

LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

September 25, 2026

timesofsandiego.com/lajollavillagenews

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LA JOLLA

2026

LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

SEE INSIDE



The La Jolla coastline with Scripps Pier in the foreground and Blacks Beach and Torrey Pines State Beach in the background. La Jolla's coastline was hit hard during the 2016 El Niño. (Photo by Thomas Melville/Times of San Diego)

COVER STORY

San Diego's iconic coastal locations face triple threat from 'Super El Niño'

California's entire coast has been scanned six times since 2023 by the California Coastline Survey, a state-funded climate initiative based out of the Air-Sea Interaction Laboratory at Scripps. Using an array of sensors mounted on helicopters, planes and trucks, researchers can compare high-resolution models of the entire coast before and after El Niño storms strike. Iconic locations along San Diego's coastline may be permanently altered by this year's historic 'Super' El Niño — a “triple-threat for coastal hazards,” according to Adam Young, a Scripps Institution of Oceanography geomorphologist who studies California's changing coastline. Strong El Niño conditions can raise sea level on the coast by 6 to 13 inches. **PAGES 4-5**

ENVIRONMENT

Coastal Commission, Town Council weigh in on closing La Jolla Cove

Dozens of wildlife advocates and swimmers packed into a Sept. 10 La Jolla Town Council meeting to argue about the Cove. By the time the meeting began, 145 people had packed into a conference room at the La Valencia Hotel. Public comment grew increasingly heated as advocates and swimmers took turns arguing their vision for the Cove. Wildlife advocates argued that harassment and inadequate enforcement require stronger restrictions, while swimmers and other opponents questioned the evidence behind the pup mortality statistic. **PAGE 6**



HOUSING

New mixed-use development could transform Pearl Street

Applicant and architect Taal Safdie of Safdie Rabines Architects gave a presentation to La Jolla Community Planning Association on the mixed-use development on the corner of Pearl Street and Girard Avenue on Sept. 3, detailing the project. During deliberations, LJCPA trustees sang praise for the project's design. Known as The Pearl, the project would demolish a single-story, 2,980-square-foot commercial building at 941 and 945 Pearl St. that previously housed La Jolla dry cleaning staple Ogden's One Hour Cleaners, which closed in 2024. **PAGE 8**



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There's a good chance this year's 'Super' El Niño will break records

By Tessa Balc
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – Summer's end means the precipitation we could see from this year's potentially record-breaking "Super" El Niño is just around the bend.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center released its September El Niño update Thursday, saying there is a greater than 90% chance of a very strong event in the Northern Hemisphere during this fall and winter.

Chandler Price, a meteorologist at the San Diego office of the National Weather Service, said just because an El Niño is evident, it doesn't automatically mean an unusually wet winter. Price says he and other researchers need to see a weather pattern develop before they can provide a forecast.

If the El Niño brings increased rain to the coast, Price said the region could begin to see winter storms as early as late September and they could last through April.

While the amount of rain San Diego will get this year is still up in the air, high tides and large ocean swells will hit the coastline. In preparation, the city of San Diego began its annual installation of sand berms on city beaches and the Mission Bay shoreline Thursday to help protect against flooding. They will take several weeks to install and are expected to be completed by early November.

Another figure NOAA released is a 75% chance this El Niño will exceed the strength of previously recorded events dating back to the 1950s when the agency began collecting data on El Niño weather patterns. Price said that's actually a good chance of breaking the historical record.

There have been six strong El Niños on record. But strength and precipitation don't go hand in hand, something scientists are making clear to the public.

Price pointed out that the strong events with the highest precipitation as well as those events with the lowest precipitation both had similar scores on the index used to classify them.

Looking at the past data, there is an 83% chance that this El Niño, if it comes in among the strongest on record, will result in more precipitation than we would typically see, Price said.

So, should we sound the alarm?

In spite of the 1972 tune "It Never Rains in Southern California," Price says San Diegans should stay vigilant for flooding every winter, not just during an El Niño.

"The good thing about this is that it is encouraging new conversations about how you prepare for this on a personal or structural level," he said.

While widespread flooding is still not a guarantee, Price says he has a lot of confidence in the fact that Southern California will see coastal erosion and coastal flooding.

Daniel Swain, an associate researcher at UC Agriculture and Natural Resources and a research partner at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, agrees.

"There will be significant coastal flooding that will get worse from here... How bad it gets will depend [on] whether we get alignment of the king tides, the peak of a coastally trapped Kelvin wave and a big storm event," Swain said.

"It could happen, and it could get pretty darn bad. That would paralyze a lot of the low-lying infrastructure."

The Kelvin waves Swain mentioned are just extremely large, slow-moving waves that do not break. They're important to note because they bring higher water levels than we would typically see.

These elevated water levels along with high surf, Price said, have already contributed to visible erosion, and could likely be something that will continue through the winter. And as sea levels are expected to rise by a foot in the next couple of decades, the discussions El Niño has brought to coastal communities on how to adapt is something, Price said, that will likely need to continue outside of these events into the future.

"[Elevated surf days have] already done a lot of damage and erosion," Price said. "King tides today might look like what every day looks like in 100 years. So, I think it's a great conversation to be having."

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San Diego's iconic coastal locations face threat from 'Super El Niño'

By Thomas Murphy
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – If predictions are accurate and a "Super El Niño" is on San Diego's event horizon, dozens of iconic locations along San Diego's coastline will have to withstand not one but three threats, those being erosion of beaches, bluff collapse and coastal flooding from huge swells, high tides and rain.

The triple threat could potentially alter the region's coastline — according to Adam Young, a Scripps Institution of Oceanography geomorphologist who studies California's changing coastline.

"Powerful waves can accelerate erosion of beaches, sea cliffs, and bluffs, and cause coastal flooding; and strong El Niño conditions can raise sea level on the California coast by 6 to 13 inches," Young wrote. "Combined, these factors increase coastal erosion and flooding during El Niño events, which can threaten public parks, beaches, critical infrastructure, highways, and homes."

California's entire coast has been scanned six times since 2023 by the California Coastline Survey, a state-funded climate initiative based out of the Air-Sea Interaction Laboratory at Scripps.

Using an array of sensors mounted on helicopters, planes and trucks, researchers compare high-resolution models of the entire coast before and after El Niño storms strike.

The city council looked to protect San Diego's coast from rising sea levels, adopting the Coastal Resilience Master Plan in September 2025. Project sites were identified at La Jolla Shores, Tourmaline Surf Park, Mission Beach, Ocean Beach and Sunset Cliffs.



A huge wave rolls over the seawall protecting the Children's Pool.

Then, the council prioritized the resilience projects at Tourmaline, Ocean Beach, and Sunset Cliffs — which are now in the initial engineering design phase, according to city spokesman Peter Kelly. La Jolla Shores and Mission Beach have not progressed beyond conceptual designs due to funding constraints.

In the meantime, the city is installing sand berms along the shoreline of Mission Bay and other beaches. These sand walls absorb the power of heavy surf, reducing the risk of erosion and coastal damage.

San Diego City College professor of physical science Lisa Chaddock stressed the need for preparation, "I am sure that some people are not taking this as seriously as they should."

"Any homes on the cliffs are going to be in danger this year," Chaddock wrote. "Some have put riprap below to take the blow of the waves, but the communities from Oceanside to Del Mar may see a lot of bluff damage."

Cliff collapse isn't the only danger posed by heavy rainfall and rising sea levels; El Niño could also worsen South Bay's sewage crisis by spreading pollution further north, Chaddock explained.

Here are the beaches, parts of the bay-front and other waterways that are at risk.

LA JOLLA

La Jolla Shores experienced some of the greatest erosion in the county during the 2015-2016 El Niño. Black's Beach was hit hard. After that winter, researchers observed more than 260 feet of shoreline retreat and three feet of elevation loss as powerful waves stripped away the sand.

Erosion may endanger the iconic Mushroom House, an unusual concrete house at the southern base of Blacks Beach that became a graffiti battleground earlier this year. Built in 1968, the house has weathered decades of coastal storms and erosion. GDC Construction, a La Jolla-based company charged with maintaining the structure, did not respond to Times of San Diego's inquiry regarding preparations for potentially supercharged winter storms.

North of the Mushroom House, Torrey Pines State Beach experienced significant erosion during the 2015-2016 El Niño.



Torrey Pines State Beach experienced significant erosion during the 2015-2016 El Niño. (Photos by Thomas Melville/Times of San Diego)

Researchers found the low-level erosion threatened the shoulder of North Torrey Pines Road — where people park to visit the stoney beach.

"This area has a great wetland, but the road is not on the most stable ground," Professor Chaddock explained. This road also runs along steep coastal cliffs, making significant bluff retreat a potential threat to northbound traffic and public access to the beloved beach.

La Jolla Shores, similarly to Blacks Beach during the 2015-2016 El Niño, Young's research team reported at least 260 feet of beach retreat and a minimum of 3 feet of sand height shaved away by powerful waves. The wide, narrow beach buffer that normally separates the Pacific from La Jolla's parks and businesses may become even narrower this winter.

Kellogg Park sits right behind the eroding sand buffer. The park usually floods when sea levels rise by 2.5 feet, according to the city, especially during storm conditions at high tide. Due to this, the city has identified La Jolla Shores for the coastal resilience project; however, initial engineering has not begun due to funding constraints, according to city spokesman Peter Kelly.

Moving south, La Jolla's shoreline shifts from soft, sandy beaches to rough, rocky bluffs. Despite their solid appearance, the sandstone cliffs face significant erosion risks. That, combined with high tides, forced organizers of the 110th La Jolla Cove Swim to cancel the event on Sept. 9.

The rocky contrast is especially clear around Bird Rock, where cliffside houses sit on low bluffs above the ocean.

"Bird Rock is perched precariously, including Calumet Park," Professor

Continued on Page 5

ICONIC COASTAL LOCATIONS
 Continued from Page 4

Chaddock added. “These cliffside dwellings are on sandstone and could have a rough time this year.”

The crumbling cliffs forced the city to consider an emergency development plan for a seawall reinforcement near Calumet Avenue in 2025, which awaits final approval.

