher-than-expected trash fees on their annual property tax bill.

Part-time journalist Marty Graham spotted the Nextdoor post and looked up her property tax bill. Graham's bill was \$224 higher than it should have been.

Seeing the line of trash cans outside of her Normal Heights home, Graham got to work. She jotted down the size of the trash can and the address for 100 homes down her street. She went on to the County Assessor's website and looked up the property tax bills. Graham said 34 of the 100 were overcharged.

Graham contacted the media, including Times of San Diego, on Saturday, Sept. 19.

By Monday morning, city staff was receiving complaints from residents and media inquiries from journalists.

It wasn't until 1:47 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 21 that the mayor's office had to address the potential problem. That's when Bethany Beak — who was then Gloria's chief performance and logistics officer, but who was named the city's new chief operating officer last week — sent a text message to Gloria and his executive team.

"We are receiving complaints from residents and media inquiries that property taxes don't match their selected level of service," Bezak texted. "(So far it's from residents logging into their online accounts). (Environmental Services) is assessing now to determine number of impacted residents, etc."

At 5:47 p.m., Bezak sent another text message to Gloria and Paola Avila, his

chief of staff, requesting a meeting with the mayor on the "trash fee issue."

"Oh, that sounds like bad news," Avila responded.

It was.

Approximately 87,000 property owners received errant bills, more than 44,000 of which were overcharged, some by thousands of dollars.

The Union-Tribune broke the news of the error during the afternoon of Sept. 22.

The next day, Gloria released a statement acknowledging the "glitch" and calling it "unacceptable."

Criticism from councilmembers began pouring in, focused on whether the mayor could continue acting as the city's chief operating officer.

"Something needs to change drastically and quickly because the city and its residents can't afford

more mistakes like this," Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera said during a committee hearing that week.

A Gloria spokesperson said the city is ensuring all bills are corrected, and the mayor plans to issue a report on the glitch soon to prevent another similar error.

"The Mayor has been clear that this billing error was unacceptable and that residents should not be expected to pay more than the correct amount for their trash service," the statement reads.

"Safeguards should have been in place to catch this error before incorrect amounts appeared on residents' property tax statements," the statement continues. "Technology and process updates are already in development. At the Mayor's direction, a report will be issued detailing what went wrong and the steps necessary to prevent a similar error from happening again."

"The Mayor's focus remains on ensuring affected residents receive accurate information, their bills are corrected and the City follows through on the necessary improvements." it concludes.





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Stingray injuries in La Jolla drop, but stinging season may continue

By Thaïs Giraudet and Drew Sitton
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA — The good news for La Jolla beachgoers is that the warmer ocean temperatures have not resulted in a higher number of stingray reports to lifeguards this year, at least in La Jolla. The bad news: the warmer temperatures have extended stingray season, meaning more reports are likely to come.

According to data obtained through the Public Records Act, La Jolla beaches are on track to have a four-year low in stingray stings since 2023. So far in 2026, La Jolla Shores, Blacks Beach and Scripps Beach saw close to 400 stings, with three months in the year remaining. In 2024, those same beaches had 763 reported stings.

Warm waters could extend stingray season later into the year, though, so numbers could rise. In addition, the data provided by lifeguards likely underestimates the real numbers, as many beachgoers don't report stings.

Despite the longer season, La Jolla beaches are seeing lower sting numbers than in the past. Blacks Beach's stings hovered around 230 in 2023 and 2024, but

shot up to 278 in 2025. This year, though, swimmers reported only 150 stings.

At La Jolla Shores, 376 beachgoers endured the pain of a sting in 2023, the highest year in the data set. That 2023 number rivals the total stings, 399, at all three La Jolla beaches so far in 2026. But since that first year of data, the number of stings at La Jolla Shores has not broken 250.

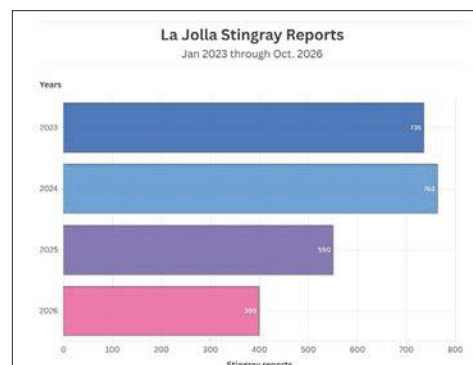
Over at Scripps, the number of stings broke 300 only in 2024. Then, stings dramatically fell to 34 in 2025. This year has a few more stings than that four-year low, but at 46 in October, it is still much lower than the 304 reported in 2024.

So overall, La Jolla has fewer stings than past years.

That trend is not universal in the city of San Diego. Pacific Beach, for instance, has seen year-over-year increases in stings since 2023, with 2026 stings already surpassing the record set in 2025.

While there is no single explanation for that strong increase, Zach Merson, a Ph.D. student at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, said two factors are at play: more people and warmer waters.

"Generally, stingrays like the same



conditions that people going to the beach really like: nice, shallow, warm water," Merson said. "And that's, of course, where you're going to have the most people wading into the water."

With a super El Niño coming, Merson said water temperatures have been unusually high, even bringing in all sorts of exotic animals to the coasts of California.

"That's definitely contributing to more stingrays coming close to the beach than in a typical year," he said. "This year, because the water is warmer further into the year, I just expected that peak stingray season will extend, perhaps, through the end of October into November as well."

Merson also said stingrays tend to be most heavily concentrated at low tides, when there is a smaller area of shallow water for them to be in.

To prevent being stung by a stingray, beachgoers should do the "stingray shuffle": keeping both feet in contact with the sand at all times while sliding forward. This prevents someone from stepping directly on a stingray's barb.

"When a stingray is stepped on, it thinks you're something trying to eat it, and that's when it will defend itself by flicking its spine into, probably, your ankle," Merson said. "But if you're shuffling your feet, you actually either spook the ray off before you even get to it, or you bump up against its side."

If lifeguards are not on duty when someone is stung, people can use the emergency call boxes located along beaches in San Diego to reach a 24-hour dispatch center for help.

If stung, Lifeguard Lt. John Maher said to treat any bleeding, clean and bandage the wound, and submerge it in hot water not exceeding 110 degrees for 45 minutes to an hour and a half.

"Don't let the stingray scare you into staying out of the water," Maher said.

La Jolla Institute team may reshape how scientists search for vaccine targets

By Thomas Murphy
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA — Researchers at the La Jolla Institute for Immunology have helped develop a computational approach that could make future vaccines more effective across people with different genetic backgrounds.

Working with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, the La Jolla team developed a system to identify rare protein fragments that can interact with multiple versions of key immune-system molecules known as HLAs. The work was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"This is fantastic and exciting work," said Alessandro Sette of the La Jolla Institute for Immunology, a co-author of the study. "We have known for some time that peptides that bound many different HLAs were prominent in responses to microbes and allergens, but a strategy to synthetically identify these sequences was lacking.

"This study takes the issue of 'super epitopes' to a new level and promises to facilitate our characterization of immune responses, and also the design of powerful immunogens."

HLAs are among the most variable components of the human immune system, with more than 22,000 known variants. Because each person carries a different combination, immune responses to the same vaccine can vary widely, and some immune-triggering fragments may go unrecognized in certain individuals.

To address that challenge, the researchers built a computational framework called "Super HLA" that scans large numbers of candidate peptides and predicts which are most likely to bind across multiple HLA



A vaccine about to be administered in San Diego. (File photo by Chris Stone/Times of San Diego)

types. The system uses probabilistic modeling and machine-learning tools and removes sequences that resemble human proteins.

The model screened more than 190,000 candidate peptides and narrowed them to 100 for laboratory testing at the La Jolla Institute.

Of those, 24 were confirmed as

"superbinders," meaning they could bind across multiple HLA groups. Twenty-one bound to at least four HLA supertypes, and one bound to nine of the 12 tested in the study.

Only a small number of similarly broad-binding peptides have previously been documented in

immunology databases, suggesting they may have been overlooked rather than being truly rare. The findings also

suggest these peptides can be identified systematically rather than discovered by chance, potentially reshaping how scientists search for vaccine targets.

Researchers said the approach could be applied to vaccine development for infectious diseases, cancer immunotherapy and pandemic preparedness, and may improve immune coverage in populations that have historically been underrepresented in immunology data.

The study was led by Tomer Hertz of Ben-Gurion University's Faculty of Health Sciences, along with graduate students Elinor Peer and Liel Cohen-Lavi, in collaboration with scientists at the La Jolla Institute.

Hertz said the project traces back roughly 15 years to conversations with a colleague while both were postdoctoral researchers at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle.

"Good ideas are worth continuing to dig into, even long after the first sketch was drawn on the whiteboard," Hertz said.



LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

Congratulations to all the Best Retail winners!

An important part of what makes La Jolla special is the businesses — big, medium and small — that are owned and staffed by the families and people in this wonderful community we call home.

These individuals work hard, day in and day out, to provide arts, entertainment, retail shopping, medical services, law advice, repair services and much, much more to locals and those not from the area visiting these establishments.

One of the most exciting times of the year for us at La Jolla Village News is the unveiling of our “Best of

La Jolla” issue, which puts a spotlight on those who are doing the very best in a wide range of categories.

Making things better for individuals voting this year in the “Best of La Jolla” issue is our new website at: bestoflajolla.voterfly.com.

The system allows for an easier voting process. Businesses can submit their brands online to be nominated, and voters take charge from there.

The Best of La Jolla issue allows us to highlight all of the wonderful businesses in our city.

Each year, we ask the most loyal readers around to nominate what en-

tertainment venues, stylists, designers and other businesses and professionals stand out most to them.

Once again, we received hundreds of nominations from La Jolla residents eager to share their thoughts on the most deserving candidates. We tally the votes, compile a directory and send out the awards — many of which readers will see proudly displayed on the wall of businesses and offices.

Some of these businesses have been there for La Jolla residents and out-of-town shoppers for decades.

Others have only just begun to

make an impact on the community but have obviously caught the attention of local consumers by doing things the right way time and time again.

We encourage readers to hang on to the following Best of La Jolla section throughout the year. It can be a handy companion for the next time you go in search of an optometrist, a car mechanic, a doctor or any niche business.

Congratulations to all winners and thank you for all you do for La Jolla!

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Congratulations to these businesses who were chosen by the readers of the La Jolla Village News.

