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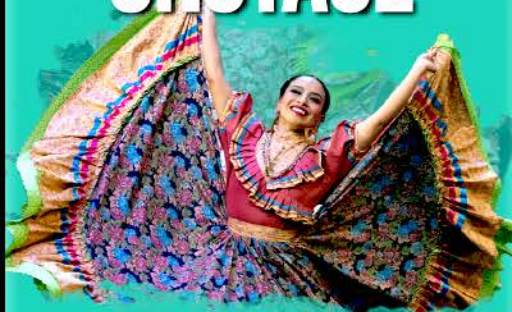
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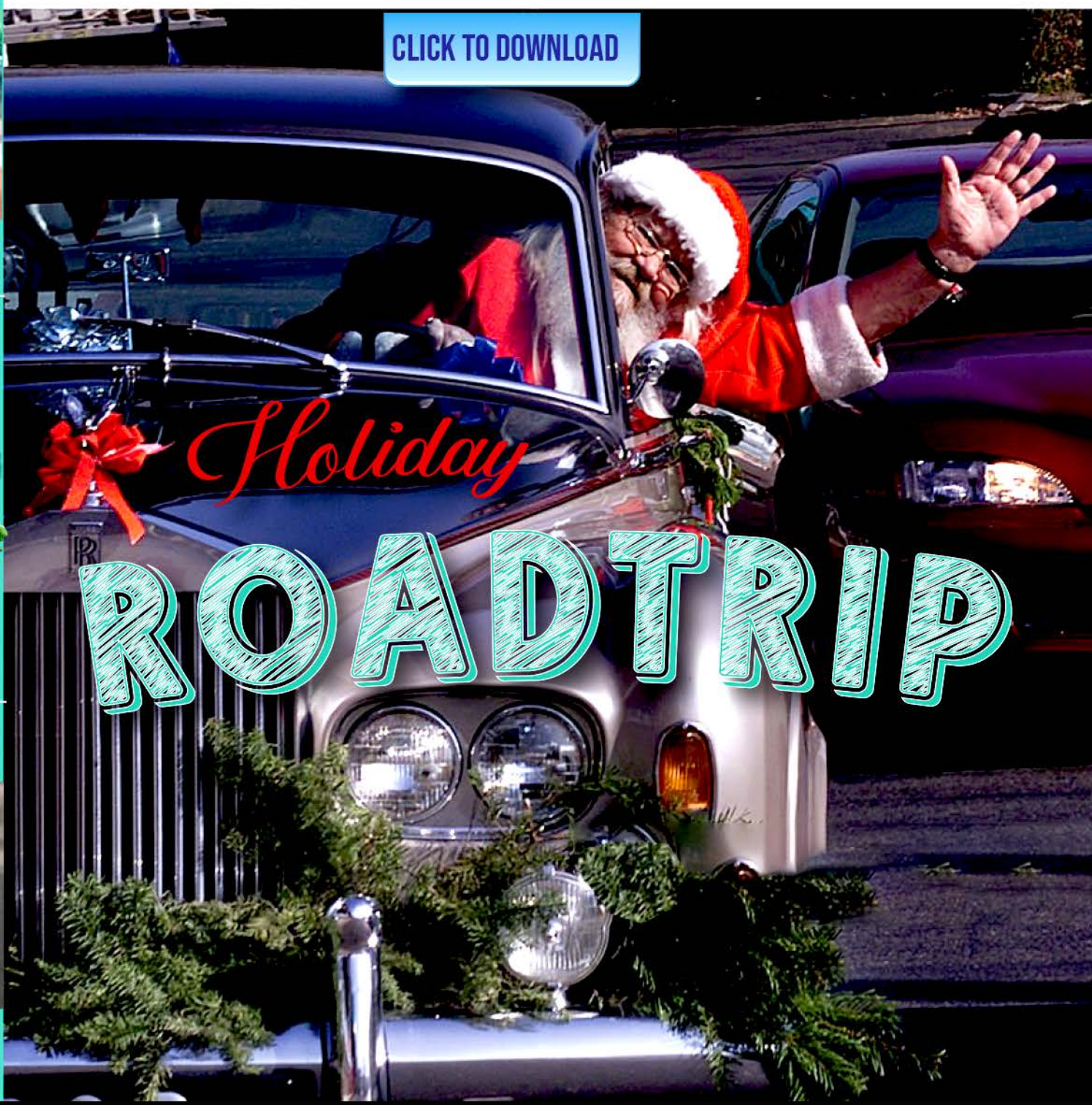


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The Museum Of Broken Relationships Is Drawing Fans and Memorabilia From Around The World

By Contributing Writer

Nestled in Los Angeles, The Museum of Broken Relationships is not your typical gallery. Instead of fine art or ancient artifacts, this museum showcases remnants of

laughter as they wander through the exhibits.

A Kaleidoscope of Stories

What makes the Museum of Broken Relationships so unique is its appeal. Breakups are a part of the human experience. The artifacts and their accompanying stories create a tapestry of emotions that anyone can relate to.

Take the story of a single high-heeled shoe left behind after a dramatic breakup at a party or the collection of texts printed out and framed. Some tales are heart-wrenching; others are humorous or even absurd.

Submissions from Around the World

The museum's collection relies entirely on contributions. People from across the globe are invited to send in objects that symbolize their lost relationships. Submissions come from all walks of life: a burned wedding dress from a jilted bride, a map marked with all the places a couple visited before calling it quits, or even a bottle of perfume.

The museum's curators take care in selecting and displaying items, ensuring each piece contributes to the narrative of love and loss. They create a dynamic and ever-evolving experience for visitors.

A Space for Reflection

While the museum is unique, its mission goes beyond entertainment. It provides a space for reflection and healing, helping visitors process their own heartbreak.

Events and Community

Beyond exhibits, the museum hosts events and workshops designed to promote emotional well-being. From breakup storytelling nights to art therapy, these programs encourage visitors to engage with their feelings. The museum has even partnered with local therapists to offer advice.

It's no surprise that the museum has attracted fans from all corners of the globe. Its Instagram-worthy exhibits and poignant stories make it a popular destination. But more than that, it's a place where people come to feel connected and understood.

Planning Your Visit

The Museum of Broken Relationships is open daily. Visitors can browse the museum's gift shop, which features books, postcards, and other mementos that capture the essence of the exhibits.

Whether you're nursing a broken heart, curious about the human condition, or looking for an unconventional day out, this museum promises an experience unlike any other.



love lost. From poignant mementos to quirky relics, it offers visitors a glimpse into the aftermath of relationships that didn't last. Drawing contributions from around the world, the museum has quickly become a haven for those seeking solace.

A Global Movement of Healing

Originally founded in Zagreb, Croatia, in 2006, The Museum of Broken Relationships began as a traveling exhibit. The concept was simple: provide a space where individuals could donate objects from failed relationships, accompanied by descriptions. These items range from old love letters or stuffed animals, to the bizarre, like an axe used to chop up an ex's furniture.

The Los Angeles branch opened in 2016 and has become a hotspot. It's not just a museum; it's a therapeutic experience. Visitors often find themselves moved to tears or

San Fernando Valley Symphony Orchestra

James Domine, Music Director & Conductor

Holiday Concert

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El Portal Theatre – North Hollywood



Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker Ballet

Domine: Noël Variations – Symphonic Poem

Humperdinck: Overture & Dream Pantomime
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The Best Local Escapes, Road Trips, And Resorts in Southern California

By Contributing Writer

Southern California is a treasure trove of scenic landscapes, vibrant culture, and luxurious resorts. Whether you're craving a beachside retreat, a mountain adventure, or a desert escape, there's something for everyone. Here's a detailed guide to the best local escapes, road trips, and resorts that make Southern California a haven for travelers.

Beach Getaways

Laguna Beach: Laguna Beach offers stunning coastal views, artist enclaves, and world-class dining. Spend the day at Crystal Cove State Park, where you can hike, swim, or explore tide pools. Stay at the Montage Laguna Beach, a luxurious resort known for

its spa, fine dining, and oceanfront suites. Don't miss the local art galleries and the famous Pageant of the Masters during summer.

Santa Monica: Santa Monica combines beach vibes with urban sophistication. Relax on the iconic Santa Monica Pier, bike along the Strand, or shop at Third Street Promenade. The Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows offers a blend of historical charm and modern luxury, complete with ocean views and a lush garden setting.