A bluff repair plan for the avenue’s 5300 block was approved by a hearing officer in August, according to the La Jolla Light. Nearby individual property owners are pursuing emergency permits from the California Coastal Commission, according to Pacific Beach Builder.

Most coastal erosion damage is permanent, but the Windansea Surf Shack has endured storms since 1947. The local surfing community rebuilt the handmade hut after El Niño storms destroyed it in 2003 and 2015.

PACIFIC BEACH

Tourmaline Surf Park is especially vulnerable to erosion, and the reason is rooted in its geology.

The coastal bluffs at Tourmaline are composed of four different types of rock

and sediment that are weakly packed together, making the cliffs more susceptible to erosion from heavy rainfall and stormwater runoff.

As a prioritized coastal resilience site, the city is working to shore up Tourmaline before major storms make landfall. Crews will use cobblestone and sand to bury a layer of large rocks, forming a solid base. Then, native plants will cover the artificial sand dune, which will help support local wildlife.

The 175-foot-long and 50-feet wide natural barrier will protect the nearby parking lot, access ramp, and bathroom from coastal flooding. This project is 15% complete as of September, according to city spokesman Peter Kelly.

Further south, Crystal Pier offers a more visible example of what El Niño can do.

Winter waves have hammered the pier since 1927. During the 1982–1983 El Niño, 15-foot waves destroyed roughly 150 feet of decking when four storms struck in just one week, according to an archival report from Jan. 27, 1983.

The city spent \$2.06 million on emergency repairs after Crystal Pier suffered more storm damage in 2023. The project closed the popular attraction for 18 months.

“While the pier is open and structurally sound, work will continue to strengthen its resilience against rising tides and increasingly intense storms,” City Council President Joe LaCava wrote in a press release on July 3, 2023.

MISSION BEACH

Mission Beach is one of San Diego’s most developed stretches of coastline, with homes, businesses and Belmont Park packed against the oceanfront boardwalk. With little room left between.

An aging seawall lines the walkway and offers some protection from coastal erosion and flooding, but it may be overpowered by surging tides this winter. The concrete wall guarding the boardwalk seems short, but is buried 20 feet into the sand, according to a 2021 California Coastal Commission report.

In 2017, the Mission Beach Bulkhead Seawall Replacement at Belmont Park replaced a 1,617-foot-long section, restored original 1920s dimensions, textures, and colors, and added ADA compliant beach access, ramps, and amenities.

The city is considering a plan to restore the seawall, potentially raising the wall by up to 12 inches to protect from rising

sea levels. A new 375-foot seawall would be constructed on the northern end of the current wall, from Thomas Avenue to Grand Avenue in PB.

Mission Beach is among the sites included in the city’s Coastal Resilience Master Plan, but the proposed project – a five-foot-tall artificial sand dune along the seawall’s west side – has not broken ground due to funding constraints, according to city spokesman Peter Kelly.

OCEAN BEACH

Dog Beach, the first of its kind in the United States, lost 360 feet during the 2015–2016 El Niño, as reported by Young’s research team. This was the greatest land change they measured in all of Southern California. Erosion on San Diego beaches ranged from 6.5 feet to 10 feet that winter, compared to less than six feet in a typical season, as reported by Times of San Diego.

With sea levels rising 11 inches above predicted heights, surging waves stripped away sand from the popular pet beach at the San Diego River outlet. This significantly shrank the buffer between the beachfront and raging sea, leading to major coastal flooding in January 2016.



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Town Council and Coastal Commission weigh in on closing Cove

By Thomas Murphy
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – Debate over public access at La Jolla Cove and the mistreatment of its resident sea lions boiled over when dozens of wildlife advocates and swimmers packed into a Sept. 10 La Jolla Town Council meeting to argue their differing visions for the Cove.

By the time the meeting began, 145 people had packed into a conference room at the La Valencia Hotel, far exceeding the 42 chairs that had been put out. Staff brought in more chairs, but many were still left standing.

The pro-closure crowd included Barrett Pall, a social media personality turned wildlife advocate who launched a pro-closure Change.org campaign in August. Pall called upon his supporters to attend the meeting and make their views known.

Pall's petition surpassed 48,000 signatures before the meeting began.

"I want to thank you all for being here tonight," town council president Mary

Soriano said, after a 10-minute delay, addressing the crowded conference room with an echoing karaoke microphone and speaker.

Soriano laid out the ground rules: "Maintain respect for each other and orderly conduct." She warned that San Diego police would escort out anyone who violated this rule.

As the crowd inside the hotel meeting room quieted down, chatter online grew contentious.

Within seconds of joining, participants were commenting "Close the CoveLOSE!" and "Protect our wildlife!"

Others pushed back, arguing advocates were going too far.

One commenter compared closing the Cove to "shutting down the freeway because there are drunk drivers," a reference to the viral video of 18-year-old La Jolla resident Tyler Muehl kicking a sea lion at Point La Jolla on July 22. The July incident turned ongoing wildlife harassment into a hot-button issue. Mention NOAA and guilty plea. Another commenter



Sea lions roughhouse at La Jolla Cove.
(Photo by Thomas Murphy/Times of San Diego)

wondered whether advocates would close Crystal Pier to protect pigeons.

Some suggested that the sea lions could swim away from visitors. Advocates pointed out that, unlike pigeons, sea lions cannot simply fly away from human harassment. They argued that leaving the Cove isn't an option for the sea lions because it is their home.

The meeting quickly devolved from the topic at hand.

Opponents questioned Pall's financial ties to Change.org, where he serves as an ambassador. Supporters defended him, writing, "Change.org approached and offered to sponsor Barrett's grassroots activism. Not the other way around. Activists don't need to work for free and alone to be right in their values."

Change.org says ambassadors earn \$0.30 to \$0.50 per signature, paid monthly as their petitions grow. Pall's petition is estimated to earn \$22,400 over its lifetime after passing 56,000 signatures on Sept. 13, though it continues to grow. Ambassadors also receive advanced payment based on audience size — Pall claims to reach over 2.3 million people across his social media platforms.

Pall declined to comment on the opposition's payment concerns to Times of San Diego.

(Editor's Note: Following publication of this story on timesofsandiego.com, Pall posted a series of posts on social media stating he does not get paid per signature.)

Those opposed to closing the Cove also challenged the statistics advocates used to

support the proposal, most notably the Seal Society's claim that 40% of sea lion pups have died this year at the La Jolla rookery.

Some commenters claimed the wildlife advocacy group has since retracted the pup mortality figure.

This is not the case, according to Robyn Davidoff, chair of Seal Society. Without official statistics from the agencies responsible for managing the Cove, Davidoff argued the Seal Society's citizen science is the best measure available.

But the figure has faced public scrutiny. On the morning of the town council meeting, Scripps Institution of Oceanography graduate Zach Cabading argued that people should "follow sea lion science, not social media" in an op-ed by the website lajolla.ca. Cabading claims preliminary counts do not support a 40% mortality rate or establish that human harassment caused their deaths.

"I only just heard about this 'rumor' that someone said that the Sierra Club Seal Society is retracting their statement...This is not true," Davidoff told Times of San Diego the day after the town hall.

"[Cabading] believes all research must be peer-reviewed and published. That just isn't possible and would take years and funding," Davidoff wrote.

"No entity is studying this sea lion population even though we have reached out to Scripps and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for years," Davidoff wrote. "Our data is 'Citizen Science' backed by photos to document the pup deaths. We then discussed that pup mortality is much higher in the Cove than in the closed area around the corner at Point La Jolla."

"The key point isn't the exact mortality numbers but the fact that there is uncontrolled harassment of sea lions (pups and adults) in the La Jolla Cove daily," Davidoff wrote.

The dispute over the numbers reflected a larger divide throughout the town council meeting: whether to keep people out of the Cove or force the city to better enforce protections agreed to in June.

Earlier in the day on Sept. 10, the issue came before the California Coastal Commission. San Diego commissioner Matt O'Malley reiterated his support for a partial closure.

Public Notice: University of California, San Diego



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➤ The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) issued an Emergency Permit to the University of California, San Diego valid September 11, 2026, through November 10, 2026.

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- Expired chemicals will be tested to confirm the treatment is successful.

For more information

Contact the Project Manager to review the Administrative Record for this project at the contact information below. The physical Administrative Record is available for review by appointment only at the DTSC Sacramento Regional Office.

Access printed copies at:

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Call (916) 255-3545 to schedule an appointment

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About us: DTSC protects California's people, communities, and environment from toxic substances, to enhance economic vitality by restoring contaminated land, and to compel manufacturers to make safer consumer products.



LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

Congratulations to all the 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 great food, drink, 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

restaurants, entertainment 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 restaurants and office.

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, a Mexican dinner, a craft brewery or just a simple coffee with friends.

