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# MISSION VALLEY News

MISSION VALLEY'S LOCALLY OWNED INDEPENDENT VOICE

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER GROUP

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2022

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**BEST OF**

**2022**

**MISSION VALLEY**

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Outdoor classrooms will be a key feature of the river park as well as recreational facilities. PHOTO COURTESY OF SDSU

## SDSU MISSION VALLEY GOES ONLINE

By VINCE MEEHAN | MISSION VALLEY NEWS

SDSU Mission Valley is ready for its close-up. It was promised that the new stadium built on the site of the former Qualcomm arena would be ready for Aztec football in 2022 and here we are. Football returned to Mission Valley on Sept. 3, and SDSU Mission Valley won an impressive sprint to the finish line in a race that had many San Diegans skeptical of success. But Snapdragon Stadium is just the first step in a massive build out that will be taking place for the next 10 to 15 years. The finished plan will not only feature an innovation center for students and non-students alike, but also plenty of support retail and housing that will benefit the San Diego community as a whole.

Gina Jacobs is the Associate Vice President, Mission Valley Development at San Diego State University and is pleased at the progress being made at the site. She said that much of the open area that is currently onsite will be utilized as a parking area for the stadium until permanent facilities are completed.

"The site development is ongoing,

all the grading to bring the development parcels up out of the flood plain is being done," Jacobs said. "In the short term – before we start construction on any building including the residential or the innovation district – those areas will serve as surface parking for the stadium event. Long term, we're planning all of the great residential, innovation district, hotels, retail and all of that to get started with construction early next year."

All this construction comes as the result of Measure G, which was approved by San Diego voters in November of 2018. Talk of a new stadium for San Diego dominated the election, but Measure G also included plans for an innovation center where private enterprises such as biotech firms could open offices alongside new SDSU facilities creating a "learn and intern" opportunity. It also allows SDSU to expand its academic as well as economic impact on the region and encourage students to stay in San Diego after graduating.

Jacobs said the next piece of the puzzle to complete will be the river park portion of SDSU Mission Valley. "The next big asset that will

come online will be the river park, we began construction earlier in the year on that, but it will really go in earnest once the stadium is complete. And that is going to be completed by the end of next year."

This river park will include recreational fields, a children's play area, hike and bike access and even an outdoor classroom.

Rob Hutsel is the President & CEO of the San Diego River Park Foundation, and has been a tenacious advocate for maintaining the sanctity of the river area for years. He has monitored the planning of the river park from the get-go and is pleased that this concept is becoming a reality.

"The San Diego River Park Foundation is thrilled to see work starting on the river park at SDSU Mission Valley," Hutsel said. "SDSU Mission Valley's park is a key piece in the vision of a regional greenbelt in Mission Valley and for the entire 52-mile-long San Diego River Park. After years of advocacy by the San Diego River Park Foundation, civic discussion, and an election, it is

SEE SDSU PG. 15

## Some emergency housing voucher recipients struggle to find landlords willing to accept vouchers

By J.M. GARCIA | MISSION VALLEY NEWS

Katrina Lewis-Gutierrez starts work at ten in the morning by opening a box of paper cups while standing behind the counter of the Häagen-Dazs store in Fashion Valley. She enjoys the early hours. She gets more done working by herself and spends her time restocking for the afternoon and evening rush.

"You have chocolate?" Someone asks, poking their head in the door.

"Of course."

"I'll be by after lunch."

"I'll be here," Lewis-Gutierrez responded.

She wears a black T-shirt with a the Häagen-Dazs logo and ties her long hair in a braided ponytail. From her neat appearance, many customers with a stereotype of what a homeless person looks like would not guess that Lewis-Gutierrez does not have housing.

She has been at the store for about a year and earns about \$1,600 a month working part-time. Of all the jobs she has had,

SEE VOUCHERS PG. 15



While Lewis-Gutierrez dreams of having a safe and permanent place to live, she said the aging Winnebago is an improvement from when she camped in the riverbed behind Fashion Valley Mall.  
PHOTO BY J.M. GARCIA



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MEET ME AT THE MONKEY BAR

Day tripping at the renewed Town and Country Resort

By Frank Sabatini Jr. | Mission Valley News

The aesthetics have radically changed. And the vibe is decidedly livelier. Hence, as a San Diego resident exploring dining options in Mission Valley, you get the feeling when setting foot onto the revived Town and Country Resort that you’ve entered some faraway vacation spot suited to accommodate your eating and drinking needs after a long, cramped flight.

The indoor-outdoor Monkey Bar and its adjoining fine-dining restaurant, ARLO, are among the new additions included in a \$90 million makeover the resort recently underwent. In eye shot resides yet another restaurant, but with a more casual menu. It’s called The Lapper. That eatery is distinguished by a hovering neon figure of a female swimmer representing legendary diver Thelma Payne, who earned an Olympic bronze medal in 1920. She turns quite radiant after sunset.

All three venues welcome locals and resort guests alike.

I came to know the Town and Country over the past 15 years through a combination of family members lodging there, and as a frequent customer to the former Charlie’s, a casual bar and restaurant that sported an unremarkable ambiance.

Back then, the property spanned nearly 32 acres and encompassed 917 hotel rooms. Built in phases beginning in 1953, the grounds

greeted with quirky statuary, crafty birdhouses, ivy-clad gazebos, and flourishing rose gardens. It was like stepping into a mid-Century Alice in Wonderland—an obsolete and trippy panache I came to love.

The new Town and Country Resort shows off a more refined and elegant mid-Century style. It too is quite loveable.

Its owners, San Diego-based Terry Brown and his family, and Lowe Enterprises, sold off 10 acres to housing developers. Multiple structures were razed (except for a central cluster of two-story buildings from when the property first opened as a motel). The redevelopment ushered in a freshly built lobby, which partly houses the Monkey Bar and leads to a tiered outdoor seating area replete with fire features. There is also a significantly enlarged swimming pool with a water slide, and re-landscaped grounds flaunting tall, stately palm trees salvaged during the renovation.

Half of the Monkey Bar sits inside the lobby, where the furniture and other trappings appear straight out of a commodious living room from the 1950s. The other half of the bar sits in open air and verges into the spacious outdoor lounge.

The name “Monkey Bar” was inspired by the development team’s choice of wallpaper seen in the restrooms. The print reveals primates perched in lush tree branches.

I have yet to dine at ARLO or The Lapper, but I’ve enjoyed the creature com-



Partial view of Monkey Bar’s outdoor seating area. COURTESY PHOTO

THE MONKEY BAR

500 Hotel Circle North  
619-291-7131, www.towncountry.com

Prices: Pizzas, burgers and share plates, \$9 to \$21; beer, wine and cocktails, \$5 to \$20

forts (including live music) from Monkey Bar a few times in the recent past.

If visiting during happy hour (4 to 6 PM Monday through Friday), you can save 50 percent or more on certain consumables. It is when select craft beers on tap, plus certain wines by the glass, and the signature “Drunken Monkey” cocktail are only \$5. In addition, wood-fired pizzas are \$9.

The tall Drunken Monkey is surprisingly tame in sweetness, considering it’s made with Kettle One Orange, Malibu Rum, orange liqueur, pineapple juice, simple syrup, and grenadine. Perhaps it’s the fresh lime juice that prevents it from tasting like a cloying Mai Tai. Or maybe it’s the engaging vacation-like environment that makes them go down so effortlessly.

Over a couple of visits, the mushroom and Margherita pizzas ordered with friends proved to be shareable and satisfying. Each flaunted pleasing mantles of cheese and desirable, elastic crusts.

After switching once from the drunken cocktail to a couple of Hess IPAs, the “char burger” cried out. Priced at \$21, it’s a hefty herb-

infused flavor bomb crowned with truffle aioli and Gruyere cheese. (Yes, a fine burger like this during these inflationary times will be pricey just about anywhere you go.)

Additional menu items include several other signature cocktails, plus lamb meatballs, sticky short ribs, and shrimp with ginger-soy ponzu.

Locals partaking in food and drinks at any of the venues are entitled to complimentary parking in the resort’s newly built parking garage located near the front entrance. The structure features a bright, dramatic mural similar to others seen around the property—all of which were created by local artists during the makeover.

Civita wins design awards

By Delle Willett | Mission Valley News

The American Society of Landscape Architects, San Diego chapter (ASLA), recently bestowed Schmidt Design Group (SDG) an Honor Award for Civita Park, a 14.3-acre community park in the heart of Mission Valley. Civita is a 230-acre sustainable urban village being developed on the site of a former sand and gravel quarry.

In this year’s ASLA design awards program, jurors from around the country selected one President’s Award, four Honor Awards and 14 Merit Awards.

In judging Civita Park, the jurors said, “This is a signature project that is very recognizable, tells a story, and is an important community asset. It does an excellent job of taking a large site and breaking it down into defined areas that offer a variety of experiences and a high level of interest.”

SEE CIVITA PG. 16



Drought-resistant plantings are an important part of Civita’s aim to be sustainable.

PHOTO COURTESY SDG

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DR. KRAGE ON KUSI



# Mission Valley location of San Diego Gymnastics to open with new CEOs

By CYNTHIA ROBERTSON | MISSION VALLEY NEWS

San Diego Gymnastics will soon open a fifth location in Mission Valley. The move comes as San Diego's largest gymnastics school and camp program elevated two of its executive directors to the role of dual CEOs. San Diego Gymnastics named Erin Adams and Paige Conroy as dual CEOs, taking over for previous CEO and co-founder Christina Grady.

San Diego Gymnastics is the region's largest full-service gymnastics facility, with four locations offering classes and programs to promote physical activity, including parkour, tumbling, alternative pre-school, an after-school program, camps, parties, Kids' Night Out and open gym.

"The last few years have been a time of extraordinary challenges and growth. Erin and Paige were instrumental in allowing us to be nimble and flexible during difficult times, all while growing the business and opening our La Costa location and relocating our Point Loma gym," Grady said.

"Since first being hired as executive directors they have been instant sensations with our team and the community, providing advancement for our long-time employees, building an amazing team of managers and coaches, and assisting numerous families along the way. They have truly been the face of San Diego Gymnastics and their time has come to officially take the leadership reins and drive our expansion," she added.

