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# Uptown News // SAN DIEGO DOWNTOWN NEWS

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**FIND OUT WHO WON!**




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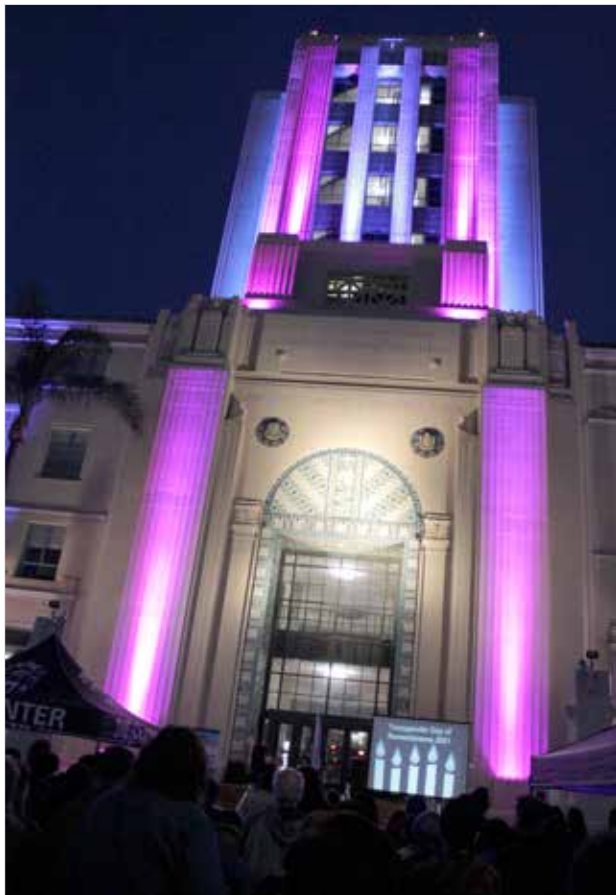
## San Diego holds vigil for transgender people murdered nationally

Event highlighted local discrimination despite efforts of LGBT+ public officials

By Kendra Sitton

The County Administration Building lit up in blue and pink for the transgender flag during a vigil held on Saturday, Nov. 20 in honor of the at least 47 transgender people murdered in the past year. The number has risen to at least 48 trans people since then, according to

SEE **TDOR VIGIL**, Page 22



The County Administration Building in blue and pink for the transgender flag. (Photo by Kendra Sitton)

## 2021 holiday local gift guide

By Vince Meehan

It's always a good idea to buy local but this year that credo holds true more than ever. With our current supply chain fiasco, holiday shopping will not be as easy as years past. But if the products are made here in San Diego, you will not need to be concerned about the armada of container ships anchored off San Pedro ruining your shopping experience. Besides, our local businesses are still catching up from the Covid shutdowns, so the extra business will help them out immensely. Here is a list of thoughtful gifts that are easy to obtain at local spots.

### EMBRACE THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT!

A bottle of wine or spirits has always been a go-to gift that brings a smile to your family or friends.

Nick Apostolopoulos is the founder of **619 Spirits North Park**, a star player in a new wave of local distillers that have taken root in San Diego due to new state laws that made the craft viable in 2017.

619 Spirits North Park is in the heart of North Park at 30th and Lincoln (3015 Lincoln Ave.). Flavored vodka is his spirit specialty. The line includes 619's Original Vodka, as well as five infusions — Scorpion Pepper, Coffee, Rose

SEE **GIFT GUIDE**, Page 20

## New establishment in Normal Heights brings absinthe to the forefront

By Frank Sabatini Jr.

It has been touted as a cure for everything from flatulence and crushing headaches to anemia and convulsions. Created in the late 1700s by a French doctor, the emerald-green spirit known as absinthe has been both

celebrated and condemned over the centuries.

Local restaurateur Amar Harrag is dispelling the negative myths about absinthe with his newly launched Wormwood, a bar and restaurant he named after one of the spirit's primary botanical extracts.

Wormwood replaces Jayne's Gastropub, which served elevated British-pub fare for nearly 15 years. Harrag has given the space a French flair, drawing inspiration from an absinthe bar he discovered while visiting

SEE **ABSINTHE**, Page 23



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TOP AGENTS in 92101

Total Sales by Real Estate Agent in 2020  
(Incl. buyer sales and listings sold, January 1 - December 31, 2020)

1. Gregg Neuman	109	14. Gerry Burchard	8	27. Elcim Gulec	5
2. Chad Dannecker	43	15. Michael Lange	7	28. David Spiewak	5
3. Denny Oh	37	16. Franchesca Meram	7	29. Nicole Hazelton	5
4. Michael Chious	13	17. Ryan Ponce	7	30. Danijela Ripley	5
5. Francine Finn	12	18. Mark Mills	7	31. Brian Ruhl	5
6. Jeffery Nix	11	19. Jeff Grant	7	32. Kayoko Yoshioka	5
7. John Husar	10	20. Jeffrey O’Neal	6	33. Katie Gilbert	5
8. David Stone	10	21. Michael Ciampa	6	34. Michael Brunnhoelz	5
9. Mike Althof	9	22. Todd DeBoer	6	35. Jeannine Savory	5
10. Claudette Cooper	9	23. Donna Egan	6	36. David Rudd	5
11. Alan Hamrick	9	24. John Reeves	6	37. Monica Stone	5
12. Jorge Castellon	8	25. Richard Combs	6	38. Sabrina Ortega	5
13. Melissa Goldstein Tucci	8	26. Sarah Scott	5	39. 11 tied with 4	

REAL Marketing, Inc. Congratulates the Top  
Downtown San Diego Real Estate Agents in 2019!

REAL Marketing Inc. has helped real estate agents build their market share and client retention for more than 29 years across North America, specializing in increasing market share and improving customer retention. We are pleased to announce our team has helped Gregg Neuman and the Neuman & Neuman Team extend their lead in Downtown sales for the ELEVENTH consecutive year.

Results for 2020

Total sales for the 92101 zip code decreased to 785 units last year, which is a 0.51% decrease from 2019. The average sales price increased 1.2% to \$674,200, while the average days on market have decreased by 19.6% to 37 days.

Gregg Neuman of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties tops the list for an eleventh consecutive year with 109 total 92101 sales. While his sales represent 63% of Berkshire Hathaway Home Services California Properties’ sales in Downtown, he continues to outsell entire brokerages, including Pacific Sotheby’s Intl Realty, Big

Block Realty, Coldwell Banker Residential, Redfin Corporation, Hunter & Maddox Intl. Inc, Keller Williams SD Metro, and Douglas Elliman of California.

With a total of 168 sales according to data available from Trendgraphix, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties finished another strong year and also sustains their lead over all other Downtown brokerages.

Congratulations to all Top Real Estate agents in Downtown San Diego for another outstanding year.

TOP 10 in 92101  
Total Sales by Company

1. Compass	241
2. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices	168
3. Pacific Sotheby's Intl Realty	89
4. Big Block Realty	66
5. Coldwell Banker West	54
6. Redfin Corporation	52
7. Hunter & Maddox Intl. Inc	30
8. Keller Williams SD Metro	29
9. Coldwell Banker Residential	29
10. Douglas Elliman of California	26



# Hearing for Shinn's death rescheduled

By Neal Putnam

A preliminary hearing was re-scheduled to Jan. 4, 2022 for the drug impaired driver who is accused of killing architect Laura Shinn while she was riding her bicycle in North Park.

The hearing had been set for Nov. 24, which was the Wednesday before Thanksgiving for Adam David Milavetz, 38, of Pacific Beach, who is charged with second-degree murder and gross vehicular manslaughter while under the influence of drugs in the July 20 incident.

The Nov. 24 date was set at Milavetz's first court appearance in August, perhaps because attorneys didn't realize it was the day before Thanksgiving, which would have been difficult to subpoena witnesses. San Diego Superior Court Judge Robert Trentacosta recently re-set it for Jan. 4, according to court records.

Shinn, 57, was on Pershing Drive on her way to work at 7:30 a.m. as the director of facilities planning at San Diego State University when



Laura Shinn traveling and alongside her husband. She was tragically killed while biking on Pershing Drive. (Photos courtesy the Shinn's)



she was struck from behind by Milavetz's 2011 Prius while she was in a bicycle lane.

A prosecutor said Milavetz was arrested a month before the incident on a charge of suspicion of driving under the influence of meth. On his Facebook page, Milavetz wrote he was a "420 mobilization tech" for a cannabis dispensary. He also wrote he was a delivery driver for another marijuana dispensary and sometimes worked from his PB home.

Milavetz has pleaded not guilty. He remains in the George Bailey Detention Facility without bail. San Diego police arrested Milavetz at the scene.

Shinn was an avid bicyclist and was riding to work as she often did, according to the American Institute of Architects San Diego. She was their board president this year.

—Neal Putnam is a local court reporter. Reach him at [nealputnam@gmail.com](mailto:nealputnam@gmail.com).

# Ghost gun shooter's hearing set

By Neal Putnam

A preliminary hearing of Feb. 3, 2022, has been set for a man suspected of using an unregistered "ghost gun" to shoot five men in Downtown San Diego in April including Justice Boldin, an Ace parking attendant who died.

Travis Fereydoun Sarreshteh, 33, is accused of murder in the April 22 death of Boldin, 28, and four counts of attempted murder of four men who survived their wounds.



Justice Boldin (Photo courtesy GoFundMe)

San Diego Police Chief David Nisleit announced at a press conference that Sarreshteh shot the victims with an unregistered polymer "ghost gun" that was assembled, possibly from a prepackaged kit that was mailed to him.

Sarreshteh was irritated at his girlfriend for not staying with him at a Courtyard Marriott hotel on Broadway and he left her apartment at 10:20 p.m. very angry, according to a prosecution document.

Sarreshteh walked to the Pendry Hotel, which was just a block away, and shot Boldin, at "point blank range," the document says. He paced for 20 seconds and then shot the valet while he was on the ground.

Surveillance cameras caught footage of Sarreshteh shooting the parking valet and also showed him walking away at Fifth Avenue and J Street.

The gunman walked away and encountered three people who later told police he demanded the group salute him, according to court records. One man saluted him and he continued walking.

Several minutes later, Sarreshteh was walking on a sidewalk on Fifth Avenue and walked between three New Jersey men, who separated to allow him to pass.