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 98 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.*

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- Brockton Villa
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- Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop
- Brockton Villa
- The Cottage

BEST BRUNCH

- Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop
- Brockton Villa
- The Cottage

BEST BURGER

- Queenstown Village
- Jeffs' Beach Burger
- Nine-Ten

BEST BURRITO

- Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop
- The Taco Stand
- Don Carlos

BEST CAFE

- Cala La Jolla Café
- Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop
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- Girard Gourmet

BEST CHEF

- Kamal Kamal @ Zoya
- Sebastian Becerra @ Pepino
- Elijah Arizmendi @ LUCIEN

BEST CHINESE

- Mandarin House
- Chin's Szechwan
- Best Chocolate

MICHELE COULON DESSERTIER

- Teuscher Chocolates Of Switzerland
- Chocolate Haus

BEST COFFEE SHOP

- Cala La Jolla Café
- Bird Rock Coffee Roasters
- Better Buzz Coffee

BEST COFFEE STAND/KIOSK

- Better Buzz Coffee
- Pinpoint Cafe
- Rancho Roasters

BEST COLD BREW

- Bird Rock Coffee Roasters
- Better Buzz Coffee
- Java Earth Coffee

BEST COMFORT FOOD

- Rock N' Roost Rotisserie
- The Cottage
- Promiscuous Fork

BEST CREPES

- Richard Walker
- Elixir Espresso Bar
- Scoops

BEST CURRY

- Taste Of The Himalayas
- Clay Oven Indian Cuisine
- Pamir Kabob

BEST DELI

- Girard Gourmet
- Small Goods Cheese Shop & Cafe
- Mimi's Panini Italian Deli

BEST DESSERTS

- Michele Coulon Dessertier
- LUCIEN
- Girard Gourmet

BEST DINNER

- Zoya
- LUCIEN
- George's At The Cove

BEST ESPRESSO

- Better Buzz
- The Cottage
- Elixir Espresso Bar

BEST FAMILY RESTAURANT

- Zoya
- Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop
- Brockton Villa

BEST FARM TO TABLE

- George's At The Cove
- Nine-Ten
- LUCIEN

BEST FAST FOOD (MEXICAN)

- The Taco Stand
- Don Carlos
- Rigobertos

BEST FISH & CHIPS

- Hennessy's
- Cody's

BEST FISH TACO

- El Pescador
- Don Bravo
- Puesto

BEST FRENCH

- Bistro Du Marche
- Le Coq
- The French Gourmet

BEST FRENCH TOAST

- Beaumont's
- Brockton Villa
- The Cottage

BEST GELATO

- Bobboi
- Cafe Milano

BEST GRAB & GO MEALS

- Rock N' Roost Rotisserie
- Small Goods Cheese Shop & Cafe
- Valley Farm Market

BEST GREEK

- Zoya
- Spiro's Mediterranean Cuisine
- Olive & Basil

BEST GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICH

- Small Goods Cheese Shop & Cafe
- Cheese Shop
- Deli-Icious

BEST HAPPY HOUR

- Beaumont's
- Eddie V's
- Roppongi Restaurant & Lounge

BEST HAWAIIAN/POLYNESIAN

- Duke's

BEST HEALTHY DINING

- Parakeet Cafe
- Trilogy Sanctuary
- Fresheria

BEST ICE CREAM

- Scoops
- Killer Whale Creamery
- Baskin Robbins

BEST INDIAN

- Taste Of The Himalayas

BEST ITALIAN

- Piatti
- La Dolce Vita Ristorante
- Piazza 1909

BEST JUICE BAR

- Parakeet Juicery
- Fresheria
- Juice Caboose

BEST KOMBUCHA

- Trilogy Sanctuary
- Parakeet Cafe

BEST LATE NIGHT EATERY

- The Spot
- The Living Room

BEST LATTE

- Bird Rock Coffee Roasters
- The Cottage
- Java Earth Coffee

BEST LIVE MUSIC

- Beaumont's

BEST LOBSTER

- The Marine Room
- Lobster West

BEST LUNCH

- Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop
- George's At The Cove
- The Cottage

BEST MARGARITA

- Puesto
- Verdes El Ranchero
- Jose's Courtroom

BEST MARTINI

- Manhattan
- Eddie V's
- Piatti

BEST MEDITERRANEAN

- Zoya
- Spiro's Mediterranean Cuisine
- Olive & Basil

BEST MEXICAN

- Puesto
- Verdes El Ranchero
- Jose's Courtroom

BEST NEW BAR/TAVERN

- LUCIEN
- Best New Restaurant
- Zoya

ROCK N' ROOST ROTISSERIE

- LUCIEN

BEST OCEAN VIEW

- George's At The Cove
- Brockton Villa
- The Marine Room

BEST OMELETTE

- The Cottage
- Harry's Coffee Shop
- Richard Walker

BEST ORGANIC

- Parakeet Cafe
- Trilogy Sanctuary

BEST OVERALL RESTAURANT

- Zoya
- Beaumont's
- LUCIEN

BEST OVERALL SERVICE

- Beaumont's
- LUCIEN
- George's At The Cove

BEST OYSTERS

- El Pescador
- Beeside Balcony

BEST PANCAKES

- Richard Walker

- Harry's Coffee Shop
- The Cottage

BEST PASTA DISH

- Catania
- Marisi
- Osteria Romantica

BEST PASTRY

- Wayfarer Bread & Pastry
- Sugar & Scribe
- Girard Gourmet

BEST PATIO DINING

- Brockton Villa
- George's At The Cove
- Beaumont's

BEST PET FRIENDLY RESTAURANT

- Beaumont's
- Barbarella
- Piatti

BEST PIZZA

- Isola Pizza Bar
- Pizza On Pearl
- American Pizza Manufacturing

BEST PIZZA (WOODFIRED)

- Isola Pizza Bar
- Wheat & Water
- Sammy's Woodfired Pizza

BEST PLACE FOR A BIRTHDAY PARTY

- LUCIEN
- Barbarella

BEST PLACE TO GO ON A BUDGET

- Taco Stand
- Don Carlos

BEST PLACE TO PEOPLE WATCH

- Jose's Courtroom
- The Cottage
- Nine-Ten

BEST ROMANTIC

- LUCIEN
- Brockton Villa
- George's At The Cove

BEST ROOF TOP DINING

- George's At The Cove
- Birdseye Rooftop Restaurant & Bar
- LUCIEN

BEST SALAD

- Zoya
- Mary's Gourmet Salads
- Sammy's Woodfired Pizza

BEST SANDWICH

- Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop
- Small Goods Cheese Shop & Cafe
- The Cottage

BEST SEAFOOD

- El Pescador Fish Market
- LUCIEN
- The Marine Room

BEST SOUP

- Zoya
- Lobster West
- Verdes El Ranchero

BEST SPECIALTY DRINK

- Pardisaea
- Nine-Ten
- LUCIEN

BEST SPORTS BAR

- Nautilus Tavern
- The Lot
- Public House La Jolla

BEST STEAK

- Eddie V's
- LUCIEN
- Manhattan

BEST SURF AND TURF

- Eddie V's
- The Marine Room

BEST SUSHI

- Himitsu
- Sushi Nekosan
- TAKARAMONO SUSHI

BEST TACOS

- Puesto
- Taco Stand
- Don Bravos

BEST TAKE-OUT

- Rock N' Roost Rotisserie
- Small Goods Cheese Shop & Cafe
- Chin's Szechwan

BEST THAI

- Aroi Thai
- Turmeric Thai Garden
- King Of Thai

BEST VEGAN

- Trilogy Sanctuary
- Fresheria

BEST VEGETARIAN

- Trilogy Sanctuary
- Parakeet Cafe
- Fresharia

BEST WINE BAR

- Bird Rock Fine Wine
- LJ Crafted Wines
- We Olive

BEST WINE SELECTION (RESTAURANT)

- Nine-Ten
- Eddie V's
- LUCIEN

BEST WINE SHOP

- Bird Rock Fine Wine
- We Olive

BEST WINGS

- Nautilus Tavern
- Hennessy's
- Public House La Jolla

BEST WRAPS

- Marketplace Grille
- Fresheria

BEST YOGURT

- Froglanders Crepes & Yogurt
- Scoops



GOLD WINNER LISTINGS: BEST RESTAURANTS

Best Acai Blue Whale

Experience the wonders of the ocean while indulging in delicious, locally sourced brunch options. Enjoy the finest breakfast, lunch, and coffee in California. Step inside this unique coastal 'house' located near picturesque La Jolla Cove, and immerse yourself in the relaxed ambiance as you savor every bite. Their team is dedicated to creating delightful culinary experiences that will leave you craving more.

834 Kline St, La Jolla
858-352-6580 | bluewhalesd.com

Best Ahi Poke Duke's La Jolla

Duke's reputation precedes it, with iconic Hawaii-themed locations and expansive beachfront venues that pay homage to sun, surf, and the legendary Duke Kahanamoku, revered as the pioneer of modern surfing. Yet, the allure of Hawaii pales in comparison to the magnetic pull of Duke's La Jolla. Since its opening, patrons have flocked to indulge in the delectable Hawaiian-inspired cuisine and the laid-back, inclusive atmosphere reminiscent of its namesake.

1262 Prospect St, La Jolla

858-454-5888 | dukeslajolla.com.com

Best American The Cottage

The Cottage is a quintessential La Jolla destination beloved by locals, tourists, the young, the old, regulars and newcomers alike for the past 30 years. Set in the historic "Columbine Cottage," built in the early 1900's, serves exceptional breakfast and lunch on the sun-touched patio. The gourmet omelets, stuffed French toast, sandwiches, salads and trademark house-made granola are memorable and well worth the wait.

7720 Fay Ave, La Jolla
858-454 8409 | cottagelajolla.com

Best Appetizer Zoya

Discover delicious Mediterranean flavors at this new, popular La Jolla favorite. Whether you're feeling made-from-scratch seafood, hand-crafted margarita pizza or a traditional Middle Eastern dish, Zoya offers it all with wholesome ingredients, organic vegetables and no seed oils! Celebrate by hosting special events at Zoya and enjoy their curated selection of wines and local beers.

1000 Prospect St, La Jolla
858-203-7049 | zoyalajolla.com

Best Atmosphere George's at the Cove

Make every day a special occasion – one that begins with a bounty of locally grown and harvested products and ends with inventive preparations that surprise and delight you. George's is known for its ocean-view dining room—contemporary yet comfortable, with an intimate setting where conversation comes easy. Let their knowledgeable staff guide you through the many exciting choices.

1250 Prospect St, La Jolla
858-454 4244 | georgesatthecove.com

Best Bagel PopUp Bagels

PopUp Bagels is a popular East Coast-based franchise that operates only in certain states, and La Jolla is lucky enough to have its own location. Known for their signature artisanal cream cheese spreads and flavored butters, PopUp Bagels is sure to satisfy your chewy, New York-style bagel cravings. They offer weekly specials and schmear flavors, and you can order your freshly baked bagel online to save time.

637 Pearl St, La Jolla
855-747-6347 | popupbagels.com

Best Bakery Wayfarer Bread & Pastry

Wayfarer Bread & Pastry feels like a true neighborhood treasure. Owned by baker Crystal White, this cozy spot fills La Jolla mornings with the smell of fresh, naturally fermented breads made in small batches with care. Locals line up early for loaves, croissants, and brioche, while afternoons bring sandwiches layered on their signature bread. Wayfarer's charm lies in its simplicity — delicious, honest baking that's become part of daily life in the village.