Grady scaled back from her day-to-day management duties but maintains an advisory role along with additional co-founder Doug Grady while their children also begin assuming positions within the organization.

As dual CEOs, both Adams and Conroy will be involved in all aspects of daily operations and administration, with Adams focusing primarily on HR and operations and Conroy leading marketing and enrollment efforts.

Adams started her career in fitness early, working as a customer service representative at a private athletic club, quickly promoted to front desk manager and eventually duty manager for the entire facility. After completing her bachelor's degree in sociology and women's studies at Cal State University San Marcos in 2011, she was promoted again to the business office overseeing accounting and sales and then moved over to serve as the club's member retention specialist.

Adams then switched to the spa side of operations, spending six years as spa director managing multiple locations in the Baltimore area. In 2018, Adams returned to San Diego and was recruited to join San Diego Gymnastics as an executive director.

"My experience running mem-

bership-based businesses and operational expertise is a natural fit for my new role at San Diego Gymnastics," said Adams. "I am excited to continually focus on development and growth for all our staff, expanding internal structures to make more upper-level management positions available for our dedicated employees. Our goal is to be the place passionate gymnastics coaches come and have the opportunity to not only coach but use their unique skill sets to build an exciting and fulfilling career."

Conroy also began working in the fitness industry early in her career, including positions at both 24 Hour Fitness and as an event manager at a local gymnastics facility during her undergraduate work at San Diego State University. After graduating from SDSU in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in liberal studies and a minor in literacy, Conroy set out with a goal to become a kindergarten teacher and elementary school principal.

She returned to SDSU to earn her California teaching credential and cross-cultural, language, and academic development certificate. She faced a career crossroads when she was offered a full-time job as general manager of a startup gymnastics company. Conroy took the leap of faith and forged a new dream to develop a career in the gymnastics and education industry. After three years in her first gymnastics role, she was offered a position at San Diego Gymnastics as an executive director and immediately went to work focused on curriculum development, marketing, and member growth.

"My passion for health, fitness, and aspirations to work with children goes back as far as I can remember," said Conroy. "Looking forward, I am excited to open more gyms and develop new and interesting programs for our members, as well as career opportunities for others. Shaping young minds and building their confidence is the best part of this career."

San Diego Gymnastics has four longstanding locations in San Diego County, including spots in Point Loma/Midway, La Mesa, Chula Vista, and Carlsbad, covering a wide range of neighborhoods and will open its fifth gym in Mission Valley.

All San Diego Gymnastics coaches are USAG certified, CPR and First Aid certified and background checked. Team members include California Credentialed teachers, collegiate-level gymnasts, parkour coaches trained by a certified World Freerunning Parkour Federation instructor, physical and occupational therapists, and kinesiology and child psychology majors.

San Diego Gymnastics opened its first location in Liberty Station in 2008 after owners Doug and Christina Grady were trying to find time to shuttle their three children

to various activities, including driving their daughter 30-plus minutes each way to gymnastics three times a week while each working full-time jobs.

Learn more about enrollment and becoming a founding member of the new Mission Valley location at [sdgymnastics.com](http://sdgymnastics.com). The new location will be at 1144 Camino Del Rio N.



Erin Adams, left, and Paige Conroy are dual CEOs of San Diego Gymnastics  
COURTESY PHOTO

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WELCOME THIS YEAR’S WINNERS!

Every year, we ask our loyal readers to nominate their favorite restaurants, entertainment venues, boutique and shops, vets, hair salons, law offices and any other kind of business or professional they frequent for the Best of Mission Valley News special edition.

Once again, we’ve received nominations from the residents from the Mission Valley area to share their thoughts on their favorite, deserving local establishments. We’ve tallied the votes, compiled a profile of the top winners and provided them with certificates which you may see proudly display on their walls.

Some of these businesses have been serving local residents and out-of-town shopper and visitors for decades. Other have only begun to make an impact on the communities, but have obviously caught the attention of local consumers by doing things right.

We encourage you to hang on to this annual Best of Mission Valley edition throughout the year as a handy reference. So, for the next time you are looking for an optometrist, a dry cleaner, nail salon or a new restaurant to try with friends, you’ll be able choose from a highly recommended selection of winners in their field.

And if by chance your favorite establishments were left out this year, we encourage you to keep your eye out for next year’s ballot and show your support to all these hard working professionals who service us all year around. After all, showing your support is what continues to maintain strong communities. Congratulations to all the winners!

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







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**lazydogrestaurants.com**

**Best Appetizer**  
**Islands Mission Valley**  
Great TVs for sports viewing or watching Islands' surf videos. Menu items include the best burgers, fresh cut fries, cold beer and the best cocktails in San Diego. Guacamole and swiss atop the Maui Burger is very popular with our guests. Happy hour specials weekdays from 3 pm to 7 pm for great specials on appetizers, cocktails, wine and beer.  
**10475 San Diego Mission Rd, 92108**  
**(619) 282-9797**

**Best BBQ**  
**Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill**  
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**7510 Hazard Center Dr #215, 92108**  
**(619) 764-4411 | woodranch.com**

**Best Beer/Brewery**  
**BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse**  
BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse in Mission Valley is an ideal place to enjoy a great meal with the family or meet up with friends for a game. The cocktail patio is kept warm with heaters and a large fire pit. While pizza may have been their beginning, they've expanded their large menu filled many amazing choices. From burgers to tacos to slow-roasted entrees to salads and beyond, you're sure to find something you love.  
**1370 Frazee Rd, 92108**  
**(619) 814-6350 | bjsrestaurants.com**

**Best Breakfast**  
**The Waffle Spot**  
The Waffle Spot has been a nostalgic setting complemented with fun breakfast characters that decorate the walls and menus. Sir Wafflelot, the Waffle King, is practically a local celebrity in San Diego and loves to visit dining guests. Located inside the Kings Inn and features breakfast and brunch specials with delicious waffles 7-days a week. Come by for lunch and try a tasty, classic San Diego burger and fries, or choose a fresh salad, wrap, or select from the soup and sandwich menu. They're serious about serving scrumptious waffles, fluffy pancakes, and a complete breakfast menu. Enjoy the best waffles in San Diego.  
**The Waffle Spot at The Kings Inn**  
**1333 Hotel Cir S, 92108**  
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**Best Brunch**  
**Mimi's Café**  
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**5180 Mission Center Rd, 92108**  
**(619) 491-0284**

**Best Burger**  
**Mr. Peabody's Burgers & Ale**  
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**6110 Friars Rd, 92108**  
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**Best Burrito**  
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<b>Dining</b> American Appetizer Bakery Bar Bbq Beer/Brewery Breakfast Brunch Burger Burrito Business Lunch Cafe Casino Casual Dining Catering Chinese Cocktail Coffee Shop Comedy Club Comfort Food Deli Desserts Dinner Donuts Farmer's Market Fast Food Fine Dining Food Truck Golf Course Greek Happy Hour Health Food Store Indian Irish Pub Italian Japanese Cuisine Juice Bar Late Night Dining Live Music Lunch Margarita Martini Mexican Movie Theater New Restaurant Outdoor Dining Pet Friendly Restaurant Pizza Poke Seafood Sports Bar Steakhouse Sushi Thai Vegetarian / Vegan Wings Wine Selection	<b>Gold</b> Lazy Dog Restaurant & Bar Islands Restaurant Mission Valley Nothing Bundt Cakes McGregor's Grill & Ale House Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse The Waffle Spot Mimi's Café Mr. Peabody's Burgers & Ale Qdoba Mexican Eats Oggi's Sports, Brewhouse & Pizza Mimi's Café Sycuan Casino Resort The Kebob Shop L&L Hawaiian Barbeque Pei Wei Asian Kitchen / P.F. Chang's Blanco Tacos & Tequilla Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf Murder Mystery Dinner Theater The Habit Burger Grill Which Wich Superior Sandwiches The Cheesecake Factory The Amigo Spot - Kings Inn Rose Donuts Mission Valley Farmers Market Shake Shack ARLO Kiko's Seafood Lunch Truck Riverwalk Golf Club Troy's Greek Restaurant Yard House Lazy Acres Tandoor McGregor's Grill & Ale House North Italia Fuji Japanese Steak House Nekter Juice Bar Yard House TBS Tavern Jane's Café Blanco Tacos & Tequilla Tommy Bahama Marlin Bar & Store The Amigo Spot - Kings Inn / Fiesta de Reyes AMC Mission Valley 20 ARLO King's Fish House Brazilian Bowls Lucca's Pizzeria and Market/Oggi's Pizza Poke One and N Half California Fish Grill BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse Hunters Steakhouse/Bully's East Sushi Kuchi Ka Prao Thai Cuisine True Food Kitchen Buffalo Wild Wings Total Wine & More	<b>Silver</b> The Cheesecake Factory/Yard House Oggi's Sports Brewhouse Pizza Corner Bakery Bully's East Prime Bistro Sports Bar Brazil by the Bay Balboa's Tap House Jane's Café Valley Kitchen Restaurant The Habit Burger Grill Roberto's Taco Shop Marketplace Café Jane's Café Barona Resort & Casino Boudin SF CurioCity Catering City Dragon Windows Lounge Milano Coffee Company (none) Grater Grilled Cheese Big Daddy's Deli Nothing Bundt Cakes Lazy Dog Restaurant & Bar Donut Panic North Park Farmers Market The Habit Burger Grill Benihana Green Truck Admiral Baker Gold Course The Kabob Shop Bully's East Prime Bistro Sports Bar Maju Superfoods/Trader Joe's Himalayan Curry and Grill The Ould Sod Filippi's Pizza Grotto Benihana San Diego Blenders Buffalo Wild Wings McGregor's Grill and Ale House Grater Grilled Cheese Puesto Mission Valley Bully's East Prime Bistro Sports Bar Blanco Tacos & Tequilla Ultra Star Mission Valley - Hazard Center Brazilian Bowls / Panini Kabob Grill Puesto Mission Valley Lazy Dog Restaurant & Bar Filippi's Pizza Grotto The Poke Co. - Mission Valley King's Fish House Bully's East Prime Bistro Sports Bar Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill So Sushi Lounge Sukho Thai Extraordinaire Everbowl Hooters of Mission Valley BevMo!
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uoosd.com | shopuoo.com | 619.683.2020



friends and revel in the many unique flavors and varieties that you can't find anywhere else. Enjoy while you explore a full menu of classic Mexican entrées, including burritos (and burrito bowls), quesadillas, nachos and signature flavors such as their craveable, creamy 3-Cheese Queso. And to sweeten the deal, they let you top your dish off with guacamole and queso, at no extra cost.