SEE GHOST GUN, Page 23



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# Fashion-inspired exhibits

## Fashion Files

By DIANA CAVAGNARO



What do social security and feathers have in common? The Oceanside Museum of Art (OMA) has two new innovative exhibits called *Saki: Birds of a Different Feather* and *MartyO: Social Security*. Saki and MartyO both won the grand prize last year for the fashion fundraiser gala. This virtual art fashion event in 2020 was called Night of the Living Art: An Art After Dark Extravaganza. Winning the grand prize gave them both the opportunity to share a space for this new installation. The first fashion-inspired exhibit, *Saki: Birds of a Different Feather*, examines cultural themes of gender roles.

In the animal realm, male birds stand out to grab the attention of their mate. It is the

opposite in the human world. Women are the ones to steal the show with their fashion. As an educated professional, the modern woman is not just an attractive dresser. This exhibit inspires the onlookers to see beyond traditional gender roles. The modern man can now go beyond wearing a three-piece suit. Each one of Saki's creations show different birds of a feather and how the male roles in society range from the sugar daddy to rockstar.

The second outstanding exhibit is *MartyO: Social Security*. She analyzes women's roles and cultural mores in the 20th century which have ushered in women's suffrage in 1919, the Social Security Act in 1935, and "the pill" in 1961. Each piece in the show is about a feminine issue. The exhibition is dedicated to Francis Perkin who



3 Generations

was a fierce labor advocate. She worked toward abolishing child labor and was a role model for women getting an education and joining the work force. One of MartyO's creations named "No No No" is about the need for consent. Another called "You Turn Me On" is about the way women have been objectified. "Still Life with Doves Quilt" is about how thin we must be and "Love Honor & Obey" is about how women are taught domestic skills.

Some of the pieces are really fun such as "Give her what she really wants for Christmas" which is a richly-embellished vacuum and a Dust Pan with



Dressing Shame (Photos courtesy of OMA)

a mink collar. One piece that is meaningful to MartyO is the piece called "3 Generations." Her mom and grandma helped her on the piece that helps her remember her family. The title Social Security refers also to our rights as women to be secure with no fear of sexual assault, free to have contraceptives and the right to be seen as an individual, not as an object for others gratification.

OMA showcases artists' works, presenting innovative and dynamic exhibitions of significant local and regional art. This exhibit runs through Jan. 23, 2022.

Museum hours are Thursday-Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information visit: oma-online.org.

—Diana Cavagnaro is an internationally renowned Couture Milliner based in Alpine, California. Learn more about our Hat Designer, Teacher & Blogger at [DianaCavagnaro.com](http://DianaCavagnaro.com).



You Turn Me On



Powerbird



Cuckoo



Peacock

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Gaslamp Pet Parade**  
Dress your dog or animal in their best holiday gear. Registration is \$20 at [jotform.com/213076127867158](http://jotform.com/213076127867158). Sunday, Dec. 19.

# "to the yellow house" rambles through van Gogh's life

## Theater Review

By JEAN LOWERISON



Art is a harsh mistress. So is public opinion. And a negative reaction – or being ignored – can do huge psychological damage to an artist who's "not like all the others."

Playwright Kimber Lee's "to the yellow house" – La Jolla Playhouse's latest offering – explores this problem. It was inspired by a voluminous biography of 19th-century artist Vincent van Gogh that details the (many) failures, hardships and psychological problems the artist had as an iconoclast trying to get viewers (and buyers) to appreciate his most unusual way of portraying the world on canvas.

Here's a little history: van Gogh never achieved fame during his lifetime, surviving mostly with the help of his brother Theo. He worked briefly as an art dealer. He took up religion and spent time as a Protestant missionary in Belgium before moving to Paris in 1886. Here he tried painting and took art classes, in which the teachers told him how and what to paint: "Draw only what you see." During this time, he befriended avant-garde artists like Paul Gauguin, who were reacting against the popular Impressionist movement in art.

He and brother Theo exchanged many letters, and this is the source of information we have about the artist. But all this time his psyche suffered. In 1888 he moved south to Arles, where he began to broaden his subjects to the olive trees, wheat fields and sunflowers we all know today. He also drank too much and fell in love with the wrong woman, triggering more depression. He eventually moved back to the Paris area (Auvers-sur-Oise) to be closer to the stability offered by Theo. This is where he would die by his own hand.

The play gives an unsettling portrait of an unstable personality who stubbornly painted what and how he wanted to, and would never know the fame he eventually would achieve. It's almost as difficult to watch this story as it must have been to live it, because no matter what Vincent does, it doesn't work out. The set design by Takeshi Kata gives viewers the idea of Van Gogh's unstable life by use of black-and-white projections that change and float back and forth behind the action.

Neel Keller directs a diverse and uniformly excellent cast. Six of the actors are students in UCSD's MFA program.

Paco Tolson, of Manhattan Theatre Club's "Vietgone" production, must be exhausted each



(L-R) Alton Alburo as Henri, DeLeon Dallas as Bernard and Paco Tolson as Vincent in the world premiere of "to the yellow house."

night after playing Vincent, but he is definitely convincing.

Frankie J. Alvarez's Theo is an excellent if frustrated brother, trying to help van Gogh and have a life of his own.

Vincent spends a lot of time in a local café. Brooke Ishibashi (as waitress and wannabe baker Sophie) and Deidrie Henry (as cafe owner Agostina) add much-needed humor and occasional exasperation.

Alton Alburo, as Henri, Marco Barricelli in three roles, and DeLeon Dallas as Bernard are all very fine as well.

And let's hear it for the design team: David Israel Reynoso's costumes, Alberto "Albee" Alvarado's wigs, Masha Tsimring's lighting, Palmer Hefferan's sound design, Nicholas Hussong's stunning projections and Justin Ellington's music.

I would like to see the play shortened by at least 30 minutes



Tolson gives a rousing performance of the troubled artist. (Photos courtesy La Jolla Playhouse)

(it clocks in at two hours, 45 minutes), if only because seeing the same thing happening over and over (failure) gets monotonous.

But "to the yellow house," named after the house in Arles where Vincent rented four rooms, is certainly a play like no other.

'to the yellow house' plays through Dec. 12 at La Jolla Playhouse's Weiss Theatre.

Shows Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 2 and 8 p.m. Shows Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.; Wednesday at 2 and 7:30 p.m.; Thursday and Friday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 2 and 8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 and 7 p.m.

Tickets: [lajollaplayhouse.org](http://lajollaplayhouse.org)  
Proof of vaccination and masks mandatory.

—Jean Lowerison is a long-standing member of the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle and can be reached at [infodame@cox.net](mailto:infodame@cox.net).

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# San Diego foundations help in the holiday season

By Vince Meehan

The holiday season is a time for giving, but also a time for love and caring. And that love and caring typically extends beyond family and friends. It's a time to give to those not as fortunate, even if they are complete strangers. But many people who would like to give do not know exactly the best way to help, so they rely on established foundations that do this every year. And many times, these foundations need volunteers to distribute the donations as much as the donations themselves. However you wish to help, there is definitely a foundation out there that can use your resources to help ensure that the less fortunate receive additional support this holiday season.

## JACOBS & CUSHMAN SAN DIEGO FOOD BANK

The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank is the largest hunger-relief organization in San Diego County, and serves an average of 550,000 people per month here locally. They partner with nearly 500 nonprofits to ensure that families in need receive nutritious and health food items. One of their major partners is the Albertsons Companies, which also includes Vons here in San Diego.

"This holiday season the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank is honored to partner with Albertsons and Vons supermarkets to raise vital food and funds to provide food assistance to families in need, Castillo said. "We are asking the community to help our San Diego County neighbors in need by donating a \$5 pre-filled Hunger Bag at checkout at Albertsons or Vons supermarkets. Each bag contains our 'most needed' food items that will be distributed to families in need this holiday season. We are encouraging the community visit Albertsons and Vons to make a difference today,"

The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank also encourages schools, churches, businesses and community groups to host a food drive of their own to help their neighbors. This can be done by going to [SanDiegoFoodBank.org](http://SanDiegoFoodBank.org) and accessing the Host a food drive button. On that same page, you will see many other programs that can be accessed year-round for those in need. These include the Super Pantry Program, which provides food distribution all over the county, The Neighborhood Distribution Program, which provides monthly fruit and vegetable giveaways, and the Emergency Food Assistance program, which is a federal program that serves families who meet income guidelines set by the federal government.

For all donation and volunteer opportunities, go to [SanDiegoFoodBank.org](http://SanDiegoFoodBank.org)



San Diego Pride volunteers partner with the Bankers Hill Community Group. (Photos by Vince Meehan)



Fernando Zweifach López, Executive Director of San Diego Pride



Deacon Jim F. Vargas, OFS, President and Chief Executive Officer of Father Joe's Village

## FATHER JOE'S VILLAGES

Father Joe's Villages has been the premiere organization in San Diego for over 70 years when it comes to providing services for our homeless population. It has gone from a simple soup kitchen to now providing housing, health and dental care, and job training for their clients so they can achieve true independence and join the community once again. As with most foundations, they are busy year-round, however, the holiday season brings special programs. Deacon Jim F. Vargas, OFS is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Father Joe's Village and sees firsthand

the effects of homelessness on our children.

"We're preparing for Christmas, and Christmas is a special time at our village because it gives us an opportunity to really – especially for the kids – to provide some normalcy for them. Because you can imagine their situation isn't very typical," noted Vargas. "We serve 350 families – to put it in perspective for you – and about 900 children through our programs and our services. So it's a lot of families that we support and a lot of children."

On December 9, Vargas will host an event at the village designed to bring some holiday magic to the

kids. "We'll have the Old Town Trolley – which for years and years has partnered with us – and will put together a Christmas event, and that's always a lot of fun," Vargas said. "Where the kids are able to have fun and we'll be able to provide some gifts for them and they will also be able to see Santa."

Due to Covid, the event had to be scaled down a bit last year, but Vargas is confident that the event will go on as normal. This includes hopping aboard the trolley for a fun nostalgic ride. "We do it in a very safe way obviously, so there's distancing and masks involved because we want to make sure that our kids are safe, and

that everybody is safe. So it's both Santa and Mrs. Clause actually who will join us for that event."

The village typically provides up to 4000 meals each day year-round to their clients, but they plan on doing a special event on Christmas Eve with a festive ambiance with holiday music and decorations. And this year, there will again be a shopping event designed to save Christmas for the children housed at the village.

**See the website for the rest of this story.**

—Vince Meehan can be reached at [vinniemeehan@gmail.com](mailto:vinniemeehan@gmail.com).



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# Balboa Park exhibits innovative Japanese textiles

By Kendra Sitton

San Diego is the host of the first NUNO exhibit on the west coast in over a decade. The leader in innovative modern Japanese textiles has an exhibit called “The Language of Textiles” at the Japanese Friendship Garden through Feb. 27.