Malibu: For a more secluded escape, head to Malibu. El Matador State Beach is a must-see for its dramatic cliffs and coves. The Malibu Beach Inn provides an intimate,



upscale stay right on the sand, perfect for romantic getaways. Savor local wines at the Malibu Wine Safari or enjoy fresh seafood at Nobu Malibu.

Mountain Retreats

Big Bear Lake: Nestled in the San Bernardino Mountains, Big Bear Lake offers year-round outdoor activities. During winter, hit the slopes at Snow Summit or Bear Mountain. In summer, enjoy hiking, boating, and fishing. Stay at The Lodge at Big Bear Lake or opt for a cozy cabin rental for a more rustic experience.

Lake Arrowhead: Dubbed the "Alps of Southern California," Lake Arrowhead is a serene mountain escape. Take a leisurely stroll around Lake Arrowhead Village, enjoy a lake tour, or hike the Heart Rock Trail. The Lake Arrowhead Resort and Spa offers lakeside luxury with a rustic touch.

Idyllwild: This charming mountain town is a haven for artists and nature lovers.

Explore the Idyllwild Nature Center, browse local art galleries, or hike the Devil's Slide Trail. For lodging, try the Strawberry Creek Inn, a cozy bed-and-breakfast surrounded by towering pines.

Desert Escapes

Palm Springs: Palm Springs is synonymous with mid-century modern design, hot springs, and golf courses. Visit the Palm Springs Art Museum, ride the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, or relax at the Two Bunch Palms Resort and Spa in nearby Desert Hot Springs. For a luxurious stay, the Parker Palm Springs offers chic accommodations and exceptional dining.

Joshua Tree National Park: Joshua Tree's surreal landscape of giant boulders and iconic trees makes it a favorite among hikers, climbers, and stargazers. Stay at the unique Autocamp Joshua Tree, featuring a mix of Airstreams and luxury tents, or opt for a modern desert villa rental.



Chinatown Winter Night Market:

Celebrate the season with a visit to the Chinatown Winter Night Market on December 9, 2024, at Central Plaza. Under twinkling lights, the market comes alive with a fusion of holiday spirit and Chinese traditions. Browse handcrafted gifts, savor delectable street food, and marvel at lion dance performances that bring energy and excitement to the evening. The market is the perfect spot for unique holiday shopping and festive fun. Visit: chinatownla.com

These street festivals celebrate community, culture, and the joy of the holidays, making them must-visit events for locals and visitors alike. Whether you're searching for one-of-a-kind gifts or simply soaking up the festive atmosphere, these cultural celebrations promise a memorable holiday experience.

Immersive Holiday Experiences and Light Shows in Los Angeles

The holiday season in Los Angeles glows brighter with stunning light shows and immersive experiences that captivate all ages. From drive-through displays to themed installations, these events transform the city into a wonderland of sparkle and joy.

Griffith Park Holiday Train: The annual Holiday Light Festival Train Ride will run from November 29, 2024 - January 3, 2025. Trains will operate seven nights a week! However, the event will close down on Dec. 24, 25, and 31 for the observances of Christmas and New Year's Eve. Hours of operation are from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Visit: www.griffith-parktrainrides.com/holiday-light-festival

Holiday Road: Immerse yourself in holiday magic at Holiday Road, held at King Gillette Ranch in Calabasas from November 29 - December 28, 2024. Stroll through a mile-long trail featuring larger-than-life installations, twinkling lights, and festive decor. Food trucks and live entertainment round out this interactive experience, making it a perfect evening adventure for friends and family. Visit: holidayroadusa.com

LA Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow: Running through January 5, the LA Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow transforms the Los Angeles Zoo into a nighttime spectacle. Wander through glowing animal sculptures, vibrant light tunnels, and interactive displays. Holiday treats and festive drinks add to the magical atmosphere. Visit: www.lazoo.org/plan-your-visit/special-experiences/zoollights

These immersive experiences and light shows offer unforgettable holiday memories, making them essential stops on your seasonal

itinerary. Be sure to reserve tickets early, as these events are popular holiday highlights. **Experience the Magic of The Nutcracker in Los Angeles**

The holiday season in Los Angeles wouldn't be complete without the timeless tradition of The Nutcracker. With its enchanting choreography and Tchaikovsky's iconic score, this beloved ballet brings festive cheer to audiences of all ages. Two exceptional productions light up the stage this December, offering unique interpretations of the classic tale.

Los Angeles Ballet: The Nutcracker: From December 6 - 28, 2024, the Los Angeles Ballet takes audiences on a magical journey through Clara's dreamlike world.



With performances in Pasadena, Westwood, and Hollywood, this production features stunning sets, exquisite costumes, and brilliant choreography faithful to the original. Known for its commitment to showcasing world-class ballet, the Los Angeles Ballet's The Nutcracker is a perfect way to celebrate the season with family and friends. Visit: www.losangelesballet.org/2024-2025-season/the-nutcracker

American Contemporary Ballet: The Nutcracker Suite: For a more intimate experience, the American Contemporary Ballet presents The Nutcracker Suite from November 30, 2024 - December 24, in Downtown Los Angeles. This immersive adaptation invites audiences to step into Clara's dream, blending close-up performances with captivating storytelling. Set in a unique venue, this production offers an innovative twist on the classic ballet, creating a magical holiday experience unlike any other. Visit: acbdances.com

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KEEP IT THAT WAY BY DRIVING SOBER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

1/3 of all driving fatalities in the holiday season are due to drinking and driving

BUZZED DRIVING IS DRUNK DRIVING





Tour vineyards like Ponte Winery or Wilson Creek Winery and enjoy hot air balloon rides at sunrise. The South Coast Winery Resort & Spa offers luxurious accommodations amidst rolling vineyards.

Outdoor Adventures

Channel Islands National Park: Dubbed the "Galápagos of North America," this remote park is perfect for kayaking, snorkeling, and wildlife spotting. Accessible via ferry from Ventura or Oxnard, the islands offer day trips or camping for more adventurous visitors.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks: Home to giant sequoias and dramatic canyons, these parks are ideal for hiking and photography. Visit the iconic General Sherman Tree and stay at the Wuksachi Lodge for a rustic yet comfortable base.

Death Valley National Park: Despite its name, Death Valley boasts vibrant landscapes, from the colorful hills of

Artist's Palette to the salt flats of Badwater Basin. Stay at The Inn at Death Valley, a historic resort offering luxury in the desert.

Luxurious Resorts

Terranea Resort (Rancho Palos Verdes): Perched on a coastal bluff, Terranea is a destination in itself. Enjoy



ocean-view golf, a world-class spa, and eco-friendly dining. The resort's setting offers stunning views of the Pacific and Catalina Island.

The Beverly Hills Hotel (Beverly Hills): A Hollywood icon, this "Pink Palace" combines glamour with impeccable service. Relax at the famous pool or indulge in fine dining at the Polo Lounge.

La Quinta Resort & Club (Palm Desert): This desert oasis features 41 pools, a championship golf course, and luxurious casitas. It's perfect for a relaxing getaway or an active vacation.

Tips for Planning Your Escape

Book Early: Popular resorts and destinations fill up quickly, especially during holidays and peak seasons.

Pack Smart: Bring layers for mountain and desert trips, as temperatures can vary widely.

Travel Off-Season: For fewer crowds and better rates, consider visiting during shoulder seasons (spring and fall).

Explore Locally: Don't overlook smaller towns and hidden gems; they often offer unique experiences without the crowds.

From beachside bliss to mountain serenity and desert luxury, Southern California has it all. Whether you're planning a weekend getaway or an extended vacation, these escapes offer unforgettable experiences.

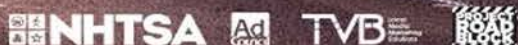


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Finding The Perfect Volunteer Opportunity For You In Los Angeles And Ventura County

By Contributing Writer

Volunteering is a fulfilling way to give back while enriching your life with new skills, friendships, and experiences. In areas like Los Angeles County and Ventura County, there are countless opportunities tailored to diverse interests and passions.

Assess Your Interests and Skills

The first step to finding the perfect volunteer opportunity is understanding your passions and abilities. Are you drawn to working with children, supporting the homeless, or preserving the environment? Do you have skills like event planning, teaching, or organization? Knowing what you bring to the table

helps narrow down the choices and ensures your time is spent in the most meaningful way.