**1620C Camino De La Reina, 92108**  
(619) 393-3560 | qdoba.com

### Best Business Lunch Oggi's Sports, Brewhouse & Pizzeria

The Oggi's franchise was originated by two brothers, George and John Hadjis, who began serving up their own pizzeria experience in August of 1991. After more than 20 combined years working in the technology industry, George and John opened their first restaurant in Del Mar, as a franchisee of an existing local pizza chain. Throughout the years, the restau-

rant concept evolved from a pizzeria style to a sports-themed restaurant with many televisions, followed by the evolution into the brewing industry, you can now enjoy a wide selection of micro brews.

**2245 Fenton Pkwy Ste 101, 92108**  
(619) 640-1072 | oggis.com

### Best Cafe

#### Mimi's Café

(See listing under Best Brunch)

### 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 with an advanced air filtration system, with over 60 table games. The fun extends well beyond the unlimited gaming!

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

### Best Casual Dining

#### The Kebab Shop

Enjoy this local counter-serve chain offering döner kebabs, shawarma and other Turkish-Mediterranean eats served in customizable wraps, boxes, and plates.

**1570 Camino De La Reina, 92108**  
(619) 491-0279 | thekebabshop.com

### Best Catering

#### L&L Hawaiian Barbecue

When Johnson Kam and Eddie Flores Jr. introduced L&L to the U.S. mainland, they knew that most people were unfamiliar with the "plate lunch". So they repackaged it as L&L Hawaiian Barbecue®. A "Plate lunch" – dates back to wage laborers in 19th century sugar plantations and fields, who brought rice and other leftovers to work in compartmentalized tins. Lunches were often shared, resulting in a harmonious mix of home recipes from Japan, China, the Philippines, Portugal, Korea, and even New England. Discover the delicious possibilities inherent in the uniquely delicious, contemporary L & L Hawaiian Barbecue plate lunch.

**6353 El Cajon Blvd Ste 124146, 92115**  
(619) 229-6888

### Best Chinese (tie)

#### Pei Wei Asian Kitchen

At Pei Wei, enjoy fresh ingredients to craft entrées with bold flavors. Made with quality ingredients like house-chopped veggies and whole cuts of white meat chicken and grass-fed flank steak, they make your meal fresh to ensure every entrée is prepared exactly to your liking.

**1025 Camino De La Reina, 92108**  
(619) 321-6670 | peiwei.com

### P.F. Chang's

P.F. Chang's serves a variety of Asian-inspired dishes and Chinese food, including hand-rolled sushi and traditional Chinese dim sum. Many gluten-free and vegetarian options are also available. A delightful ambience and mouth watering dining awaits.

**7077 Friars Rd, 92108**  
pfchang.com | (619) 260-8484

### Best Cocktails

#### Blanco Tacos & Tequila

Blanco's fresh twist on Mexican food is all you need to experience that ocean kissed bliss you crave. Lounge long and drink on with tantalizing tequila flights, and easy but innovative a la carte tacos. Go for the burrito layered with savory fillings like spicy Machaca short rib or red chili chicken, fresh salsas and their famous house guacamole. They've got everything you want at Blanco.

**Fashion Valley, 7007 Friars Rd, 92108**  
(619) 810-2931 | blancotacostequila.com

### Best Coffee Shop

#### Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

Enjoy the finest-quality coffee and tea when visiting The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®. Serving your favorites, from The Original Ice Blended® beverages to deliciously-flavored latte and espresso drinks. Indulge in a seasonal treat like the Caramel Cold Brew Latte. Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf is dedicated to sourcing the best ingredients by selecting only the top one percent of Arabica beans and top hand-plucked whole tea leaves.

**Westfield Mission Valley**  
925 Camino De La Reina, 92108  
(619) 299-5072 | coffeebean.com

### Best Comedy Club

#### Murder Mystery Dinner Theater

America's largest interactive comedy murder mystery dinner theatre show is now playing! Solve a hilarious mystery while you feast on a fantastic dinner. Just beware!— The culprit is hiding in plain sight somewhere in the room, and you may find yourself as a prime suspect before you know it. This event is very different from a traditional murder mystery dinner show. Prepare for a fun, social and interactive evening.

**DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel**  
1515 Hotel Cir S, 92108  
(866) 496-0535  
thedinnerdetective.com

### Best Comfort Food

#### The Habit Burger Grill

The spirit of Santa Barbara is at the heart of everything at the Habit. Inspired by this coastal town's laid-back vibrancy and passion for culinary exploration, a simple idea formed: always chargrilling burgers over an open flame using only the best ingredients, and bringing everything together through genuine, world-class hospitality. In the end, it all comes from that first idea. A vision that became the Habit.

**Westfield Mission Valley**  
845 Camino De La Reina, 92108  
(619) 299-9913 | habitburger.com

### Best Deli

#### Which Wich Superior Sandwiches

Which Wich® Superior Sandwiches offer more than 50 varieties of customizable "wiches." The shop is known for its revolutionary ordering system. Guests use red Sharpies® to mark up preprinted menus on sandwich bags. They select a sandwich from one of 10 categories, then choose the type of bread, size, cheese, spreads and vegetables. The sandwiches are prepared to guests' exact specifications and delivered in personalized sandwich bags. Which "wich are you today?"

**Hazard Center**  
7610 Hazard Center Dr Ste 501, 92108  
(619) 359-4074 | whichwich.com

### Best Desserts

#### The Cheesecake Factory

From very humble beginnings, The Cheesecake Factory has become a great American success story! With more than 250 items on the menu, it may be hard to believe that they make things fresh and from scratch in each restaurant – but it's true! The prep kitchens are one of the busiest spots in their restaurants.

**7067 Friars Rd, 92108**  
(619) 683-2800  
thecheesecakefactory.com

### Best Dinner

#### The Amigo Spot

This Mexican Restaurant & Cantina Bar is located at the Kings Inn Hotel. They proudly serve the finest regional Baja Mexican family-style food with music, Happy Hour Drink Specials (25+ Tequilas!). Enjoy traditional sit-down meals from delicious burritos and enchiladas—to sizzling fajita platters to marinated carne asada and a variety of seafood and vegetarian offerings. A full bar has a large collection of tequilas that allow for a plethora of margarita combinations! Don't forget the chips & guacamole.

**Kings Inn San Diego**  
1333 Hotel Cir S, 92108  
(619) 297-2231  
amigospotssandiego.com

### Best Donuts

#### Rose Donuts

If you've never been to a Rose Donuts shop, it's time you did. These cake-style donuts are the best around. Enjoy the delectable Red Velvet Cake, delightful Raspberry or their famous Maple/Bacon delight. Affordable family sizes orders and a flavor selection to die for!

**Ford Trolley Plaza**  
5201 Linda Vista Rd, 92110  
(619) 294-8856

### Best Farmers Market Mission Valley (Civita Park) Farmers Market

Civita's farmers market is back, and it

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We invite you to come spend the night at the Kings Inn  
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1333 Hotel Circle South,  
San Diego, CA 92108  
619.297.2231  
www.kingsinn.com



will be held every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Enjoy a diverse range of vendors. It's a must-visit if you're looking for fresh fruits and vegetables from certified local growers. Bring your appetite because there will be baked goods, coffee, espresso, and much more. It's a beautiful place for a picnic and a stroll through the park after a day at the farmers market. Visit their FB page for information.

**Civita Park Farmers Market**  
7964 Civita Blvd, 92108  
(760) 504-4363

**Best Fast Food**  
**Shake Shack**  
When Shake Shack started as a hot dog cart in New York City's Madison Square Park, the mission was simple: raise funds for a public art project. As they grew into a global business, their mission to Stand For Something Good expanded to include taking care of the team, sourcing premium ingredients from partners with the same dedication to quality, supporting our communities through donations, events, volunteering—and much more.

675 Camino De La Reina, 92108  
(619) 391-1626 | shakeshack.com

**Best Fine Dining**  
**Arlo Restaurant**  
Innovative, eclectic and artfully inventive — ARLO is a celebration of San Diego lifestyle and culinary culture. Enjoy scratch-made dishes using fresh local ingredients and a mosaic of flavors from around the world. The fun, fresh, quirky environment is highlighted by a sweeping outdoor patio, swaying palm trees and a giant outdoor fireplace. Rounding out the experience is an inventive cocktail program, extensive wine list and local craft beer on tap.

Town and Country San Diego  
500 Hotel Cir N, 92108  
(619) 908-5058

**Best Food Truck**  
**Kiko's Seafood Lunch Truck**  
Rumor is they have the best seafood around. Rave reviews on-line. There can be a little wait, but happy customers claim it's worth the wait!

Corner of Hazard Center Dr. & Mission Center Rd, 92108 (619) 341-7397

**Best Golf Course**  
**Riverwalk Golf Club**  
Located in the heart of San Diego's Mission Valley within minutes of Hotel Circle and area attractions, Riverwalk Golf Club's offers a 18 hole resort style full length par 72 course. Along with magnificent golf, superb amenities and outstanding service, Riverwalk Golf Club has earned recognition among San Diego's best and most fun golf courses to play. Other amenities include a double sided, night lit driving range and short game area; golf learning center offering a variety of golf instructional programs for juniors and adults, taught by a talented team of teaching professionals; and a beautiful clubhouse featuring a full service golf shop and delicious dining.

1150 Fashion Valley Rd, 92108  
(619) 296-4653 | riverwalkgc.com

**Best Greek**  
**Troy's Greek Restaurant**  
Opening their doors in 1985, Troy's has been making great traditional Greek and American food for over 20 years. They continue to strive to make the food better, the atmosphere more attractive, and to keep prices reasonable!