“Hundreds of years of tradition in Japan have influenced today's art which is also combined with a lot of high tech. Tradition, innovation — the balance between the two is really an interesting topic and something that NUNO textiles really reflect,” said Chad Patton, the managing director of Material Things who curated the exhibit.

NUNO means “cloth” in Japanese and has become a world-famous textile company since being founded 35 years ago by Reiko Sudo with iconic textile creator Jun'ichi Ara. While many museums feature exhibits of the company's innovative textiles and often sell their products in the gift shop, this is the first exhibit curated specifically Material Things, NUNO's international distributor which is based in San Diego. The exhibit covers 20 years of Material Things' textiles they have sold since they were founded.

“It was really fun because it gave us an opportunity to look back at things that [NUNO] produced over the last 20 years that maybe we had forgotten about or



30 textiles make up the exhibit. (Photos courtesy Material Things)

hadn't looked at recently,” Patton said.

The exhibit became an involved process for his small team that typically is busy selling yardage of the textiles to interior designers, fashion designers and Hollywood costume designers. Together, the team selected 30 textiles to display inside the Inamori Pavilion.

Patton approached the Japanese Friendship Garden because although Material Things is based in San Diego, much of their business is in Los Angeles and New York.

“We wanted to do something here locally since we are based here,” Patton said.

The 30 textiles in the exhibit showcase three of NUNO's unique methods creating textiles.

Initially, the Japanese government approached Sudo to try to revitalize one of the two remaining silk mills in the country. When she toured the factory, Sudo was interested in a pile of waste. It was explained that they were

the rough outside of silk cocoons made with short fibers that for hundreds of years were thought to be unusable. Instead of simply designing a new pattern of silk, she worked with women in the town to develop an entire new fabric made with the discarded kibiso fibers. One section of the exhibit shows the stages of turning the short fibers into threads that can be woven.

Another section shows off NUNO's patented process of origami pleats. The three-dimensional fabric is created by heating up polyester to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. The plasticity in polyester ensures that when heated to that temperature, the pleats become permanent.

The third textile the exhibit focuses on is called feather flurries. While making the double weave silk, the loom is stopped and feathers are manually put into pockets



This table shows how the discarded cocoon exterior is woven.



The patented origami pleats textile



An example of feather flurries



A display showing how origami pleats are made.

before the loom resumes. The feathers come from game birds eaten at restaurants such as ducks and pheasants, meaning the feathers are essentially recycled into the pockets of the silk fabric.

The exhibit opened on Nov. 12 to much interest from the public. Patton was excited to show modern Japanese art rather than historic pieces. The setting of the traditional garden offsets the changing Japanese aesthetic.

“The modern Japanese aesthetic is something that's very, very interesting and it's something that

has been influenced by the traditional but today's Japan is just as beautiful and just as interesting as 500 years ago Japan,” Patton said. “I wanted people to see that.”

Through Feb. 27, people can visit the exhibit and experience modern Japanese design for themselves. General admission at the Japanese Friendship Garden is \$12. The garden is open from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. daily at the heart of Balboa Park.

—Reach Kendra Sitton at [kendra@sdnews.com](mailto:kendra@sdnews.com).

## TIPS TO STAY CONNECTED DURING NATURAL DISASTERS, WILDFIRE SEASON



It's always important to prepare your loved ones, home and business in the event of a natural disaster, which can strike without warning. For San Diego residents, that also means preparing and protecting your home or business in the event of a wildfire.

A top priority for Cox during a wildfire or other natural disaster is to keep customers connected so they can stay informed, check in with family and friends, and even access their shows and movies if they're evacuated.

Cox also works hard to keep business customers, including hospitals and offices of Emergency Services, connected so they can continue to serve their customers and the public.

Wildfire season typically occurs from May through October. However, wildfires can occur at any time. Some of the most destructive and deadliest wildfires in California have occurred in November

(Camp Fire in Northern California in 2018) and December (Thomas Fire in Santa Barbara in 2017).

Cox prepares all year long for natural disasters, including wildfires, by reviewing its business continuity plan and running through simulated events such as a wildfire or earthquake so that employees in all facets of its operations will be prepared and know their role and responsibilities during a natural disaster.

When weather conditions increase the risk for wildfires, the local power company may notify you and Cox that they're implementing a PSPS. If you're in a neighborhood where power is shut off, your Cox services may be interrupted. You need power to run your devices and we need commercial power for our network.

We'll work closely with the power company and public safety agencies to monitor the situation and ensure the safety of our network and facilities to continue to serve our customers.

Here are some tips to help better prepare for an unexpected event or Public Safety Power Shutoff.

### Have a charged backup battery for your landline phone

Cox Voice customers should keep corded landline phones and a fully charged backup battery for phone modems in case of an emergency. Purchase a backup battery by calling 855-324-7700 or visiting your local Cox store.

### Follow Cox on Twitter for updates and info

During a Public Safety Power Shutoff or natural disaster, Cox posts service outage updates and

other important information on Twitter. Follow Cox at [@coxcalifornia](https://twitter.com/coxcalifornia).

### Download Cox apps before a wildfire or PSPS occurs

- Cox app – Check on outages, stay up to date with text alerts and manage your account.
- Cox Contour app – Cox TV customers can access the latest news and weather, and stream favorites to their mobile devices.

### Generators may help keep you connected

If your power goes out, a generator may prolong your services if your Cox service location still has power. Check your generator owner's manual for details on power capacity and safe operation.

### Homelife Security Functionality

Cox Homelife Security will continue to work with limited function. Go to [cox.com/residential/support/cellular-backup-capabilities](https://cox.com/residential/support/cellular-backup-capabilities) for more information.

### Consumer Disaster Protections

Customers whose residential telephone service is impacted during a state of emergency declared by the California Governor's Office or the President of the United States may be eligible to receive disaster relief protections Visit [cox.com](https://cox.com).

For more helpful information and tips, visit [cox.com/CaliforniaAssist](https://cox.com/CaliforniaAssist).







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# Uptown News // SAN DIEGO DOWNTOWN NEWS

## BEST OF 2021 UPTOWN & DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO

### WELCOME THIS YEAR'S WINNERS!

San Diego's urban core in the Downtown and Uptown communities is full of vibrant neighborhoods, historic districts and unique businesses.

From residents to houses, our neighborhoods comprise a balanced mix of young and old, established and new. Why would the dining and entertainment establishments we frequent be any different?

Each year, we ask readers to weigh in on what businesses add to the fabric of the communities in the annual Best of Downtown and Best of Uptown awards. Due to the changed publishing schedule of these newspapers due to the COVID-19 virus' impact on advertising, these awards have been combined into one special edition highlighting businesses in both areas.

Readers of Downtown and Uptown News were able to vote for dozens of local establishments in dining categories like happy hour, Irish pub, burrito, pizza and donut shop as well as retail categories like antique store and spa.

San Diego Uptown News covers nearly a dozen neighborhoods, including Mission Hills, Bankers Hill, Hillcrest, University Heights, Normal Heights, North Park, South Park, Golden Hill, Kensington and Tal-

madge, as well as nearby regions of City Heights, Mission Valley and more. Downtown News covers another set of unique neighborhoods from the reaches of the ever-expanding East Village, to the majestic Gaslamp Quarter, through the twinkling lights of the Core/Columbia and Financial districts, to the shores of the Marina District and the Embarcadero, and to the piazzas of Little Italy. Our readers have spoken about their favorite establishments. The range of winners reflect our diverse neighborhoods, offering a glimpse of what it's like to live in the urban core.

As you look through these pages, we hope you find familiar names along with new faces. Swing by these spots for a taste of life and to support local businesses.

To each of our 2021 Best of Downtown and Uptown winners, we extend hearty congratulations on your recognition. We hope our loyal readers — and your loyal customers, both new and old — continue to show you patronage for years to come.

—The staff at San Diego Community News Group (sdenn.com)



ROYAL INDIA



THE KNOT STOP



MISSION HILLS AUTOMOTIVE



SUSHI DELI 1



HOB KNOB HILL



# Thank You!

**San Diego Uptown & Downtown News Readers**



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2021 DOWNTOWN

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## Gold Winner Listings:

### DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

#### Best Ahi Poke

##### Blue Poke

Blue Pok is committed to building a reputation centered on quality service, ambiance and uncompromising food. Their commitment to responsibly sourcing the highest-quality ingredients has aligned them with farmers, fishermen, processors and suppliers who share their commitment. The menu reflect this.

Blue Poke  
2707 Boston Ave, San Diego  
bluepoke.com | 619-434-4673

#### Best American

##### Hob Knob Hill

For 75 years, Hob Knob Hill has been doing their way. The bakery starts early every day to bake fresh muffins and cakes. The cooks cure the corned beef. Dressings, sauces, and squeezed orange juice are made fresh every day. Just about everything is done right on the premises. They serve breakfast all day and lunch and dinner service, as well. Over the years, Hob Nob Hill has become beloved by the community, the region and has received national attention on Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives.

Hob Knob Hill  
2271 1st Ave, San Diego  
hobnobhill.com | 619-239-8176

#### Best Bakery

##### Blackmarket Bakery

A trendy bakery serving mouth-watering baked goods, fresh sandwiches, coffee drinks and more goodies in a casual, roomy digs located along 30th.

Blackmarket Bakery  
4686 30th St, San Diego  
blackmarketbakery.com | (619) 641-0081

#### Best Bar

##### Queenstown Public House

Queenstown Public House is a quaint and whimsical restaurant located in San Diego's Little Italy neighborhood specializing in New Zealand inspired dishes. Whether it be for breakfast or brunch for weekend mimosas, lunch or happy hour for a grass-fed burger and a cocktail, or dinner on the patio for some locally sourced, seasonal salads and wine varietals, there is sure to be something for everyone.

Queenstown Public House  
1557 Columbia St, San Diego  
queenstownpublichouse.com | (619) 546-0444

#### Best Barbecue

##### Kansas City BBQ

Kansas City Barbeque is a self-proclaimed as the "Top Gun Bar", known for being the filming location for scenes used in the film Top Gun. Opened 30 years ago by Kansas City natives Martin and Cindy Blair Kansas City BBQ was one of the first restaurants to usher in the downtown dining re-vitalization of San Diego which is known today as the premier destination for all things travels and business related.

Kansas City BBQ  
600 W Harbor Dr, San Diego  
kcbqb.net | 619-231-9680

#### Best Brewery

##### Knotty Brewing Co.

Head Brewmaster, Donovan Lane, grew up in and around Portland Maine and like a lot of people, his passion for brewing began with home brewing. Donovan came to San Diego from Funky Bow Brewery. His favorite type of beer to brew and drink is a stout unless it's over 100 degrees then he'll go with a Saison.