The business categories were published in ballot form over a period of 4 weeks. Readers were asked to cast ballots for their favorite choices. With more than 114 categories, our readers came through with overwhelming response. We wish to thank all the readers who took the time to recognize these local businesses. *Editor’s note: Factual descriptions for sponsored guides were compiled with the help of artificial intelligence and checked for accuracy by an editor.*

BEST ACCOUNTING

- Natalie Papagni CPA
- Russell Ingledew CPA
- Eric K. Boldt CPA

BEST ACUPUNCTURE

- Amorah Kelly at Wonderworks Healing Arts
- Herbs to Acupuncture
- Pacific Pearl

BEST ALTERNATIVE/INTEGRATIVE HEALTH

- Amorah Kelly at Wonderworks Healing Arts
- Pacific Pearl
- La Jolla Functional Medicine Clinic

BEST ANTIQUES

- Ark Antiques
- Girard Ave. Marketplace
- Ross Thiele & Son

BEST ARCHITECT

- Benton & Benton Architects
- HLLK Architects
- Architect Mark Lyon

BEST ART GALLERY

- Ian Ely Gallery
- Bret Webster Images
- Thumbprint Gallery

BEST ART GALLERY (PHOTOGRAPHY)

- Ian Ely Gallery
- Bret Webster Images
- Peter Lik

BEST ATTORNEY

- Mark Krasner CPA ESQ
- Edward Brennan
- Best Auto Detail

LA JOLLA HAND CAR WASH

- Ocean Breeze Car Wash

BEST AUTO REPAIR (ALL MAKES)

- Family Auto
- Colonial Garage Smog

BEST AUTO REPAIR (IMPORT)

- La Jolla Independent
- Marco Polo

BEST AUTO SALES

- McLaren San Diego
- O’Gara Coach
- Grand Prix Classics

BEST BANK

- Chase
- Poppy Bank
- Wells Fargo Bank

BEST BED

- Vispring
- Naturepedic
- Mattress Firm

BEST BIKE SHOP

- California Bicycles
- Pedego
- UC Cyclery

BEST BIKE SHOP (ELECTRIC)

- Pedego
- UC Cyclery
- La Jolla Ebike & Skate

BEST BOOK STORE

- Warwick’s
- DG Wills Books

BEST BOUTIQUE

- Sweet Paper
- Sigi’s Boutique
- Forte Deux

BEST CAR WASH

- La Jolla Hand Car Wash
- Ocean Breeze Car Wash
- Shell Car Wash

BEST CELL PHONE STORE

- Verizon
- AT&T
- T-Mobile

BEST CHILD CARE

- Dan McKinney Family YMCA
- Mimi’s House Child Care of La Jolla
- Baby Blossoms Home Child Care

BEST CHILDREN’S APPAREL

- Celita & Co.
- Little Love
- Aviator Nation

BEST CHIROPRACTOR

- Active Rest Chiropractic
- Linea Chiropractic + Wellness
- Dr. Jeff Mersky @ Pacific Pearl

BEST CLEANING

- Big League Clean
- Clean Freak Cleaning Services
- Merry Maids

BEST COINS & PRECIOUS METALS

- H.S. Perlin
- United Coin & Precious Metals

BEST COMPUTER REPAIR

- Endless Technology Solutions
- iGenius Phone Repair – UTC
- La Jolla Computer Guy

BEST CONTRACTOR / CONSTRUCTION

- Grunow Premier, Inc.
- NAU Builders
- Four By Four Construction Co

BEST CONVENIENCE STORE

- Keg N Bottle
- Neighbor-Saver Market
- Best Cosmetic Rejuvenation

TORREY PINES DERMATOLOGY & LASER CENTER

- True Beauty
- La Jolla Cosmetic Laser Clinic

BEST COSMETIC SURGERY

- Torrey Pines Dermatology & Laser Center
- True Beauty
- Belladerma Cosmetic Surgery & Skin Care Center

BEST DAY SPA

- Colibri Skincare
- Signature Skin Care by Denise Ann
- Cara Studios

BEST DENTIST

- Dr. Weston Spencer
- Dr. Reynolds
- Dr. Taddey

BEST DENTIST (PEDIATRIC)

- Dr. Scoma-Seaside Pediatric Dentistry
- Dr.Tracy Hagan
- Open Wide La Jolla Dentistry

BEST DISCOUNT STORE

- Goodwill
- Best Doctor
- Pacific Pearl

DR. KRISTEN RICHARDS

- Torrey Pines Dermatology & Laser Center

BEST DOCTOR (NATUROPATHIC)

- Pacific Pearl
- La Jolla Functional Medicine Clinic
- Anna Feagan @ BioMed Health Center

BEST DOG GROOMING

- Left Coast Grooming
- La Jolla Grooming Co. Pet Grooming
- Bella Woolf

BEST DRY CLEANER

- Margaret’s Cleaners
- Lele’s Cleaners
- Ocean Dry Cleaners

BEST ELECTRIC RIDEABLES

- La Jolla Ebike & Skate
- Pedego

BEST ELECTRICIAN

- West Coast Electric

BEST EYEWEAR

- Optical Artisans
- Be Seen Optics
- Gordon Wong Eye Designs & Optometry

BEST FASHION ACCESSORIES

- Sigi’s Boutique

BEST FINANCIAL PLANNER

- Canter Wealth
- Dyer Wealth Management
- Wells Fargo Financial Advisors

BEST FLOOR COVERING

- Nativia
- Aja Rugs

BEST FLORIST

- Bridget’s Blooms
- Adelaide’s
- Bloomers of La Jolla

BEST FURNITURE STORE

- Unscripted Spaces
- Nativia
- Ark Antiques

BEST GIFT STORE

- Sweet Paper
- Warwick’s
- The Cave Store

BEST GOURMET MEAT/ BUTCHER SHOP

- Valley Farm Market
- Rock N’ Roost Rotisserie
- Pavillions

BEST GROCERY STORE

- Pavillions
- Valley Farm Market

BEST GROCERY STORE (SPECIALTY)

- Valley Farm Market
- Small Goods Cheese Shop & Cafe
- The Corner Mercantile & Eatery

BEST HAIR SALON

- Belle Sirène Salon
- Glidia Salon
- Koda Salon

BEST HANDYMAN

- Handyman of La Jolla & Del Mar
- Best Hardware Store
- Meanley & Son Hardware

BEST HEALTH CLUB

- Life Time La Jolla
- Balanced Fitness & Health
- Dan McKinney Family YMCA

BEST HEALTH FOOD/NUTRITION STORE

- Trader Joe’s
- Sprouts
- Whole Foods Market

BEST HOLISTIC CENTER

- Amorah Kelly at Wonderworks Healing Arts
- Pacific Pearl

BEST HOLISTIC MEDICINE

- Amorah Kelly at Wonderworks Healing Arts
- Pacific Pearl
- Koi Wellbeing

BEST HOTEL

- La Valencia
- Grande Colonial
- Inn by the Sea

BEST INSURANCE AGENT

- Pete Blasi @ My Senior Health Plan
- Pete Williams-Farmers Insurance
- Terry Hudkins-State Farm

BEST INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE PRACTICE

- Pacific Pearl

BEST INTERIOR DESIGNER

- AGK Design Studio
- Elizabeth Thiele
- Solstice Interiors

BEST JEWELRY DESIGN & REPAIR

- Bower’s Jewelers
- Mario Master Jewelers
- Bella Jolla Jewelry

BEST JEWELRY STORE

- Diamonds on the Rock
- Bower’s Jewelers
- CJ Charles

BEST LANDSCAPER

- Crown Point Clippers
- C Nyhan
- Revolution Landscape

BEST LIQUOR STORE

- Dick’s Liquor
- Keg N Bottle
- BevMo!

BEST MARTIAL ARTS

- PTC Boxing Gym
- Gracie Jiu-Jitsu La Jolla
- Eagle Martial Arts

BEST MASSAGE

- SD Therapy Massage & Bodywork
- Connie Youngblood –Equanimity
- Bird Rock Massage

BEST MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION

- La Jolla Village Merchants Association
- La Jolla Women’s Club
- La Jolla Community Center

BEST MEN’S APPAREL

- Ascot Shop
- Faherty Brand La Jolla
- State & Liberty

BEST MEN’S APPAREL (FORMAL)

- Ascot Shop
- Bendlis

BEST MORTGAGE AGENT

- Kenny Simpson

BEST NAIL SALON

- Nancy’s Nails
- Perfect 10
- Nails By the Sea

BEST NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR

- Pacific Pearl

BEST OPTOMETRIST

- Eyecare at the Cove Optometry
- Gordon Wong Eye Designs & Optometry

BEST ORTHODONTIST

- Pal Orthodontics of La Jolla
- La Jolla Village Orthodontics
- La Jolla Village Orthodontist

BEST PAINTER

- Chism Bros. Painting
- Japhet’s Painting Company
- Scott Gillen

BEST PAINTING SUPPLIES

- Meanley & Son Hardware
- Sherwin Williams

BEST PERSONAL TRAINER

- Balanced Fitness & Health
- Chad Van Herpe – Bird Rock Fit
- John Swain-Optimum Fitness & Health

BEST PET HOSPITAL

- Bird Rock Animal Hospital
- La Jolla Veterinary Hospital
- Windan’ Sea Vet Clinic

BEST PET SITTING / BOARDING

- DogZenergy
- Jennifer’s Full Care Pet Service

BEST PET STORE

- Decker’s Dog + Cat
- Bella Woolf

BEST PHARMACY

- Cortex RX

BEST PILATES

- SOULution Pilates
- Platform Lagree Fitness

BEST PLACE TO BUY JEANS

- Ralph Lauren
- State & Liberty

BEST PLUMBER

- Erling Rohde
- M.D. Plumbers

BEST PRESCHOOL

- Gillispie School
- La Jolla Presbyterian Church Preschool

BEST PRINTER

- Sweet Paper
- Copy Cove
- Fed Ex La Jolla

BEST PRIVATE SCHOOL

- The Bishop’s School
- Stella Maris Academy
- La Jolla Country Day

BEST REMODELING COMPANY

- GDC Construction Inc
- Style & Structure

BEST RESALE SHOP

- Boulevard La Jolla
- Goodwill
- 2nd Act

BEST SENIOR CARE

- Chateau La Jolla
- La Jolla Nurses Home Care

BEST SENIOR LIVING

- White Sands La Jolla
- Casa de Manana
- Vi at La Jolla Village

BEST SHIPPING

- UPS Store of Bird Rock
- La Jolla Mailbox

- Pak Mail

BEST SHOE STORE

- Rangoni Firenze
- Charleston Shoe Co.

BEST SPECIALIZED WORKOUT FAC.