5525 La Jolla Blvd, La Jolla
wayfarerbread.com

Best Bar Beaumont's Neighborhood Eatery

With everyday happy hours, a weekly Wednesday "Girl Dinner" menu, weekend bottomless mimosas or live local music, Beaumont's knows how to throw a party. Come feel the electric vibes and turn a night out into a full experience. With over two de-

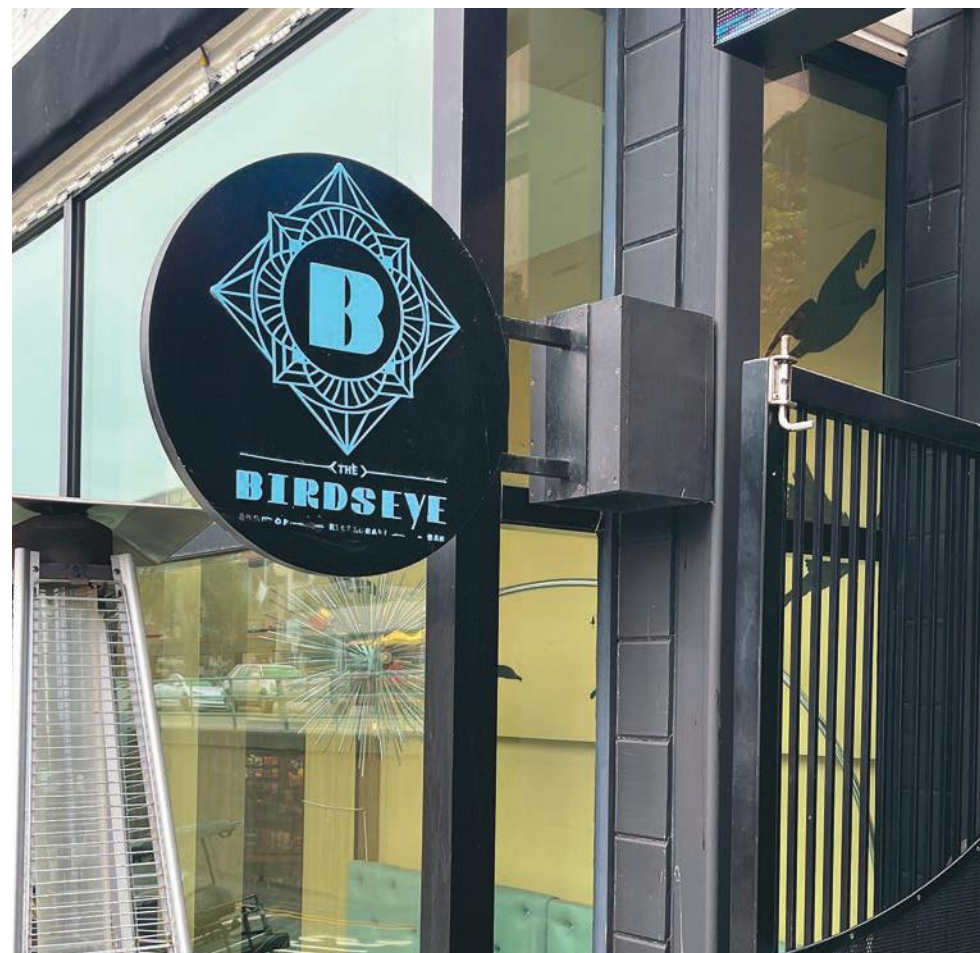


*Thank You La Jolla for your support the last **49** Years! We are honored to have been voted for the following in 2026:*



Best Chinese

www.MadarinHouseLJ.com



cadés in business, Beaumont’s remains Bird Rock’s go-to for food and fun.

5662 La Jolla Blvd.
858-459-0474 | beaumontseatery.com

Best Beer Selection
Public House La Jolla

The Public House specializes in a delicious variety of burgers, wine, and limited-release beer. Come hang out and enjoy the rotating taps of Belgian and German beers, local San Diego beers, and many hard-to-find craft beers and microbrews from all around the world. Relax in the backyard, outdoors, or make yourself at home inside.

830 Kline St, La Jolla
858-551-9210 | the-publichouse.com

Best Bloody Mary
Beaumont’s

(See listing under Best Bar)

Best Breakfast
Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop

Pepino’s award-winning chef and owner, Sebastian Becerra, is a native La Jolla native with Peruvian origins. Although he has worked around the world, he finds his passion in seasonal and local ingredients. At Pepino, breakfast is served all day, with bowls, burritos, eggs and sandwiches. This cozy spot has grown in popularity thanks to its quality coffee and freshly baked goods that are sure to make a wonderful start to your day.

7556 Fay Ave Ste F, La Jolla
619-609-7065 | pepinosd.com

Best Brunch
Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop

(See listing under Best Breakfast)

Best Burger
Queenstown Village

Queenstown Village and its New Zealand–inspired cuisine charms guests who love inventive plates, bold flavors, and creative cocktails. With hearty burger favorites, lively energy, and warm service, Queenstown has quickly become a go-to destination in the heart of La Jolla.

1044 Wall St, La Jolla
858-352-6595 | q-town.com

Best Burrito
Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop

(See listing under Best Breakfast)

Best Cafe
Cala La Jolla Café

Located in the historic Arcade building in The Village, Cala Café offers a wide selection of nourishing meals, from fresh paninis to crisp salads and protein-packed wraps. Pair that with a refreshing cold brew or a specialty latte, and you will feel right at home in this

cozy neighborhood cafe.

7910 Girard Ave, La Jolla
858 333-8610 | calalajolla.com

Best Cantina
Verdes El Ranchero

After 80 years in business, this locally owned Sonoran-style Mexican restaurant continues to bring beloved traditional meals to its La Jollans. If you’re in the mood for chile rellenos, carnitas, tamales, and hearty soups, or you want to sip on a curated selection of Mexican beers and tequilas, Verdes El Ranchero has both the food and the atmosphere to greet you. Surrounded by hand-painted murals and historical artwork, this restaurant allows generations to connect and gather over warm meals made with love.

7404 La Jolla Blvd, La Jolla
858 459-5877 | verdeselranchero.com

Best Catering
Smallgoods Cheese Shop & Cafe

Smallgoods American Cheeses & Provisions started in the San Diego Farmer’s Markets in 2015. They opened their brick-and-mortar in La Jolla in 2020. Here, they proudly bring their version of a gourmet deli, cafe and caterer to life with award-winning sandwiches, charcuterie platters, local finds and neighborhood charm.

7524 La Jolla Blvd, La Jolla
858-886-7217 | smallgoodsusa.com

Best Chef
Kamal Kamal @ Zoya

Kamal Kamal is as popular on Instagram as his cooking is at Zoya. As an Iraqi-American chef and a world traveler, Kamal knows how to pair different flavors to bring out the best of Mediterranean food. Featured on local news channels, Kamal emphasizes his goal of bringing community together, especially through his fan-favorite breakfast menu and family-platter options.

1000 Prospect St, La Jolla, CA 92037
858 203-7049 | zoyalajolla.com

Best Chinese
Mandarin House La Jolla

Since 1977, Mandarin House has served the best versions of the classic Chinese dishes you know and love in a fun, retro-yet-modern environment. Their classically trained chefs still use traditional techniques, paired with our original recipes, to deliver a dining experience unlike anywhere else in the world. There may be thousands of other Chinese restaurants worldwide, but there’s only one Mandarin House La Jolla.

6765 La Jolla Blvd, La Jolla
858-454-2007 | mandarinhouselj.com

Best Chocolate
Michele Coulon Dessertier

Step inside Michele Coulon Dessertier and

you’ll find desserts that feel more like works of art than simple sweets. Using the best Belgian chocolate, real butter, and fresh organic produce, every bite is rich, balanced, and unforgettable. From elegant wedding cakes to jewel-like pastries and savory creations, their philosophy is simple: food should be as beautiful as it is delicious. A true La Jolla gem for those who savor indulgence done right.

7556 Fay Ave, La Jolla
858-456-5098 | dessertier.com

Best Coffee Shop
Cala La Jolla Café

(See listing under Best Cafe)



THE COTTAGE

LA JOLLA ENCINITAS DEL MAR

★

BEST OMELETTE

Gold

★

BEST ESPRESSO

Silver

★

BEST PANCAKES

Bronze

★

BEST LUNCH

Bronze

★

BEST AMERICAN

Gold

★

BEST PLACE TO PEOPLE WATCH

Silver

★

BEST FRENCH TOAST

Bronze

★

BEST SANDWICH

Bronze

★

BEST COMFORT FOOD

Silver

★

BEST BREAKFAST

Bronze

★

BEST BRUNCH

Bronze

7702 Fay Ave. La Jolla, CA 92037 p: (858) 454-8409

124 El Camino Real Encinitas, 92024 p: (760) 854-4212

1555 Camino Del Mar, Ste. 102, Del Mar CA 92104 p: (858) 290-0200

thecottagerestaurants.com

in San Diego. BRCCR has won multiple national and international awards for quality, taste, roasting and socially responsible practices. Bird Rock Coffee Roaster's staff sources the best coffees in the world directly from origin. They engage in direct trade with farmers and are proud to serve the best green coffee, prepared with the utmost respect for sources.

5627 La Jolla Blvd, La Jolla
858-551-1707 | birdrockcoffeeroasters.com

Best Comfort Food
Rock N' Roost Rotisserie

With its 100% natural, antibiotic-free, hormone-free and cage-free chicken, Rock N' Roost lets you indulge in savory, juicy and flavorful roasted chicken guilt-free. The Mediterranean spices and olive oil roast deliver the crisp, aromatic flavors you crave ... all there's left to do is pick it up!

5662 La Jolla Blvd, La Jolla
619 810-2582 | rocknroost.com

Best Crepes
Richard Walker's
Pancake House

Since 1948, the Walker family name has become synonymous with quality family dining. The only thing better than their incredible made-from-scratch, daily breakfast creations is the ambiance of their restaurants and the friendly staff who serve you 365 days a year.