Knotty Brewing Co.  
842 Market Street, San Diego  
knottybrewing.com | (619) 269-4337

#### Best Beer Selection

##### Bottlecraft

Little Italy is Bottlecraft's original home. Named San Diego's Best Craft Beer Shop, Bottlecraft is a craft beer store, bottle shop, and bar with twenty four taps plus hundreds of bottles available to drink in or take to-go. Their friendly and knowledgeable bartenders are passionate about craft beer and will help you find the perfect beer to enjoy in our bar or to take home. In addition to beer, they also offer wine, cider, and kombucha on draft and in bottle, available to drink on site or take-away.

Bottle Craft  
2252 India St, San Diego  
bottlecraft.com | (619) 487 9493

#### Best Breakfast (tie)

##### The Waffle Spot at Kings Inn

The Waffle Spot serves Breakfast, Brunch, and Lunch and has been a San Diego favorite in Mission Valley for 25 years. This family-friendly restaurant is great for kids features fresh waffles 7-days a week, along with classic breakfast and lunch menu items. Free Parking and Free Wi-Fi are available for all patrons. Groups are welcome, plus catering and To-Go services are available.

The Waffle Spot at Kings Inn  
1333 Hotel Cir S, San Diego  
kingsinnsandiego.com | (619) 297-2231

#### Hob Knob Hill

(see listing under Best American)

#### Best Brunch (tie)

##### Madison Park

Cutting his teeth in the kitchens of BiCe, La Strada and Opera, Chef Tony brings all of his Mediterranean influences to roost in the Madison kitchen. A tireless beast, Tony and his team would love to welcome you to enjoy a meal that is the creation of an ongoing exploration.

Madison Park  
4622 Park Blvd, San Diego  
madisononpark.com | (619) 269-6566

#### Morning Glory

It's all about breakfast at Morning Glory in Little Italy. Enjoy items like avocado toast and shakshuka and a fluffy soufflé pancake that are worth waking up for. How about fried rice with pork belly plus two eggs with runny yolks to mix things up. So, get up early and smell the wonderful mix of breakfast offerings!

Morning Glory  
550 W Date St, San Diego  
morningglorybreakfast.com  
(619) 629-0302



**Best Cafe****Parakeet Cafe**

At Parakeet Café you will find yourselves among friends and neighbors, among foodies and yogis, young and old. You will be a part of a celebration of one of life's simplest pleasures and one of the most joyful acts we as humans can do: share a meal and have a drink.

Parakeet Cafe  
1680 India St, San Diego  
parakeetcafe.com | 619-255-1442

**Kensington Cafe**

Kensington Cafe is truly a neighborhood cafe. They love regulars and always welcoming to new faces who walk in the door. They strive to make everyone feel at home... you can even bring your dog for patio seating and people watching.

Kensington Cafe  
4141 Adams Ave, San Diego  
kensingtoncafesd.com | (619) 640-0494

**Best Casino****Sycuan Casino Resort**

They began as a humble Bingo Palace in 1983. Now 35 years later, they've grown into

a community landmark and one of San Diego's premier casino resort destinations that offers something for everybody. The casino features 2,800 diverse slot machines and classic table games like poker, blackjack, craps, and roulette. Their designated non-smoking wing is the largest of its kind in San Diego and brings new meaning to pure gaming.

Sycuan Casino Resort  
5469 Casino Way, 92019  
sycuan.com | 619-445-6002

**Best Cocktail****Nobel Experiment**

Things are not always as they appear. This swanky speakeasy is tucked behind a secret door in secretly located inside a popular downtown eatery, The Noble Experiment is a bar hidden inside a restaurant: What may look like a stack of kegs by the restroom is actually a secret door leading into a bar so elite and exclusive that it requires reservations several days in advance. The gothic-style room is tastefully balanced and allows for intimate conversations.

Nobel Experiment  
777 G St, San Diego  
(619) 888-4713

**Best Coffee Shop****James Coffee**

Independently owned and operated specializing in producing handcrafted artisan roasted coffee. James Coffee has three locations that offer a revolving assortment of distinctive single-origin beans as well as exclusive James Coffee crafted blends. Using modest production methods they are able to elevate and preserve our quality and taste.

James Coffee  
2870 Fourth Ave. #107, San Diego  
jamescoffeeco.com | (619) 343-1477

**Best Chinese****Fortunate Son**

Fashionable eatery with a terrace seating offering Chinese specialties and cocktails, plus a take-out option.

Fortunate Son  
2943 Adams Ave, San Diego  
(619) 391-3766

**Best Deli (tie)****Grapes & Hops Deli**

Grapes & Hops Deli is committed to presenting quality products that is unsurpassed in taste, freshness, and distinction. Leading

by example with integrity and professionalism is what defines their company. Dedicated employees are poised to serve you and meet your needs from the moment you walk in the door.

Grapes & Hops Deli  
811 Market St, San Diego  
grapesandhopsdeli.com | (619) 255-5383

**The Deli Llama**

Quirky counter-service deli offering gourmet sandwiches along with salads and soup.

The Deli Llama  
3702 Fifth Ave, San Diego  
(619) 295-4666

**Best Dessert****Babycakes**

Since 2008, they've been serving up sweet treats. From cupcakes to wedding cakes and all sorts of desserts in between. With three locations to serve you, they are always ready to make any birthday, wedding, anniversary, or holiday celebration special with something delectable!

Babycakes  
3795 Fourth Ave, San Diego  
babycakesandiego.com | (619) 990-2282

**Best Donut Shop****Nomad Donuts**

Nomad Donuts offers an ever-evolving menu of donuts, bagels, pastries, preserves and coffee. Nomad is your go-to for gourmet donuts and bagels inspired by the world yet created with local ingredients. From Pacific Rim flavors to your grandma's kitchen, San Diego donut shop celebrates global tastes with weekly changing menus.

Nomad Donuts  
3102 University Ave, San Diego  
nomaddonuts.com | (619) 431-5000

**Best Farmers' Market****Hillcrest Farmers Market**

The Hillcrest Farmers Market hosts 175 weekly vendors offering a wide variety of locally grown in-season fruit, produce, gifts, arts and crafts, and flowers. Many of the local California farmers participating in the market grow their produce organically or with no pesticides. The market also hosts a large variety of prepared food and hot food items with an emphasis on international cuisine. Each week, there are a large number of arts and crafts vendors as well as weekly entertainment.

Hillcrest Farmers Market  
3960 Normal St #3960, San Diego  
(619) 299-3330

**Best Fine Dining (tie)****Mr. A's**

Born in rural southwest France, Bertrand studied economics at the University of Toulouse. After college, his studies took him to America always deriving income by waiting tables in French restaurants. In over a decade, Bertrand became involved in the ownership of several restaurants. Bertrand had always loved the tremendous location and potential of the legendary Mister A's. In 2000 and completely re-designed the restaurant. Bertrand writes a wine column for a local newspaper, enjoys golf, tennis, horse racing and traveling with his wife Denise.

Mr. A's  
2550 Fifth Avenue, 92103  
asrestaurant.com | (619) 239-1377

**Born & Raised**

Born and Raised is an American steakhouse. They brought an almost academic appreciation for steakhouse history and tradition to Born & Raised, while trying to stay relevant and authentic. Their dry-aged beef pays tribute to earlier, earthier, pre-government grading practices and is the centerpiece of a meal. A timeless celebration of everything that makes Born & Raised so special.

Born and Raised  
1909 India St, San Diego  
(619) 202-4577  
bornandraisedsteak.com

**Best Greek Cuisine****Olympic Cafe**

For over thirty years, Olympic Café has served the San Diego and North Park communities with the finest homemade Greek and American style cuisine. By making food from scratch with the freshest ingredients, they provide flavorful and distinctive dishes inspired by recipes handed down through generations.

Olympic Cafe  
2310 University Ave, San Diego  
(619) 692-9082

**Best Health Food****Lazy Acres**

Lazy Acres has a great selection of healthy foods and niche products. The organic produce is plentiful and easy to find.

Lazy Acres  
422 W. Washington St, San Diego  
(619) 272-4289

**Best Indian Cuisine****Royal India**

Royal India has been voted the best Indian restaurant in San Diego, year after year and are run by the Kambo brothers. Locations are independently owned. Royal India has been voted best Indian restaurant in San Diego specializing in fine dining. They combine their experience and cooking talents to provide tranquil ambiance, using the finest ingredients, prepared with an infusion of passion and creativity.

Royal India  
329 Market St, San Diego  
royalindia.com | (619) 269-9999

**Best Irish Pub****The Field**

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Hillcrest – 527 University Ave | (619) 291-7525  
Del Mar – 15770 San Andres Dr. | (858) 793-9695

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329 Market St.  
619.269.9999  
royalindia.com

**Miramar**  
8990 Miramar Rd.  
858.457.9999





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2655 4th Ave. 92103



heart of America’s finest city? The Field Irish Pub — it’s a genuine bit of Ireland in San Diego’s Gaslamp Quarter. Come in to experience Irish food. Stay for the live and lively entertainment. As they say in Ireland: C  ad M  ile F  ilte, a hundred thousand welcomes. The Field  
544 Fifth Avenue, San Diego  
thefield.com | (619) 232-9840

**Best Italian Cuisine**  
**Parma Cucina Italiana**  
Parma Cucina Italiana, has been voted repeatedly Best Italian Restaurant in San Diego. Enjoy a down-to-earth ambiance and fantastic Italian food and it is sure to become a staple for years to come. The Italian wines, the homemade lasagna and pastas, the best Italian products and the native Italian proprietors, Parma is as authentic as it gets. The house specialty is, of course, pasta. Don’t miss also the best lasagna, the risotto special and the fresh seafood and fish of the day! Vegetarian and gluten-free options available. Parma Cusin Italiana  
3850 Fifth Ave, San Diego  
(619) 543-0049

**Best Juice Shop**  
**Pure Press**  
Pure Press sprouted from love and passion to live well balanced lives through healthy eating and fitness. A healthy lifestyle, not only changes your body, it changes your mind, your attitude and your mood. Pure Press takes great pride to bring fresh and healthy options to fuel your body. Pure Press  
7283 Navajo Rd, San Diego  
purepressjuicebar.com | (619) 569-5255