Friars Village Shopping Center  
10450 Friars Rd, Ste T, 92120  
(619) 281-7741 | troysgreek.com

**Best Happy Hour**  
**Yard House**  
If you're looking for innovative foods, look no further than the Yard House. The chefs are constantly coming up with ways to introduce globally inspired flavors to favorite American dishes, giving their menu a worldly yet familiar feel. To enjoy the world's largest selection of draft beer featuring over 100 beers from local and imported breweries visit Yard House.

Westfield Mission Valley  
1640 Camino Del Rio N, Ste 157, 92108  
(619) 574-0468 | yardhouse.com

**Best Health Food Store**  
**Lazy Acres**  
At Lazy Acres, a natural approach to optimal health and wellness is taken. From organic and seasonal produce and products steeped in tradition, to functional supplements and body care, they are here to support you in mind, body and soul. Founded in 1991, Lazy Acres quickly became a trusted resource within the Santa Barbara community. Now with four more SoCal locations. Live well, eat well. That's their motto.

422 W Washington St, 92103  
(619) 272-4289

**Best Indian**  
**Tandoor**  
Tandoor has been serving delicious Indian food for over 20 years in San Diego. Enjoy a casual dining experience with traditionally flavors and selections you won't find anywhere else.

Friars Mission Center  
5608 Mission Center Rd #902, 92108  
(619) 497-0751 | tandoorsandiego.com

**Best Irish Pub**  
**McGregor's Grill & Ale House**  
Your friendly neighborhood joint. Great food, tasty craft beer and good friends can turn any night into the best night ever. That's the feeling McGregor's provides. Just the right atmosphere and vibe bring friends around the table. Whether it's date night, lunch with a colleague or happy hour, you'll always feel at home at McGregor's.

10475 San Diego Mission Rd, 92108  
(619) 282-9797  
mcgregorssandiego.com

**Best Italian**  
**North Italia**  
Everyday at North Italia there is a new delicious favorite— like the Chef's daily pizzas, waiting to be discovered and devoured. A tempting assortment of wines, beer, and house-made cocktails give you endless ways to treat yourself. From the moment you walk through their door, to your last scoops of budino at the end of a satisfying meal, you'll know you're in good hands. Come by. Sit back and savor every bite, sip, and moment.

Fashion Valley  
7055 Friars Rd, 92108 (619) 343-2301

**Best Japanese**  
**Fuji Japanese Steak House**  
Wood-accented Japanese eatery offering sushi plus teppanyaki served with made-from-scratch sauces. They don't disappoint.

911 Camino del Rio S, 92108  
(619) 298-3854

**Best Juice Bar**  
**Nekter Juice Bar**  
At Nékter, you'll find only the freshest ingredients. The crafted juices, smoothies, and acai bowls are natural, clean and always buzzing with the most energizing and nutrient-rich ingredients. For healthy on-the-go, try one of the cold pressed juices or take a 6-bottle vacation with a Nekter Cleanse. Juices and Smoothies are a natural way to feed our bodies with essential minerals, vitamins, and living enzymes. Incorporate more real foods into your life, and pack more healthy choices into your days with Nekter Juice Bar.

Friars Mission Center  
5694 Mission Center Rd # 604, 92108  
(619) 272-0777 | nekterjuicebar.com

**Late Night Dining**  
**Yard House**  
(See listing under Best Happy Hour)

**Best Live Music**  
**TBS Tavern**  
TBS Tavern (Tacos barBites and Salads) is serving up slow cooked meats with unique flavor profiles paired with cold San Diego craft beer and a diverse wine selection. Located in the Promenade residential complex aiming to be the Rio Vista community's favorite new local bar.

The Promenade Rio Vista Apartments  
8555 Station Village Way, 92108  
(619) 359-4198 | tbstavern.com

**Best Lunch**  
**Jane's Café**  
Jane's Cafe opened 10 years ago. Owners Jane and Masoud have been in the restaurant industry for over 30 years in San Diego. Devena Jane was born in Manchester, England. She fondly remembers her Grandparents Gladys and Albert serving the patrons of their "The Swan" pub in Crumpsall. The delicious food with quality ingredients and good portions kept them coming back for more. Their hope was to have that

same feeling at Jane's Cafe. And that's exactly what they've have achieved.

591 Camino De La Reina Ste 130, 92108  
(619) 380-2501

**Best Margarita**  
**Blanco Tacos & Tequilla**  
(See listing under Best Cocktail)

**Best Martini**  
**Tommy Bahama Marlin Bar**  
Good vibes and sunshine. They're mak-

ing their mark in SoCal with the Marlin Bar. Enjoy their first-ever restaurant location in San Diego, let your free spirit fly in their outdoor-dining patio, complete with an outside bar. When the occasion calls for happy hour apéritifs and appetizers, go where you can kick back, raise a glass, and bask in the sunshine.

Fashion Valley  
7007 Friars Rd #305, 92108  
(619) 541-6296  
tommybahama.com

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THE AMIGO SPOT AT KINGS INN  
BEST MEXICAN

**Best Mexican**  
**The Amigo Spot, Kings Inn**  
(See listing under Best Dinner)

**Best Movie Theater**  
**AMC Mission Valley 20**  
Experience the difference of AMC amenities. From spacious rocking seats to luxury recliners, innovative menus, premium offerings like IMAX, Dolby Cinema, and Prime. AMC Theatres offers a range of ways to get more out of movies.  
**Westfield Mission Valley**  
1640 Camino Del Rio N, 92108  
(619) 296-2737

**Best New Restaurant**  
**Arlo**  
(See listing under Best Fine Dining)

**Best Outdoor Dining**  
**King's Fish House**  
Welcome to the house that seafood built." A long time ago, on a road trip in search of the ultimate seafood experience, down the highways and byways, pulled up a seat, put on bibs, and soaked

up the seafood experience. The no-name dishes with unforgettable flavor, the fresh-caught oysters and clams piled high, the hand-lettered specials on ancient chalkboards, and the savory simmer of every combination of spices unforgettable. That's what King's Fish House is all about— to bring all of these ideas together into one single, spectacular place, filled with things we love best!  
**Westfield Mission Valley**  
825 Camino De La Reina, 92108  
(619) 574-1230 | kingsfishhouse.com

**Best Pet Friendly Restaurant**  
**Lazy Dog Restaurant & Bar**  
The Simms family has gathered the knowledge and traditions of three generations to create something they hope will be a special place for you and your family. Inspired by unplanned adventures, an enduring love of food and fire-side conversations, Lazy Dog was created to do just that. They source fresh ingredients from places and farmers they love and respect. Meals made by-hand each day, including all of their sauces,

marinades and dressings. You can also enjoy a seasonal menu, where you can celebrate Mother Nature's beautiful bounty the best way they know how.  
**Westfield Mission Valley**  
1202 Camino Del Rio N, 92108  
(619) 481-6191  
lazydogrestaurants.com

**Best Pizza**  
**Lucca's Pizzeria and Market**  
At Lucca's Pizza and Market, customers can enjoy delectible artisan pizza and a food market. The interests of customers is their top priority.  
**The Promenade Rio Vista**  
2195 Station Village Way A, 92108  
(619) 684-5125  
luccaspizzamarket.com

**Oggi's Sports Brewhouse & Pizza**  
(See listing under Best Business Lunch)

**Best Poke**  
**Poke One and N Half**  
Poki (or Poke), a Hawaiian delicacy, is a delicious salad bowl served with fresh

seafood and a variety of ingredients. Poke in the Hawaiian language literally means "to cut or slice". They offer four bases, 7 types of seafood and over 10 types of toppings and various sauces. They will help you to find that one perfect combination to satisfy your taste buds. Highest quality and the freshest ingredients ensures you the best Poki experience around.  
**Fashion Valley**  
7007 Friars Rd Ste 941, 92108  
(619) 220-7147

**Best Seafood**  
**California Fish Grill**  
Relaxed chain serving fried and char-broiled seafood, plus chicken, fish tacos, beer & wine. View the fresh menu consisting of freshly sourced ingredients and seafood: Fish tacos, catfish, New England clam chowder, jumbo shrimp, ahi poke, and more.  
**Park Valley Center**  
1530 Camino De La Reina, 92108  
(619) 541-8723 | cafishgrill.com

**Best Sports Bar**  
**BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse**  
(See listing under Best Beer/Brewery)

**Best Steak**  
**Bully's East Prime Bistro Sports Bar**  
A San Diego tradition since 1971, Bully's is known for superior quality, exceptional value and of course, friendly service! Bully's features award-winning prime rib, fresh seafood, steaks, ribs, sandwiches and a children's menu. Whether it is brunch, lunch or dinner served late, it's sure to be a pleasurable experience.  
2401 Camino del Rio S, 92108  
(619) 291-2665 | bullyseastsd.com

**Best Sushi**  
**Sushi Kuchi**  
Large menu to choose from, fair prices, convenient location. A great local option to quench your sushi cravings.  
**Fenton Marketplace**  
2408 Northside Dr, 92108  
(619) 284-8036

**Best Thai**  
**Ka Prao Thai Cuisine**  
The votes are in. Stop by to see why diners enjoy the flavors of Ka Prao Thai, selection, portion size and pricing.  
**Rio Vista Shopping Center**  
8590 Rio San Diego Dr #105, 92108  
(619) 326-8083  
kapraothaicuisine.com

**Best Vegetarian/Vegan**  
**True Food Kitchen**  
The foodies, the health experts and the wellness seekers who believe in a good glass of red. The flavor fanatics, the plant-based and the protein obsessed. The cocktail wizards and the culinary visionaries who concoct and create. The farmers, the growers, the winemakers and the bakers. The green juice lovers and the burger aficionados and the Sunday brunchers.  
**Fashion Valley**  
7007 Friars Rd Suite 394, 92108  
(619) 810-2929 | truefoodkitchen.com

**Best Wings**  
**Buffalo Wild Wings**  
Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar's concept is more than a Buffalo, New York-style wing joint with 14 signature sauces, they are also a sports bar, with a full menu featuring everything from salads to appetizers to burgers, and a variety of specialty items.  
**Westfield Mission Valley**  
1640 Camino Del Rio N #1376, 92108  
(619) 298-7068 | buffalowildwings.com

## Gold Winner Retail Services

**Best Accountant**  
**Rowling & Associates**  
Rowling & Associates is an award-winning, fee-only, San Diego based, registered investment advisor that offers investment management, and tax and financial planning services. The firm's

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**8889 Rio San Diego Dr, 92108**  
rowling.com | 619-295-0200

### Best Acupuncture

#### Fertile Turtle Acupuncture

Fertile Turtle Acupuncture specializes in enhancing fertility through the age old practices of acupuncture and herbal medicine. Couples conceive naturally or increase the success of Assisted Reproductive Techniques such as IUI or IVF. They work to improve egg quality, improve sperm quality and help to resolve unexplained infertility.