- The Perfect Workout

BEST SPORTING GOODS STORE

- Bird Rock Surf Shop
- Vuori
- La Jolla Swim and Sport

BEST STYLIST

- Ashen Salon
- Chadwinn Scott
- At Opulence Salon
- Hairamedics Salon

BEST SUNGLASSES

- Be Seen Optics
- Sunglass Hut
- Eyestructure

BEST SURF SHOP

- Mitch’s Surf Shop
- Surf Diva Surf Shop

BEST SWIMSUITS

- Mitch’s Surf Shop
- La Jolla Swim and Sport
- Ocean Girl

BEST TANNING SALON

- B Lash Studio
- Blush Organic Spray Tanning

BEST TATTOO PARLOR

- Prospect Ink

BEST TOURIST ATTRACTION

- Birch Aquarium
- Torrey Pines Glider Port

BEST TRAVEL AGENCY

- Chayet Travel Network
- Cadence Travel

BEST TREE TRIMMING

- Crown Point Clippers

BEST TUTORING

- Mathnasium of La Jolla

BEST URGENT CARE

- Urgent Care of La Jolla
- Marque Urgent Care

BEST VENUE

- La Valencia

BEST VETERINARIAN

- Bird Rock Animal Hospital
- La Jolla Veterinary Hospital
- Dr. Dina Raichel@ Windan’ Sea Vet Clinic

BEST WEB DESIGN

- Brass Ring Multimedia

BEST WEIGHT LOSS

- Pacific Pearl
- Dan McKinney Family YMCA
- La Jolla Nutritional Health

BEST WELLNESS CENTER

- Amorah Kelly at Wonderworks Healing Arts
- 8th Harmony
- Pacific Pearl

BEST WOMENS APPAREL

- Faherty Brand La Jolla
- Forte Deux
- Sigi’s Boutique

BEST YOGA

- Prana Yoga Center
- YogaFuzn

GOLD WINNER LISTINGS: BEST RETAIL

Best Accounting

Natalie Papagni CPA

Natalie C. Papagni, CPA - Tax, Planning & Advisory Services is a modern, forward-focused La Jolla CPA firm with 15+ years of experience. They provide strategic tax planning, quarterly tax management, tax preparation and advisory services for individuals and businesses in La Jolla, the greater San Diego area and throughout California.
858-754-8277 | lajollataxcpa.com/principal

Best Acupuncture

Amorah Kelly at Wonderworks Healing Arts

Wonderworks Healing Arts is an acupuncture and Oriental medicine practice run by Amorah Kelly, L.Ac., M.S., O.M. Operating Tuesday through Friday, Wonderworks offers acupuncture, herbal medicine and intuitive energy healing. New Patients can receive 12% off their first visit, along with other discounts available on their website.
7742 Herschel Ave., Suite Q
858-775-1515 | wonderworkshealingarts.com

Best Alternative/Integrative Health

Amorah Kelly at Wonderworks Healing Arts

(See listing under Best Acupuncture)

Best Antiques

Ark Antiques

For nearly five decades, Ark Antiques has blended community spirit with timeless style. Staffed entirely by volunteers, this La Jolla treasure supports animal welfare through the sale of fine donated and consigned pieces. Discover period furniture, silver, crystal, china, artwork, rugs, and decorative accents — all curated from some of the area’s most elegant homes.
7643 Girard Ave, La Jolla
858-459-7755 | arkantiques.org

Best Architect

Benton & Benton Architects

Andrew Benton leads an eclectic team of architects at Benton & Benton Architects, working on projects of all scales. From custom residences and institutional spaces to medical clinics and laboratories, airports and

corporate space, Benton & Benton Architects does it all. Clients include major universities, medical clinics, and national and local non-profit organizations. The architecture team specializes in coastal architecture in La Jolla, Del Mar and other coastal areas in San Diego.
7757 Girard Ave
858-459-0805 | benton-benton.com

Best Art Gallery

Ian Ely Gallery

Ian Ely’s breathtaking landscape photography captures the spirit of the natural world with rare depth and emotion. His work transforms moments of light and shadow into timeless pieces that resonate with collectors and admirers alike. The gallery’s elegant presentation and Ely’s signature vision have made it a standout destination for fine art photography.
1141 Prospect St, La Jolla
858-291-8084 | ianely.com

Best Art Gallery (Photography)

Ian Ely Gallery

(See listing under Best Art Gallery)

Best Attorney

Mark Krasner CPA ESQ

Mark A. Krasner, a founding partner of Blanchard, Krasner & French, has over 36 years of experience as a certified public accountant and attorney. His practice areas include mergers and acquisitions, real estate, tax matters, family law, purchases and sales, litigation, licensing, corporate and partnership structuring and reorganizations, international trade, tax and estate planning.
800 Silverado St #302
858-551-2440 | bkflaw.com/team/mark-a-krasner/

Best Auto Detail

La Jolla Hand Car Wash

La Jolla Hand Carwash offers top-notch car detailing services to keep your vehicle looking its best inside and out. With a team of skilled professionals, they provide meticulous hand washes, waxing and interior cleaning using high-quality products. Known for their attention to detail and excellent customer service, La Jolla Hand Carwash is the perfect choice for maintaining your car’s appearance. Visit them for a superior car care experience.
909 Prospect St, La Jolla
858-456-1556 | lajollahandcarwash.com





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 (858) 352-6465

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Best Auto Repair (all makes)

Family Auto

Family Auto is an independently owned and operated full-service auto shop dedicated to providing the best possible vehicle and customer service. They work on all makes and models, ensuring comprehensive care for any vehicle. Their waiting area includes free Wi-Fi, a refreshment station, a children's play area, and a shuttle service for your convenience. After one visit, you'll understand why this auto service has been voted La Jolla's top choice. Experience exceptional care and service at Family Auto, where your satisfaction is a top priority.

1027 Virginia Way,
858-260-2000 | familyautoservice.com

Best Auto Repair (import)

La Jolla Independent

La Jolla Independent BMW Service is a specialized independent auto repair facility offering expert repair, maintenance and vintage restoration services specifically for BMW vehicles. With over 50 years of in-house BMW technical experience, La Jolla Independent has proven to be one of the nation's leading Independent BMW service facilities.

5535 La Jolla Blvd
1-800-466-8184 | bimmerdoc.com

Best Auto Sales

McLaren San Diego

McLaren San Diego is an official factory-authorized luxury supercar dealership and service center located in La Jolla. This is the premier destination for McLaren sales, service, and parts needs for all of San Diego!

7440 La Jolla Blvd
858-454-1800 | sandiegoluxurymotors.com

Best Bank

Chase

Chase is the consumer and commercial banking subsidiary of JPMorgan Chase, making it the largest bank in the United States by total assets. Chase Bank has three main branches in La Jolla.

8807 Villa La Jolla Dr
858-554-0091 | chase.com

Best Bed

Vispring

Vispring's showroom offers 10 mattresses to experience. At the heart of Vispring's story is a vision of exceptional sleep, born from a simple act of love. A century of craftsmanship has followed, grounded in our unwavering commitment to ingenuity and care. Every detail of their mattresses is crafted with the finest natural, responsibly sourced materials and time-honored techniques.

7464 Girard Ave
858-203-3438 | vispring.com

Best Bike Shop

California Bicycles

San Diego's premier bike store since 1976, California Bicycles is a family-owned business that has dedicated the last four decades to great products and even better services. Whether you're looking for beach cruisers, top-of-the-line road bikes, mountain bikes, E-bikes, or first-time children's and adult bikes, California Bicycles has something for you.

7462 La Jolla Blvd
858-454-0316 | calbike.com

Best Bike Shop (Electric)

Pedego Electric Bikes

Pedego Electric Bikes La Jolla has partnered with multiple Best-in-Class Electric Bike and Rideable Brands to be your one-stop shop for all things Electric. Now stocking more than 40 electric bicycle models across multiple brands, with different sizes, colors and price points. Brands included are Urtopia, Raev, Macfox, Bulls USA, Velotric, Blaupunkt and more! They offer Pedego Electric Bike Rentals, as well as custom guided tours featuring the La Jolla coastline and panoramic ocean/desert/mountain views from the top of Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial! They also specialize in sales of Electric Board-sports (Onewheel & Accessories), Electric Scooters (Cycleboard), Electric Skateboards (Evolve/Summerboard), and Underwater Sea Scooters and Kickboards (ASIWO). They

also feature multiple Brands of Accessories to support your Active Lifestyle, including BLENDERS, Shokz, Sun Bum, Sena, Thousand, Tifosi, Thule, Arrowhere, Sock Guy, Smith, and more. Hello, fun.

5702 La Jolla Blvd, 101
858-291-8845 | pedegolajolla.com

Best Book Store

Warwick's

A La Jolla favorite for generations, Warwick's is known for its exceptional selection of books, gifts, and fine stationery. Locals love the warm, personal service and the store's lively calendar of author events and signings. Whether you're browsing bestsellers or finding the perfect gift, Warwick's offers something special for every reader and occasion.

7812 Girard Ave
858-454-0347 | warwicks.com

Best Boutique

Sweet Paper

Sweet Paper specializes in custom wedding invitations and luxury wedding stationery for couples throughout La Jolla, San Diego and Southern California. Whether you're dreaming of letterpress wedding invitations, foil-stamped designs, watercolor artwork, custom maps, or timeless classic stationery, Sweet Paper has something to make every couple happy. As wedding stationery experts, the boutique helps couples navigate



WE
WOULD
LOVE TO
MEET
you.

At Sweet Paper, we bring your vision to life with exquisite printing, luxurious invitations, and personalized service —all thoughtfully tailored to your budget.

From selecting the perfect paper and color palette to refining every design detail, we guide you through the process with care and expertise.

Let us create invitations that reflect your unique aesthetic and set the tone for your perfect day.

Or find something special in our curated gift shop!



7660 Fay Avenue Suite A
La Jolla, California

858.456.1446

sweetpaperweddings
www.sweet-paper.com
hello@sweet-paper.com



invitation wording, guest addressing, timelines, and all the do's and don'ts of wedding invitation etiquette.

7660 Fay Ave
858-456-1446 | sweet-paper.com

Best Car Wash

La Jolla Hand Car Wash

(See listing under Best Auto Detail)

Best Cell Phone Store

Verizon

Verizon Wireless is committed to delivering outstanding customer satisfaction, and it has a charitable streak to boot. It offers quality products and services on the nation's largest 4G LTE network and the largest, most reliable 3G network – and it's all over the causes that advance literacy in the United States.

904 Pearl St
858-551-0057 | 4Gwireless.com

Best Child Care

Dan McKinney Family YMCA

The Dan McKinney Family YMCA has been proudly serving La Jolla families since 1964. Dedicated to empowering people to be healthier in spirit, mind and body, the Y believes a strong community can only be achieved when we invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors. As a leading nonprofit, the Y offers programs that foster youth development, promote healthy living and advance social responsibility. They offer a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for people from all backgrounds and walks of life and help them create meaningful change.

8355 Cliffridge Ave
858-453-3483 |
ymcasd.org/locations/dan-mckinney-family-ymca



Best Children's Apparel

Celita & Co.

Celita & Co. is a charming children's clothing boutique in La Jolla, California, offering high-end European, Canadian and Brazilian apparel for infants, toddlers and young children. The boutique offers thoughtfully curated global brands, special-occasion dresses, everyday wear and accessories that emphasize comfort, durability, and classic aesthetics.