**Best Live Music**  
**San Diego Symphony**  
Through unquestionable commitment to the highest levels of artistic achievement, the San Diego Symphony seeks to elevate human potential by providing a shared sense of pride and belonging to something bigger than any of us can achieve alone. They offer audiences the wonder of live music and transformative learning experiences and passion for the arts. San Diego Symphony  
750 B St, San Diego  
sandiegosymphony.org | (619) 235-0804

**Best Mexican Cuisine**  
**The Amigo Spot**  
Mexican Restaurant & Cantina Bar - located at the Kings Inn Hotel, established in 1998. Family-Style Mexican Food with Music, Taco Tuesdays, Happy Hours, Drink Specials (25+ Tequilas!), and Holiday Events. The Amigo Spot proudly offers the finest in regional Baja Mexican Cuisine. Enjoy traditional sit-down meals from delicious Burritos and Enchiladas—to Sizzling Fajita Platters, Marinated Carne Asada and a variety of Seafood and Vegetarian offerings. Kings Inn San Diego  
333 Hotel Circle S, San Diego  
amigospotssandiego.com | (619) 297-2231

**Best New Restaurant (tie)**  
**Callie**  
Chef Travis Swikard fell for the flavors of Greece, Spain, Italy, Morocco, the Middle East, and every place along the Mediterranean coastline during his time cooking at iconic French chef Daniel Boulud’s NYC restaurant, Boulud Sud. At Callie he brings the diversity of Mediterranean cuisines together with the ingredients and terroir of the greater San Diego region. Callie is greek for ‘the most beautiful.’ Callie puts the farmers, fisherman, and ingredients at the forefront, blending them with a Mediterranean palette. The two come together to create light, bright, and bold flavors. Cuisine du

soleil. Callie  
1195 Island Ave, San Diego  
calliesd.com | (619) 255-9696

**Lumi**  
Featuring world-renowned celebrity chef, Akira Back, Lumi is an energetic and upscale rooftop experience with a creative sushi and modern Japanese menu accompanied by handcrafted libations in a vividly unique, rooftop atmosphere. Lumi  
366 Fifth Avenue, San Diego  
lumirooftop.com | (619) 329-LUMI

**Best Outdoor Dining (tie)**  
**The Prado**  
The Prado, an award-winning, full-service restaurant located in the House of Hospitality in Balboa Park, offers charming indoor and outdoor dining. The unique d  cor blends the historical aspects and whimsical accessories inspired by the Park museum collections. The diverse cuisine includes an array of appetizers, salads, sandwiches and imaginative entr  es. The lounge combines a lighter menu with a wide variety of margaritas, sangria, beer, wine and other beverages. The Prado  
1549 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego  
(619) 557-9441

**Parkhouse Eatery**  
Parkhouse Eatery is a casual, elegant neighborhood eatery snugly nestled into the house that once held the St. Vincent de Paul thrift store. The restaurant boasts three seating areas — the outdoor garden patio, the front living room and the cozy hearth room — each with its own casually romantic personality. Parkhouse Eatery features the garden patio, the bright window-lit living room, or the cozy warm room with a wood-burning fireplace the locals call “the hearth room.” Parkhouse Eatery  
4574 Park Blvd, San Diego  
parkhousesd.com | (619) 295-7275

**Best Pet Friendly Dining (tie)**  
**Knotty Brewing Co.**  
(see listing under Best Brewery)

**Best Pizza**  
**buona Forchetta**  
Buona Forchetta started in 2011 as a craving of Matteo’s to bring some of his native Italy to our adopted home of South Park. He found the perfect corner and built the perfect oven. Since then, they’ve strived to deliver an exceptional and authentic Italian experience to customers keeping the focus on the simple recipes that Matteo grew up on. They owe a huge “grazie” to neighbors who have joined on this awesome journey. buona Forchetta  
3001 Beech St, San Diego  
buonaforchettasd.com | (619) 381-4844

**Best Seafood**  
**The Fish Market**  
In 1976, a sport fisherman, business partner, boat captain and gourmet chef joined forces to open The Fish Market. Not one of them had notable experience in the restaurant business but their individual and collective passion for seafood was deep enough to drive them toward their vision: A welcoming restaurant/fish market serving the freshest seafood, and oysters prepared to perfection. The Fish Market  
750 N Harbor Dr, San Diego  
thefishmarket.com | (619) 232-3474

**Best Sports Bar**  
**Redwing Bar & Grill**  
Named Best Dive Bar in North Park! Enjoy pool, darts, Buzztime Trivia, and karaoke seven nights a week! Plus they have a full outdoor smoking patio, great bartenders and a relaxed laid back atmosphere. Redwing Bar & Grill  
4012 30th St, San Diego  
redwingbar.com | (619) 281-8700

**Best Sushi**  
**Sushi Deli 1**  
Sushi Deli offers over 65 different rolls while

still providing traditional sashimi and nigiri. Besides the huge sushi roll selection, they offer a huge selection of fusion foods, from garlic beef french fry’s, nacho gyoza and tuna poppers to tofu nuggets. For those of you who prefer a healthier choice, enjoy tofu salad, poke salad and vegetarian rolls. Sushi Diner 1  
228 W Washington St, San Diego | (619) 231-9597

**Best Thai**  
**Taste of Thai**  
Proprietors Val, a native of Thailand and Art Habbestad deserve much of the credit for the emergence of the Hillcrest restaurant scene. It was 1989, they opened their marvelous Taste of Thai restaurant right in the heart of the vibrant community. It was a time when Thai food was coming into its own. To this day, the restaurant still remains among the most popular, despite that a number of other Thai spots have opened up. Taste of Thai  
527 University Ave, San Diego  
sdtasteofthai.com | (619) 291-7525

**Best Vegan/Vegetarian**  
**Donna Jean**  
Donna Jean was the name of chef Roy’s mom. She died at the young age of 55 from aggressive breast cancer and he believes it absolutely could have been prevented if she would have been given the knowledge and resources to seek out a plant based diet earlier in life. That being said, this is not a health food restaurant. His goal is to start a conversation about what plant based cuisine can be. Donna Jean  
2949 Fifth Ave, San Diego  
donnajeanrestaurant.com | (619) 299-5500

**Best Wings**  
**Taste & Thirst**  
This rollicking no-cover destination offers American comfort grub, mixed drinks and nightly specials. Enjoy your favorite team while savoring your favorite wings! Taste & Thirst  
715 Fourth Ave, San Diego  
tasteandthirst.com | (619) 955-5995

**Best Wine Selection**  
**The Rose Wine Bar**  
The Rose has been a staple in South Park for a decade, where owners Chelsea Coleman and Rae Gurne have been spreading the gospel of natural wines (to oversimplify it: wines that are small-scale, sustainable, organic, and biodynamic with little-to-no added yeast, additives, or sulfites) from the West Coast and Europe. They are the epitome of a local shop. The Rose Wine Bar  
2219 30th St, San Diego  
therosewinebar.com | (619) 281-0718

**Best Accountant**  
**Rowling & Associates**  
Rowling & Associates is an award-winning, fee-only, registered investment adviser that offers investment management, and tax and financial planning services. The firm’s ideal clients are professionals, business owners, retirees, and executives with complex financial situations seeking financial or tax advice to meet their goals. Their client-centric, tax-efficient investment approach sets it apart from other advisors adding tremendous value to clients. Rowling & Associates also specializes in socially responsible investing, and personalized service catered towards young professionals. Rowling & Associates  
8889 Rio San Diego Dr, San Diego  
rowling.com | (619) 295-0200

**Best Antiques/Resale**  
**Consignment Classics**  
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(619) 291-3000



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Best Attorney (tie)  
King Aminpour

Attorney King Aminpour started college at the age of 11, finished law school at the age of 19 and later became California's youngest attorney at that time. He is the founder of Aminpour & Associates and for over 24 years King and his firm have helped over 17,000 accident victims and their families. King's determination, hard work and his commitment to his clients and the community of San Diego has paid off in Gold. Gold medals that is! King has been voted San

Diego's #1 Car & Motorcycle Injury Lawyer for over seven years and now a household name.  
King Aminpour  
317 Ash St, San Diego  
AttorneyKing.com | (619) 333-3333

Susan Hartman

Following law school, Susan opened a law office with a focus on estate planning. A few years later she accepted a position as a Deputy Public Defender in Orange County, where she practiced as a trial attorney. Susan Hartman is admitted to practice in both California and Massachusetts State Courts and the U.S. District Court, Southern District of

CA. She is also an active member in the CA and MA Bar Assoc., National College for DUI Defense, California DUI Lawyers Association, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, San Diego Criminal Defense Bar, and the GSDBA.  
Law Office of Susan Hartman  
8880 Rio San Diego Dr, Ste 800,  
San Diego | 619-260-1122

Best Auto Repair Shop  
Mission Hills Automotive

If you're looking for auto repair in San Diego, Mission Hills Automotive works hard to earn your trust and loyalty. They know how important it is to find a car service you can rely on, so your satisfaction is their top priority each and every day. Their professional automotive service offers you years of combined expertise from well-trained technicians. They treat their auto repair professionals well because they value their skill and can-do attitude— that will save time and money.  
Mission Hills Automotive  
308 W Washington St, San Diego  
missionhillsautosd.com | (619) 299-9367

Best Bank (tie)  
Union Bank of California

Banking solutions designed to meet your financial needs. Learn how Union Bank® can help. You deserve more. The Private Bank. Savings. Mortgage. Checking. Credit Cards. Investments.  
Union Bank of California Downtown  
1201 Fifth Ave, San Diego | (619) 230-4666

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3737 5th Ave, San Diego | (619) 542-5068

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The Dover  
703 Eighth Ave, San Diego | (619) 795-9876

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San Diego Bike Shop  
Throughout years San Diego Bike Shop has served a wide range of customers. They stock a wide range of parts and offer a variety of services to the bicycling community; be it road rider, mountain biker, BMX'r, they do not shy away from reviving a beat-up old bike and have the experience and expertise to work on what the technology offers today. In a nutshell, they are just not an ordinary bike shop.  
San Diego Bike Shop  
619 C St, San Diego  
sdbikeshop.com | (619) 237-1245

Best Car Wash  
Uptown Touchless Car Wash  
In business since 1988, your neighborhood car wash has recently upgraded to top of the line equipment, providing a quality wash in less time. With full service or express options, customers can choose the wash and additional services based on time and budget.  
Uptown Touchless Carwash  
4157 Normal St, San Diego | (619) 297-9274

Best Childcare  
The Learning Tree Daycare  
Low student/teacher ratio: The positive effects of reduced student-to-teacher ratio are the most apparent in early education, specifically in kindergarten through third grade. Play Based + Academic Learning: They are one of the only pre-schools in San Diego that uses a combination of "Play Based" and Academic Curriculum, designed to maximize the development of your child's potential on time and budget.  
The Learning Tree Daycare  
1453 4th Ave, San Diego | (760) 943-0848

Best Chiropractor  
Fix Body Group  
Most people think of a healthy lifestyle as something that isn't for them. Whether it's because of injury, old age or "bad genes" they feel their best life is simply too far out of reach and unattainable. Fix Body Group, does not agree. With decades of experience helping hundreds of patients reach their health goals, they've seen it all. Everyone is capable of change. They can help you take back control and live the life you deserve.