**409 Camino del Rio S #110, 92108**  
(619) 980-4631  
fertileturtleacupuncture.com

### Best Animan Hospital

#### VCA Emergency Animal Hospital & Referral Center

In the AAHA-accredited facility at VCA Emergency Animal Hospital & Referral Center in San Diego, they work closely with referring primary care veterinarians. They deliver the best medical care for pets and the best experience for pet owners. The specialists provide the most advanced veterinary medical equipment and techniques to ensure that the patients receive the best care available.

**2317 Hotel Circle So., 92108**  
(619) 299-2400

### Best Antiques

#### Mission Gallery Antiques

Their passion for antiques derives from their familial roots within San Diego. Randy's, mother was the original historian for San Diego. She was tasked with documenting what we currently know as the historical state parks throughout San Diego County. She was instrumental in preserving the original Victorian homes in downtown. Jim was born just down the street from their gallery at Scripps Mercy Hospital in 1953 and grew up in Mission Hills. Jim devoted himself to studying history and was greatly influenced by his grandmother, a decorator in San Francisco. These seeds were planted and sprout when they embarked on buying and selling real estate in the 1970s. With Randy's hobby of treasure hunting and Jim's love for history and decorating, it was fate when in 1980 arrived an opportunity to purchase 320 West Washington Street in the Mission Hills. Thus, Mission Gallery was born.

**320 W Washington St, 92103**  
missiongalleryantiques.com  
(619) 692-3566

### Best Attorney

#### Law Offices of 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. In 2010, she reopened her practice, focusing exclusively on defending individuals accused of DUI in San Diego and the surrounding area. Susan Hartman is admitted to practice in both California and Massachusetts State Courts and the U.S. District Court, So. 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.

**8880 Rio San Diego Dr, Ste 800, 92108** | 619-260-1122

### Best Auto Detail

#### SoCal Auto Detail Center

Smith Bros has a reputation for excellence doesn't just come from their 25 years of experience or their five-star customer ratings—it stems from how much they care. They'll always treat your vehicle as if it were one of their own. They use only the safest products and materials, ensuring your vehicle's safety and longevity. Because being an eco-friendly business is also important to them and they use only non-toxic, environmentally conscious and professional-grade products. A family run business, it is their goal to protect the environment for future generations.

**Hazard Center**  
**7610 Hazard Center Dr #113, 92108**  
(619) 683-7420  
socialautodetailcenter.co

### Best Auto Repair Shop

#### Firestone Complete AutoCare

At Firestone Auto Care, they know your time is valuable. And there's never a convenient time to get your car serviced or checked up. Which is why they're committed to giving your car the complete care it needs, done right, the first time. After all, pride in their quality service and getting you back on the road safely as soon as possible will bring you back time and time again.

**Fashion Valley**  
**6977 Friars Rd, 92108**  
(619) 798-7878

### Best Bank

#### Chase Bank Mission Valley

Convenient location to get your banking done or get cash fast. Find out how Chase can help you with checking, savings, mobile banking, and more. Deposit products provided by JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. Member FDIC.

**5111 Mission Center Rd, 92108**  
(619) 298-9688

### Best Barber

#### Tonsorium Barber Co

Tonsorium is a single chair no-nonsense studio located within the Sola Salons of Fashion Valley. Due to space, only one customer is allowed inside the studio at a time. Operating by appointment only. No walk ins. No kids. Thank you for supporting small business and your local barber. Appointments cancelled within 1 hr of appointment time will be charged full service price cancellation fee. No exceptions.

**1450 Frazee Rd #20, 92108**  
(619) 867-4156  
tonsoriumbarberco.com

### Best Car Wash

#### SoCal Auto Detail Center

So Cal Auto Detail Center™ strives to provide the best auto detailing and paint correction/paint protection services in San Diego. They offer comprehensive yet flexible car detailing services, as well as a wide range of paint re-conditioning packages, suited to clients' needs and vehicle type. Every vehicle is treated as if it were their own, with unequaled quality and professionalism. No matter if it's your first visit or 100th, their goal is provide a better-than-new finish every time.

**Hazard Center**  
**7610 Hazard Center Dr #113, 92108**  
(619) 683-7420  
socialautodetailcenter.com

### Best Children's School

#### Children's Growing Center

Serve children age 0-6, part- and full-time. Philosophy-investigate, explore, and experiment. They teach through play. Play makes learning fun and easy.

**Located inside First United Methodist Church of San Diego**  
**2111 Camino del Rio So, 92108**  
(619) 295-1915

### Best Chiropractor

#### Inner Balance Institute

Inner Balance Institute provides natural, non-invasive therapies and functional exercise as an alternative to surgery and drug-related approaches. Get to know their professional team, how the practice started, and what makes them unique.

**1764 San Diego Ave #140, 92110**  
(619) 543-9999

### Best Collective

#### 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.

**2835 Camino del Rio S #100, 92108**  
619-314-7336

### SDRC

San Diego Recreational Cannabis - is the go-to destination for locals and tourists alike. As San Diego's largest recreational dispensary, SDRC has the widest selection of THC and CBD products to meet any budget — guaranteed. You'll be able to find top-shelf flower, discreet vapes, tasty edibles or even cannabis-infused topicals for that sunburn. Best of all, anyone 21 and up is welcome with a valid I.D. (even out of state). SDRC is Redefining Recreational and now redefining your vacation. Check their website for all the locations and newest products.

**1299 Camino Del Rio So, 92108**  
619-906-5546  
**10150 Sorrento Valley Rd, Ste. 100,**  
**858-380-4637**  
sandiegorecreationalcannabis.com

### Best Computer Repair

#### iSquad Repair

iSquad Repair is the best place for cell

phone repair in Mission Valley. They offer free diagnostics, and you don't pay until the job is complete and you are 100% satisfied. That's their guarantee. They can fix any type of cell phone, including iPhones, Androids, and even tablets. Plus, enjoy the convenient location next to Ikea. So if you're in need of a cell phone repair, go to iSquad Repair and they'll take care of you.

**2169 Fenton Pkwy #115, 92108**  
(619) 542-9223

### Best Cosmetic Service

(tie)

#### Ideal Image Mission Valley

As the nation's leading aesthetics brand, Ideal Image's vision is to make personal aesthetic and wellness services more affordable, accessible and effective than ever before. They believe everyone deserves to look and feel their best, and that the only opinion that matters when it comes to your appearance and well-being is your own. That's why they promise affordable aesthetic treatments through the most accessible network of doctors and medical professionals. Their team of experts will give you honest answers, create a personalized plan that best fits your goals, and deliver results you can see and confidence you can feel.

**1652 Camino Del Rio N, 92108**  
(619) 821-3281 | idealimage.com

### SD Botox

Dr. Roher remains a practicing board-certified anesthesiologist, but his real passion remains in helping people change their lives for the better. Back in 2012, Dr. Roher opened his first SDBotox with a desire to help people achieve enhancements with minimally invasive cosmetic procedures and microtreatments. Since then, SDBotox has been a groundbreaking endeavor. Dr. Roher has helped tens of thousands of patients achieve amazing results. He's done so in a warm, relaxing environment at several locations around San Diego.

**Plaza Del Rio Shopping Center**  
**1400 Camino de la Reina Ste 107, 92108**  
(844) 732-6869 | sdbotox.com

### Best Credit Union

#### 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, San Diego County Credit Union 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 today and experience the difference. It's your hometown. It's ours too.

**502 University Ave #500, 92103**  
sdccu.com | 877-732-2848

### Best Dance Studio

#### The Origin Hip Hop

#### Performing Arts Academy

The Origin is dedicated to supporting the cultural, social, creative, and educational values of Hip Hop. The Origin will edu-

cate and inspire youth to utilize the genre as a tool for learning. The Origin enjoys broad local support and collaborations with a variety of businesses and private benefactors. Voted Best Hip Hop Dance Studio in 2016 and 2017. Programs include classes, dance crews, camps and after schools programs has been a staple of the community for nearly 12 years.

**Westfield Mission Valley**  
**1640 Camino Del Rio N #230, 92108**  
(619) 905-3645 | originhhpaa.com

### Best Day Spa

#### Belle la vie Day Spa

Welcome to Belle La Vie Spa. Our spa is conveniently located in Mission Valley right off interstate 8 and Texas St with plenty of parking available. We are proud to serve all of San Diego County and visitors alike. Indeed, when you enter their spa, you will be impressed by the relaxing and peaceful ambiance. You will find the staff to be friendly, helpful and informative. Moreover, their Aestheticians and Massage Therapists have years of experience. When you leave, you will feel rejuvenated, relaxed, and renewed, your mind will be clearer and refreshed to take on the world.

**2667 Camino del Rio S, 92108**  
(619) 798-3907

### Best Dentist

#### Smile Mission Valley Dental Center

Smile Mission Valley has assembled a team of dentists and dental experts from multiple specialties to take care of all your dental needs at Smile Mission Valley. Whether you need something as simple as a cleaning or as complex as an implant, you can have all of your work done there. They refer very few cases out to other specialists. By staging all of your treatment at one location, Smile Mission Valley improves your quality of care, reduces your treatment time and saves you money.

**2650 Camino Del Rio N #102, 92108**  
(619) 298-0521 | localmed.com

### Best Dry Cleaner

#### San Diego Dry Cleaners & Alterations

Full service dry cleaning plus a professional team to help alter your favorite clothes fresh looking year after year. Though it may not be the cheapest facility around, customers say it's worth the little extra cost.