7734 Herschel Ave Ste B
619-663-1192 | celitaco.com

Best Chiropractor

Active Rest Chiropractic

Dr. Koeppen operates Active Rest Chiropractic, a San Diego chiropractor specializing in "Upper Cervical" alignments—a noninvasive, gentle adjustment to the vertebrae of the neck. Dr. Koeppen's journey began at just 8 years old when he suffered a neck injury that wasn't properly corrected until he found an upper cervical specialist 20 years later. Inspired by his own experience, he has dedicated his life to helping others achieve a pain-free lifestyle. At Active Rest Chiropractic, Dr. Koeppen provides compassionate and effective care to promote optimal health and well-being.

7630 Fay Ave
858-736-4056 | activerestchiropractic.com

Best Cleaning

Big League Clean

Big League Clean provides commercial cleaning and janitorial services for offices, medical facilities and retail spaces in La Jolla, CA. The company offers commercial janitorial work, window cleaning, carpet cleaning, strip and wax, power washing and day porter services.

4225 Executive Square 858-422-0101
bigleagueclean.com/locations/la-jolla



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truebeautysd.com | @truebeautysd

Best Coins & Precious Metals H.S. Perlin

For more than 60 years, H.S. Perlin Co. has been a trusted name in rare coins and precious metals. President Joel D. Perlin, a respected expert in gold and rare coin markets, provides clients with informed financial insight and personalized investment guidance. The firm specializes in gold bullion, U.S. and world coins, and rare collectibles, helping investors build secure, tangible portfolios with lasting value and long-term growth potential.

1110 Silverado St
858-459-7803 | goldendures.com

Best Computer Repair Endless Technology Solutions

Endless Technology Solutions specializes in providing cutting-edge IT services tailored to businesses of all sizes. Our expert team delivers reliable solutions in network management, cybersecurity, cloud services, and IT consulting. With a commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction, we ensure your technology needs are met efficiently and effectively. Partner with us to elevate your business operations with seamless technology integration.

888 Prospect St Suite 200
619-400-7581 | endlesstechsolutions.com

Best Contractor / Construction Grunow Premier, Inc.

Grunow Construction is a residential contractor serving the La Jolla area for over 35 years. Grunow's work includes custom home remodels and some custom commercial upgrades. Grunow maintains a high-quality, select group of long-term employees. Grunow's mission is to provide its clients with a consistently high standard of craftsmanship and service. Their premier service includes detailed bidding and quality project management, along with consistent communication, which helps build long-lasting relationships. Grunow is built on trust and consistent performance. Tom has been an active community volunteer, serving as President of the LJ Historic Society, the Founding board President of the Winston School, a vestry member and head of the building committee at St. James Church, the general contractor for the Map in LJ Shores, the contractor for the Rec Center bocce ball court, the flagpole restoration in Park Row, and a member of the Vision Committee at the Rec Center.

1121 Torrey Pines Rd
858-459-8742 | grunowconstruction.com

Best Convenience Store Keg N Bottle

Keg N Bottle has a vast deli sandwich menu, and they make sandwiches to order with fresh ingredients at great prices! What's not to love about this great neighborhood market? Headed to the beach? They have everything you need to fill your picnic basket. And

don't forget—the wine, beer and liquor selections are fabulous too.

1030 Torrey Pines Rd
858-459-1124 | kegnbottle.com/
pages/location-la-jolla

Best Cosmetic Rejuvenation Torrey Pines Dermatology & Laser Center

Torrey Pines Dermatology & Laser Center is a comprehensive dermatology and skin care clinic. Open Monday through Friday, they offer medical, surgical and cosmetic dermatology. They accept most major PPO insurance plans, Medicare and Scripps EPO.

9850 Genesee Ave #460
858-362-8800 | torreypinesderm.com

Best Cosmetic Surgery Torrey Pines Dermatology & Laser Center

(See listing under Best Cosmetic Rejuvenation)

Best Day Spa Colibri Skincare & Sugaring

This boutique, woman-owned skin spa is located in the heart of La Jolla and specializes in nurturing facials, customized acne programs and natural sugaring hair removal. The warm, spacious, and cozy spa room pro-

vides a calm, inviting environment designed for deep relaxation.

7760 Fay Ave Ste E
619-535-1653 | colibriskinsd.com

Best Dentist Dr. Weston Spencer

Dr. Weston Spencer is an award-winning cosmetic, restorative and general dentist. Her practice emphasizes a spa-like, comfortable patient experience with amenities like soothing blankets, pillows and lavender-scented towels, along with advanced digital impression technology.

7855 Fay Ave #110
619-651-9537 | westonspencerdds.com

Best Dentist (Pediatric) Dr. Scoma-Seaside Pediatric Dentistry

Seaside Pediatric Dentistry and Orthodontics treats each patient like family. Supported by an experienced, compassionate team, their doctors are dedicated to ensuring you feel heard, respected, and valued as an individual. They want you to feel at ease in their care, confident that you or your child is receiving the ideal treatment for your specific needs and concerns.

10549 Scripps Poway Pkwy, Ste E
858-271-4200 | myseasidesmiles.com





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SAT: 8 AM – 6 PM
SUN: CLOSED

7923 Girard Ave. La Jolla, Ca 92037

858.454.1607

bellesirenesalon.com



Pacific Pearl
— La Jolla —

Guarneri Integrative Health, Inc.

— Pacific Pearl La Jolla —

Thank You for Voting!

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 **858-459-6919**

 **PacificPearlLaJolla.com**

 **6919 La Jolla Blvd,
La Jolla Ca 92037**

Best Discount Store

Goodwill

Yes, La Jolla has its own Goodwill—and locals love it! This 1,600-square-foot boutique-style store turns donated treasures into opportunities, supporting job training and employment programs for people with disabilities and other barriers to work. Shoppers enjoy the thrill of discovery, where luxury finds like Prada and Gucci often share the racks with everyday favorites.

7631 Girard Ave
858-752-6181 | sdgoodwill.org

Best Doctor

Pacific Pearl

Pacific Pearl is an integrative medical center. It combines conventional, functional, and natural medicine to treat the body, mind and spirit. In the 1990s, Dr. Guarneri recognized the need for a comprehensive approach to cardiovascular disease and co-founded Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine, where she served as Medical Director for 15 years; in 2014, she co-founded Guarneri Integrative Health, Inc. at Pacific Pearl La Jolla. She serves as Medical Director to a team of experts in Conventional, Integrative, Natural, and Functional Medicine. She is Board-certified in Cardiovascular Disease, Internal Medicine and Integrative Holistic Medicine.

6919 La Jolla Blvd.
858-459-6919 | pacificpearllajolla.com

Best Doctor (Naturopathic)

Pacific Pearl

(See listing under Best Doctor)

Best Dog Grooming

Left Coast Grooming

Left Coast Grooming started from the bond between the owner and founder, Ashley Dorsey and her Weimaraner, Harvey. LCG is a cute, boutique-style grooming salon offering customized haircuts and baths for all types of dogs. With a knowledgeable owner/operator, backed by an understanding of dog behavior and the grooming industry, all dogs leave happy, smelling good and looking great.

7443 La Jolla Blvd
619-871-5849 | leftcoastgrooming.com

Best Dry Cleaner

Margaret's the Couture Cleaners

La Jolla was Margaret's original flagship location in 1953. Over the years, they have expanded to five SoCal stores and also serve garment retailers in San Diego, Orange County, and Beverly Hills. All of their services are also available through their CleanByMail nationwide program with UPS. Margaret's provides garment, leather and suede cleaning, restoration, and preservation services at their new state-of-the-art, award-winning plant in





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Since 2001, Dr. Kristen Richards has proudly served her hometown of La Jolla, providing comprehensive medical, surgical, Mohs, and cosmetic dermatology. After 13 years of advanced dermatologic and Mohs surgery training at leading institutions, she returned home to build a practice rooted in clinical excellence, personalized care, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

As Torrey Pines Dermatology & Laser Center celebrates its 25th anniversary, Dr. Richards and her team remain committed to providing the highest standards of care to the community she calls home.

Thank you for being part of our journey. We look forward to welcoming you!



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- ✓ Best Cosmetic Rejuvenation
- ✓ Best Doctor



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Office Hours

MTWTF 8:30-5:00
Saturday & Sunday | Closed



9850 Genesee Ave Suite 460,
La Jolla, CA 92037

torreypinesderm.com



Conveniently located on the Scripps Hospital campus in La Jolla inside the Ximed Building.

Kearny Mesa. Margaret's specializes in high-end dry cleaning, bridal gowns, handbags, leather and suede. Home services include drapery, area rugs, and memorabilia. Complimentary pick-up and delivery are included in their service areas.

7511 La Jolla Blvd
858-454-2375 | margarets.com

Best Electric Rideables

La Jolla Ebike & Skate

La Jolla Ebike & Skate keeps riders rolling with expert maintenance and repair services for bikes and e-bikes. Their friendly, certified technicians provide free estimates, fast turn-arounds, and top-quality care you can trust. From full tune-ups to quick fixes, they make sure every ride is smooth, safe, and ready for the road or trail.

7444 Girard Ave
858-242-9836 | lajollaebikeandskate.com

Best Electrician

West Coast Electric

West Coast Electric Solutions, Inc. is a family-owned business that has proudly served the San Diego area since 1979. All the electricians are licensed, insured and bonded. They provide full-service electrical work for residential and commercial needs. West Coast Electric Solutions values customer service and takes pride in our work and attention to detail.

3077B Clairemont Dr, Ste 393
858-565-7897 | wcesolutions.com

Best Eyewear

Be Seen Optics

Locally owned and dedicated to style, Be Seen Optics is La Jolla's destination for luxury eyewear. Their curated collection features designer frames from around the world, blending fashion, function, and individuality. With expert fittings and a team that knows the latest trends, you're sure to find the perfect pair to match your personal style.

5702 La Jolla Blvd. Ste 102
858-291-8211 | beseenoptics.com

Best Fashion Accessories

Sigi's Boutique

Women seeking high-end European designer fashions and accessories will love Sigi's Boutique. This elegant shop offers a curated selection of fine cashmere from Scotland, stylish classics from Italy and France, and sophisticated sportswear from renowned brand Herno. Whether you're looking for luxurious sweaters, chic dresses, or elegant outerwear, Sigi's Boutique has something to suit every taste. The boutique's commitment to quality and style ensures that each piece is timeless and impeccably crafted. It's the perfect destination for those who appreciate exquisite European fashion and desire to add a touch of luxury to their wardrobe.

7888 Girard Ave
858-454-7244 | sigislajolla.com

Best Financial Planner

Canter Wealth

Canter Wealth is a fee-only fiduciary financial planning and wealth management firm. They specialize in combining traditional wealth management with real estate expertise. Their team of Certified Financial Planners adheres to a fiduciary standard, meaning they must put your financial interests first.

7825 Fay Ave #140
858-812-7550 | canterwealth.com

Best Floor Covering

Nativa

Nativa furniture collections are crafted in-house using premium materials. From exotic wood species from South America to soft leathers from Italy or rare marble from Turkey, the list of unique components available to you is close to endless. To ensure that these materials are treated with the respect they deserve, they process them using old-world techniques in their own factories. Thanks to the close attention to detail, they can personally guarantee that the pieces you take home will last you a lifetime.