Heal the Bay

If you're passionate about ocean conservation, Heal the Bay offers volunteer opportunities like beach cleanups, educational outreach, and advocacy programs. Based in Santa Monica, this nonprofit is dedicated to protecting the Southern California coastline. www.healthebay.org

Project Angel Food

For those who want to address food insecurity, Project Angel Food delivers meals to critically ill individuals across Los Angeles County. Volunteers can help with meal preparation, packaging, or delivery. www.angelfood.org

Los Angeles Public Library

Make a difference in literacy by volunteering at the Los Angeles Public Library. Oppor-

tunities include tutoring adults in reading, helping children with homework, or participating in digital literacy programs. www.lapl.org

The Midnight Mission

Located in Downtown LA, The Midnight Mission provides food, shelter, and recovery services to the homeless.

Volunteers serve meals, assist with administrative tasks, or support job-readiness programs. www.midnightmission.org

Food Share of Ventura County

Combat hunger by volunteering with Food Share, which distributes meals to food-insecure families. Volunteers can sort donations, pack food boxes, or help at mobile pantry sites. www.foodshare.com

Ventura Land Trust

For nature enthusiasts, Ventura Land Trust offers opportunities to protect and restore open spaces. Join habitat restoration projects, trail maintenance, or community outreach. www.venturalandtrust.org

Habitat for Humanity of Ventura County

Build homes and hope with Habitat for Humanity. Volunteers can assist in construction, work at Habitat ReStores, or support fundraising efforts. www.habitatventura.org

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ventura County

Make a lasting impact on a child's life by becoming a mentor through Big Brothers Big Sisters. Volunteers provide guidance, friendship, and positive role modeling. www.bbsvc.org

Virtual and Flexible Options

If your schedule doesn't allow for in-person volunteering, consider virtual or flexible opportunities. Organizations like Crisis Text Line offer remote options to provide mental health support. Platforms such as Volunteer-Match or JustServe can help you find flexible roles that fit your availability and interests.

Tips for a Rewarding Volunteer Experience

Start Small: If you're unsure of your commitment level, begin with a one-time event or short-term project.

Ask Questions: Before committing, clarify the organization's expectations and how your role supports their mission.

Bring Friends or Family: Volunteering can be even more enjoyable when shared with loved ones.

Reflect on Your Impact: Take time to evaluate how your efforts are making a difference and consider areas for personal growth.

Why Volunteering Matters

Volunteering not only benefits your community but also boosts your mental well-being, expands your social network, and strengthens your resume. In regions as dynamic as Los Angeles County and Ventura County, your contribution can leave a profound mark on the lives of others and the environment.

Take the First Step

Finding the perfect volunteer opportunity is just a click away. Use local resources, online platforms, or community bulletin boards to discover roles that resonate with you. Remember, no effort is too small when it comes to making a difference—the perfect volunteer opportunity is waiting for you to say yes!



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Maria

By Contributing Writer

Angelina Jolie glides through the final days of Maria Callas' life in Pablo Larrain's "Maria," a dramatic elegy to the famed soprano.

Reality is of little consequence on the stage and in "Maria." It's all about raw feeling, which serves the movie well, more dream than history about La Callas. Early on, she pops some Mandrax and tells her devoted butler Ferruccio (Pierfrancesco Favino) that a television crew is on the way. Are they real, he wonders.

"As of this morning, what is real and what is not real is my business," she says definitively,



making a feast out of Steven Knight's sharp script. It's one of many great lines and moments for Jolie, whose intensity and resolve belie her fragile appearance. And it's a signal to the audience: Don't fret about dull facts or that Jolie doesn't really resemble Callas. This is a biopic as opera — an emotional journey fitting of the great diva.

In "Maria," we are the companion to a protagonist with an ever-loosening grip on reality through her life, for one week in September 1977.

The images from cinematographer Ed Lachman, shifting in form and style, take us on a journey through her triumphs on stage, her scandalous romance with Aristotle Onassis (Hakuk Bilginer) and her traumatic youth. In the present, at age 53, she sleeps till midday, drinks the minimal calories she ingests, goes to restaurants where the waiters know her name looking for adulation.

Callas is always immaculately dressed and assured, whether reflecting to the imagined news crew (led by Kodi Smit-McPhee) or attempting to find her voice again. Her instrument had famously diminished, leaving her wondering what's left to live for. The

only consistent praise she gets is from her obedient housemaid Bruna (Alba Rohrwacher). It's no secret that the destination is death. And you suspect that she knows quite well that everything will be a big dimmer when her spotlight is turned off.

Larrain has made a lasting mark on cinema with his unofficial trilogy about these famous women with tragic narratives. With "Jackie," "Spencer" and now "Maria," his films are also an unintentional antidote to Ryan Murphy's stranglehold of the grand dames of recent history, which are all style and scandal and little substance. And yet Larrain's films are not for everyone. If "Jackie" and "Spencer" did not speak to you, did not show those women as you hoped they would, "Maria" will not turn you into a believer. Three movies in, it seems that audiences are either very on board with his vision or not. There is little room for an in between.

And yet it's hard to deny that his films are incredible showcases for actors. Jolie as a movie star is somehow both omnipresent and elusive, and lately she chooses to step in front of the camera all too infrequently. Sometimes you wish she could just follow in Nicole Kidman's footsteps, for whom quantity does not seem to ever jeopardize quality, and she seems to be having fun doing it all, all the time. Perhaps it's because performances like Jolie's in "Maria" look so all-consuming.

In the film, Maria scolds a fan for daring to question that she faked sickness to miss a performance. He doesn't understand the total commitment of body and soul required to make it look effortless, which is probably true. Jolie is not so dramatic, at least publicly, about what it takes to create art. But here the lines blur: Character and actor blend so seamlessly, so ferociously, that you leave not just with heightened empathy for La Callas but Jolie as well.

In one of the film's few regrettable scenes, she's put face to face with John F. Kennedy (no fault of Caspar Phillipson), whose wife has caught the greedy eye of Onassis. As a testament to the power of Jolie and the script, you almost forgive yet another JFK impersonation for giving her one of the great brushoffs to utter, romantic and withering all at once. Is it all a little much? Of course, but that's kind of the point of Maria.



By Contributing Writer

The warm Polynesian spirit and open-sea sense of adventure is back in "Moana 2," but little of the original's humor or catchy songs finds its way into this heartfelt but lackluster sequel.

"Moana 2" was originally put into development as a streaming series before it was rerouted the big screen. Curiously, though, it's not scale or spectacle lacking here. Directors David Derrick Jr., Jason Hand and Dana Ledoux Miller have made an often dazzlingly animated film that is a step up from 2016's "Moana."

But in a story that brings in a literal boatload of new characters, it's hard to shake the feeling that "Moana 2" got caught in the crosswinds.

That's a shame because the original "Moana" is about the lightest, most joyful animated movie Disney has made in a decade — with the possible exception of "Encanto," which likewise bounced to the buoyant rhythms of songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda. (Miranda is crucially absent in "Moana 2," though "Hamilton" director Thomas Kail is currently developing a live-action "Moana.")

Photorealistic remakes have been the more dominant providence of the Magic Kingdom in recent years, a trend that's made more whimsical, imagination-filled animations like "Moana" all the more exceptional. Here was a movie that somehow balanced Pacific Island cultural authenticity with the cartoony delights of a demigod turned accidental shark and Jemaine Clement as a singing, flaunting giant crab. Talk about win win.

Such inventiveness is harder to come by in the perfectly earnest but not especially inspired "Moana." It opens with a visibly grown Moana (Auli'i Cravalho, returning) engaged in a search for evidence of Pacific Islanders beyond her home island. She is by now a mythic figure, herself, to her people, idolized by youngsters for her courage and for being "super-besties" with the demigod Maui (Dwayne Johnson, also back).

When Moana turns up an artifact with evidence of a two-peaked island, Motufetu, fabled as the once binding center of their ancestors, she sets out to find the cursed island and reunite the disparate people of Oceania. This time, though, Moana is sailing with a more crowded boat.

Some of the old sidekicks — the rooster Heihei (with noises courtesy of Alan Tudyk) and the pig Pua — are back. But Moana decides she needs human help this time, and brings along a crew featuring the uber Maui fan Moni (Hualalai Chung), the engineer Loto (Rose Matefeo) and the curmudgeonly older farmer Kele (David Fane).

Each of these characters has one generic note to play, and while you could see the need to add in more personalities for a series (Moana also now has a cute little sister, voiced by Khaleesi Lambert-Tsuda), they are effectively dead weight in "Moana 2."