9090 Prospect St, La Jolla
858-459-8800 | richardwalkers.com

Best Curry
Taste of Himalayas

Taste of Himalayas offers a vibrant dining experience with its blend of Indian and Himalayan cuisine—a casual yet lively atmosphere offering flavorful curries and traditional Himalayan dishes. Patrons can embark on a flavorful journey and indulge in a diverse range of culinary delights.

8008 Girard Ave, #170, La Jolla
858-551-9999 | tasteofthehimalayasca.com

Best Deli
Girard Gourmet

For more than 39 years, Girard Gourmet has been a La Jolla staple, celebrated for its quality, sustainability, and community spirit. From chocolate croissants and raspberry rugelach to custom cookies and specialty desserts, their creations delight. Using organic ingredients and European technique, Girard Gourmet exemplifies their commitment to healthy, honest food for happy, satisfied customers.

7837 Girard Ave, La Jolla
858-454-3321 | girardgourmet.com

Best Desserts
Michele Coulon Dessertier

(See listing under Best Chocolate)

Best Dinner
Zoya

(See listing under Best Appetizer)

Best Espresso
Better Buzz

(See listing under Best Coffee Stand/Kiosk)

Best Family Restaurant
Zoya

(See listing under Best Appetizer)

Best Farm To Table
George's At The Cove

(See listing under Best Atmosphere)

Best Fast Food (Mexican)
The Taco Stand

When's the last time you had a custom-made taco? Usually, those things are one-and-done, with a particular size fitting all. Not here – here, you can pretty much make your own stuff, with (almost) all the guacamole you can stand.

621 Pearl St, La Jolla
858-551-6666 | letstaco.com

Best Fish & Chips
Hennessey's Tavern

For 50 years, Hennessey's has served liters of cold pints, crispy fish & chips and a whole lot of Irish hospitality. Whether you're there for breakfast classics, a filling lunch, or to celebrate Oktoberfest with a beer, Hennessey's has what you need. Find your favorites in this lively neighborhood pub.

7811 Herschel Ave.
858-551-8772 | hennesseystavern.com

Best Fish Taco
El Pescador

A La Jolla staple for more than 50 years, El Pescador Fish Market is beloved for its fresh, flavorful seafood served in a laid-back, beach-casual setting. Famous for fish sandwiches like swordfish and calamari, it also lets guests hand-pick fish to be char-grilled or sautéed, served with salad and rice. With friendly service, fair prices, and unmatched quality, El Pescador remains a true local gem for seafood lovers from all over San Diego.

634 Pearl St, La Jolla
858-456-2526 | elpescadorfishmarket.com

Best French
Bistro Du Marche

Since 2015, Bistro du Marché by Tapenade has been a multi-award-winning French classic bistro named in honor of La Jolla's



Verdes el Ranchero

THANKS

-for voting us-



GOLD
BEST
CANTINA



SILVER
BEST
MEXICAN



SILVER
BEST
MARGARITA



BRONZE
BEST
SOUP



VERDES
EL RANCHERO



80
YEARS

858-459-5877 | 7404 La Jolla Blvd. | La Jolla, CA 92037 | www.VerdesElRanchero.com

PIATTI

THANK YOU LA JOLLA!
WINNER



GOLD | Best Italian
BRONZE | Best Martini
BRONZE | Best Pet Friendly Restaurant



OPEN DAILY
SUN - THURS: 11AM - 9PM
FRI & SAT: 11AM - 9:30PM

2182 AVENIDA DE LA PLAYA, LA JOLLA, CA 92037 | 858.454.1589
PIATTI.COM | @PIATTILAJOLLA

closed-by Sunday Open Air Market. The cuisine blends selected fresh, local Californian ingredients with traditional French techniques and flavors. The comfortable, relaxed atmosphere of the dining room, bar and patio, combined with a lively ambiance, creates an elegant setting reminiscent of turn-of-the-century Parisian bistros.

7437 Girard Ave, La Jolla
858-551-7500 | bistrodumarche.net

Best French Toast

Beaumont's

(See listing under Best Bar)

Best Gelato

Bobboi Gelato

At Bobboi Gelato, every scoop feels like a little adventure. One day you're savoring a timeless pistachio or velvety stracciatella, the next you're discovering Matchatella—matcha swirled with chocolate shards—or Rose-honey, kissed with Lebanese rosewater and organic honey. Made daily from fresh, seasonal ingredients, the flavors are as vibrant and unexpected as La Jolla.

8008 Girard Ave, La Jolla
858-255-8693 | bobboi.com/la-jolla

Best Grab & Go Meals

Rock N' Roost Rotisserie

(See listing under Best Comfort Food)

Best Greek

Zoya

(See listing under Best Appetizer)

Best Grilled Cheese Sandwich

Smallgoods Cheese

Shop & Cafe

(See listing under Best Catering)

Best Happy Hour

Beaumont's

(See listing under Best Bar)

Best Hawaiian/Polynesian

Duke's

(See listing under Best Ahi Poke)

Best Healthy Dining

Parakeet Café

At Parakeet Café, authenticity means food that's as nourishing as it is delicious. Known for soups made with the highest quality ingredients from local organic farms, Parakeet caters to every lifestyle—vegan, vegetarian, paleo, keto, gluten-free, or simply health-conscious. Their commitment to sustainability ensures every bowl supports both the planet and the palate, making Parakeet a favorite for those who want real food, real flavor, and wholesome comfort. Perfect for fall weather.

927 Silverado St, La Jolla
858-412-5627 | parakeetcafe.com

Best Ice Cream

Scoops

Because one wasn't enough, Scoops opened two locations in La Jolla to satisfy all the local sweet tooths. On their way to a hot beach day, customers can stop to savor handcrafted ice cream, with popular flavors including brown sugar cookie dough chunk, black cherry chip, honeycomb and Sicilian pistachio. There's something for everyone with additional vegan options featuring cashew and coconut milk.

2179 Avenida De La Playa, La Jolla
858-246-6321 | scoopsajolla.com

Best Indian

Taste Of The Himalayas

Located in the heart of La Jolla Village, Taste of the Himalayas offers authentic Nepalese cuisine and stellar vegetarian dishes for dine in, carryout or catering. Standout dishes include classics like chicken tikka masala, lamb korma, palak paneer and chana masala, along with handmade momos (soft meat or veggie dumplings)

8008 Girard Ave, La Jolla
858-551-9999 | tasteofthehimalayasajolla.com

Best Italian

Piatti

Established in 1987, Piatti offers finely crafted, classic Italian cuisine rooted in tradition and served in a warm yet refined setting. At the heart of our menu is the pasta—rolled and cut by hand each day, and cooked with care and intention. Piatti brings a fresh perspective to the time-honored Italian restaurant, blending polished hospitality with a familiar, welcoming spirit. It's a place where cherished traditions are celebrated, new memories are made, and friends and family naturally gather—whether dining in or enjoying at home.

2182 Avenida De La Playa
858-454-1589 | lajolla.piatti.com

Best Juice Bar

Parakeet Juicery

Owned by Carol and Jonathan Goldwasser, the same couple who run Parakeet Cafe, this juicery is full of fresh, ethically sourced ingredients and good intentions. Their juice bar serves yummy smoothies, nourishing juices, and even some vitamin immunity booster shots. With countless flavors and mixtures, customers are sure to find more than one favorite in this healthy, high-quality juicery.

935 Silverado St, La Jolla
858 451-4812 | parakeetcafe.com

Best Kombucha

Trilogy Sanctuary

Trilogy Sanctuary is a vibrant wellness center in La Jolla serving the community - indoor and outdoor yoga studio, aerial yoga, rooftop



Thank You for Voting For Us!



- Located in the heart of La Jolla Shores
- Homemade Pasta, Authentic Italian Cuisine, Dine in or To Go!
- International Wine List
- Thank You to all our clients for your continued support
- Call or go online to schedule your Holiday Party
- Let us cater your next Memorable Celebration.

Come enjoy your own private tour of Italy with us!



2151 Avenida de la Playa • La Jolla
858.551.1221 • www.OsteriaRomantica.com



TIEMPOS
 de San Diego

Tiempos de San Diego
en WhatsApp

Noticias e información
clave de San Diego

Escanea el código QR o envía un
mensaje de texto al 619-964-6029

WhatsApp



vegan and organic cafe with plant-based catering, spiritual counseling, juice cleanses via cold-pressed juice, boho boutique & event venue! Nourishing mind, body & spirit right here on a rooftop in La Jolla.

7650 Girard Ave, Ste 400, La Jolla (rooftop)
858-633-3893 | trilogysanctuary.com

Best Late Night Eatery

The Spot

This landmark restaurant on Prospect is best known for its 'highly customizable' Burger menu, unique take on Chicago-style Pizza, full-service bar, and late-night dining. It offers a full-service bar, a large selection of fine wines, and good vibes! It's where the cool people hang out.

1005 Prospect St, La Jolla
858-459-0800 | thespotonline.com

Best Latte

Bird Rock Coffee Roasters

(See listing under Best Cold Brew)

Best Live Music

Beaumont's

(See listing under Best Bar)

Best Lobster

The Marine Room

Few dining experiences rival The Marine

Room, where the ocean itself becomes part of the evening. Since 1941, this La Jolla icon has enchanted guests with its floor-to-ceiling windows and the thrill of waves crashing just beyond the glass. As the tide rises, so does the romance—perfectly paired with world-class seafood, seasonal flavors, and decadent desserts crafted by Chefs Bernard Guillas and Ron Oliver.

2000 Spindrift Dr, La Jolla
858-459-7222 | marineroom.com

Best Lunch

Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop

(See listing under Best Breakfast)

Best Margarita

Puesto

As first-generation Mexican Americans, they grew up immersed in authentic Mexican cooking. Traveling has fueled their fascination with how local cuisine reflects a city's people, art and culture. They frequently visit Mexico City in search of everything from innovative flavors to treasured family traditions passed down through generations. This is where they bring all of that inspiration to life.