7770 Girard Ave
858-454-1874 | nativafurniture.com

Best Florist

Bridget's Blooms

Bridget's Blooms creates custom bouquets and floral arrangements for birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions. The longtime local shop is known for fresh flowers and personalized service.

1055 Torrey Pines Road
858-459-0731 | bridgetslajollablooms.com

Best Furniture Store

Unscripted Spaces

Unscripted Spaces is a contemporary furniture showroom and interior design studio featuring luxury Italian kitchens, closets, lighting, bathrooms and home furnishings. Its team works with homeowners and design professionals on projects ranging from individual rooms to full remodels.

7730 Girard Ave.
858-459-0731 | unscriptedspaces.com

Best Gift Store

Sweet Paper

(See listing under Best Boutique)

Best Gourmet Meat/Butcher Shop

Valley Farm Market

At Valley Farm Market, you can expect the highest-quality USDA meats, the freshest

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6902 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla
858-999-0358 | valleyfarmmarkets.com

Best Grocery Store
Pavilions

Pavilions in La Jolla offers a premium grocery experience with a wide selection of fresh produce, gourmet foods, and everyday essentials. Known for quality products and friendly service, the store features an extensive deli, bakery, and prepared foods section, plus a variety of organic and health-conscious options to fit every lifestyle. Visit Pavilions for all your grocery needs and enjoy a top-notch shopping experience.

7544 Girard Ave., La Jolla
858-454-2620 | local.pavilions.com

Best Grocery Store (Specialty)
Valley Farm Market

(See listing under Best Gourmet Meat/Butcher Shop)

Best Hair Salon
Belle Sirène Salon

Belle Sirène is built on uncompromising quality, open communication, and an exceptional experience from beginning to end, with a touch of Hollywood glamour. Their core focus is to build trust with every client before evolving their look. They prioritize understanding their customers' needs and take the time to establish a clear objec-

tive before starting any service. The passionate team of artists at Belle Sirène cares deeply about their clients, ensuring their time there is unique and memorable.

7923 Girard Ave.
858-454-1607 | bellesirenesalon.com

Best Handyman
Handyman of La Jolla & Del Mar

With over 30 years of experience in construction, remodeling, and handyman services, Handyman of La Jolla & Del Mar offers reliable, clean, and quiet service. Whether you need interior or exterior work, or a bit of both, they are here to help. From remodeling and repairs to general maintenance for homes and condos, Handyman of La Jolla & Del Mar can handle it all. Trust their expertise for quality workmanship and exceptional service.

7514 Girard Ave, La Jolla
858-459-3860 | handymanoflajolladelmar.com

Best Hardware Store
Meanley & Son Hardware

Meanley & Son has been a staple of the La Jolla community for more than six decades, with roots tracing back to 1948, when Nackey Scripps Meanley, husband Tom and son William established the store. They carry gourmet cookware, paint, portable appliances, giftware, light bulbs, tools, electrical and plumbing fittings, cleaning and gardening supplies, and all the widgets, fasteners, glues, and what-chamacallits you can imagine. Meanley and Son joined the Ace Hardware co-op in 1997, which enables them to keep prices low while still offering hometown service.

7756 Girard Ave.
858-454-4288 | meanleyhardware.com

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Best Health Club
Life Time La Jolla

Experience luxury at La Jolla Life Time, located on the corner of Wall Street and Herschel Avenue. This 46,000-square-foot athletic resort features an expansive workout floor, group fitness studios, saunas, steam rooms, a full-service spa, and a cafe. Dedicated to healthy living, it offers everything you need for a balanced lifestyle.

1055 Wall St.
858-410-7100 | lifetime.life

Best Health Food/
Nutrition Store

Trader Joe's

Trader Joe's carries fresh produce, pantry staples, prepared foods, snacks and specialty products under its own label and other brands. The La Jolla location offers the chain's familiar mix of everyday groceries and seasonal items.

8657 Villa La Jolla Drive
858-546-8629 | traderjoes.com

Best Holistic Center
Amorah Kelly at
Wonderworks Healing Arts
(See listing under Best Acupuncture)

Best Holistic Medicine

Amorah Kelly at
Wonderworks Healing Arts
(See listing under Best Acupuncture)

Best Hotel
La Valencia

Coined "The Pink Lady," La Valencia Hotel has Old World charm and a new outlook, big picture windows and attention to the smallest detail. More than a La Jolla hotel, it's an icon, having hosted celebrities, celebrations, reunions and romantic getaways since 1926. Just steps from miles of stunning coastline, world-class museums, shopping and galleries, it's the perfect blend of location and recreation. The beachfront hotel's Mediterranean-influenced architecture and décor evoke colossal charm and are truly one of a kind.

1132 Prospect St.
858-454-0771 | lavalencia.com

Best Insurance Agent
Pete Blasi at My Senior
Health Plan

Pete Blasi and My Senior Health Plan help clients understand Medicare Advantage, Medicare Supplement and prescription-drug coverage. The firm's licensed advisers provide education and enrollment guidance at no cost to beneficiaries.

875 Prospect St., Suite 201

myseniorhealthplan.com

Best Integrative
Medicine Practice
Pacific Pearl
(See listing under Best Doctor)

Best Interior Designer
AGK Design Studio

AGK Design Studio creates residential and commercial interiors with an emphasis on relaxed, coastal-modern design. The firm works with clients on space planning, furnishings, finishes and full-home projects.

1298 Prospect St., Suite 1W
858-551-8752 | agkdesignstudio.com

Best Jewelry Design & Repair
Bower's Jewelers

Since 1945, Bowers is La Jolla's oldest family-operated jewelry store. Over the years, the staff has picked up expertly on customers' tastes—that's why it fills a variety of custom orders and also stocks silver, crystal, porcelain and items such as cigarette lighters, candlesticks, platters and flatware. You'll find something every time for that hard-to-buy-for person in your life! Stop in and see why they were voted Best Jewelry Store.

7860 Girard Ave
858-459-3678 | bowersjewelers.com



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Best Jewelry Store
Diamonds on the Rock

Diamonds on the Rock specializes in engagement rings, wedding bands, custom designs and fine jewelry. Its team helps clients select or create pieces suited to their style and budget.

5630 La Jolla Blvd.
858-750-2190 | diamonds on the rock.com

Best Landscaper
Crown Point Clippers

Crown Point Clippers provides tree care, pruning, removal, stump grinding, lot clearing and view-enhancement services. The family-owned La Jolla company has served the San Diego area since 1979.

1382 Rodeo Drive, La Jolla
858-270-1742 | crownpointclippers.com

Best Liquor Store
Dick's Liquor

Dick's Liquor is a neighborhood shop offering beer, wine, spirits, mixers and convenience items. The longtime La Jolla business provides a broad selection in an easy-to-shop local setting.

737 Pearl St.
858-454-0321 | dicksliquorlajolla.com

Best Martial Arts
PTC Boxing Gym

PTC Boxing Gym offers boxing, Muay Thai, high-intensity fitness classes, open-gym time and private training. Its coaches work with beginners and experienced amateur and professional fighters.

5755 La Jolla Blvd
858-330-2524 | pacifictrainingcenter.com

Best Massage
SD Therapy Massage & Bodywork

SD Therapy Massage & Bodywork offers therapeutic, sports and deep-tissue massage, along with cupping and lymphatic-drainage services. Treatments focus on pain relief, recovery and improved movement.

7301 Girard Ave., P1
619-880-1662 | sdtherapy.net

Best Membership Organization
La Jolla Village Merchants Association

The La Jolla Village Merchants Association supports local businesses through marketing, advocacy, events and community programs. The organization also promotes La Jolla Village as a destination for shopping, dining and services.

7734 Herschel Ave., Suite C
858-230-2725 | lajollabythesea.com

Best Men's Apparel
Ascot Shop

Established in 1950, the Ascot Shop is a high-end men's clothing boutique offering brand-name apparel in both classic and modern styles. Located at the same charming spot with its iconic double Dutch front doors, the Ascot Shop has grown from a traditional men's haberdashery into a beloved local institution. Committed to quality and style, this boutique continues to serve discerning customers seeking the best in men's fashion.

7750 Girard Ave.
858-454-4222 | ascotshop.com

Best Men's Apparel (formal)
Ascot Shop

(See listing under Best Men's Apparel)

Best Mortgage Agent
Kenny Simpson

Kenny Simpson and the Simpson Team assist homebuyers and property investors with conventional, jumbo, FHA, VA and investment-property loans. The team emphasizes clear guidance and loan options tailored to each borrower.

7855 Ivanhoe Ave., Suite 300
619-302-2020 | simpson-team.com





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www.colibriskinsd.com



Best Nail Salon
Nancy's Nails

Nancy's Nails offers manicures, pedicures, gel, acrylic and dipping-powder services in a relaxed neighborhood salon. The team provides both classic nail care and detailed custom designs.

721 Pearl St.
858-454-2853 | nancysnailspajxn.com

Best Naturopathic Doctor
Pacific Pearl

(See listing under Best Doctor)

Best Optometrist
Eyecare at the Cove Optometry
Eyecare at the Cove Optometry provides comprehensive eye examinations, contact-lens fittings and treatment for a range of vision and eye-health needs. The practice also carries prescription eyewear and sunglasses.

1200 Prospect St., Suite 102
858-454-5661 | eyecareatthecove.com

Best Orthodontist
Pal Orthodontics of La Jolla
Pal Orthodontics is a boutique, family-owned practice offering braces, Invisalign, retainers and digital scanning for children and adults. Dr. Arvin Pal creates individualized treatment plans in a welcoming office setting.

7301 Girard Ave., Suite 200
858-456-8080 | palorthodontics.com

Best Painter
Chism Brothers Painting
Since its inception, Chism Brothers has strived to become the leading residential painting company in La Jolla by consistently providing exceptional quality and dependable service. They're not just about painting — they are about people. They value clients, put employees first and invest in serving the community. Thank you for voting Chism Brothers Painting as your area leader in painting.

7958 Convoy Court, San Diego
858-454-3850 | chismbrothers.com

Best Painting Supplies
Meanley & Son Hardware
(See listing under Best Hardware Store)

Best Personal Trainer
Balanced Fitness & Health
Balanced Fitness and Health is a community gym driven by you. Their atmosphere and memberships are tailored to help you stay focused and achieve your best results. Real goals and real results.

7680 Girard Ave., Suite 200
858-456-2595 | balancedfitnesshealth.com

Bird Rock Animal Hospital
Bird Rock Animal Hospital is a full-service veterinary practice providing wellness care, diagnostics, dentistry, surgery and treatment for illnesses and injuries. Its team emphasizes individualized care in a friendly neighborhood setting.