**Rancho Mission Plaza**  
**10415 San Diego Mission Rd, 92108**  
(619) 640-9355

### Best Financial Planner

#### Pure Financial Advisors, LLC

With a focus on financial education and a transparent advisory process, the financial advisors strive to help everyone reach their financial goals. Find out how advisors can help you create a holistic financial plan that will help set you up for success now and in the future. We offer fee-only financial planning to put you on track for the journey that lies ahead. Experience the Pure Difference.

**Centerside**  
**3131 Camino Del Rio N #1550, 92108**  
(619) 814-4100 | purefinancial.com



**Best Florist**  
**Precious Petals**  
Precious Petals has been hand-delivering premium floral arrangements and gift baskets to help strengthen relationships, give love and support, and celebrate life's special moments. From birthdays to anniversaries to commemorating a loved one, and every little "just because" moment in between. Enjoy FREE\* Same Day Delivery in the San Diego area. Stunning arrangements will allow nature's beauty to inspire your special moment. And because they are a local florist dedicated to your satisfaction, you can always expect your needs to be treated with all the attention to detail they deserve.  
**Rancho Mission Plaza**  
**10491 San Diego Mission Rd, 92108**  
**(619) 584-8757**

**Fun Activities**  
**Battle Axe**  
Battle Axe is a family owned business that is introducing a unique, adrenaline packed activity with some style. There are 22 full lanes that dedicate 12 lanes for larger groups like corporate outings, birthdays, and bachelor/bachelorette parties and 10 lanes dedicated for walk ins. You can enjoy a game similar to darts, players throw an axe at the wooden target, scoring points based on where the axe lands on the bullseye. The player that wins the most games gets dubbed Battle Axe Champion. They also have tic-tac-toe after you master the craft of axe throwing. If you've never thrown an axe, don't worry – a Battle Axe expert will be assigned to your group.  
**Riverdale Commercial Park**  
**6330 Riverdale St, 92120**  
**(619) 501-8811**

**Best Garden Supply**  
**Mission Hills Nursery**  
Since 1989 Mission Hills Nursery & Garden Center has been 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. All your landscape design dreams will come true when Eco Gardeners takes over. Serving your needs and making your garden come alive! "Dig It. Plant It. Eat It. Green, growing green, and eating green since 1910."  
**1525 Fort Stockton Dr, 92103**  
**(619) 295-2808**  
**missionhillsnursery.com**

**Best Gym**  
**Mission Valley YMCA**  
Mission Valley YMCA has been proudly serving families since 1981. Dedicated to empowering people to be healthier in spirit, mind and body. The Y believes a strong community can only be achieved when invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors. As a leading nonprofit organization, the Y offers programs that foster youth development, promote healthy living and advance social responsibility. If you've not been to a YMCA lately, you'll be amazed at the amenities. Prices are affordable, family plans and memberships are good at any Y location.  
**5505 Friars Rd, 92110**  
**(619) 298-3576 | ymcasd.org**

**Best Hair Salon**  
**Frederick Michael Salon**  
This salon and barber shop has grown in popularity to residents. They also have a great hair extension technician available.  
**1233 Camino del Rio So, 92108**  
**(619) 398-2105**

**Best Health Food Store**  
**Lazy Acres Natural Market**  
Lazy Acres prides itself on a natural approach to optimal health and wellness. From organic and seasonal produce and products steeped in tradition, to functional supplements and body care, they are there to support you in mind, body and soul. Founded in 91, they quickly became a trusted resource within the Santa Barbara community. Now with four more SoCal locations, Lazy Acres is dedicated to local communities and

strives to provide a marketplace for anyone who lives healthy and eat well.  
**422 W. Washington St, 92103**  
**(619) 272-4289 | lazyacres.com**

**Best Hospital**  
**Alvarado Hospital Medical Center**  
Alvarado Hospital is a 306-bed acute care hospital offering advanced, specialized healthcare services to the San Diego community and beyond. Advanced medicine meets personalized care in the staff at the Alvarado Hospital Medical Center. The hospital's orthopedic and spine surgeries are award-winning. This hospital has been recognized for Patient Safety Excellence Award™  
**6655 Alvarado Rd, 92108**  
**alvaradohospital.com | 619-287-3270**

**Best Hotel**  
**Kings Inn**  
Beautiful weather, private, clean rooms, with open air spaces, open corridors, and a stylish, mid-century vibe... overlooking a perfect pool. Enjoy two dining areas in the Waffle Spot and Amigo Spot. Family friendly dining in a casual atmosphere.  
**1333 Hotel Cir S, 92108**  
**kingsinnsandiego.com**  
**(619) 297-2231**

**Best Insurance Broker**  
**Ramsey Insurance Brokers**  
Paying for insurance month after month (when you don't need it) can be a real drag. You might even feel like you're paying for nothing—but don't get tricked into believing that. Insurance might not be as flashy as something like your debt snowball, but insurance is just as important when it comes to things on the defensive side of your game plan here. Think of insurance like a life jacket. It feels like a pain when you don't need it, but when you do need it, you're freakin' thankful to have it.. Without insurance, you could be one car wreck, sickness or emergency away from having a huge money mess. But how do you know which types of insurance are worth it and which types are useless?  
**ramseysolutions.com**

**Best Jewelry**  
**Stuart Benjamin & Co. Jewelry Designs**  
For over 25 years as one of San Diego's exclusive jewelers, Stuart Benjamin & Co. Jewelry Designs has been an award-winning jewelry store that has helped people celebrate special moments in their lives. Business partners Stuart Benjamin and Barbara Wasserstrom share a love and knowledge for jewelry style and design that is rare in today's market. Together, they have guided Stuart Benjamin & Co. Jewelry as a full-service jewelry store that is known for the finest custom designs, fashion jewelry, exquisite engagement rings, and certified diamonds.  
**7610 Hazard Center Dr # 517, 92108**  
**(619) 297-7666**

**Best Manicure/Pedicure**  
**Lavish Nails & Lounge**  
Lavish Nails is an upscale nail salon carrying the latest equipment to provide a relaxing and enjoyable experience for both men and women. The salon offers a wide selection of services, including manicures, spa pedicures, waxing and facials—all within their elegant yet comfortable atmosphere. This individualized attention and relaxed atmosphere offers the perfect antidote to the hustle and bustle of work, home and shopping. Pamper yourself with the latest techniques in all services provided by Lavish.  
**7610 Hazard Center Dr ste 503, 92108**  
**(619) 294-9800**

**Best Massage**  
**Deluxe Spa Services**  
Whether you are looking for waxing service or deep tissue massage, Deluxe Spa Services will not dissappoint.  
**1233 Camino del Rio S, 92108**  
**(619) 851-9639**  
**deluxespaservices.com**

**Best Optomotrist**  
**Urban Optiks**  
Urban Optiks Optometry is committed to superlative service, unsurpassed craftsmanship and advanced technology. Their commitment is not just in meeting your expectations, but in exceeding them! Your eye health and appearance can mean to the quality of your life, and they are committed to excellence in servicing your complete eyecare needs. You'll find the finest selection of frames, lenses, contacts and accessories available in San Diego. This vintage/industrial-inspired optical boutique comes alive as foraged and locally-sourced furnishings and display elements provide an eclectic backdrop for their unique collection of high-quality handcrafted classic, modern and vintage-inspired eyewear from around the world.  
**3788 Park Blvd Suite 5, 92103**  
**(619) 683-2020 | uoosd.com**

**Pet Groomer**  
**Top Dog Wash & Groom**  
The staff at Top Dog are trained professionals that take great pride in what they do. Each team member has their own area of specialty and personal affinity. They offer breed specific cuts, creative styles and colors, and coat maintenance. They will make sure to match your pup up with his/her perfect quaffing professional.  
**3371 Adams Ave, 92116**  
**(619) 225-1000**

**Best Pet Sitter**  
**Mission Valley Pet Sitting Services**  
If you're like most of us, your pets are members of the family. When you can't be at home to look after them due to work, vacation, business trips or other obligations, you want someone you can trust to provide the care and attention they need and deserve. MV Pet Sitting Services is based on the belief that the client's needs are of the utmost importance. They are committed to meeting those needs beyond your expectations. Their goal is to become a part of your extended family and to have you become a part of theirs. They offer a variety of services for dogs and cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters and mice and birds, they also care for chickens.  
**10085 Rio San Diego Dr, 92108**  
**(760) 644-0289**

**Best Pharmacy**  
**CVS Pharmacy**  
Honestly, what's not to love about CVS. They offer so much. Savings programs, Minute Clinic, Photo department. Large assortment of wine and spirits, and It's all under one roof and the pharmacy staff is wonderful and professional.  
**Friars Mission Center**  
**5644 Mission Center Rd, 92108**  
**(619) 298-3655**

**Best Pilates**  
**Club Pilates Mission Valley**  
Since 2007, Club Pilates has expanded around the globe, bringing Pilates to hundreds of thousands of people. They serve up over eight million workouts each year to dedicated members...and they're just getting started. Pure to Joseph Pilates' original Reformer-based Contrology Method, but modernized with group practice and expanded state-of-the-art equipment, Club Pilates offers high-quality, life-changing training at a surprisingly affordable price. They believe that Pilates is the path to a fuller, more satisfying physical existence. Control of your body helps you to be in control of your life.  
**Golfview Center**  
**10330 Friars Rd # 112, 92120**  
**(619) 786-2300 | clubpilates.com**

**Best Plumbing, Heating & Electric**  
**Ideal Plumbing, Heating, Air & Electrical**  
Ideal Heating and Air, plumbing and electric has been trusted by San Diego since 1960. Ideal is more than just a company that installs and repairs your plumbing, heating, air, or electrical. We believe in

*Wealth Management* ✨ *Taxes* ✨ *Financial Planning*  
  
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*& associates*  
  
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**www.rowling.com**

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**idealservice.com | (619) 583-7963**

**Best Real Estate Agent**

**Kathy McSherry**  
Kathy McSherry ~ Civita Mission Valley Real Estate Agent is more than just about finding and selling homes. It is about forming true relationships and being a reliable and trustworthy source for those looking to buy or sell. Through her committed efforts and constant communication throughout each real estate transaction, Kathy is able to understand her clients' wants and needs when making important decisions. With more than 15 years of experience in real estate and 12 years with new home builders, Kathy is an expert when it comes to the cost and value of a home, which enables her to accurately assess both sides of the real estate transaction.  
**Kathy McSherry, Compass Real Estate**  
**8889 Rio San Diego Dr Ste 200, 92108 (702) 328-9905**

**Best Real Estate Office**

**Compass Real Estate**  
A brokerage of unparalleled agents. As an innovative residential real estate firm, they strive empower agents providing more time for advising their clients. With

the solutions-driven mindset of a startup and the sophistication of a luxury brand, Compass is the future of real estate. Compass is changing how agents and clients navigate the process of finding or selling a home.  
**8889 Rio San Diego D, Ste 200, 92108 (619) 353-5799**

**Best Retirement Living**  
**St. Paul's Senior Services**

St. Paul's Senior Services has provided care to San Diego seniors since 1960. Since then, they have expanded programs and offerings to include three senior living communities, a skilled nursing center, a senior day program, a child care center, and four St. Paul's PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) medical centers throughout San Diego. St. Paul's continues to expand and evolve services as the needs of local seniors change.