1026 Wall St, La Jolla
858-454-1260 | eatpuesto.com

Best Martini

Manhattan of La Jolla

Since 1986, Manhattan of La Jolla has transported guests to the elegance of New York, all within the Empress Hotel. Known for its impeccable service, this beloved spot blends East Coast sophistication with Southern California charm. Guests enjoy Zagat Award-winning veal chops, fresh seafood, and Italian-inspired cuisine in a timeless setting. With its piano bar, classic cocktails, and warm hospitality, Manhattan remains a favorite.

7766 Fay Ave, La Jolla
858-459-0700 | manhattanoflajolla.com

Best Mediterranean

Zoya

(See listing under Best Appetizer)

Best Mexican

Puesto

(See listing under Best Margarita)

Best New Bar/Tavern

LUCIEN

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Arizmendi's expertise and made with locally sourced, high-quality ingredients.

7863 Girard Ave #308, La Jolla
619-786-3082 | luciensd.com

Best New Restaurant

Zoya

(See listing under Best Appetizer)

Best Ocean View

George's At The Cove

(See listing under Best Atmosphere)

Best Omelette

The Cottage

(See listing under Best American)

Best Organic

Parakeet Cafe

(See listing under Best Healthy Dining)

Best Overall Restaurant

Zoya

(See listing under Best Appetizer)

Best Overall Service

Beaumont's

(See listing under Best Bar)



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Best Oysters

El Pescador

(See listing under Best Fish Taco)

Best Pancakes

Richard Walker’s
Pancake House

(See listing under Best Crepes)

Best Pasta Dish

Catania

Located on the top floor of the newly redesigned La Plaza center on the historic corner of Wall and Girard, Catania Coastal Italian is the result of the vision of Whisknadle Hospitality owner Arturo Kassel and Culinary Partner/Director Ryan Johnston, inspired by a two-week, 1,400-mile road trip through Italy years ago. The restaurant offers guests authentic Italian coastal cuisine in a relaxed setting with panoramic ocean views.

7863 Girard Ave. #301 F3, La Jolla
858-551-5105 | cataniasd.com

Best Pastry

Wayfarer Bread & Pastry

(See listing under Best Bakery)

Best Patio Dining

Brockton Villa

Perched above La Jolla Cove in a historic 1894 beach cottage, Brockton Villa is as famous for its views as it is for its signature “Coast Toast.” This family-owned favorite serves breakfast, lunch, and seasonal dinners with carefully crafted menus. Cozy and welcoming, it’s also a popular choice for private parties and holiday gatherings— delicious food and unforgettable ocean scenery.

1235 Coast Blvd, La Jolla
858-454-7393 | brocktonvilla.com

Best Pet Friendly Restaurant

Beaumont’s

(See listing under Best Bar)

Best Pizza

Isola Pizza Bar

Isola Pizza Bar brings the authentic flavors of Italy straight to La Jolla, earning it the title of Best Pizza in this year’s Readers’ Choice Awards. Known for its wood-fired pizzas made with fresh, high-quality ingredients, Isola offers everything from classic Margherita to inventive seasonal combinations. The cozy yet modern setting, paired with a curated wine list and attentive service, makes it a favorite for both casual nights out and special occasions—a true slice of Italy in the heart of the village.

7734 Girard Ave, La Jolla
858-412-5566 | isolapizzabar.com

Best Pizza (Woodfired)

Isola Pizza Bar

(See listing under Best Pizza)

Best Place For A Birthday Party

LUCIEN

(See listing under Best New Bar/Tavern)

Best Place To Go On A
Budget

Taco Stand

(See listing under Best Fast Food (Mexican))

Best Place To People Watch

Jose’s Courtroom

For locals, Jose’s Courtroom isn’t just a restaurant—it’s where the fiesta starts. Classic Mexican dishes meet La Jolla flair, with favorites like ceviche, burritos, and house-made chips with salsa. Every sauce, side and marinade is crafted from scratch, making each bite full of flavor. Add in their legendary margaritas, craft cocktails, and an impressive lineup of Mexican and local beers, and you’ve got the recipe for good times, great food, good cheers.

1037 Prospect St, La Jolla
858-454-7655 | joses.com

Best Romantic

LUCIEN

(See listing under Best New Bar/Tavern)

Best Roof Top Dining

George’s At The Cove

(See listing under Best Atmosphere)

Best Salad

Zoya

(See listing under Best Appetizer)

Best Sandwich

Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop

This cozy La Jolla bakery with a Peruvian influence is beloved by locals for its welcoming atmosphere and house-made offerings. Known for delicious coffee, fresh baked goods and a well-curated selection of beer & wine, Pepino Eatery & Bakeshop brings a refined feeling to casual dining.

7556 Fay Ave Ste F
619-609-7065 | pepinosd.com

Best Seafood

El Pescador Fish Market

A La Jolla staple for more than 50 years, El Pescador Fish Market is beloved for its fresh, flavorful seafood served in a laid-back, beach-casual setting. Famous for fish sandwiches like swordfish and calamari, it also lets guests handpick fish to be char-grilled or sautéed, served with salad and rice. With friendly service, fair prices, and unmatched quality, El Pescador remains a true local gem

for seafood lovers from all over San Diego.

634 Pearl St, La Jolla
858-456-2526 | elpescadorfishmarket.com

Best Soup

Zoya

(See listing under Best Appetizer)

Best Specialty Drink

Pardisaea

Paradisaea is a destination restaurant and bar in the heart of La Jolla’s Bird Rock neighborhood. MICHELIN Guide recommended since 2023, the restaurant serves modern French cuisine and deliciously inventive cocktails like the Paradisaea Mai Tai, the Big Dill, Ch4 Kryptonite and Toki Highball.

5680 La Jolla Blvd
858-255-8011 | paradisaea.com

Best Sports Bar

Nautilus Tavern

Fall means football, and Nautilus Tavern is the place to watch every play. With wall-to-wall TVs, cold brews, and one of the best happy hours by the beach, it’s game-day central in La Jolla. Fans flock here for daily specials, big flavors, and the lively energy of two patios buzzing with sports spirit.

830 La Jolla Blvd #103, La Jolla
858-750-2056 | nautilustavern.com

Best Steak

Eddie V’s

Looking for expertly prepared seafood and steak? Well, look no further; Eddie V’s has you covered. This premier seafood restaurant near La Jolla Bay delivers a vast array of fresh seafood, like Pacific Ahi Tuna and raw oysters, and deliciously prepared premium hand-cut steaks and chops. To complement the meal, Eddie V’s offers handcrafted cocktails and an extensive wine menu curated by their in-house sommelier

1270 Prospect St, La Jolla
(858) 459-5500 | eddiev.com/
locations/ca/la-jolla/la-jolla/8511

Best Surf And Turf

Eddie V’s

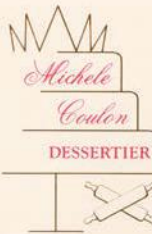
(See listing under Best Steak)

Best Sushi

Himitsu

Inspired by the sushi bars of Ginza, Tokyo and Southern California lifestyle, Himitsu brings Japanese culture, dining and hospitality to San Diego. Chef Mitsu Aihara presents a menu of traditional sushi and nigiri, along with Japanese-style tapas, using the highest-quality products and ingredients. Meals can be paired with drinks from their carefully curated sake list, natural wines and Japanese and local craft beers.

1030 Torrey Pines Rd G, La Jolla
858-263-4463 | himitsusd.com



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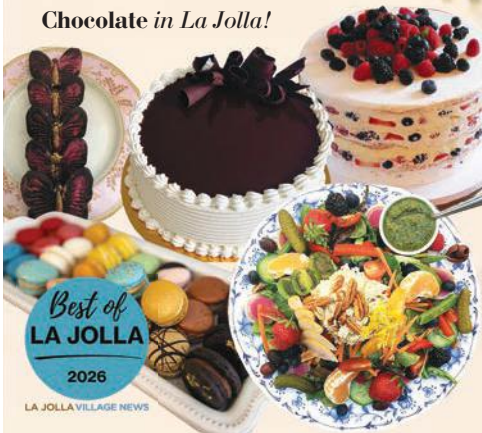
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Best Tacos
Puesto
(See listing under Best Margarita)

Best Take-Out
Rock N' Roost Rotisserie
(See listing under Best Comfort Food)

Best Thai
Aroi Thai
Aroi Thai Cuisine brings the vibrant flavors of Thailand to La Jolla with authentic soups, noodles, curries, and stir-fries crafted with care. Family-owned and welcoming, it's a place where guests can enjoy Thai hospitality over lunch or dinner. Every dish is prepared with passion and precision, delivering an experience that's flavorful, comforting, and truly memorable.
7523 Fay Ave, Ste A, La Jolla
858-729-1883 | aroithailajolla.com

Best Vegan
Trilogy Sanctuary
(See listing under Best Kombucha)

Best Vegetarian
Trilogy Sanctuary
(See listing under Best Kombucha)

Best Wine Bar
Bird Rock Fine Wine
Bird Rock Fine Wine is a traditional 'brick and mortar' store located in the Bird Rock area of La Jolla. It opened in 2012 and still has the same local owner, Ken Chalmers.
5687 La Jolla Blvd, La Jolla
858-230-6956 | birdrockfinewine.com

Best Wine Selection (Restaurant)
Nine-Ten
NINE-TEN Restaurant's evolving California cuisine features the best of the harvest from local artisan farmers, where produce is selected daily. Lunch and dinner are served daily and Brunch every Sunday, in the main dining room, sidewalk patio or back terrace with glimpses of the ocean.
910 Prospect St, La Jolla
858-964-5400 | nineten.com

Best Wine Shop
Bird Rock Fine Wine
(See listing under Best Wine Bar)

Best Wings
Nautilus Tavern
(See listing under Best Sports Bar)

Best Wraps
Marketplace Grille
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1030 Torrey Pines Rd, La Jolla
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'Biggest tour ever' part of La Jolla Modernism and Architecture Week

By Dave Schwab
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – The fourth annual La Jolla Modernism and Architecture Week, an expanded celebration of the architecture, design, history and innovation that have shaped the coastal community, will start Oct. 2.