Ask about the program that's best for you.  
Fix Body Group  
5030 Camino De La Siesta #404, San Diego  
fixbodygroup.com | (619) 295-9791

Best Cosmetologist/  
Dermatologist  
Dr. Darren Farnasi  
Dr. Farnesi has been an investigator in clinical trials for new medical treatments since 2001. His extensive experience in the field of medical research allows him to stay tuned to the fields of Anti-Aging Medicine and Aesthetic Dermatology. Dr. Farnesi will develop your personalized program— a multi-disciplined approach that may include natural bio-identical hormone therapy, fitness, and nutrition, as well as natural, integrative and traditional medicines and supplements, diet, vitamins and minerals as needed.  
Dr. Darren Farnasi  
3911 Normal St, San Diego | (619) 795-6700

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San Diego County Credit Union  
San Diego County Credit Union is San Diego's largest locally-owned financial institution. With over \$8.3 billion in assets, SDCCU is a not-for-profit credit union wholly owned and operated by its members. Unlike most other financial institutions, like big banks, SDCCU does not issue stock or pay dividends to outside stockholders. Instead, earnings are returned to members in the form of lower loan rates, higher dividends on deposits or lower fees. Visit a SDCCU branch and experience the difference. It's your hometown. It's ours too.  
San Diego County Credit Union  
502 University Ave #500, 92103  
sdccu.com | (877) 732-2848

Best Computer Repair  
DC Computers  
DC Computers is locally owned and operated. They specialize in selling used Apple laptops and desktops, as well as all brands of Windows-based laptops including Dell, IBM, Toshiba, Sony, HP and Compaq. Most of the laptops are off-lease units acquired from large corporations which are upgrading their computers. They buy these computers in bulk, test them to ensure they work proper-



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### Bohdi Massage & Wellness Center

Bohdi offers the best in massage therapy, acupuncture, and bodywork services. The location is easily accessible with off-street parking. Bohdi's professional practitioners are hand-picked based on education, experience, friendliness, and the ability to provide results for clients. They believe that with consistent and quality bodywork in conjunction with mindful self-care, you can experience optimal health.

Bohdi Massage & Wellness Center  
3678 Fourth Ave, San Diego  
(619) 274-2744

## Best Dentist

### Jeffrey S. Keeny DDS

Dr. Keeny's staff provide professional care and are eager to help with your dentistry needs as well as answer any questions you might have during your visit. Each member of their team specializes in particular dentistry services from dental cleanings, root canals, dental insurance, continuing care, sensitivities, cosmetic care and more!

Jeffrey S. Keeny DDS  
1807 Robinson Ave, #101, San Diego  
drkeenypacbell.net | (619) 295-1512

## Best Dispensary (tie)

### March & Ash

Visit this one-of-a-kind cannabis boutique in the heart of Mission Valley. Just 15 minutes away from Downtown San Diego, their flagship location boasts an impressive flower bar, a dedicated CBD room, and a clone wall. They believe everyone deserves a comfortable and confident cannabis experience and they prioritize customer education, safety and satisfaction. That's why they try to have the most knowledgeable staff and the highest quality products in San Diego.

March & Ash  
2835 Camino del Rio S #100, San Diego  
(619) 314-7336

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SDRC  
1299 Camino Del Rio So, San Diego | (619) 906-5546  
10150 Sorrento Valley Rd, Ste. 100, San Diego  
(858) 380-4637 | sandiegorecreationalcannabis.com

## Best Financial Planner

### Stockton Financial

With offices in San Diego and Boston. Stockton Financial helps individuals, families

and small businesses on both coasts to crystallize their dreams and develop the best possible strategies to achieve their goals. No matter what stage of life you're in and no matter how much planning you have or haven't done, if you're looking help to grow and protect your assets, now may be the time to check them out.

Stockton Financial  
4365 Executive Dr. Ste. 800, 92121  
marystockton.com | (858) 623-8945

## Best Florist

### Dave's Flower Box

Dave's Flower Box offers a large variety of fresh flowers and gifts. You can send flowers for any occasion. Enjoy the convenience of safe and secure ordering online 24 hours a day. Thier goal is to exceed customer expectations in quality, value and professional service.

Dave's Flower Box  
2405 El Cajon Blvd, San Diego  
davesflowerbox.net | (619) 298-7247

## Best Garden Supply

### Mission Hills Nursery & Garden Center

Mission Hills Nursery is dedicated to being the eco-friendly, organic gardening and landscape designs center of San Diego. Since 1989, Mission Hills Nursery & Garden Center has been a favorite destination for locals providing San Diego with the finest rose plants, pest control, house plants, flowers, organic fertilizers, garden tools, bulbs and the highest quality eco-friendly organic gardening products available. A San Diego Landscaper, Eco Gardeners will make your

landscape shine. Shop now for holiday theme plants and gift ideas!

Mission Hills Garden Center  
1525 Fort Stockton Dr, San Diego | (619) 295-2808

## Best Gym

### Fit Athletic Club

The heart of Little Italy is Fit's fifth and newest location. The 28,000 square foot fitness facility is inside of the Carte Hotel & Suites, an upscale boutique hotel. The club is open to hotel guests and local residents, offering everything from indoor cycling, yoga, and specialty group exercise classes.

Fit Athletic Club  
350 Tenth Ave, San Diego  
(619) 432-4179

## Best Hair Salon

### Hairspray Salon

Looking great and feeling even better is easily accomplished with every trip you make to Hairspray Salon. If you're looking to achieve great-looking hair that makes a bold statement about who you are, now is the time to put your hair in their hands. Since 1996, the talented stylists at this high-energy salon have been delivering fabulous results with clients seeking a wide array of hair salon treatments. This salon is chill, the vibe is low-key, and the staff is very personable and committed to your utmost satisfaction. They will make you feel relaxed and at home. They make it a point to keep up with the latest products and innovative techniques in the industry.

Hairspray  
141 University Ave, San Diego  
hairspraysalonhillcrest.com | (619) 297-9333

## Best Handyman

### Mr. Handyman

Their primary goal is to earn you as a customer for life and provide for all your home improvement needs. They show up on time, respect your home, guaranteeing work, and providing excellent customer service. Mr. Handyman is driven by respect, integrity, customer focus. Licensed and bonded.

Mr. Handyman  
mrhandyman.com | (877) 685-1377

## Best Health Food Store

### Lazy Acres

Lazy Acres Market is a best source for wholesome, natural, and organic foods and products. Lazy Acres Market is about natural foods and real people dedicated to providing un-matched personal service. They go out of their way to make the Lazy Acres experience enjoyable every time you stop by.

Lazy Acres  
422 W Washington St, San Diego  
lazyacres.com | (619) 272-4289

## Best Hospital

### Sharp Coronado Hospital

At Sharp, your health and safety are a top priority. They have extra safety precautions in place to keep you safe. The emergency department is known for short wait times and is ready to care for you 24 hours a day. Clinical excellence that's second to none. As a leader in orthopedics, they help patients regain mobility through joint replacements. Expect treatment by world-renowned liver care specialists, surgical, plus long-term care.

Sharp HealthCare - Coronado Hospital  
250 Prospect Pl, Coronado, CA 92118  
sharp.com | (619) 522-3600

## Best Hotel

### Hotel Del Coronado

A living legend for more than 130 years, The Del celebrates its rich history as the proud host to celebrities, royalty, U.S. Presidents, and beach-loving guests for generations. Built in 1888 by Elisha Babcock, Jr., and Hampton L. Story and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1977, this historic beach resort is a San Diego icon.

Hotel Del  
1500 Orange Ave, Coronado  
hoteldel.com | (619) 435-6611

## Best Insurance Broker

### Ryan Harwigsen, Allstate

"Helping insure the needs of my community is my number one priority. Let us customize an insurance portfolio to help meet your unique needs.

Ryan Harwigsen, Allstate  
1433 University Ave, San Diego | (619) 278-0081

## Best Jeweler

### Harold Stevens

Harold Stevens jewelers prides itself on three basic rules of business. Authenticity: Being authentic means being true. And there is no area where they take truthfulness more seriously than in pricing. Expertise: Having roots in the So. African diamond trade means their reach and reputation extends beyond local geography with insider connections to source the finest, non-conflict diamonds from around the globe. Trust: A culture and philosophy that prioritizes relationships over sales— well beyond a purchase.

Harold Stevens  
225 Broadway Suite #1580, San Diego  
haroldstevens.com | (619) 231-0520

## Best Law Firm

### RJS Law

RJS Law is So. California's finest tax law firm. Their teams of top attorneys are located in San Diego, Cuyamaca, Orange County, and Beverly Hills. Practice include; Criminal Tax, IRS Audits, Appeals, Offers in Compromise, Estate Planning, Probate, Trusts and Trust Litigation.

RJS Law  
303 A St #400, San Diego  
irrsolution.com | (619) 595-1655

## Best Manicure/Pedi

### Hello Birdi

Hello Birdie is a boutique nail art and lash extension salon. Hand painted nail art with gel polish on natural nails is their specialty. They provide an acrylic-free environment. They pride themselves on a clean and friendly environment with a unique customer experience. Creating a space to provide safe and clean services.

Hello Birdie Salon  
3032 University Ave, San Diego  
hellobirdielab.com | (619) 358-9875

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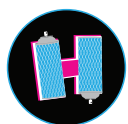
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The Knot Shop  
2655 Fourth Ave, 92103  
theknotstop.com | (619) 296-5668

**Best Optometrist**  
**Urban Optiks Optometry**  
San Diego's premier source of luxury eyewear, Urban Optiks offers one of the finest collections of handcrafted frames curated from around the world. Utilizing the most advanced eye examination equipment and precision custom digital lens technology, Dr. Klein and his highly trained optometrists and optical staff provide for a truly unparalleled visual experience. Their vintage-industrial inspired optical boutique, contemporary exam room and friendly team have resulted in a highly regarded reputation with over 150 five-star reviews and numerous awards including "Best Eyeglasses" by San Diego Magazine Readers Choice 2019.