5588 La Jolla Blvd.
858-459-3279 | birdrockah.com

Best Pet Sitting /Boarding
DogZenergy
DogZenergy offers complete canine care. More than a dog-walking service, DogZenergy also organizes exercise play groups and a positive-reinforcement dog training program to change your dog's life. Your dog will be physically and mentally exercised so that they can be the best dog they can be. This place can turn your out-of-control dog into a calm, zen dog. They provide in-home overnight pet sitting, so your dog can stay in the comfort of their own home.

7514 Girard Ave
858-349-5700 | dogzenergy.com

Best Pet Store
Decker's Dog + Cat
Decker's Dog + Cat carries pet food, treats, toys, beds and supplies selected for dogs and cats. The independent shop emphasizes quality products and knowledgeable service for

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Thank you for voting us Gold for Best Tanning Salon in La Jolla!

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local pet owners.

7928 Ivanhoe Ave.
858-886-7899 | deckersdogandcat.com

Best Pharmacy

CortexRx

CortexRx is an independent community pharmacy offering prescriptions, vaccinations, supplements and other wellness products. The pharmacy provides personalized service and delivery options for customers in La Jolla and beyond.

7301 Girard Ave., Suite 100
858-246-6918 | cortexrx.com

Best Pilates

SOULution Pilates

SOULution Pilates San Diego is passionately committed to offering inspiring, attentive and creative Pilates sessions. SOULution Pilates San Diego is an upscale boutique studio in a unique and peaceful setting.

8813 Villa La Jolla Drive, Suite 2000A
858-337-3921 | soulutionpilates.com

Best Place To Buy Jeans

Ralph Lauren

Ralph Lauren offers premium men's and women's clothing, including denim, sportswear, accessories and signature Polo styles. The Girard Avenue store brings the brand's classic American aesthetic to La Jolla.

7830 Girard Ave.
858-459-0554 | ralphlauren.com

Best Plumber

Erling Rohde Plumbing

Erling Rohde Plumbing is a family-owned business that has been serving La Jolla for over 100 years. Its specialties include toilet, faucet and pipe repair and replacement; backflow protection; underground water and gas leaks; Ray-Pak boiler repair; solar hot water systems; and water heaters.

5666 La Jolla Blvd #122, La Jolla
858-454-4258 | rohdeplumbing.com

Best Preschool

Gilipse

Recognizing that children are naturally creative problem solvers, Gillispie's Early Childhood program uses a Reggio-inspired approach, and elementary grade levels use well-researched programs and strategies that help students move past the "How?" to the "Why?" At Gillispie, academic rigor is defined by work that demands independent, higher-level thinking.

7380 Girard Ave.
858-459-3773 | gillispie.org

Best Printer

Sweet Paper

(See listing under Best Boutique)

Best Private School

The Bishop's School

The Bishop's School is an academic community pursuing intellectual, artistic and athletic excellence in the context of the Episcopal tradition.

7607 La Jolla Blvd.
858-459-4021 | bishops.com

Best Remodeling Company

GDC Construction Inc.

GDC is a family-owned business headed by Pancho Dewhurst, a fourth-generation La Jolla builder. GDC appreciates serving the La Jolla community through both fine craftsmanship and decades of community service. GDC's commitment to serving La Jolla remains a cornerstone of GDC Construction values.

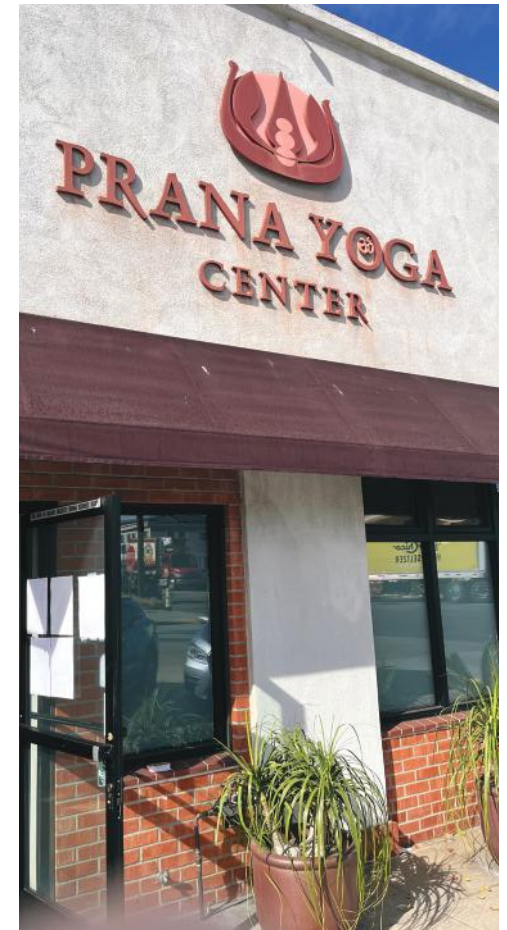
1031 Silverado St.
858-551-5222 | gdcconstruction.com

Best Resale Shop

Boulevard La Jolla

Boulevard La Jolla is a resale boutique offering a rotating selection of designer clothing, shoes, handbags and accessories. Shoppers can find gently used luxury and contemporary pieces in the heart of the Village.

7458 Girard Ave.
619-665-5645 | boulevardlajolla.com



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www.grunowpremier.com

Best Senior Care**Chateau La Jolla**

Chateau La Jolla is a coastal retirement community offering independent living with dining, housekeeping, transportation, activities and other services. Its location places residents close to La Jolla's shops, restaurants and shoreline.

233 Prospect St.
858-459-4451 | chateaulajolla.com |

Best Senior Living**White Sands La Jolla**

As California's only beachfront continuing care retirement community, White Sands La Jolla offers an active lifestyle with welcoming residents. Take in concerts, water aerobics classes or trips to nearby musical and stage performances.

7450 Olivetas Ave.
858-454-4201 | whitesandslajolla.com

Best Shipping**The UPS Store of Bird Rock**

The UPS Store 0003 in Bird Rock offers a wide range of services including in-store and online printing, document finishing, mailboxes for all your mail and packages, notary services, packing, shipping, and freight services.

5580 La Jolla Blvd.
858-459-4077 | theupsstore.com

Best Shoe Store**Rangoni Firenze**

Rangoni Firenze Shoes offers a unique European vibe, specializing in handcrafted shoes from Florence, Italy, made in their own Amalfi Factory. This charming store also features a fine selection of leather handbags by Barbara Milano and Merci Marie, both crafted in Milan, Italy.

7870 Girard Ave.
858-454-5011 | rangonistore.com

Best Specialized Workout Fac.**The Perfect Workout**

The Perfect Workout's La Jolla studio delivers efficient 20-minute slow-motion strength training with dedicated one-on-one personal trainers. Clients build strength, boost energy, lose weight, improve muscle tone and cardio health. Options include in-studio sessions or virtual training, private clean facilities, flexible schedules, and guaranteed results for all ages.

715 Pearl St.
858-729-9901 | theperfectworkout.com

Best Sporting Goods Store**Bird Rock Surf Shop**

Bird Rock Surf Shop carries surfboards, wetsuits, apparel and beach accessories for local surfers and visitors. The neighborhood shop also offers knowledgeable advice for all skill

levels.

5509 La Jolla Blvd.
858-459-5933 | birdrocksurfshop.com

Best Stylist**Ashen Salon**

Ashen Salon provides haircuts, color, highlights and styling in a modern boutique setting. Its stylists work with clients to create personalized looks suited to their hair, routine and preferences.

ashen-salon.com

Best Sunglasses**Be Seen Optics**

(See listing under Best Eyewear)

Best Surf Shop**Mitch's Surf Shop**

Established in 1967 near Windansea Beach, Mitch's Surf Shop is the ultimate destination for local surfers and skateboarders. The shop is also popular with the skate crowd, offering a wide selection of skateboards from brands like Arbor, Sector 9, and Skatedesigns. Mitch's remains a cornerstone of the local surf and skate community.

631 Pearl St.
858-459-5933 | mitchssurfshop.com

Best Swimsuits**Mitch's Surf Shop**

(See listing under Best Surf Shop)

Best Tanning Salon**B Lash Studio**

B Lash Studio offers beauty services designed to create a polished, customized look, including lash and tanning treatments. Clients can choose services suited to everyday wear or special occasions.

7730 Herschel Ave. Ste. I
858-967-2130 | blashstudio.com

Best Tattoo Parlor**Prospect Ink**

Prospect Ink is a premium tattoo studio located in La Jolla, California, known for its clean, modern aesthetic and breathtaking ocean views. With convenient hours, walk-in options, and consultation services, Prospect Ink offers both artistry and comfort in a serene coastal setting.

1224 Prospect St., Suite 150
858-203-3447 | prospectinktattoos.com

Best Tourist Attraction**Birch Aquarium at Scripps**

Birch Aquarium at Scripps is the public exploration center for the world-renowned Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC



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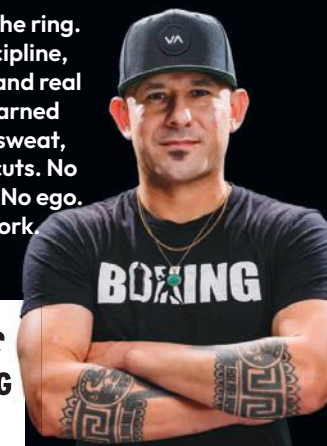
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LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

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Mahj Theory Collective features open play, lessons, and leagues

By Dave Schwab
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – For those searching for a fun board game to play, there's an exotic one now offered daily in La Jolla.

Mahj Theory Collective, an American Mah Jongg studio and boutique in La Plaza at 7863 Girard Ave., Suite 109, features open play, lessons, leagues, tournaments, events, and curated Mah Jongg accessories.

The collective is a social club founded by mother-daughter duo Deb and Sam Solomon of La Jolla. The pair have created a welcoming, community focused space for players of all levels in a studio blending gameplay, instruction, retail, and social events in a refined atmosphere.

Mah Jongg is much more than a game, pointed out Deb about their new membership-based, walk in social club.

"The game is definitely about building community around relationships with the people playing," she said, noting her grandmother introduced her to the game. "This is now their home away from home."

Deb added there's another modern benefit to playing Mah Jongg socially.

"The best thing is you get away from your cell phones and concentrate on being with each other," she said. "It's more than sitting around and just playing."

Terms of membership at Mahj Theory are varied, with one special category created for those who don't expect to be regulars, but want the opportunity to drop-in and play any time.

"It's become pretty much an obsession for many people," joked Deb about how the game is catching on and drawing players, not only from San Diego County and Southern California but also from Arizona, Texas, Las Vegas and even Mexico.

Deb Solomon said Mah Jongg typically takes just 15 to 20 minutes to play, and most people who come in spend a couple of hours playing multiple games. She added Mahj Theory not only provides the venue to play but also offers training needed to understand and master the game.

"We offer 2 1/2-hour lessons multiple times every week where people learn all



Sam and Deb Solomon, owners of Mahj Theory Collective. (Photo by Jaimie Dickerson Brown/J. Dixx Photography)

the basics and the rules as well as the strategies behind the game," Deb Solomon said, adding there's another instructional option where new players learn under the watchful eye of a game guide.