To me, the iconic image of these films is Moana as a solo adventurer, leaning against the wind in her camakau and setting an unknown course. Sure, Maui is inevitably her buddy-comedy partner in adventure, but Moana and her canoe should permit passengers no more than John Wayne did on his horse.

After an encounter with the coconut brigade of the Kakamora, Moana and Maui eventually reunite via a giant clam, where Maui has been trapped by Matangai (Awhimai Fraser, having fun), a mysterious, bat-adorned figure who's a kind of villain for the movie. She's more interesting than some recent Disney antagonists and gets probably the best song ("Get Lost") in a movie that mightily misses Miranda's touch. (The songs are by Abigail Barlow and Emily Bear.)

That scene and the climactic one, with a sea of tornadoes spinning across stormy waters, are vividly drawn — enough, surely, to delight younger moviegoers. Coming fast on the heels of "Wicked," one of the most salient selling points of "Moana 2" may be its comparatively nimble running time. At 100 minutes, it's a full hour shorter than "Wicked."

Ironically, "Moana 2" — beefed up from a would-be series — has brevity in its favor. But the hopes for "Moana 2" should go beyond mere placeholder. Only a few times does the banter between Moana and Maui really remind you of the fun that characterized the original. In one such moment, Moana corrects Maui after he calls her — perhaps confusing Moana for many other Disney protagonists — a princess. His comeback? "Well, a lot of people think you are."

'Tis the Season For Holiday Albums Jennifer Hudson Toby Keith Jimmy Fallon And More!

By Contributing Writer

The holiday season is upon us, and with it comes festive albums to set the mood. Whether you're into soulful ballads, country twang, or comedic jingles, there's something for everyone.

Jennifer Hudson: Christmas Soul

Jennifer Hudson's powerhouse vocals are the gift that keeps on giving, and her holiday album, Christmas Soul, delivers a mix of classic carols and original tracks that ooze emotion. Highlights include her gospel-inspired rendition of "O Holy

Night" and the original track "Winter Wonderland Groove," which blends R&B and soul.

Toby Keith: Country Christmas Classics

For country music fans, Toby Keith's Country Christmas Classics is a must-listen. With his



signature drawl and heartfelt lyrics, Keith breathes new life into songs like "Silent Night" and "Jingle Bell Rock." The album also includes originals like "Cowboy's Christmas Wish," a tender ballad about the true meaning of the season.

Jimmy Fallon: Holiday Hijinks

Leave it to Jimmy Fallon to bring humor and charm to holiday music. His album, Holiday Hijinks, features quirky tracks like "Eggnog Blues" and "Santa Forgot His iPhone." Fallon enlists celebrity friends for comedic duets, including a rendition of "Baby, It's Cold Outside" with Ariana Grande.



Pentatonix: Christmas Symphony

Acapella sensations Pentatonix are back with Christmas Symphony, showcasing their harmonies in a fresh set of holiday tunes. Known for intricate arrangements, the group offers breathtaking versions of "Hallelujah" and "Mary, Did You Know?" The album also features collaborations with renowned orchestras.

SZA: Wintry Nights

R&B superstar SZA ventures into holiday music with Wintry Nights, a soulful and sultry collection of seasonal songs. Highlights include "The Christmas Song"

and the original "Snowfall Serenade." SZA's unique voice and introspective lyrics bring a contemporary twist to holiday themes.

Dolly Parton: Holly Dolly Christmas (Deluxe Edition)

Dolly Parton returns with a deluxe edition of her beloved Holly Dolly Christmas, adding new tracks that blend her signature charm and holiday cheer. From the playful "Christmas on the Range" to the tender "Candlelight Christmas," Dolly's timeless voice continues to spread joy and warmth.

Lizzo: Holiday Love

Lizzo's Holiday Love is a vibrant and uplifting celebration. Featuring tracks like "Gingerbread Groove" and "Let It Snow (With Sass)," Lizzo infuses her trademark energy and positivity into every song.

The Perfect Playlist

With such a diverse range of holiday albums, curating the perfect playlist has never been easier. Whether you're hosting a party, decorating the tree, or simply unwinding after a long day, these albums offer a soundtrack for every festive moment. So grab your headphones, pour a cup of cocoa, and let the holiday spirit take over.

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RELAX AMONG THE STARS

REDEFINING VACATIONS WITH VAST SPACE TOURISM

Imagine gazing at Earth from the serenity of space, floating weightlessly while marveling at the stars in unparalleled proximity. This isn't the stuff of sci-fi anymore. Vast, an ambitious space company, is making vacations in space a reality, offering a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for adventurers and dreamers to explore the final frontier.



The Vision of Vast

Founded with the mission of expanding humanity's reach beyond Earth, Vast has quickly become a leader in space habitation technology. Their flagship project, Haven-1, is designed to be the first commercial space station available for tourism and research. Scheduled to launch in the late 2020s, Haven-1 promises to be a luxurious yet functional hub for space travelers.

The company's innovative approach aims to merge cutting-edge technology with comfort, ensuring a safe and transformative experience. Haven-1's design includes private quarters, a communal observation deck, and advanced life-support systems. Vast envisions it as the gateway to space living—not just for astronauts, but for everyday people with a thirst for adventure.

What to Expect on a Space Vacation

Space tourism with Vast will include a journey aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, which will transport travelers to Haven-1. Once docked, guests will have the chance to spend up to a week in orbit, enjoying breathtaking views of Earth and engaging in activities such as:

Stargazing: Without atmospheric interference, the stars shine brighter and clearer than ever.

Microgravity Fun: Experience the joy of floating freely in a zero-gravity environment.

Earth Observation: From 400 kilometers above, watch continents, oceans, and weather patterns unfold below.

Scientific Experiments: Participate in hands-on science activities designed to educate and inspire.

Vast also plans to integrate virtual and augmented reality technologies, allowing travelers to simulate spacewalks and explore distant planets from the comfort of Haven-1.

Luxury Meets Innovation

Vast isn't just about science and exploration—it's about redefining luxury travel. The interiors of Haven-1 will rival five-star accommodations, featuring modern design aesthetics, plush seating, and state-of-the-art amenities. Gourmet meals, specially prepared for zero-gravity consumption, will be part of the package, ensuring that even in orbit, travelers enjoy fine dining.

Safety remains a top priority for Vast. The station is equipped with multiple redundant systems to handle emergencies and maintain optimal living conditions. Additionally, all travelers undergo extensive training to prepare for the unique challenges of space travel, from zero-gravity acclimation to emergency protocols.

The Cost of Space Adventure

While the price tag for a week in space isn't for everyone, Vast is aiming to make this



experience accessible to more than just billionaires. Early estimates suggest costs in the range of \$50 million per person, which includes training, transportation, and accommodation. Vast is exploring partnerships with governments and organizations to subsidize costs for educators, researchers, and artists, ensuring diverse representation among space tourists.

The Broader Impact

Beyond providing awe-inspiring vacations, Vast's initiatives have far-reaching implications. By developing sustainable space habitats, the company is paving the way for long-term human presence in orbit. This technology could eventual-



ly support missions to the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

Moreover, Vast's space tourism program could ignite public interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, inspiring the next generation of space pioneers. The company's commitment to education ensures that each mission includes

outreach component, sharing the experience with students and communities worldwide.

The Future of Space Tourism

As competition heats up in the burgeoning space tourism industry, Vast stands out for its focus on creating a holistic, luxurious, and impactful experience. The company's dedication to innovation and accessibility ensures that space vacations are no longer just a dream but an achievable reality for those with the means and curiosity to venture beyond Earth.

While the concept of vacationing in space is still in its infancy, Vast's Haven-1 project marks a significant step forward. For adventurers seeking the ultimate escape and for humanity striving to expand its horizons, Vast offers an extraordinary glimpse into a future where space is not just a frontier, but a destination.

Ready to book your trip? The stars await.

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SPIRITS/TASTES

THE OLDEST PUB IN THE WORLD

A Journey Back To Viking Times

By Contributing Writer



A Pub Carved from History

Nestled against the iconic Nottingham Castle's sandstone rock face, Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem is more than just a watering hole. This historic establishment is partly carved into the rock itself, creating a series of caves that serve as its unique interiors. These ancient chambers have stood the test of time, bearing witness to centuries of history, from medieval knights to modern-day tourists.



of the most famous tales involves the Cursed Galleon, a model ship hanging from the ceiling. According to local lore, anyone who cleans it will meet an untimely demise. The ship remains untouched, gathering dust as a testament to the power of superstition.