Urban Optiks / Gary A. Klein, O.D.  
3788 Park Blvd #5, 92103  
uoosd.com | (619) 683-2021

**Best Pet Boarding/Day Care (tie)**  
**Camp Run-a-Mutt**  
"Camp Run-A-Mutt is a cage-free doggie

daycare and boarding facility featuring indoor and outdoor fun for your canine companion. During their stay, your dog will receive exceptional care by our well-trained, attentive staff who are certified in pet first aid and CPR. Additional services include grooming, obedience training, and other surprises. Their goal is to ensure the safety of the dogs in our care while minimizing the stress and anxiety some dogs experience when away from home and their owners.

Camp Run-a-Mutt  
2900 Fourth Ave Ste 206, San Diego  
(858) 272-6310

**Best Pet Groomer**  
**South Bark Dog Wash**  
San Diego's premier locally-owned companion-loving hot spot! Their beautifully renovated building offers a relaxing home away from home. Just a bark from the park! Located just three blocks from Grape Street Dog Park. Stop in for a treat on your walk or visit to the park. While there, check out the latest great quality food, chews, snacks, and toys. Ask about their Blueberry Facial®.

South Bark Dog Wash  
2037 30th St, 92104  
southbark.com | (619)-232-7387

**Best Pet Sitter**  
**Have a Ball Pet Sitting & Dog Walking**  
Christine Neely is the owner of Have a Ball Pet Sitting and Dog Walking. They don't take themselves too seriously, but they do take the care, safety, and comfort of your pets VERY seriously. Their highest priorities are the security and well-being of your pets and home, and we take many precautions to make sure these qualities are maintained. They offer customized services to meet the needs of you and your pets. Every pet and home environment is different and may need a unique combination of services.

Have A Ball Pet Sitting & Dog Walking  
4767 34th St, San Diego  
haveaballpetsitting.com | (619) 354-4242

**Best Pharmacy**  
**AHF Healthcare Center**  
AIDS Healthcare Foundation opened the AHF San Diego Wellness Center in 2014 and is located in AHF's San Diego Health-

care Center. Walk-ins welcome. The Wellness Center is designed to make testing for STDs convenient and to encourage regular sexual health screenings as part of routine health care for all sexually active people. They welcome both male and female patients. Services offered include: free HIV testing and screening as well as treatment for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis.

AHF Healthcare Center  
3940 Fourth Ave. Ste 140, 92103  
freeSTDcheck.org | (619) 516-8920

**Best Pilates**  
**Beyond Pilates Studio**  
Beyond Pilates mission is to bring each member on a transformational physical and personal journey. Actively participating in pilates is much more than a "workout." Each member, regardless of whether they are in a private lesson or small class, receives an experience within their own personal movement. Everyone develops at their own pace. It is through consistency and true learning that progress/change happen.

Beyond Pilates Studio  
423 University Ave, San Diego  
beyondpilates.com | (619) 872-2593

**Best Plumber**  
**Ideal Plumbing Heating Air Electrical**  
On April 1, 1960 with their second baby on the way, Donald Teemsma Sr. and mother Barbara founded Ideal Plumbing and Heating. At the time they ran the company as a home-based business with only one '53 Ford pick-up truck and the garage as the warehouse. In 1962, Ideal Plumbing and Heating outgrew their home when they opened their first storefront shop on Waring Road. Ideal is more than just a company that installs and repairs your plumbing, heating, air, or electrical. They believe in service excellence, demonstrated in high moral standards and business ethics since the company's inception. Ideal is an active supporter of the Allied Gardens Summer Concerts in the Park, Lake Murray Fireworks & Music Fest, Mission Trails Regional Park, Mt. Helix Park, and the San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation.

Ideal Plumbing Heating Air Electrical  
5161 Waring Road, 92120  
idealservice.com | (619) 583-7963

**Best Real Estate Agent**  
**Jeannine Savory**  
Jeannine Savory, Team Leader of The Savory Group, started her full-time real estate career in 1999. Jeannine holds an Associate of Arts in Interior Design from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. As a top producing Realtor® year after year, Jeannine gives her clients a better service with her talented team than she could alone. Named a "FIVE STAR: Best in Client Satisfaction, Real Estate Agent" for San Diego Magazine (2009 - 2019).

The Savory Group  
620 1st Ave, 92101  
thesavorygroup.com | (619) 800-0289

**Best Real Estate Office**  
**The Savory Group**  
The Savory Group believes that real estate should be simple. Simply put, they use services and marketing strategies that work, to make sure clients have an experience they'll love. One of those who knows all about those relationships is Jeannine Savory. As a REALTOR® and Team Leader with The Savory Group as part of Coldwell Banker West, Jeannine builds relationships through advocating for the people most important to her. Along with her team, Jeannine continues to build her business. Jeannine's success is rooted in her determination to diversify her expertise and resources in order to fulfill the needs of her clients.

The Savory Group  
620 1st Ave, 92101  
thesavorygroup.com | (619) 800-0289

**Best Retirement Living**  
**St. Paul's Manor**  
Since 1960, St. Paul's Senior Services has been providing comprehensive, innovative, and affordable services for seniors. They offer housing, care, and services that aid seniors during any stage of the aging process. Some of their services and programs include independent and assisted living communities, memory care, a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center, day programs, as well as a program of all-inclusive care for the elderly. The office is in the Bankers Hill district San Diego and houses many essential departments and Senior Day Program and Child Care Program.

St. Paul's Manor  
2635 2nd Ave, San Diego  
stpaulseniors.org | (619) 239-2097

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**Sunless Revolution**  
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sunless-revolution.com | (800) 482-1198

**Best Tattoo Studio**  
**Church of Steel**  
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Pilgrimage of the Heart Yoga began as a small gift boutique store in 1999. Their inspiration was to create a business that could spread spiritual energy and be a viable business. Soon the yoga room was operating at full capacity: 12 people! The East Room, as it is known now, and used the Lounge area as a reception area.

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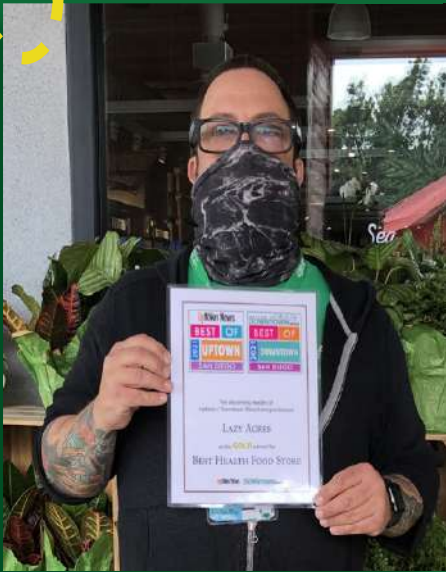
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**ROBERT HARPER**  
*Store Director*  
"It has been a wonderful 4 years here in Mission Hills! We are so thankful to be part of this great community."



**VANESSA TOLEDO**  
*Manager of Perishables*  
"My favorite thing about the Mission Hills community is how open and welcoming they have been to our store and Team Members. Many thanks to our Mission Hills community for voting Lazy Acres Mission Hills the BEST Health Food Store in SD!"



**RUBEN WALTERS**  
*Manager of Merchandising*  
"Mission Hills has been an incredible town to work in. It brings so much diversity and community awareness into the store. It truly has been an awesome adventure to be able to work with the community."







Gift guide

CONTINUED FROM Page 20

**Kroger**, so now you can find it at **Ralph's** for under \$9 a bottle.

LOCAL WINE

**Rose's Tasting Room** is tucked away in a corner of **Fiesta De Reyes** in Old Town, and they feature a wide selection of local wines from Ramona. Ramona has the largest concentration of wineries in San Diego County and these make great gifts for any wine lovers on your list. You can choose from wineries such as **Ramona Ranch Winery** that produces Italian wines such as Sangiovese, Montepulciano and Super Tuscan Blends. **Woof and Rose Winery** produces Rhone and Bordeaux style varietals, and the property is surrounded by rose bushes and the owners operate a large dog rescue service. **Old Julian Winery** features traditional French varietals, while **Hatfield Creek Winery** does an organic port style Zinfandel and a Petite Sirah with a big front, big finish and big nose! Rose's Tasting Room is at 2754 Calhoun St. in Old Town.

BOOKS!

The right book as a gift will show exactly how much thought you put into it and also let your loved ones know exactly how much you understand their passions.

**Verbatim Books** in North Park (3793 30th St.) will be hosting an outdoor book fair on Saturday, Dec. 11 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at North Park Way and 30th Street. This bookworm festival is made possible by the support of **North Park Main Street**, (NPMS) the Business Improvement District that services the North Park Business Community.

"North Park hosted its first book fair in July and were delighted by the feedback," said Angela Landsberg, Executive Director of NPMS. "San Diego is a city that loves to read and understands the importance of supporting local businesses. We are so grateful that our community asked us to host another book fair for the holidays."

More than 100 vendors will be on hand offering books, original art, specialty gifts and more. This fun and free, family-friendly event will include tasty offerings from local restaurants, music from local bands, and live poetry and spoken word performed by San Diego



Nick Apostolopoulos of 619 Spirits North Park



Joe Houghton of Rose's Tasting Room (Photos by Vince Meehan)

artists. And kids will enjoy crafts, story time – and a visit with Santa!

GIFT CARDS

Gift cards have taken off in the past 10 years as a great gift that gives the recipient the freedom to pick whatever they want. It's hard to screw that one up and picking up a gift card is an easy in and out affair with no fuss attached. Here's a list of great local places to grab some cards to give as a gift or a stocking stuffer.

**Mike Hess Brewing** is an OG in the local craft-brewing scene, which has become a huge part of our economy. Mike Hess offers gift cards, which are a great idea because locally brewed beer is fresh, delicious and always available. Located in the heart of North Park, (3812 Grim Ave.) Mike Hess is a great place to hang out and enjoy some of the best beer in San Diego.

Speaking of OGs, **Filippis Pizza Grotto** (1747 India St.) has been a landmark in Little Italy since way before it became the hip restaurant zone it is today. Filippis has been a favorite magnet for San Diego pizza lovers because of its great food as well as beyond reasonable prices. My dad always gets me a \$50 card every year and it is one of my favorite gifts because of its versatility. I can use it to take somebody out for a full dinner. At Filippis, \$50 will get you two pasta entrees, antipasto salad and a carafe of wine! That's more than enough for a fun night out. But you can also hold onto it and save it for a low time when you are broke and would love a piping hot pizza to go instead of more ramen.