**328 Maple Street, 92103 (619)239-6900 | stpaulseniors.org**

**Best Shopping Center**  
**Hazard Center**

There's a lot happening at Hazard Center. Fun happy hours. Favorite eats. Winning workouts. Bestselling books. The latest movies and so much more. Plus, access to awesome deals happens here. Check out the deals page for the latest discounts and offers. And with over

2,000 free parking spaces (including covered underground parking), plus convenient access from the freeways, shopping's never been so easy.

**7510-7610 Hazard Ctr Dr, San 92108 (619) 543-8111 | hazardcenter.com**

**Best Tanning Salon**

**iTan Sun Spray Spa**  
itan is different from the competition in that they are committed to providing clients with exceptional customer care and 100% satisfaction. utomers choose iTAN because they provide a unique experience that delivers on the promise to fulfill a customers' needs. These needs were determined in a recent survey of both customers and non-iTAN clients.

**Westfield Mission Valley**  
**925 Camino De La Reina Site B, 92108 (619) 220-8100**

**Best Tattoo Studio**

**Mission Valley Tattoo**  
Matt Hines brings his 12 years of professional tattooing to San Diego. He's enjoyed his career in places like Costa Rica and Bali. Using only high quality tattoo equipment and inks, he offers a versatile style to his clients. Keeping and open mind helps him collaborate with his clients ideas. His styles are bold, bright and colorful, with fine line black and grey. Whether you are looking for American tradition, portraits, Japanese,

you'll get the best tattoo possible with Matt Hines at Mission Valley Tattoo.  
**Rancho Mission Plaza**  
**10463 San Diego Mission Rd, Ste B, 92108 | (619) 453-3180**

**Best Tutoring**

**Mathnasium**  
For decades the Mathnasium Method™ has transformed the way kids learn math. They build a foundation for math mastery through deep understanding by starting with what they already know, addressing any learning gaps, expanding their mathematical thinking and adding new concepts in sequence. This proprietary method works for kids of all ages and skill levels. When kids see what they can achieve because of their proficiency in math, it can alter the course of their entire lives.  
**10330 Friars Rd #109, 92120 (619) 281-6284**

**Best Waxin Salon**

**European Wax Centers**  
Their Comfort Wax® was the inspiration behind the name of European Wax Center, because Europe is where they source the beeswax from to make their signature violet wax. In addition to beeswax, Comfort Wax® is formulated with skin-soothing ingredients. Additionally, Comfort Wax® is an alcohol-free, hard wax that doesn't adhere to the skin. It applies at a warm temperature, removes easily, without using strips, and is gentle on all hair and skin types.  
**Westfield Mission Valley**  
**1640 Camino Del Rio N, 92108 (619) 299-9822 | waxcenter.com**

**Best Wine Selection**

**Total Wine & More**  
Total Wine & More is America's Wine Superstore® — the country's largest independent retailer of fine wine. They began in 1991 when brothers David and Robert Trone opened a small store in Delaware. Today, they operate 229 superstores across 27 states and continue to grow. Their typical store carries

more than 8,000 different wines from every wine-producing region in the world. You'll also enjoy a selection of more than 2,500 beers, from America's most popular brands to hard-to-find microbrews and imports, and more than 3,000 different spirits in every style and price range. Their tremendous buying power and special relationships with producers, importers and wholesalers bring considerable savings, which they pass on to customers.

**Rio Vista Shopping Center**  
**8740 Rio San Diego Dr, 92108 (619) 822-1317 | totalwine.com**

**Best Yoga Studio**

**Pilgrimage of the Heart Yoga**  
Pilgrimage of the Heart Yoga and Gift Boutique has a long history in San Diego. The inspiration was to create a business that could spread spiritual energy and be a viable business.  
**3287 Adams Ave, 92116 (619) 640-4438 | pilgrimageyoga.com**

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businesses.**



**Hispanic Heritage Month Business Spotlight:  
Lolita's Mexican Food**

If you've attended a San Diego Padres game, or live or work downtown, there's a good chance you've stopped by Lolita's Mexican Food across from Petco Park on Park Boulevard.

The popular location is always buzzing with baseball fans, downtown residents and tourists alike who want some of the best rolled tacos and California burritos in San Diego.

Dolores C. Jackson, president of Lolita's Mexican Food in San Diego, has been working for the family-owned business since 2001, but it's been part of her life for nearly four decades. In 1984, Jackson's parents, Joaquin and Dolores Farfan, opened their first location in Chula Vista. Today, they have six locations including downtown San Diego and Clairemont Mesa.

"My dad is 75 and still works here every day," she says of the family-owned operation.

It's a priority for Jackson and her five siblings to be present at their locations. They all have different roles within the company including operations, safety, and marketing. During the height of the pandemic, the family stepped in wherever needed due to staffing shortages, including washing dishes, cooking and bussing tables, sometime going from their daytime corporate role to a nighttime role at one of the locations without pause.

For 15 years, they've used Cox Business services supported by the San Diego team, with senior account manager Angelica Carrillo as their primary point of contact.

"When we first opened, we had basic phones, but as operations expanded, we added Cox Business Internet to ensure our point-of-sale systems were highly functional," Jackson said. "We also transitioned to phone lines with a queue system for takeout orders to have a smoother flow while also advising guests of the ability to order online."

Jackson also added televisions, powered by Cox Business, so customers can enjoy sporting events while dining in or taking out.

Jackson and her family are proud of how Lolita's has become a tradition for generations of Mexican food lovers.

"We see college students returning home and stopping by with their families, and they're students we've served since they were children."

Visit Lolita's and Cox Business for more information.





VOUCHERS »  
CONT. FROM PG. 1

this ranks as one of her favorites. A four-year-old girl named Sophie recently asked her to be her best friend. Lewis-Gutierrez smiled and agreed. She has gotten to know a hairdresser and her three daughters. Another customer cried when she told him she had applied for a job at a Target store off Interstate 805. It would be an opportunity to work there and convenient. She has lived in a 1982 Chevrolet P30 Winnebago with her fiancé on a side street across from the store for almost two years.

Of the nearly 8,500 homeless people in San Diego County, more than 700 live in vehicles, according to an annual countywide survey. Almost 500 emergency housing vouchers became available last year to address housing insecurity worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lewis-Gutierrez received one but a year later, red tape and the bias of some landlords toward homeless people has made it difficult for her to find a home before the voucher expires.

“One landlord told me, ‘All people on Section 8 have bed bugs,’” Lewis-Gutierrez, 39, said. “Rather than clump me in with a category, they should look at me as a completely different person.”

Lewis-Gutierrez grew up in a small, quiet town in Utah. During her high school senior year she met a young man and became pregnant. They married and had two more children by the time she was 24. She said her husband introduced her to heroin and pills. That led to years of substance use and a four-month prison sentence. They divorced in 2016 and the state took the children, turning them over to their father’s aunt. The following year, Lewis-Gutierrez moved to San Diego with a truck driver and stopped using drugs. But when he died of cancer in 2018, she became homeless and resumed her drug habit. With the

support of her fiancé, Teddy Medhin, who she met at a 7/11 store the same year, Lewis-Gutierrez stopped using drugs again and has been clean and sober since 2019.

Like Lewis-Gutierrez, Medhin, 39, had a substance use disorder and spent time in prison. He said he has been drug-free for five years. He works at a gas station.

“I’m doing this sobriety for me,” Lewis-Gutierrez said. “A lot of homeless don’t quit because you quit and then you look around at the bushes and dirt you’re staying in and think, ‘I’m by myself and this is it,’ and you get high to get away from your life. You have to take the person out of the environment.”

Living in a dilapidated Winnebago may not be that far removed from staying outside but Lewis-Gutierrez prefers it to sleeping in the riverbed behind Fashion Valley Mall like she once did. She and Medhin have organized their work schedules so that one of them can always be with the Winnebago to prevent someone from stealing it or breaking in. Once they find a place to rent, they hope to work the same hours so they can be home together.

“Katrina has struggled to find a landlord not too stringent on background checks,” said Cory Stapleton, an outreach worker with the non-profit, People Assisting the Homeless (PATH). “Homeless people face a lot of obstacles and discrimination getting access to housing. Happens all the time in different ways.”

The emergency housing voucher issued to Lewis-Gutierrez applies only to San Diego County. She has asked to have it transferred to the city so that she can look for housing near her job. However, according to Stapleton, the city has not agreed to the transfer.

“We’ve been working to provide the paperwork,” Stapleton said, “but so far the city hasn’t accepted her request. She has a resource but she can’t find a home. It’s an unfortunate disconnect between the county

SEE VOUCHERS PG. 16



Lewis-Gutierrez and her fiancé Teddy Medhin have added two stray cats to their cramped living space inside the Winnebago while staying on a side street populated by other homeless people living in their vehicles. PHOTO BY J.M. GARCIA



This is a projected view of SDSU Mission Valley looking northwest.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SDSU

SDSU »  
CONT. FROM PG. 1

truly amazing to see park construction starting.”