Another mysterious artifact is the Haunted Chair. It's said that anyone who sits in this chair will experience bad luck or even death. Whether these stories are true or merely local myths, they add an eerie allure to the pub's already enchanting atmosphere.

A Viking Connection?

While the pub's history begins in the late 12th century, some historians believe its origins could predate this era. Nottingham's caves have been used for millennia, and it's possible that the site of Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem served as a meeting or drinking spot during Viking times. Archaeological findings in the area suggest that the caves were used by various groups throughout history, including the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings, making the pub's history even richer.

A Taste of Tradition

Today, Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem offers visitors more than just a glimpse into the past. The pub serves a selection of traditional British ales, hearty pub fare, and an atmosphere that's unmatched. The low ceilings, uneven floors, and flickering candlelight create a cozy, authentic experience for patrons.

Specialties include classic dishes like fish and chips, steak and ale pie, and ploughman's lunch, all served with a side of history. The pub also offers guided tours, where visitors can learn about its storied past and explore the sandstone caves that make it so unique.

Preservation and Recognition

As one of the most cherished historical landmarks in England, Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem has been carefully preserved to maintain its authenticity. It's recognized by both locals and historians as a treasure, and efforts continue to protect it for future generations.

Despite its ancient roots, the pub has adapted to modern times without losing its charm. It's a popular spot for locals and tourists alike, drawing visitors from around the globe who come to experience a piece of living history.

A Symbol of Enduring Legacy

Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem isn't just a pub; it's a symbol of resilience. Through wars, plagues, and historical events, this ancient establishment has remained a constant. It's a reminder of the enduring power of tradition and the pleasures of gathering over a drink.

For history buffs, beer enthusiasts, and curious travelers, Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem offers a journey into the past. Whether you're there to marvel at its medieval architecture, enjoy a pint, or ponder its Viking connections, one thing is certain: this pub is a place where history comes alive.

So, the next time you find yourself in Nottingham, don't miss the chance to visit Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem. After all, how often can you say you've had a drink in the oldest pub in the world?



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MINDFULNESS BREATHING EXERCISES YOU CAN DO ANYWHERE AND ANYTIME

By Contributing Writer

In today's world, finding ways to relax and reduce stress is essential. Mindfulness breathing exercises are one of the most effective tools to achieve this. These are simple, can be done anywhere, and require no equipment. The beauty of mindfulness breathing is its accessibility. Here are some mindfulness breathing exercises.

Box Breathing (Four-Square Breathing)

Box breathing is an exercise that involves breathing in a structured, square-like pattern. It helps regulate your breath, calm your nervous system, and increase focus.

Step 1: Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four. Step 2: Hold your breath for a count of four. Step 3: Exhale through your mouth for a count of four. Step 4: Pause and hold your breath again for a count of four before repeating.

This cycle can be done for several minutes. You can increase the count to six or eight once you feel more comfortable.

Deep Belly Breathing

This is one of the most basic and effective breathing exercises. Deep belly breathing helps activate the body's relaxation response:

Step 1: Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your abdomen. Step 2: Slowly inhale through your nose, allowing your abdomen to rise as your lungs fill with air. Step 3: Hold your breath. Step 4: Slowly exhale through your mouth, letting your abdomen fall.

This exercise helps focus attention on your body's natural rhythms and deepens the breath. It's an excellent way to ground yourself or to unwind.

4-7-8 Breathing

The 4-7-8 technique is a highly effective breathing exercise that promotes relaxation and sleep. It's particularly beneficial for calming your nervous system.

Step 1: Sit in a comfortable position with your back straight. Close your eyes and take a deep breath through your nose for a count of four. Step 2: Hold your breath for a count of seven. Step 3: Exhale slowly and completely through your mouth for a count of eight.

Repeat this cycle for four breaths, gradually increasing the



number of cycles. The 4-7-8 method helps reduce stress and improve focus.

Alternate Nostril Breathing

This exercise is used in yoga and helps balance the body's energy, promote mental clarity, and reduce stress.

Step 1: Sit in a comfortable position with your spine straight. Close your eyes and relax. Step 2: Use your right thumb to close your right nostril. Inhale deeply through your left nostril.

Step 3: Close your left nostril using your right ring finger, then release your right nostril. Exhale slowly through your right nostril. Step 4: Inhale deeply through



your right nostril, then close it with your right thumb. Step 5: Release your left nostril and exhale slowly through it.

This is one cycle. Repeat for five to ten cycles. Alternate nostril breathing clears blockages, relieves stress, and can help you focus.

Mindful Breathing (Just Notice the Breath)

One of the simplest mindfulness exercises is being aware of your breath. It can be done anywhere, anytime, and helps bring you into the moment.

Step 1: Sit or stand in a relaxed position. Close your eyes. Step 2: Bring your attention to your breath, noticing how it feels as it enters and exits. Step 3: If your mind

begins to wander, gently guide it back to the sensation of the breath.

This practice cultivates mindfulness and can be used as a grounding technique.

Mindfulness breathing exercises offer an easy and accessible way to manage stress, improve focus, and increase overall well-being. Whether you're at work, at home, or anywhere in between, these exercises can help you return to a state of calm and presence. By incorporating mindfulness breathing into your daily routine, you can find moments of peace and clarity no matter where life takes you. You'll discover how powerful your breath can be in transforming your mental and emotional state.



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Celebrate The Holidays At The Soraya!

By Contributing Writer

Holiday traditions continue at The Soraya with a wide variety of seven performances for all ages. The Holiday series begins on Dec. 7 and 8 with the ninth edition of The Soraya's original production, Nochebuena: A Christmas Spectacular—featuring Ballet Folklórico de Los Angeles and Mariachi Pueblo Viejo. In the 2024-25 Season, Camila Fernández, the daughter of Mexican Singer Alejandro Fernández, and granddaughter of the late great Vicente Fernández, joins as a special guest.

On Dec. 12, Michelle Dorrance returns to The Soraya (following her 2023 debut in Tum it Out with Tiler Peck) with Dorrance Dance: The Nutcracker Suite. The performance, co-created by Dorrance with Josette Wiggan and Hannah Heller, caught attention in the news following its White House invitation by First Lady Jill Biden. The jazzy new vision of the classic holiday tradition is set to Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's arrangement of the Tchaikovsky classic.

"It's a unique telling of this classic story, living very much in a very traditional jazz and vernacular space," Michelle Dorrance said in an interview with Soraya Executive and Artistic Director Thor Steingraber. "It couldn't be more of a literal dream to work with Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's interpretation of Tchaikovsky...because it's such an unbelievably swingin' version...there's horn, a funky baseline, a swingin' feel."

Following the Nutcracker Suite is the World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra, with a concert on Dec. 14 filled with timeless arrangements and holiday classics that made the Glenn Miller Orchestra an icon for all ages.

One day later on Dec. 15, Lea Salonga makes her fourth visit to The Soraya, this time with two performances of Sounding Joy: The Holiday Tour at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. The all-new holiday concert, sure to be a hit with fans of all ages, features songs from Lea Salonga's new holiday album (just released on Nov. 1) Sounding Joy. The album, featuring original music and classic Christmas songs reimagined in Salonga's original style, is the star's 14th recording, and marks a milestone as her very first holiday release in 20 years.

Thu Dec 12 | 8PM
Dorrance Dance: The Nutcracker Suite
Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn, arrangement
Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky, composer
Tap shoes kick pointe shoes aside in this American version of the holiday classic, The Nutcracker Suite. Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn reimagined Tchaikovsky's score in 1960, providing today's preeminent tap

Soraya with this brand-new show for all ages sure to get you in the holiday spirit. Tickets: \$57 - \$157.
Thu Dec 19 | 8PM
SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK®
50th Anniversary Tour Celebrating the HolyDays
Described as "one of the most dynamic,

versatile, and still relevant a cappella musical collectives today," the GRAMMY®-nominated African American vocal ensemble is known around the world for its blended voices, vocal improvisations, and choral-stacked spiritual/gospel and jazz traditions. SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK® continues its 50th Anniversary tour at The Soraya with a powerful celebration of the "HolyDays." Tickets: \$43 - \$95.