Bakeries that create artisan craft pies are rare here in Southern California and also in the rest of the nation to be honest. But University Heights is home to one of the few true craft pie outlets around and that saves you from trekking up to Julian for a delicious holiday gift! **Pop Pie Co.** is located at Park Ave. and Meade (4404 Park Blvd) and is run by partners Steven Torres and his husband Gan Suebsarakham. They specialize in hand-made craft pies including savory meat pies. A gift card from Pop Pie Co. is the perfect way to give someone a unique and yummy present.

The **Little Italy Mercato** is the farmers market that is held in Little Italy every Wednesday and Saturday along West Date Street. You can find just about

anything from fresh honey to original art, all from local vendors. The Mercato offers gift cards, so you can send one to any of your friends who live Downtown. Then they can use it to get whatever catches their eye.

Finally, you can donate to the **San Diego Food Bank** as a progressive holiday gift to one of your civically minded friends or family members. Both the donor and the honoree will receive a letter of thanks from the San Diego Food Bank. This is not only a thoughtful gift, but helps those in need as well – a win-win for everybody. Go to [SanDiegoFoodBank.org](http://SanDiegoFoodBank.org) to donate.

—Vince Meehan can be reached at [vinniemeehan@gmail.com](mailto:vinniemeehan@gmail.com).

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# TDOR vigil

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

Human Rights Watch, marking it as the most deadly year on record with still a month to go.

The Trans Day of Remembrance event was hosted by the LGBT Center with partners including San Diego Pride. The majority of the speakers were members of San Diego's trans community although a special effort was made to highlight the voices of government leaders amid a rash of anti-trans legislation passed in other states.

San Diego's first gay mayor Todd Gloria said "We will continue to fight for a more equitable and safer San Diego for all of us. I want to say that as mayor of the city, I want you to know that I see you. I acknowledge you. I'm not only aware of you, I'm here to celebrate you. All of you are important parts of the city. We would not be America's finest city without our transgender gender non-binary members."



Tootie Thomas, wearing sequenced pants next to Councilmember Whitburn, brought the letter forward to the city's human relations committee.

Councilmember Stephen Whitburn highlighted his work 20 years ago in passing the human dignity ordinance to protect trans people and more recently declaring Nov. 20 as Trans Day of Remembrance in District 3.

"It's one thing to fight discrimination. It's another to fight prejudice," Whitburn said. "We have so

much work to do." At least nine of the bills that passed nationally targeted trans youth to either bar them from extracurricular sports or gender-affirming healthcare. Amid the crowd of at least 100, dozens of trans youth were present. Among the 47 people whose names were read alongside a projection of their photo, two trans boys were under the age of 18 when they were murdered.

As in past years, a special effort was made to honor Black trans women who are killed at disproportionate rates. According to Human Rights Watch, transgender women are four times more likely to be murdered than cisgender women.

The event commemorated people across the nation while also highlighting issues closer to home, including trans man Poe

Black who was stabbed to death and left in the Coachella Canal in Slab City. Evidence related to his murder is still waiting to be processed at a San Diego lab, according to LGBTQ Nation. Activists say his life on the margins as a homeless trans person living in an alternative community has led to his murder case being a low priority for the Imperial County Sheriff.

Meanwhile, San Diego Sheriff Bill Gore and the county is being sued by transgender woman Kristina Frost who was jailed with several men, one of whom allegedly beat her, despite her updated ID listing her as female.

Publicly, Gore supports transgender rights and he was the final vote at the Leon L. Williams San Diego County Human Relations Committee that helped co-sign a letter with the city's commission that condemned transphobia and



The committee that organized the event along with others who assisted. (Photos by Kendra Sitton)

encouraged public officials to speak out for trans people. The joint letter was presented at the event. Getting the letter passed was a challenge as the volunteer county board of 24 seated members needed 18 votes to pass it ahead of the vigil. Initially two people abstained, including a representative sitting in for Gore while he was out of town. After the representative abstained, Gore was contacted directly and he said over text that he would vote in favor of it. Amid the kerfuffle to get it passed, commissioner Dennis Hodges was asked why he abstained. In answer, the local pastor said that "transgenders" are an "abomination" in the eyes of God.

Over the Zoom meeting, there was an audible gasp in response

SEE TDOR VIGIL, Page 23



The emcee, a transgender woman, introducing the speakers for the evening.



The crowd watching as public officials pledged to protect trans people.



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TDOR vigil

CONTINUED FROM Page 22

to his remarks on a commission meant to promote human rights and dignity. One of the transgender commissioners was visibly crying and Nicole Murray-Ramirez called Hodges out for the grief he had caused to two of the commissioners who sit on the board with him.



Elder activist Connor Maddox and two other trans people holding each other while looking at the photos of the murder victims. (Photo by Kendra Sitton)

At the vigil, commissioner Julia Legaspi said it was the first time in 40 years as an LGBTQ+ activist that someone had called

her an abomination to her face and she still gets emotional recalling it. “I have had shares of discrimination,” she said. “I didn’t expect it from a fellow commissioner on the human rights commission.” Following the incident, Hodges sent a letter to chair Ellen Nash doubling down on his previous comments, saying “when men and women embrace obviously other-gendered expressions of identity it is a disgrace.”

Led by Center CEO Cara Dessert, the LGBT+ members of the commission sent a letter to all of the county supervisors calling for his immediate resignation. The letter concludes “While we believe in Commissioner Hodges’ right to vote how he chooses, his right to free speech, and to freedom of religion, his persistent discriminatory and hateful comments are simply antithetical to the mission of this Commission and disqualifying of his appointed position.” Due to the Thanksgiving holiday and an annual conference, the supervisors have not held a meeting since the letter was sent.

—Kendra Sitton can be reached at [kendra@sdnews.com](mailto:kendra@sdnews.com).

Ghost gun

CONTINUED FROM Page 3

One man was heard laughing, and Sarreshteh turned around and fired shots at the men, wounding all three and a fourth man behind them. Two bystanders tackled Sarreshteh, who appeared to have problems with the gun. San Diego Police officers arrested him within 30 seconds after the bystanders tackled him. Once in a patrol car, Sarreshteh apologized to officers, saying “I really thought I

was protecting the city, I’m sorry,” according to the prosecution document. Court documents say Sarreshteh was arrested in 2017 for threatening his girlfriend and police seized another unregistered polymer “ghost gun” from him, which was not returned to him. Sarreshteh has pleaded not guilty to all counts and remains in the George Bailey Detention Facility without bail. —Neal Putnam is a local court reporter. Reach him at [nealputnam@gmail.com](mailto:nealputnam@gmail.com).



Some of the absinthe offerings at Wormwood

Absinthe

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

his small hometown in southern France. “We’re starting out with at least 30 different kinds of absinthe—from Europe and the U.S., including one from a local distillery in Barrio Logan called ReBru Spirits,” he pointed out. “Every distiller has their own recipe. In addition to wormwood, some have common herbs such as mint and coriander, and others have more obscure herbs such as hyssop and angelica.” Harrag also owns the mezcal-centric Tahona Bar in Old Town. There, the liquor and its myriad varieties serve as a bridge to Mexican culture. At Wormwood, he hopes to educate consumers equally on absinthe’s French-European connections while creating a sense of community through tastings and a book club focusing on authors who have shown passion for absinthe in their works. “With absinthe, the history is so strong,” said Harrag. “More than 100 years ago there was the misconception that absinthe made you crazy. It wasn’t based on any data. It was actually the wine industry in France that lobbied to get it banned because absinthe had become so popular, especially among artists and philosophers in Paris during the early 1900s.” Harrag also cited that Parisian bar owners back then held “green hour” in the late afternoons,



One of two outdoor dining spaces

when high numbers of consumers gathered to imbibe on the drink. But stigmas about absinthe and its wormwood extract eventually took root, resulting in global bans on the liquor. In Europe and the U.S. such bans were lifted in 2002 and 2007, respectively. Harrag admits the liquor is indeed higher in alcohol compared to most spirits, ranging between 90 and 130 proof. He playfully cites the words of 19th-century Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde, who described the effects of absinthe as such: “After the first glass of absinthe you see things as you wished they were. After the second one, you see things as they are not. After the third, you finally see things as they really are.” Moderation is the approach at Wormwood, where customers are served their absinthe along with a table-size water fountain. “The water drips slowly into your glasses from multiple spouts of the fountain. It’s up to the customer how much they want to dilute their absinthe,” said Harrag while noting the “ceremonial



Artichokes with Caesar butter (Photos by Arlene Ibarra)

presentation” dates back at least a century throughout France. The wormwood element, he added, is what gives the spirit its distinct anise flavor. Several changes were made to the interior, although Jayne’s intimate bar and signature black-and-white floor tiles remain in place. Harrag created two backyard patios; one of them is a “secret garden” designated for private parties. He also hung new wall art and opened up the kitchen so customers can witness the creation of meals by two executive chefs: Danny Romero, formerly of Addison, Bracero and Stone Brewing Co.; and Janina Jaray, who ran a bakery in Tijuana and had also worked at Addison. Their menu is French-based with dishes unique to Wormwood. Some of them include oysters accented with absinthe foam, artichokes set in Caesar butter, wild mushroom tartlets, and Wagyu beef tartare. On the dessert menu is “baba au rum,” a classic French cake soaked in rum. Wormwood is located at 4677 30th St. It operates from 5 to 10 p.m., Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday; and 5 to 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Harrag plans on introducing brunch service early next year. For more information call 619-915-6706 or visit [wormwoodsd.com](http://wormwoodsd.com). —Frank Sabatini Jr. can be reached at [fsabatini@san.rr.com](mailto:fsabatini@san.rr.com).



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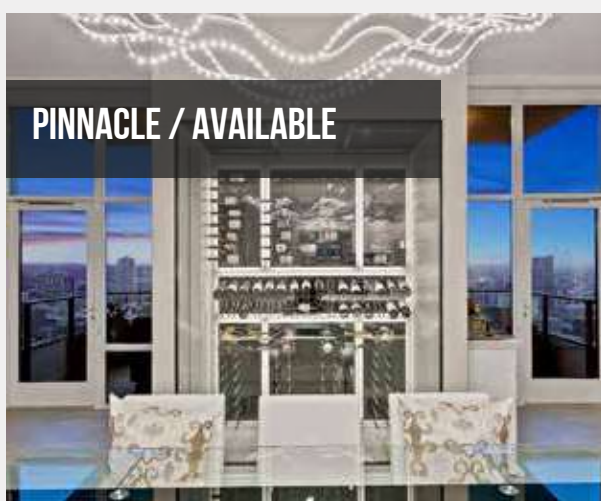
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