Mahj Theory Collective is the first American Mah Jongg social club in San Diego. There are nine Mah Jongg tables in the boutique studio open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. most days. After two months, collective membership is more than 55 and growing.

"Our youngest member is 24 and our oldest member is age 82," said Deb about players' age range.

After just two months, Deb and daughter Sam no longer view their mah jongg guests as merely patrons.

"We now consider them our friends, and we've been invited to play in their homes," she noted. "People have become super friends playing together, and they're now going on vacations together. Some people come in every single day. That's a huge reward for us."

For more information call 858-253-6788, email letsplay@mahjtheorycollective.com or visit mahjtheorycollective.com.

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La Jolla Vikings football: 'It's playoff football from here on'

By Ed Piper
SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA — La Jolla defensive coordinator Stephen Dixon and long-time assistant Chris Velez say the Vikings have to play with a "playoff mentality" to finish the season strong after a rough 2-4 start.

"It's a marathon, not a sprint," says Dixon, in his first year at La Jolla after serving as head coach at Escondido for the past three years.

"We're in a playoff mindset, thinking about making a deep run in the postseason playoffs next month," said Dixon.

Dixon's colleague Velez agrees. "Every game is a playoff for us," says Velez, who has been with the Vikings through the highs (2023 and 2020 Eastern League championships, the latter in a shortened season under COVID) and some of the lows over the past seven years.

Safety Bryson Grant, linebacker Sean Bannon, linebacker/running back Joseph Crudo, and linemen Zach Gergurich and

Travis McCarther have been some of the sparks for La Jolla on the defensive side during a tough schedule. Each player has lifted their teammates and helped show the way through wins against Scripps Ranch (42-29) and La Jolla Country Day (26-0) sprinkled among losses to four other opponents on the schedule.

Grant, a senior, was only recently activated at midseason due to his transfer status.

"[...He] has been a leader vocally", according to Dixon. "He helps get the defense lined up on the back end."

Bannon led the team with 23 tackles through the first four games. "He helps get guys ready to rock," says the defensive coordinator.

Crudo, playing both ways, trailed Bannon with 21 tackles. On offense, he had 218 yards rushing on 39 carries, second to running back Kali Deberry (cq), who totaled 648 yards on 102 carries. Both carry a heavy load, running for bruising yardage, then turning around to make stops on defense.



Freshman Zakai Jackson returns a punt in the first quarter in a 42-29 win over Scripps Ranch on Oct. 2. (Photo by Ed Piper/Special for Times of San Diego)

"Crudo provides the spark, making big plays. Plus, he makes slash plays on defense," says Dixon. Senior defensive lineman Gergurich, known as "Snacks" by his teammates, who earned his nickname for the frequent healthy snacks he eats, is 6-foot-4-inch-tall, 245-pound frame, and holds down the defensive line up front. McCarther, a sophomore, provides some new energy, having moved up from the

JV/novice team this season. He weighs in at 290 pounds.

Down the stretch, after a tough non-league loss to highly-ranked powerhouse Cathedral Catholic, head coach Tyler Roach and the Vikings will finish their Eastern League schedule against Christian High, San Diego High, and rival University City. It will be a gauntlet that makes or breaks La Jolla, as the red-and-black qualify for the postseason playoffs no matter what, since all teams now make the playoffs according to their overall rankings on MaxPreps. Schools will be spread over six divisions by record and strength-of-schedule.

Roach, in his 10th year, hopes to have sophomore quarterback Ty Tortorice back after a concussion protocol in weeks 6-7-8 of the 11-week season, to go with junior transfer Brody Bukich, who is steadily finding his feet after a summer transfer from Mt. Carmel High. Bukich has completed 47 of 86 passes for 598 yards and four touchdowns at this writing. Tortorice is 47 for 69, 542 yards, and three TD's.

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San Diego Wave owners propose stadium at Del Mar Fairgrounds

By Roman Aguilar
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

DEL MAR – San Diego Wave FC could trade its shared home at Snapdragon Stadium for its own soccer venue under a proposal that would also bring a hotel, convention center and shopping to the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

The National Women's Soccer League team's owners have proposed building a 12,000- to 16,000-seat stadium on the southeastern portion of the 324-acre fairgrounds, with a projected opening in 2031, when the Wave's current lease at Snapdragon Stadium expires.

The project, called Del Mar Dreams, was presented Oct. 13 to the board of the 22nd District Agricultural Association, which operates the state-owned property.

Wave controlling owner Lauren Leichtman and her son, Zachary Leichtman-Levine, pitched the development as a chance to give women's professional soccer a dedicated home while turning portions of the fairgrounds into a year-round destination.

The proposal remains preliminary. The developers, including Wave ownership and Beverly Hills-based Eighty Eight Place Acquisitions, have not disclosed a total project cost. They are seeking a two-year exclusive negotiating period to study the site's feasibility.

In a statement provided to Times of San Diego, the club emphasized that its current stadium arrangement remains intact.

"San Diego Wave FC is proud to call Snapdragon Stadium home and remain committed to our long-term agreement and valued partnership with San Diego State University," the statement said.

"As we look toward the future of San Diego Wave FC, the concept shared with the 22nd District Agricultural Association represents an early exploration of what's possible. We look forward to continuing those conversations with the Fairgrounds board, the City of Del Mar, our fans, and the broader community."

WHY THE WAVE WANTS A NEW HOME

Since moving into the 35,000-seat Snapdragon Stadium in 2022, the Wave



A conceptual rendering of the proposed Del Mar Dreams development at the Del Mar Fairgrounds shows a 12,000- to 16,000-seat San Diego Wave FC stadium alongside a hotel, convention center, shops and restaurants.

(Image courtesy of Del Mar Dreams LLC)

have shared the venue with San Diego State football and, beginning in 2025, Major League Soccer's San Diego FC.

The Wave are fourth in line for scheduling priority, behind SDSU football, concerts and other special events, and San Diego FC.

Leichtman-Levine, speaking to the fairgrounds board during its Oct. 13 meeting, described the order of priority as placing the Wave in the position of "something resembling a fourth-class citizen."

The Wave averaged a league-record 20,718 fans in 2023, but attendance has since declined. The club averaged 13,427 in 2025 and has drawn roughly 12,000 per game this season, according to figures included in the development presentation.

Leichtman-Levine told the board that a smaller stadium would better accommodate current attendance, create a more intimate atmosphere and give the team greater control over its home schedule.

A STADIUM AND MUCH MORE

Plans include a multi-level parking structure with approximately 1,300 spaces, 350,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, a 300-room hotel, a 125,000-square-foot convention center and about 15 acres of public space, plazas and trails.

A proposed tram would connect facilities throughout the fairgrounds and provide access to a planned rail platform.

The developers say the project would let the Del Mar Racetrack and the annual San Diego County Fair continue operating during construction.

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22. Business symbol
25. Exclamation of surprise
26. Pouch
27. Individually
29. Satisfaction
31. The bill in a restaurant
34. Japanese delicacy
36. Port in southern Japan
37. Double-reed instruments
38. Center
40. "The Mount Rushmore State"
43. Soldier
45. Indicates position
48. Beauty treatment: ____-pedi
50. Nonsense (slang)
51. Republic of Ireland
53. Ballplayers' tools
54. American state
55. Clusters of a fern frond
57. Patriotic women's group
58. A person's brother or sister
59. Breed of sheep
61. Of I

CLUES ACROSS

1. El Dorado High School
5. A sculpture representing a human or animal
11. A type of return
14. Tie the knot again
15. Washington city
18. Hairlike structures
19. Mark used over a vowel
21. Explosive
23. Popular 500 car race
24. Pile up
28. Currency
29. Commercial
30. A minute amount (Scottish)
32. Mass of fish eggs
33. Baseball stat
35. Licensed accountant
36. Japanese classical theater
39. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
41. Blood group
42. Assist in wrongdoing
44. Language of Cameroon
46. Grayish-white
47. A woolen cap of Scottish origin

CLUES DOWN

49. Microorganism
52. Strong social customs
56. Calm and dependable
58. Congressman
60. Force
62. As a result of this document
63. A main branch of Islam
2. American DJ Rick
3. Fictional Asimov planet
4. Coughed out
5. Singing to one's lover
6. Scotland's longest river
7. One of the six noble gases
8. Body art
9. Two-toed sloth
10. Electronic counter-countermeasures
12. A foolish person
13. Of the wind
16. Mansion
17. Sound
20. English river

ANSWERS

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Halloween happenings in La Jolla Village and Birch Aquarium

By Dave Schwab

SAN DIEGO – Now through Halloween on Saturday, Oct. 31, activities at the coast will be spooktacular featuring everything from surfers in costume, to a haunted aquarium, a creepy marine mammal park, and trick-or-treating in La Jolla.

LA JOLLA

Halloween Aglow – Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego at 2300 Expedition Way in La Jolla is getting into the Halloween spirit. The park's family-friendly Halloween Aglow will be Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23-34 from 6-8:30 p.m. Cost is \$59.95 for adults, \$49.95 for children (ages 3-12), and free for children ages 2 and under. Highlights include trick-or-treating in costumes, underwater pumpkin carving by scuba divers, the Boo & Goo Lab, the Bone Zone, live music, and pop-up science stations with Scripps Oceanography.



Divers make the final adjustments for the fully assembled skeleton in the Giant Kelp Forest habitat at Birch Aquarium at Scripps. (Photo by Jordann Tomasek/Birch Aquarium at Scripps)

Creepy Candy Crawl – The La Jolla Real Estate Brokers Association at 908 Kline St. is hosting trick-or-treating for children of all ages in La Jolla Village with its Creepy Candy Crawl (formerly Pillage The Village) from 3-6 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30. Kids can go to participating Village shops with goodie bags available at REBA and enter a costume contest featuring prizes

donated by Geppetto's toy store. Judges will announce the winners at REBA at 4:15 p.m.

Village merchants do not need pre-register to participate. On event day, pick up a balloon to designate your business as a treat stop. Balloons will be available at the La Jolla Village Merchants Association's office, 7734 Herschel Way, Suite C, beginning at noon. For the first time, a Village Spirit Award will be awarded to the businesses that bring the most creative decorations, energy, and fun to the Crawl.

Halloween Happy Hour – La Jolla Community Center at 6811 La Jolla Blvd. is hosting Spirits & Spirits: A Halloween Happy Hour on Friday, Oct. 30 from 3-5 p.m. Adult festivities will include wine, a signature cocktail, light bites, Halloween treats and live music. Cost is free for members, \$15 for non-members. Costumes and festive attire are encouraged. Call 858-459-0831 or register through the La Jolla Community Center Special Events Page.

PACIFIC BEACH

Halloween Surf contest – The Tourmaline Halloween Surf contest at 600 Tourmaline St., on Saturday, Oct. 31, starts at 8 a.m. Surf in your best costume while enjoying coffee and treats. Stick around for awards at 10 a.m. Guests will pick who wins. There is also a beach cleanup at 11 a.m.