Sponsored by Kathleen P. Martin

The Soraya's 2024-25 Season boldly advances the expansive sound of orchestras both traditional and contemporary; the freestyle vibe of jazz; an array of dance luminaries, and a cultural bounty drawn from the musical well of global voices. The Soraya continues its vigorous commitment to innovating, excelling, and amplifying access by offering a wide variety of performances that reflect Los Angeles' many distinctive communities and featuring new and original work and artists from the local region as well as nationally and around the world.

Where: Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya) 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge
Ticket Office: (818) 677-3000
Website: www.TheSoraya.org



company a platform to jazz up the holidays. The colorful fantasy was featured as the nation's Nutcracker in 2023 with appearances at the Kennedy Center. Tickets: \$48 - \$118.

Sat Dec 14 | 3PM The World Famous
Glenn Miller Orchestra
In the Holiday Mood

With timeless melodies and swinging arrangements that made the Glenn Miller Orchestra an icon of the Big Band era, the program features a blend of beloved holiday classics reimagined in the orchestra's signature style. With spirited brass sections and lush saxophone solos, In the Holiday Mood celebrates the magic and nostalgia of the holiday season in the inimitable American style. Tickets: \$43 - \$95.

Sun Dec 15 | 2PM Sun Dec 15 | 7PM
Lea Salonga
Sounding Joy: The Holiday Tour
Ring in the holidays with one of

Broadway's biggest stars, Tony Award-winner Lea Salonga. Best known for her leading roles in Miss Saigon, Les Misérables, Once On This Island, and Allegiance, this global artist was bestowed the honor of "Disney Legend" for her signature singing roles in Aladdin and Mulan. Star of the 2023 PBS special "Christmas with the Tabernacle Choir," and acclaimed for her 2020 release "Lea Salonga: Live from Sydney Opera House," Lea returns to The





'Forever' Cruises Live Onboard And Sail The World For Years

By Contributing Writer

Imagine waking up each day with the ocean stretching out before you, stepping onto a balcony overlooking ports of call, and experiencing the world from the comfort of your own home. This is

Passengers enjoy a range of benefits. Meals, entertainment, fitness centers, and many other amenities are included. The ships are equipped with full-time staff who take care of tasks like cleaning, laundry, and concierge services. The onboard community becomes like a family, with fellow long-term passengers forming lasting friendships.

The Ships: Floating Luxury Homes

The ships used are often the epitome of luxury and comfort. They're equipped with spacious cabins. Many cruise lines offering long-term cruises ensure their ships are designed for comfort and functionality.

Facilities On Ships Include:

Restaurants and Cafes: Gourmet dining options with diverse menus, from fine dining to casual eateries, offer plenty of variety.

Entertainment: A variety of shows, movies, live performances, and even themed events.

Fitness Centers and Spas: Onboard gyms, pools, and spas.

Work and Leisure

Spaces: Many ships provide coworking spaces, libraries, and lecture halls.



Certain ships even cater to specialized needs, such as wellness-focused cruises or unique adventure itineraries.

The Perks

One of the biggest draws is the opportunity to see the world. Visit countries, enjoy diverse cultures, and explore historic landmarks. Some additional perks include:

No Accommodation Arrangements:

You won't have to book flights or hotels.

Exclusive Destinations: Some cruises include stops at unique and hard-to-reach locations.

Meet People: A floating community provides an opportunity to form lasting relationships.

Amenities: These ships often have private butlers, concierge services, and personal chefs.

Who Can Go on a 'Forever' Cruise?

These cruises are designed for retirees, long-term travelers, digital nomads, or anyone seeking a unique lifestyle. The cost can be substantial, but a forever cruise offers an unparalleled way to live and travel, with the freedom to explore the world.



the allure of "Forever" cruises, a new trend that allows individuals to live aboard cruise ships and sail the world for years. With exotic destinations, endless amenities, and unique communities, forever cruises are becoming a dream-come-true.

What Is a 'Forever' Cruise?

A "Forever" cruise is a long-term, all-inclusive cruise experience where passengers can live for extended periods, sometimes years. Forever cruises are designed for those who want to experience life at sea in a more permanent way. These cruises offer a new lifestyle, with the ship acting as a floating home.

Many cruise lines have embraced the concept. The ships are outfitted with accommodations, dining, entertainment, and activities, making them ideal for long-term stays. Some of these cruises are even marketed as "World Cruises."

How Does a 'Forever' Cruise Work?

Living on a cruise ship is much like living in a luxury hotel that constantly changes its location. You live aboard the ship, enjoying its amenities, participating in activities, and exploring new destinations. These cruises are designed for those who want to experience the world without the hassle of moving from one hotel to another.

Holiday Cruises

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FABULOUS LOCATIONS WHERE POPULAR TV SHOWS WERE FILMED IN LOS ANGELES CONEJO AND VENTURA COUNTIES

By Contributing Writer

Southern California has long been a destination for television production. Its diverse landscapes, architecture, and year-round sunshine provide the perfect backdrop for countless shows.

Paramount Studios (Hollywood)

Paramount Studios is one of the oldest working studios in Hollywood. This historic location has been home to shows like *Frasier* and *Glee*. The iconic Melrose Avenue entrance and backlot sets, such as New York Street, have featured prominently in numerous productions.



Griffith Park (Los Angeles)

Griffith Park's expanse of greenery and scenic vistas has made it a favorite filming location. From *Star Trek: The Original Series* to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the park's natural beauty has served as a versatile backdrop. The park's Griffith Observatory is also instantly recognizable.

Warner Bros. Studios (Burbank)

Burbank's Warner Bros. Studios has hosted shows like *Friends* and *The Big Bang Theory*. Fans of *Friends* can still visit the Central Perk set on studio tours. The backlot's Midwest Street, with its charming houses and quaint storefronts, has been used in various productions.

Malibu Creek State Park (Agoura Hills)

This sprawling park in Agoura Hills served as the primary filming location for *MASH**. Visitors can still hike to the site where the show's set once stood.

Santa Monica Pier (Santa Monica)

The vibrant and historic Santa Monica Pier has appeared in many shows, including *Baywatch* and *NCIS: Los Angeles*. Its iconic Ferris wheel and boardwalk create a quintessential beach vibe.

Downtown Ventura (Ventura)

Ventura's charming downtown area has been featured in *Big Little Lies* and *True Detective*. With its vintage storefronts and coastal charm, it's a favorite.

Universal Studios Hollywood (Universal City)

Universal Studios is not just a theme park—it's also a working production studio. Popular shows like *Desperate Housewives* were filmed on its backlot. The iconic Wisteria Lane set remains a highlight.

Leo Carrillo State Beach (Malibu)

Leo Carrillo State Beach has been a go-to spot for beach scenes in shows like *The O.C.* and *Modern Family*. Its dramatic cliffs and tide pools provide stunning visuals.

Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA)

DTLA's historic and modern architecture has made it a prime location for shows like *How to Get Away with Murder* and *Mad Men*. Landmarks such as the Bradbury Building and the Walt Disney Concert Hall often make appearances.

Channel Islands Harbor (Oxnard)

Channel Islands Harbor has served as a picturesque maritime backdrop in shows like *Dexter* and *The Love Boat*. Its marina, dotted with sailboats, offers coastal ambiance.

Topanga Canyon (Topanga)

Topanga Canyon's bohemian vibe and natural beauty have made it a filming favorite.

The Getty Center (Los Angeles)

The Getty Center's architecture and panoramic views have made it a dramatic location for shows like *Scandal*. Its sleek modern design contrasts beautifully with the natural surroundings.



From urban cityscapes to tranquil settings, Los Angeles, Conejo, and Ventura counties offer a treasure trove of filming locations that have brought some of television's most beloved shows to life. These iconic sites provide a glimpse into the magic of film while showing the beauty of Southern California.

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WHAT WILL THE EFFECT BE OF PAYING COLLEGE ATHLETES ON THE FANS?

By Contributing Writer

The debate over paying college athletes has been an issue in the world of college sports, and the conversation is moving closer to reality. As universities, athletic programs, and bodies like the NCAA begin to grapple with the idea of compensating student-athletes, it's important to consider how this shift could impact the fans. While paying college athletes has the potential to change college sports, the effect on fans could be far-reaching.

Impact on Fan Loyalty

Traditionally, college athletes have been viewed as students who play for the love of the game, representing

their universities with pride and passion. Fans connect with athletes who embody the values of hard work, dedication, and school spirit. However, the introduction

sated. This could increase loyalty to individual players, particularly if they stay in college longer due to financial stability. Fans who admire specific athletes for their talent, work ethic, and personal stories may feel more invested in their careers.



of compensation could alter this dynamic. Some fans feel that paying athletes will diminish the purity of college sports.