Presented by the Museum of History and Culture La Jolla (formerly La Jolla Historical Society), the week-long series of events is anchored by the popular La Jolla Modernism Tour on Saturday, Oct. 3. The tour will provide rare access to a curated selection of privately owned Mid-Century Modern residences throughout the Jewel.

The museum's 2026 program, however, goes beyond just the annual tour, offering special access to significant architectural sites, guided experiences, talks and programs exploring La Jolla's distinctive built environment.

"The event has grown and this is the biggest year ever," noted the museum's executive director Lauren Lockhart. "As we begin this new chapter as the Museum of History and Culture La Jolla, Modernism and Architecture Week reflects the breadth of what we offer our community. By expanding beyond the tour, we can create new ways to experience and appreciate La Jolla's remarkable architectural heritage."

Lockhart noted La Jolla's expanded architecture week will have "something for everyone," adding that addresses of historic homes on the tour will be kept secret until disclosed in a printed program issued the day of the event for ticket holders. She said the self-driving tour will feature six homes, while the Platinum Bus Tour will offer a special bonus house for guests, and lunch.

Wrist bands and tour programs can be picked up starting at 9 a.m. the day of the event at the museum's campus, 780 Prospect St.

The "UCSD effect" is the overarching theme of this year's architecture week series, said Lockhart.

"We chose a number of homes on one of the tours which were actually commissioned to be built by UC San Diego



Homes on the La Jolla Modernism Home Tour won't be revealed until the program is released to ticket holders. (Photo by Pablo Mason/Special for Times of San Diego)

professors during the '60s (and) created by local architects," she said adding, "Some of these family homes are incredible, like time capsule pieces of architecture that were made possible because of all the talented people UC San Diego attracted in the '60s."

Other events include:

- ♦ "From Concrete to Redwood: UC San Diego's Modernist Masterpieces," Sunday, Oct. 4: Guided access to William L. Pereira's iconic Geisel Library and Lloyd Ruocco's 1963 Munk Laboratory at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

- ♦ "Modernism 101: From Bauhaus to Our House at the La Jolla Woman's Club," Thursday, Oct. 8: Joan Gand presents a program exploring the ideas, influences and personalities that transformed architecture and visual culture in the 20th century.

- ♦ "Discover the Story of Scripps Institution of Oceanography," Saturday, Oct. 10: Brings together historians and Scripps leaders to explore the institution's history, architecture, pioneering founders, and scientific achievements, followed by opportunities to experience its historic campus and landmark buildings.

La Jolla Architecture week ends Sunday, Oct. 11 with the 2026 La Jolla Jewel Awards from 3-5 p.m. at La Valencia Hotel, 1132 Prospect St.

"We're so excited about this opportunity for us to acknowledge preservationists in the community, both individuals, businesses and designers who care about protecting and preserving historic places in La Jolla," said Lockhart.

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New mixed-use development will transform Pearl Street

By Senna Ihab Omar
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – The La Jolla Community Planning Association unanimously approved plans for a new mixed-use development on a prominent corner of Pearl Street and Girard Avenue.

Applicant and architect Taal Safdie of Safdie Rabines Architects gave a presentation to the LJCPA on Sept. 3 detailing the project. During deliberations, LJCPA trustees sang praise for the project's design.

"It's just so refreshing to see multi-unit development and more housing," LJCPA trustee Harry Bubbins said. "I'm so happy to see that."

Known as The Pearl, the project would demolish a single-story, 2,980-square-foot commercial building at 941 and 945 Pearl St. that previously housed La Jolla dry cleaning staple Ogden's One Hour Cleaners, which closed in 2024. In its place, Safdie wants to construct a three-story,



Rendering of proposed restaurant space on bottom floor of The Pearl (Courtesy of Safdie Rabines Architects)

17,172-square-foot, mixed-use structure. The property will stretch from Girard Avenue to Drury Lane and add 476% to the building's square footage.

Under the current plan, The Pearl will have six residential units, with one unit deed-restricted for affordable housing, basement parking, a residential lobby, landscaping improvements and a ground-level retail space that the applicant hopes will be a restaurant. The parking lot will

include ten parking spots and two car lifts to transport cars from the basement back to the ground floor.

By including one affordable housing unit, the developer secured waivers to San Diego building codes. The waivers allow for a 41% floor area ratio increase and void city restrictions requiring street-corner setbacks on all three floors, plumb line height measurements and street facade envelope requirements, which the builder said will preserve 30% of residential unit interiors.

Although the project adheres to the maximum 30-foot coastal height limit required for all coastal projects west of Interstate 5, the property slopes down so that the overall height may exceed 30 feet in some areas, applicant Safdie explained to the LJCPA.

Units in the new building are estimated to cost between \$1.5 million and \$2 million, according to Pacific Beach Builder, a contractor that provides insight and

updates on San Diego construction. The affordable housing units will be sold between 40 and 50% below market value, at approximately \$750,000 to \$900,000.

To qualify for San Diego's deed-restricted affordable housing, properties must maintain rent or sales price caps tied to a percentage of the area median income for at least 55 years. For a 6-unit project like The Pearl, providing one affordable housing unit qualifies the developer for bonus concessions under the "at least 10% of units" threshold. The unit must serve a moderate-income household making between 80 and 120% of the area's median income.

The plan was previously reviewed by the La Jolla Planned District Ordinance Committee on Aug. 10, and the La Jolla Development Permit Review Committee on Aug. 11 and 18. The PDO did not vote, but the DPR committee did and ultimately recommended approval on Aug. 18. With LJCPA approval, the project will proceed to the city of San Diego for additional review.

Geppetto's has spent 50 years finding the 'fun factor' in toys

By Dave Schwab
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – Geppetto's Toys held a 50th anniversary party at all of its locations regionwide, including the Village of La Jolla and Westfield UTC.

Known for its unique, hand-selected toys that have stood the test of time, Geppetto's over the past 50 years has grown into a large independent toy retailer with nine locations throughout San Diego County. Those include the two outlets in La Jolla as well as locations in Old Town and Seaport Village.

To mark this golden milestone, Geppetto's hosted a special all-location, six-hour 50th anniversary celebration at all its countywide locations on Sept. 19. The observance was filled with surprises, giveaways, discounts, treats, activities and entertainment.

"To make it 50 years in any industry is an accomplishment, let alone in one that has morphed so much over the decades," said Geppetto's owner Brian Miller. "From the changing face of traditional retail to the boom in online shopping, the impact

of the pandemic, global tariffs and more, we are thrilled to have been a consistent neighborhood spot to find quality, hand-picked playthings from around the world."

Also, as part of its anniversary celebration, Geppetto's pledged a \$50,000 donation to Rady Children's Hospital, which it has long supported, from proceeds of sales of "NeeDoh," the hottest toy nationwide.

"Rady Children's is honored to celebrate this incredible milestone with Geppetto's and grateful that their success is being shared in a way that directly benefits the patients and families who rely on Rady Children's every day," said Alex Loker, vice president of philanthropy for Rady Children's Hospital Foundation.

The company and the Miller family has lent support to hundreds of other local



Geppetto's celebrated 50 years in business in September.

(Photo courtesy of Geppetto's)

causes over the past half century, including schools, social service agencies and community organizations. Some examples include Toys for Tots, La Jolla Art and Wine Festival, Words Alive and Jewish Family Services of San Diego.

Opened in 1976 in Old Town's Bazaar Del Mundo, Brian Miller said Geppetto's was

originally started by their next-door neighbor, before his family took it over. He returned

to San Diego, after working for a big East Coast retail company, to take over the new family business.

Asked about the success of Geppetto's and the toy industry, Miller said: "There's something magical about taking a child into a toy store where they can touch and feel things they might be interested in. Our stores are not big-box warehouses. I carefully select toys for each age group."

Miller regularly attends trade and manufacturer shows from companies like Lego and Mattel.

"I get to play with the toys, then decide if they fit in with our business," he added.

Noting there's competition from toys selling online, Miller believes his brick-and-mortar toy business enjoys an advantage because kids can come into Geppetto's and actually try toys out.

"You can't do that online," he said, adding, "It's not as much fun online."

Of his criteria for selecting toys, Miller noted, "They've got to be good quality and have got to have a 'fun' factor. Even if it's a math game – it has to be fun and engaging for the children. Not something they play with for 30 seconds before putting it aside."

Miller added he also likes to select toys that take kids away from too much reliance on "screen time." Also new these days, he said, is that social media is "huge" in driving public demand for toys, especially new ones.

Miller is optimistic about the future of toys. "I am very bullish on Geppetto's being around for many more decades," he said. "It's a nice, family tradition. We're not going away."

MCASD seeks to thrive by opening its galleries – and its walls – to new communities

By Drew Sitton
TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

LA JOLLA – The Museum of Contemporary Art of San Diego (MCASD) is coming in hot from a record-breaking summer. More visitors, more members, more things to celebrate and more celebrations than ever before.

On the heels of a star-studded show that drew thousands to its galleries, MCASD has just opened another exhibit meant to draw in new audiences, “Visiones Nocturnas: Queer Nightlife in Contemporary Art,” It continues through mid-January.

“What is always passionate or interesting about contemporary art is that we are a place where we can bring these dialogues forward that are zCAS or just new to a lot of people,” said Scott Anderson, MCASD’s chief advancement officer.

The museum also is welcoming a new director and CEO, Brett Littman. He visited MCASD as a UC San Diego student, and what he saw inspired his three-decade career at cultural institutions in the U.K. and New York.

Littman attended the “Visiones Nocturnas” preview party a couple weeks ahead of when his official tenure begins on Oct. 1.

“I really want to make this museum into a place where you want to come again and

again and again, and that people from all over the country and all over the world want to as well,” Littman told attendees. “The museum deserves that. It is always great.”

For Anderson, the timing, coming off Giants and into “Visiones” with a new CEO, “creates an exciting runway for the institution to continue to engage the entire city and raise our national platform.”