SeaWorld Spooktacular and Howl-O-Scream – SeaWorld San Diego hosts two Halloween experiences: The family-friendly daytime SeaWorld Spooktacular, and the intense, adult-targeted nighttime Howl-O-Scream. Fridays through Sundays through Nov. 1. The Halloween Spooktacular daytime family event includes, with regular park admission, Baby Shark Halloween Show, along with Baby Shark and Pinkfong meet-and-greets; trick-or-treating; and Captain Sweet Tooth's Candy Trail. Día de los Muertos celebration will be on Oct. 31, Nov. 1-2. Howl-O-Scream is held select nights through Oct. 31 starting at 6 p.m. Intended for mature audiences. Admission includes scare zones, live entertainment, bars, and roller coasters.

Johnny Cash tribute at Beaumont's, and other live music this week

By Bart Mendoza

SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

JOHNNY CASH TRIBUTE

Alt country group, The Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash, stop in at Beaumont's for a homecoming show on Oct. 24. Led by Mark Stuart, the group was formed in San Diego circa 1995, receiving permission from Cash himself to use the name, and penning terrific original tunes that capture Cash's musical spirit, with plenty of twangy lead guitar and pedal steel. Stuart is currently on the road promoting his latest album, "Where the Neon Fades," but whatever he chooses for the night's set list from his 12-album deep discography will be sure to please country music fans. If you haven't yet discovered the Bastard Sons music, this relatively intimate gig is the ideal opportunity.

♦ **Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash:** Saturday, Oct. 24 at Beaumont's Eatery, 5662 La Jolla Blvd. 9 p.m. \$10.

KRISTIN KORB

Double bassist Kristin Korb brings her show, "The Vocal Side of Ray Brown," to

the La Jolla Community Center on Oct. 23. Korb, a resident of Denmark whose early musical studies included a stint at UCSD, is a protégé of jazz legend Brown, recording her debut album with him in 1996. For this show, Korb is backed by Josh Nelson (piano) and Kevin van den Elzen (drums), offering up a curated mix of Brown's compositions and session work, as well as songs inspired by his teachings.

♦ **Kristin Korb:** Friday, Oct. 23 at the La Jolla Community Center, 6811 La Jolla Blvd. 8 p.m. \$35.

COME TOGETHER

Fab four fans won't want to miss a set from Come Together at Humphreys Backstage Live on Oct. 23. Featuring guitarist Dave Keefer, guitarist/keyboardist David Lee Reynolds, bassist Melanie Reynolds and drummer Nico Peters, the latter formerly of the much-missed fellow tribute combo, The Baja Bugs. This isn't a costumed band; instead, the musicians focus on the songs and having fun onstage. Come Together does a great job of replicating The Beatles' vocals and

instrumentation. While the band can play pretty much any Beatles tune, for these shows Come Together specializes in their up-tempo dance floor fillers, from "Dizzy Miss Lizzy" to "Get Back."

♦ **Come Together:** Friday, Oct. 23 at Humphreys Backstage Live, 2241 Shelter Island Drive. 8 p.m. \$15.

TOM JONES

Legendary singer Tom Jones makes an appearance at the Rady Shell on Oct. 27. Aged 86, Jones has been making hit records since 1965's "It's Not Unusual," and he hasn't let up since. Most recently, Jones has been in the spotlight as a coach on television's The Voice UK, but he remains a dynamic live performer. Jones is blessed with a strong voice and an amazing catalog of classic songs like "What's New Pussycat?", "She's a Lady," and his cover of Prince's song, "Kiss," each sure to have Jones' legion of fans up on their feet and singing along. Time is marching on; if you are a fan of Jones' music, make this show a priority.

♦ **Tom Jones:** Tuesday, Oct. 27 at The

Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, 222 Marina Park Way. 7 p.m. \$56 & up.

THE AQUABATS

Billed as the world's first superhero rock band, it's clear that a key component of The Aquabats charm is "fun." Appearing at The Observatory on Oct. 23, the costumed group has created their own reality, with a devoted fanbase following their adventures across media, including most recently the program, "The Aquabats! RadVentures!" that can be viewed via YouTube. Live, The Aquabats use screens, props and lots of audience participation to complement their hyped-up mix of ska, punk and alternative rock. It all adds up to an immersive show where the audience feels as if they've been transported into a Saturday morning cartoon show.

♦ **Aquabats:** Friday, Oct. 23 at The Observatory, 2871 University Ave. 6 p.m. \$46.

OINGO BOINGO

Manic new wave combo, Oingo Boingo Former Members, take the stage at Music Box on Oct. 24.

Art and fashion standout at the San Diego International Film Festival

By Diana Cavagnaro

SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – The Night of the Stars on Oct. 13 at The Conrad in La Jolla celebrated the 25th anniversary of the San Diego International Film Festival.

The guests arrived dressed to impress in stunning evening wear as they came together to honor some of the film industry's finest talents.

This star-studded tribute began with a cocktail reception and an impressive silent auction in the Jai Lounge.



Mira Sovino's fabulous Christian Louboutin boots.

One of the standouts pieces was a limited-edition art print, "Summer Horse," by Ruben H. Chato. Guests had the opportunity to bid on this beautiful artwork, with one lucky bidder taking it home.

Fashion designer Melissa Pellone contributed a custom gown created with silver and white sequins. Originally created as the finale look for the PELLONE

Collection at Paris Fashion Week, this stunning gown was another highlight of the silent auction. One fortunate bidder had the opportunity to take home this elegant creation.

The Jai Lounge also featured a student art exhibition, with the proceeds benefiting the FOCUS on Impact Educational Program, which supports the next generation of filmmakers. Noah Sanchez was this year's student winner.

The evening was hosted by CBS 8 news anchors Carlo Cecchetto and Marcella Lee. Artist Cynthia Berg Polsan created a sculpture, "Illumination," for the award ceremony, symbolizing the power of film to illuminate, connect, and inspire.



Fashion designer Melissa Pellone's silver and white sequin gown for the silent auction.



'Summer Horse' print by Rueben H. Chato.

Comedian Iliza Shesinger stepped into the spotlight to receive the Trailblazer Award. She arrived on the red carpet wearing a striking black lace dress by Fleur du Mal. This is one of today's popular fashion trends.

Actress Mira Sorvino made a fashionable entrance dressed in black, accessorized with fabulous Christian Louboutin Morgan Fleur crystal-embellished, knee-high velvet boots. She was honored with the Virtuoso Award.

The crowd waited in anticipation for Viola Davis to make her appearance on the red carpet. She was there to receive the Gregory Peck Award for Cinematic Excellence,



Iliza Shlesinger received the Trailblazer Award. (All photos by Diana Cavagnaro/ Special for Times of San Diego)

presented by director and producer Cecilia Peck, the late actor's daughter.

Davis is one of the select performers to achieve EGOT status, having won an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony Award. I had the opportunity to ask her about the Davis-Tennon Foundation. She said that she established the foundation to help eradicate childhood hunger.

For more information about the San Diego International Film Festival, visit sdfilmfest.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

♦ Saturday – Kenneth Barlis Fashion Show at the Legacy Hotel at 5 p.m. General admission tickets, \$100.

♦ Nov. 8 – Slow Fashion Day from 2-9 p.m. at The Lane (900 Bayfront Court, Suite 200) with upcycling workshops and fashion show. The event is free.

♦ Nov. 20-22 – Fifth annual San Diego Environmental Film Festival at Digital Gym and UCSD Park and Market, with a sustainable fashion show on Nov. 21.

Diana Cavagnaro is an internationally renowned Couture Milliner based in the Southern California area. Learn more about our hat designer, teacher and podcaster at dianacavagnaro.com.



Simonne Villamichie, director, and Kelly Hammond, DP of 'Adelaide.'



Director Rachael Moriarty and actress Michelle Harrison.



Personal trainer Elie Hawawini wearing Barabasmen.

The Social Diary – Stars shine at San Diego International Film Festival

By Margo Schwab
**SPECIAL FOR TIMES
OF SAN DIEGO**

A lot of star power came to La Jolla for the Night of the Stars during the San Diego International Film Festival held at the Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center on Oct. 13. The evening sparkled with glamour and talent, all for a purpose. SDIFF's fundraising benefits Focus on Impact's dedicated programs including student forums to foster critical thinking, social awareness, and empathy of

real-world issues. The evening highlighted the incredible careers of Viola Davis, Mira Sorvino, and Iliza Shlesinger.

Meanwhile, beloved local celebrities, news anchor Kimberly Hunt and her late husband Charger legend Billy Ray Smith Jr., were honored by the Nice Guys for their boundless support of many San Diego causes. The event held at the Marriott Marquis was a sold-out success on Oct. 10. San Diego Nice Guys provides a 'hands up' for those in need.



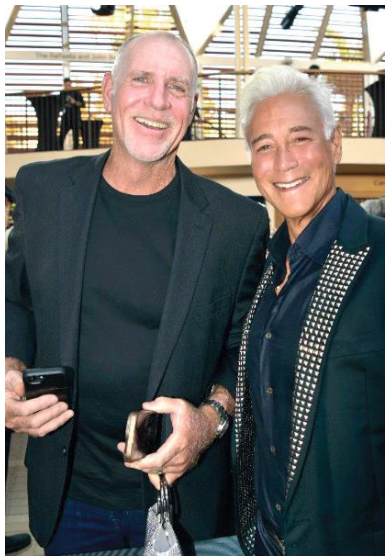
CBS 8 news anchors Marcella Lee and Carlo Cecchetto, presenters on opening night for the San Diego International Film Festival at The Conrad.



Dana Alkasmí in a svelte design.



Sophia Alsadek, Kristi Pieper, Lisa Markham, Margo Schwab, Bethany Dyson, and Mary Minore. (All photos by Margo Schwab/Special for Times of San Diego)



Charlie Dill, and Scott Johnston, stunt actor, in D Squared.



Honoree Kimberly Hunt on right with Vespa Hunt, Kimberly's mother, and Mara Morrison Nice Guys co-chair.



DJ Valentina radiant in strapless gown.



Cecilia Peck Voll (in Chiara Boni gown), producer, director, actress and daughter of actor Gregory Peck, who was raised in La Jolla.



Gianne Brintwood in City Studios gown with Laura Paulson.



Sandra Maas in gown by Aqua and Margo Schwab in Naeem Khan gown.



Margo Schwab in Naeem Khan with SDIFF CEO and artistic director Tonya Mantooth.



Simon Cohen and actress Sophia Levi. Levi has ties to La Jolla.



Brad and Katie Munoa, film, 'People of the West.'



Designer Melissa Pellone and actress/model Amanda Dill in one of Pellone's designs.



Actors and producers Julius Tennon and Viola Davis. Davis is the recipient of the Gregory Peck Award for Excellence.