On the other hand, fans may develop stronger connections with their favorite athletes if they see them as professionals who are compen-

Increased Commercialization of College Sports

One of the most immediate impacts of paying college athletes will be the commercialization of college sports. Endorsements, media rights, and sponsorships

will likely surge. This commercialization may shift the fan experience, making it feel less like a community event and more like a spectacle.

For fans, this could mean more televised games, sponsorships, and even higher ticket prices. The atmosphere at games could change, too, with fans experiencing more corporate-sponsored events and promotions.

The increased commercial pressure could lead to changes in scheduling of games and tournaments, potentially prioritizing television broadcasts and lucrative matchups over traditional rivalries or fan preferences. **The Rise of "Super Teams" and Competitive Imbalance**

Another potential effect could be the creation of "super teams" in college sports. If universities and athletic programs have financial resources to

offer lucrative compensation, it could lead to wealthier programs pulling in top talent. For fans of smaller programs, this could lead to feelings of frustration.

While fans of the wealthiest schools may celebrate the increased success and talent on their teams, those who follow less-prominent programs may feel alienated. The shifting balance of power could result in a less inclusive fan experience.

Increased Player Movement and Lessened Attachment

Currently, many college sports fans form deep attachments to their favorite



players, especially as athletes often spend several years at their schools. However, if athletes are compensated, the possibility of increased player movement becomes likely. Athletes might transfer schools in search of higher compensation or they could be enticed to leave for professional leagues earlier.

Possible Increase in Fan Engagement

On the flip side, paying college athletes might lead to an increase in fan engagement. With athletes receiving compensation, there could be a greater focus on player marketing and personal branding. Fans could appreciate the increased quality of play, knowing that these athletes are not only playing for their school but also for their livelihood.

Fan Reactions

Finally, fans may react differently to the changing dynamic. Some may express concern that paying athletes could divert attention away from the primary mission of college sports: education. Athletes, now compensated, may prioritize financial gain over academic achievement. This could spark passionate debates about the balance between athletics and academics.

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UNFORGETTABLE ANIMAL EXPERIENCES IN CALIFORNIA

By Contributing Writer

California offers unique animal experiences for wildlife enthusiasts, families, and adventurers. From marine life to awe-inspiring encounters with land animals, here are some of the best ways to connect with nature.

Whale Watching Along the Pacific Coast

The California coastline is one of the world's premier whale-watching destinations. From December to April, gray whales migrate, while blue whales and humpbacks are visible in summer and fall.

Must-Visit: Monterey Bay Whale Watch (Monterey)

Tip: Bring a camera with a zoom lens and dress warmly.

Safari West in Santa Rosa

Nestled in Sonoma County's wine country, Safari West offers a slice of the African savannah. This 400-acre wildlife preserve is home to over 900 animals, including giraffes, zebras, cheetahs, and antelope. Guests can embark on guided safari tours in open-air vehicles or stay overnight in luxury tents.

Must-Visit: Safari West (Santa Rosa)

Tip: Book reservations well in advance.

San Diego Zoo and Safari Park

The San Diego Zoo and its Safari Park are must-visit destinations for animal lovers. The zoo houses over 12,000 animals from around the globe, while the Safari Park offers expansive enclosures where animals like rhinos and elephants roam freely.

Must-Visit: San Diego Zoo & Safari Park (San Diego)

Tip: Wear comfortable walking shoes and plan to spend a full day exploring.

Sea Otter Encounters at Morro Bay

Morro Bay is a haven for adorable sea otters. Visitors can rent kayaks or join guided tours to paddle through calm waters and observe these playful creatures in their natural habitat. Keep an eye out for otters floating on their backs, cracking open shells, and caring for their young.



Must-Visit: Morro Bay State Park (Morro Bay)

Tip: Early morning tours offer the best chance for sightings.

Elephant Seals at Piedras Blancas Rookery

The Piedras Blancas Elephant Seal Rookery provides a rare opportunity to observe these massive marine mammals. From December to March, visitors can witness breeding and birthing, while molting occurs in spring and summer.

Must-Visit: Piedras Blancas Elephant Seal Rookery (San Simeon)

Tip: Bring binoculars for a closer look and dress in layers.

Monterey Bay Aquarium

The Monterey Bay Aquarium offers interactive exhibits and stunning views of ocean life. Highlights include the Open Sea gallery, a kelp forest, and a sea otter habitat. The aquarium also plays a role in rehabilitating injured marine animals.



Must-Visit: Monterey Bay Aquarium (Monterey)

Tip: Check the schedule for feeding times and special programs.

Big Bear Alpine Zoo

Big Bear Alpine Zoo is a sanctuary for injured and orphaned wildlife, offering a chance to see native

California species like black bears, bald eagles, and mountain lions.

Must-Visit: Big Bear Alpine Zoo (Big Bear Lake)

Tip: Visit during feeding times for an up-close view of the animals in action.

Channel Islands National Park

The Channel Islands are a haven for wildlife enthusiasts. Accessible by boat, these islands are home to unique species such as island foxes, seals, and seabirds. Snorkeling and kayaking offer glimpses of vibrant marine life.



Must-Visit: Channel Islands National Park (Ventura/Oxnard)

Tip: Pack sturdy hiking shoes and plenty of water for exploring.

Wild Horse Sanctuary in Shingletown

For a truly off-the-beaten-path experience, visit the Wild Horse Sanctuary. This non-profit organization provides a haven for wild mustangs and burros. Take guided tours, photograph the horses, and learn about conservation.

Must-Visit: Wild Horse Sanctuary (Shingletown)

Tip: Donations help support the sanctuary's mission.

Farm Animal Sanctuaries

Animal Place in Grass Valley and The Gentle Barn in Santa Clarita offer opportunities to meet cows, pigs, chickens, and goats in a peaceful setting.

Must-Visit: The Gentle Barn (Santa Clarita)

Tip: Call ahead.

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SOTHEBY'S AUCTIONS THE FIRST-EVER ARTWORK CREATED BY A HUMANOID ROBOT, "AI GOD"

By Contributing Writer

In a groundbreaking moment for both the art and technology worlds, Sotheby's is set to auction the first-ever piece of artwork created by a humanoid robot. The piece, titled AI God, is a portrait of Alan Turing, one of the most pivotal figures in the history of computer science and artificial intelligence (AI). The artwork, which merges technology with creativity, is expected to fetch a significant sum at auction, reflecting the growing intersection between art, robotics, and AI.

The Significance of AI God

Created by a humanoid robot designed to mimic human artistic abilities, AI God is more than just a portrait; it represents a new frontier in the evolving role of machines in artistic creation. The portrait depicts Alan Turing, the British mathematician and logician who is best known for his work during

World War II on breaking the German Enigma code. Turing's pioneering ideas laid the foundation for the field of artificial intelligence, making him a fitting subject for a work that symbolizes the intersection of humanity and technology.

Turing, often referred to as the "father of modern computing," has long been recognized as a visionary whose contributions helped shape the digital age. In his time, Turing's ideas were revolutionary, and today, his work continues to influence the fields of computer science, cryptography, and AI. The choice of Turing as the subject for this robot-created portrait is not only an homage to his legacy but also a symbolic gesture to the very essence of artificial intelligence and its potential to shape the future.

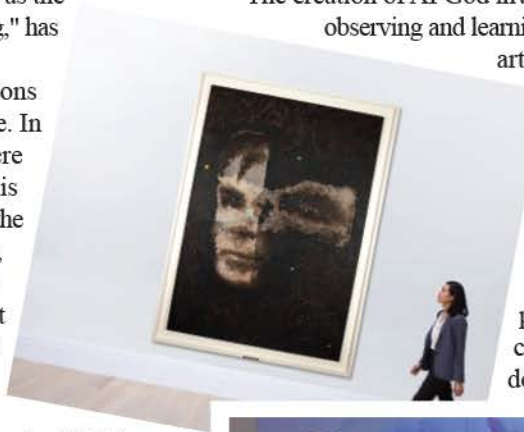
The Robot Behind the Art

The humanoid robot that created AI God was designed by a team of engineers, artists, and AI experts. The robot is equipped with advanced technology, including machine learning algorithms, neural networks, and a mechanical arm capable of producing detailed, lifelike art. It functions as an artist in its own right, drawing on datasets of

existing artworks and incorporating AI's interpretation of various artistic techniques and styles.