As for the other aspects of the SDSU Mission Valley plan, Jacobs said that these build outs will continue according to time lines that play out as the different partnerships fall into place. “For the rest of it, we’re in the process of selecting developers to initiate the first of the residential projects, the first of the affordable housing projects, and the first of the innovation district projects. The first of the residential and retail – because there will be ground floor retail in the first residential building – that’s anticipated to be about 450 units of residential and about 30,000 square feet of retail. And then, there is a first affordable project that will be about 100 units, and then a first innovation district project that will

be two or more buildings at about 300,000 square feet.”

In the mean time, the stadium will continue to add events that will fulfill its legacy as a community facility that serves the San Diego community as promised. Jacobs says that relationships are being created to ensure that Snapdragon stadium will be able to feature entertainment events throughout the year. “Obviously it’s a football stadium that’s going to host the Aztecs, but it’s also community

access so we already announced our first concert in October with Jason Mraz. We have tenants that also are going to call Snapdragon home including the San Diego Wave, the San Diego Legion, and there will be lots of other events happening at the stadium for the whole community.”

San Diegans can monitor the progress of SDSU Mission Valley via live construction cams at: mission-valley.sdsu.edu/community-updates



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Welcoming all San Diegans



On the Go is a program of Charitable Adult Rides and Services (CARS) and is operated by Jewish Family Service of San Diego.

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## Construction of Riverwalk Village begins transforming golf course into neighborhood

First phase of the 200-acre, transit-oriented development to include rental housing and neighborhood-serving retail space



**Current and former elected officials alongside executives at USAA Real Estate and Hines break ground on the construction.** PHOTO BY DAN BROZO

Hines, the global real estate investment, development, and property manager, in partnership with USAA Real Estate, began construction of its 200-acre Riverwalk San Diego village with a phase-one groundbreaking ceremony on September 21. Riverwalk San Diego will transform the existing Riverwalk golf course in western Mission Valley into a live-work-play transit-oriented neighborhood.

Phase one of Riverwalk San Diego construction will include 930 for-rent homes in a series of five buildings along Friars Road, as well as 75,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail space surrounding a central green that will serve as a gathering space for the new residents and surrounding neighbors.

“We brought together development, design, building and environmental experts, as well as local leaders to craft the Riverwalk vision,” said Eric Hepfer, managing director, Hines. “Hines is proud to be a part of bringing the community’s vision to life in Mission Valley.”

The Riverwalk residences will be for rent and will range from studios to townhomes. The retail space will be anchored by a grocery store and complemented by restaurants, bars, fitness studios and other stores and services.

Elected officials who spoke at the ceremony included California Assemblymember Christopher Ward, San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, Chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors Nathan Fletcher and San Diego Council Member Raul Campillo, as well as former San Diego City Councilperson Scott Sherman.

“Riverwalk is truly a posterchild for smart growth,” said Mayor Gloria. “When it comes to housing, mobility, natural resources, open space, environment, climate action—you can understand why the Mayor wants to be here today. This is a good day for San Diego.”

The completion and grand opening of Riverwalk San Diego’s phase one is slated for early 2025.

Also included in phase one is sidewalk and bike lane improvements along Friars Road to make for a more pleasant walking and biking experience. This work, expected to end by late 2023, will also include widening Friars Road, adding new traffic signals and installing a landscaped median.

The 18-hole Riverwalk Golf Course will remain open through phase one of construction and for a while thereafter.

Ultimately, Riverwalk will be anchored by a new San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Green-Line trolley stop and town square at the heart of the village. Biking and walking paths will skirt and traverse Riverwalk, including an extension of the San Diego River Trail.

Nearly 100 acres of the village will be dedicated to open space and a regional park. Hines will also restore the stretch of the San Diego River that runs through Riverwalk.

At the completion of all phases, Riverwalk will also include:

- A total of 4,300 homes (10% of which will be income-qualified affordable housing), ranging from studios to three-bedroom houses
- 152,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail
- One million square feet of office space
- Transportation improvements, including:
  - Intelligent traffic signals and new entryways on Friars Road (included in phase one)
  - Flood capacity improvements to Fashion Valley Road
  - 100 acres of parks and open space, including a 60-acre regional park celebrating the San Diego River

The Riverwalk plan, established through a partnership between Hines and the Levi-Cushman family landowners, incorporates extensive community input gathered over several years by the Hines team in over 100 stakeholder and community planning group meetings and charettes.

Due to its transit-, bicycle- and pedestrian-centric design, Circulate San Diego awarded Riverwalk San Diego a Mobility Certification. The Mobility Certification program evaluates and endorses transit-oriented, smart growth projects in the San Diego region that meet the program’s aspirational standards.

Riverwalk has also received support from San Diego River Park Foundation, YIMBY Democrats, The San Diego Audubon Society, San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council, San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council, Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters, IBEW 569, United Association of Plumbers & Steamfitters Local Union 230, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, Climate Action Campaign and the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce.

This development is led by Eric Hepfer, managing director, and Pete Shearer, director at Hines.

## VOUCHERS >>

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and the city.”

Meanwhile, the city said the process is easy and landlords have plenty of incentives to rent to previously homeless households.

Transferring a voucher, also known as porting, should not be an issue, said Azucena Valladolid, executive vice president of rental assistant and workforce development with the SD housing commission.

“There’s a lot of flexibility,” Valladolid said. “There’re no restriction on transfers. We have many transfers. They just asks their caseworker to transfer to another jurisdiction. It’s an easy process.”

In addition, she said, emergency housing vouchers include incentives for landlords including \$500 for the first unit landlords rent to a homeless household and \$250 for each additional unit; up to two times the contract rent in security deposits and an average of \$100 in utility assistance per household; a contingency fund to help landlords cover repairs and other expenses that exceed security

deposits; and the support of San Diego Housing Commission housing specialists.

The vouchers were provided to the San Diego House Commission by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. They became valid in July 2021 and last a year. Lewis-Gutierrez has had to apply for extensions to keep hers valid. Under the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the federal government pays the rent of homeless household or those at risk of homelessness. The tenant pays a pre-determined portion of the rent based on their income.

The disconnect between the bureaucratic systems and programs in the city and county are an ongoing issue for those trying to access services. At a joint meeting on Monday, Oct. 3, San Diego County Board of Supervisors Chair Nathan Fletcher and San Diego City Council President Sean Elo-Rivera pledged to work together to build 10,000 units of affordable housing on government property and streamline the processes of building new housing. Both city and county unanimously voted in favor of the resolution.

Valladolid said 480 emergency housing vouchers were issued last

year and 449 voucher recipients have found housing. The remaining 31 recipients, like Lewis-Gutierrez, continue their search for a landlord willing to rent to them.

“I’m talking to a landlord now who is willing to work with me but she doesn’t have any openings,” Lewis-Gutierrez said.

For now, Lewis-Gutierrez makes the best of what she has. She speaks with her mother in Utah every day. Her children, she said, feel ambivalent about her. Her oldest son joined the Marines. Another son will soon graduate from high school. Her youngest, a 13-year-old daughter, is active in sports.

At night, two stray cats rescued by Lewis-Gutierrez and Medhin perch on the Winnebago’s dashboard and watch them sweep the sidewalk outside of Target. Nine other people live in their vehicles on the same street. A man in a white car works construction. Two home healthcare nurses live in a green car. A man who receives disability assistance stays in an RV.

“I want just a little yard, a cute garden and to feel safe,” Lewis-Gutierrez said. “Something comfortable. Something Teddy and I can call our own.”



**Katrina Lewis-Gutierrez and her fiancé have lived in this Winnebago for the past two years while trying to find a landlord willing to accept their Federal Emergency Housing Voucher. They have taken in two cats.** PHOTO BY J.M. GARCIA

## CIVITA >>

CONT. FROM PG. 3

Credited as the first big step in what has been coined an “open-space renaissance” in the Mission Valley community, the park features numerous terraced amenity sites including a central plaza with a custom amphitheater, community gardens, two dog runs, two children’s play areas, game areas, and many public-art features. A “Mining Relic Garden” as well as interpretive and educational signage tie visitors to the site’s history as a sand and gravel quarry. This park is a sustainable, engaging, world-class park beloved by its community and visitors alike.

“We were so fortunate to work with incredible clients on the park design—the Sudberry and Grant families—who never wavered from their commitment to excellence and quality,” said Glen Schmidt, FASLA, founder of Schmidt Design Group.

Since the completion of Civita

Park, SDG has won eight awards for the park, including:

- Two Orchids Awards, San Diego Architectural Foundation, 2020 and 2017.
- Award of Excellence, California Parks and Recreation Society, 2021
- Parks Make Life Better Award, California Parks and Recreation Society-District 12, 2021
- Healthy Public Open Space Award, Urban Land Institute, San Diego-Tijuana, 2017
- Orchid, Landscape Architecture (Phase II), Orchids and Onions Public Awareness Awards Program, 2020 and 2017
- Astounding Urban Forestry Project Award, California Urban Forests Council, 2017
- Honor Award (Phase II), American Public Works Association, 2020
- Outstanding Award (Phase I), American Public Works Association, 2018

“Civita Park draws inspiration from its history, creating a unique and memorable sense of place,”

Schmidt said.

SDG also won an Honors Award for E Street Greenway, a linear park in East Village. Jurors commented: “This linear park has a vibrant downtown feel with an artistic flair that successfully activates the space. The design is thoughtful, providing points of interest that any business owner would be thrilled to have showcased outside of their shops. More visibility and support should be given to projects like this.”

In addition to Civita Park and E Street Greenway, SDG captured two Merit awards, one for Fox Point Farms Agrihood in Encinitas, and another for Maruta Gardner Playground at Bonita Cove Park in Chula Vista.

Based in San Diego, since SDG was established in 1983, it has received 175 awards. To learn more about Schmidt Design Group and the renaissance of Mission Valley visit: [asla-sandiego.org/schmidt-design-group-designing-mission-valleys-future/](http://asla-sandiego.org/schmidt-design-group-designing-mission-valleys-future/)