“I see a very bright future ahead for the museum,” he said.

Compare that outlook with what some of MCASD’s peers are facing. The oldest San Diego art institution, San Diego Museum of Art in Balboa Park, laid off 11 employees in August amid its centennial celebration. The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), which has locations in Balboa Park and Encinitas, announced it had laid off nearly half its staff, including almost all its senior staff. In addition, the Balboa Park ICA campus is temporarily closed.

The two art institutions blamed rising operational costs, a decline in grants and



‘Dulce en Mexico’ 2020 by Amina Cruz.
(Photo courtesy of Amina Cruz/MCASD)

donations, and a decrease in visitors (both of them felt the impact of ongoing Balboa Park parking fees, set to end Dec. 31). It’s a tough economic time for arts across the country, including at MCASD, with leaders noting that philanthropy is hard to come by.

But a decline in visitors? That’s not something the La Jolla museum faced during the record-breaking run of “Giants: Art from the Dean Collection of Swizz Beatz and Alicia Keys.” Close to 40,000 people made the trek to La Jolla to see the stars’ personal collection, which coincided with a second exhibit from local Latino photographers called “Hometown Heroes.”

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55					56			57			58
59					60			61			
62					63				64		

25. Chest muscle (slang)
26. Ribonucleic acid
27. Doctor of Education
28. Coffee receptacle
29. Where rockstars work
34. International airport in Connecticut
35. Russian river
36. It's used to make cabins
37. OJ trial judge Lance
39. A means to persuade
40. Short poem
41. A way to begin hostilities with
42. Multi-function radar (abbr.)
44. Joints
45. Blatted
46. Swedish rock group
47. Millisecond
48. ___ podrida: Spanish stew
51. Doctors' group
52. Trunk of a tree
53. Tattle
54. Metrical foot
58. ___ Angeles

CLUES ACROSS

1. Egyptian bull god
5. A young canine
8. North Carolina university
11. "Oddbod" actor Tom
13. Midway between northeast and east
14. A place to shop
15. Mysterious "Severance" family
16. Single Lens Reflex
17. Malaria
18. Informal loan organizations
20. Twitching
21. Holm oak
22. Willing to consent
25. In an early way
30. Stuck it out
31. Language in Ghana
32. Obtain
33. Ancient Greek currency
38. One point east (clockwise) of due north
41. Popular baseball movie
43. Group of islands
45. Church building
47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
49. Late AC/DC frontman Scott
50. Spiritual leader of a Jewish con-

gregation

55. Thick piece of something
56. Breakfast food
57. One mole of solute per kilogram of solvent
59. Ancient Greek City
60. Bitterly regret
61. Don't forget it
62. Dishonorable man
63. Affirmative
64. "___ and flows"

CLUES DOWN

1. Bridge-building degree
2. Expression of sorrow or pity
3. Lizard species
4. Turkish leader title
5. A way to bother
6. Blank
7. A fine, closely woven cotton fabric
8. Sports broadcaster Ian
9. Popular whodunit board game
10. Alkali flats mineral
12. Large African antelope
14. It's delivered most days
19. Satisfy
23. Water soaked soil
24. Of a past era

ANSWERS

9	7	8	2	7	1	9	6	8
9	6	2	7	8	8	7	5	1
8	7	1	9	9	6	2	7	8
8	9	7	6	2	9	1	8	7
1	8	6	7	7	9	8	2	9
2	9	7	1	8	8	6	9	7
7	8	9	8	6	7	9	1	2
7	2	9	9	1	7	8	8	6
6	1	8	8	9	2	7	7	9

S	B	B	E		S	E	A		O	V	C
O	W	V	T	V		E	N	H	V	E	T
T	V	T	O	W		O	O	E	B	V	T
	I	B	B	V	H		N	O	B	B	W
				V	C	I	T	I	S	V	B
O	O	V	T	E	d	I	H	O	W		
L	O	T	O	N	V	S	E	B	N		
I	T	O	B				E	O	O	V	C
				O	E	O		O	E	H	N
				A	T	E	H	N	L	V	W
				E	T	B	V	N	E	W	V
X	E	T	I	O	I	L	S	N	S	N	S
E	N	O	V				T	S	N	V	E
T	T	V	W		E	N	E		O	O	T
N	O	E		d	N	d			V	L	V

Chris Thile brings Punch Brothers and their 'wild adventure' to UCSD

By Peter Blackstock
SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – It's always a welcome homecoming whenever Grammy-winning mandolinist Chris Thile returns to San Diego County. Born and raised in Oceanside, Thile broke through with eclectic stringband Nickel Creek just after the turn of the century, then branched out with solo records and an all-star ensemble called the Punch Brothers.

It's the latter outfit that he'll bring to UCSD's Epstein Family Amphitheater on Oct. 9. And there's a couple of new wrinkles this time through. The brothers have recently recruited a sister, renowned fiddler Brittany Haas from the band Crooked Still. They also have a new album out titled "The Unsung Adventures of Punch Brothers" — its tongue-in-cheek title designating the album as their first-ever all-instrumental project.

Instrumental virtuosity has always been central to the Punch Brothers' identity. Thile is the focal point on mandolin, but Haas, banjo picker Noam Pikelnny, guitarist Chris Eldridge and upright bassist Paul Kowert all are among the most talented and accomplished players in Americana music.

As such, the Punch Brothers are ideally suited to making an all-instrumental album. But why now? Bassist Kowert says that in some respects, it was as simple as this: "Thile didn't really feel like writing lyrics" this time. "He's the lead singer and lyricist; sometimes he sends his ideas through the (band) committee, but he's the lyricist. But it didn't seem like the things he was feeling were as communicable with words."

The material on "Unsung Adventures" took shape over the past couple of years, as the group was working on a podcast called the "Energy Curfew Music Hour." Its format was similar to the NPR show "Live From Here," for which Thile served as host from 2016 to 2020.

"It's a musical variety show, a lot like 'Live from Here' or 'A Prairie Home Companion,' with skits and jokes and music and musical guests," Kowert explains. "We would convene for a week at an Airbnb in Vermont or upstate New



The Punch Brothers, with Paul Kowert and Chris Thile, left. (Photo by Josh Goleman/Special for Times of San Diego)

York, and we'd get songs together over the course of many of these writing sessions."

Another key factor in the new record's instrumental direction was the arrival of Haas, who joined in 2023 after co-founder Gabe Witcher decided to concentrate on music for film and TV as well as arrangements for other artists. "She's such a great voice on the fiddle, and in the absence of actual singing, she has more space to be that voice," Kowert says of Haas, with whom he previously played in the instrumental band Hawktail. She'd also been in the house band for Thile's NPR show.

"We all have a lot of experience playing with Britt, so it was a really natural fit," Kowert says. "Making an instrumental record was a great way to bring her into the fold. It really empowers her."

Haas is now the group's youngest member, just shy of 40, alongside four forty-somethings. Kowert was previously the youngest; when he joined the band in 2008, he was just out of college, studying classical music with legendary bassist Edgar Meyer at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music. That was part of how he ended up in the Punch Brothers, as Thile had worked extensively in the studio with Meyer.

When co-founding bassist Greg Garrison left after the first Punch Brothers record, Kowert jumped at the opportunity. "I thought I was going to be in an orchestra," he says now. "I didn't really know another way, frankly. They called and I auditioned, and I ended up in the band."

When asked whether he views Punch Brothers as a bluegrass band crossing over into classical, or a classical band crossing over into bluegrass, he answers with a smart sidestep.

The Social Diary – Cheers to ‘Artscape,’ and SDMA hosts Cecil Beaton!

By Margo Schwab

SPECIAL FOR TIMES OF SAN DIEGO

I was one of the lucky three dozen invitees on Aug. 28 for a posh luncheon and a curator led tour of the timeless photography of Cecil Beaton at the Photographic Museum of San Diego/San Diego Museum of Art. Sponsor Balmain (UBS was also a sponsor) was there in tribute to Cecil Beaton’s friendship with Balmain. As such, several of us dressed in Balmain!

Highlights were many of Beaton’s beautiful photographs ranging from Queen Elizabeth, celebrities, and his work for Vogue, Vanity Fair and

Life Magazine. The exhibition is the only West Coast viewing! Open until mid-January, the exhibit was made possible by the Bern Schwarz Foundation.

On Aug. 21, the National Cheers Foundation held its ‘Artscape’ themed fundraiser in Pacific Beach at the former home of Kate Sessions. The beautifully landscaped property was a perfect setting for the event which funds medical research and health institutions and outreach programs for women. Amidst art purveyors, there was dining and later dancing to famous guitarist Tommy Castro and the Painkillers!



Kristi Pieper in vibrant lemon-yellow gown, an on-line find, at Cheers. (All photos by Margo Schwab/Special for Times of San Diego)



Volunteer check-in ladies, Sophie Samiei, Sage Ferrar, and Jenna Ferrar at Cheers.



Balmain’s Brett Kane and Paige Sloniker with Valerie Cooper center at MOPA.



Khoi Ho with Miriam and Dr. David Smotrich at MOPA.



Kathryn Murphy with Maria Davis, Chris Andrews and Lisa Bresnahan at Cheers.



Joby Bakken and Gail Forbes getting in some art shopping at Cheers.



Ingrid Garcia Myers, National Cheers Foundation vice president Marnie Cheney, Shannon Campbell and Mark Feighan at Cheers.



More fun in Balmain, Margo Schwab and Valerie Cooper at MOPA.



Diane Szekely of the Rancho La Puerta family at Cheers.



Miriam and Dr. David Smotrich in Balmain at MOPA.



Brett Kane with Stephanie Khourie in Balmain at MOPA.



Dr. Anne Varick Lauder of the Bern Schwarz Foundation and SDMA with Sydney Holland at MOPA.



Cheers event chair Jackie Helm with Mimi Swenson at Cheers.



National Cheers Foundation founder and president Anseth Richards after accidentally falling into the pool, smiling with grace at Cheers.



Margo Schwab in guitar theme appropriate Moschino with Scott Johnston in Gucci Tom Ford vintage at Cheers.

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