The creation of AI God involved the robot observing and learning from various artistic traditions,

including portraiture, before using its mechanical arm to paint the portrait of Alan Turing. The process of creation was documented and



analyzed to understand how the machine interpreted the task of creating a portrait. The result is a work that combines the technical precision of robotics with the unpredictability and nuance of human creativity.

What makes AI God particularly remarkable is that it challenges our traditional understanding of the artist's role. Can a machine be considered an artist if it can create works that evoke emotion or meaning? Is the artwork truly "authored" by the machine, or is it merely a tool for human programming? These questions have sparked debates within the art community and beyond, as the lines between creator and creation blur in this new era of technological art.

Sotheby's Auction Expectations

Sotheby's is anticipating high interest in the auction of AI God, given its status as the first-ever artwork created by a humanoid robot. The auction house has not yet disclosed an exact estimated price for the piece, but art experts speculate that it could fetch anywhere from hundreds of thousands to over a million dollars. The unique nature of the work, its connection to Turing's legacy, and its groundbreaking use of technology all contribute to its expected value.

The auction is expected to draw attention from a wide range of buyers, including collectors of contemporary art, AI enthusiasts, and those invested in the future of

technology and its impact on society. The sale of AI God could mark a historic moment in the art world, as it demonstrates the increasing influence of technology in shaping the creative process.

For Sotheby's, the auction is a rare opportunity to offer a piece that challenges traditional notions of artistry. The sale of AI-created art has already been a hot topic in the art world, with AI-generated pieces like those created by the AI program Obvious gaining attention at auction houses like Christie's. The success of these auctions has demonstrated that there is growing interest in art created by non-human entities, and AI God is poised to continue this trend.

The Debate: Human vs. Machine in Art

The auction of AI God comes at a time when the role of artificial intelligence in creative fields is being hotly debated. Some argue that AI-created art lacks the emotional depth, intuition, and experience that human artists bring to their work. Others see it as a natural evolution of creativity, with AI serving as a new tool that expands the possibilities of what art can be.

As AI systems become more sophisticated, there is increasing recognition that these technologies can produce works that rival or even exceed human capabilities in certain areas. However, the question remains: Can AI ever truly be considered a creator in the same way humans are? AI God exemplifies this tension, as it is both a tribute to a human genius and a demonstration of a machine's artistic capabilities.

Ultimately, the auction of AI God will not only mark a milestone in the history of art but will also provoke ongoing discussions about the future of creativity, authorship, and the role of technology in shaping culture.

The Future of AI in Art

The sale of AI God at auction is just the beginning of what could be a new era in the world of art. As technology continues to evolve, we may see more works created by AI, robotics, and other forms of artificial creativity. The art world is rapidly adapting to the idea that machines can produce compelling, meaningful art, and the sale of AI God will likely serve as a catalyst for further exploration of AI in creative fields.

For collectors and art lovers, the auction of AI God offers a unique opportunity to own a piece of history—a moment where technology and art intersect in an entirely new way. As the art world continues to evolve, it's clear that the future of creativity will be shaped, in part, by the innovations in AI and robotics. Whether or not AI God becomes a monumental piece in the history of art remains to be seen, but one thing is certain: it represents a bold new direction for the art world, one where machines and humans can coexist in the creative process.

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FRONT DOOR DECOR IDEAS THAT WILL INSTANTLY BOOST YOUR HOME'S CURB APPEAL

By Contributing Writer

Your front door is the gateway to your home and sets the tone for what lies beyond. A well-decorated entryway creates a welcoming vibe and boosts your home's curb appeal. Whether

you're looking to make a grand statement or simply freshen up your exterior, here are some creative and impactful ideas for front door décor.

Bold Paint Colors

Nothing transforms a front door like a fresh coat of paint. Bold colors such as fiery red, navy blue, or sunny yellow can make your entryway pop. For a modern look, consider black or deep charcoal gray. Match your door color with complementary accents like planters or doormats to create a cohesive look.

Seasonal Wreaths

Wreaths aren't just for the holidays. Opt for seasonal varieties like lush greenery in spring, bright florals in summer, rustic harvest hues in fall, or frosty evergreen designs in winter. Customize your wreath with monograms or ribbons for a personal touch.

Statement Lighting

Illuminate your entryway with eye-catching light fixtures. Sconces, pendant lights, or lanterns add both style and functionality. Consider smart lighting options that allow you to adjust brightness and timing for added convenience and security.

Decorative Doormats

Doormats are a simple yet effective way to add charm to your doorstep. Look for mats with quirky sayings, geometric patterns, or seasonal themes. Layering a smaller mat over a larger patterned outdoor rug creates visual interest and makes the space feel curated.

Lush Potted Plants

Flank your front door with potted plants to add greenery and life to your entryway. Choose tall planters for a dramatic effect or mix and match different heights and styles for a relaxed, bohemian vibe. Seasonal flowers, succulents, or even small trees like olive or citrus add texture and color.



House Numbers and Hardware

Upgrade your house numbers and door hardware for a quick and stylish refresh. Opt for sleek, modern fonts in brushed metal for a contemporary look, or go for vintage brass or ceramic numbers for a traditional aesthetic. Pair these with a new door knocker or handle for a polished finish.

Outdoor Art or Decor

Add personality to your entryway with outdoor art, such as metal sculptures, hanging signs, or decorative tiles. Consider wind chimes or weatherproof wall art that complements your home's style.

Symmetrical Design

Symmetry creates a sense of balance and elegance. Use matching planters, light fixtures, or wreaths on either side of your door for a harmonious look. This design principle works especially well for traditional and colonial-style homes.

Door Mats and Layers

Layering isn't just for fashion—it works wonders for your doorstep too. Start with a large outdoor rug as a base and top it with a statement doormat. Choose complementary colors and patterns to tie the look together.

Seasonal Decor Themes

Celebrate the seasons with themed decor. Pumpkins and hay bales for fall, twinkling lights and garlands for winter, and lanterns or seaside accents for summer add a festive touch that changes with the calendar.

Vintage or Modern Mailboxes

A stylish mailbox near your front door can be a standout detail. Vintage designs add charm, while sleek modern boxes offer a clean aesthetic. Choose

a style that matches your door hardware and overall décor.

Front Door Awning or Canopy

An awning or canopy not only provides shelter but also serves as a striking design element. Choose materials like wood, metal, or fabric that complement your home's architecture.

Welcome Signs

A cheerful welcome sign can instantly uplift your entryway. Whether it's a rustic wooden plank or a contemporary acrylic piece, a welcoming message makes visitors feel at home.

Color-Coordinated Accessories

Tie your entryway together with color-coordinated accessories. Match your door color with planters, cushions on nearby seating, or even the flowers in your garden bed for a cohesive and polished appearance.

Power Wash and Polish

Sometimes, all your front door needs is a good cleaning. Power wash the area to remove

dirt and grime, polish the door handle, and touch up any chipped paint. A sparkling clean entryway always makes a great impression.

Creative Door Knockers

Swap out your standard door knocker for something with personality. From whimsical animal designs to elegant vintage pieces, unique knockers add character and charm to your front door.

Personalized Touches

Incorporate elements that reflect your personality. A chalkboard with changing messages, a monogrammed wreath, or a collection of small decorative items like lanterns or figurines can make your entryway uniquely yours.

Lighting Pathways

Guide guests to your front door with well-lit pathways. Use solar-powered lights along walkways or install LED strips for a modern, sleek look. This not only enhances safety but also adds an inviting glow.

Enhancing your front door's décor doesn't have to be a daunting task. With a mix of creativity, seasonal updates, and thoughtful touches, you can transform your entryway into a space that welcomes guests and boosts your home's curb appeal. Whether you're updating for yourself or preparing to sell, these ideas ensure your front door makes a lasting impression.



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Parents and teachers at Goshō Kodomo-en kindergarten in southwestern Japan thought for sure someone with a footwear fetish was swiping little shoes from cubbies at the school, the Associated Press reported. Police installed three cameras in the school, and on Nov. 11, zeroed in on another culprit: a weasel. "It's great it turned out not to be a human being," said Deputy Police Chief Hiroaki Inada. The stolen shoes have not been found, but the school has installed a net over the cubbies to keep the weasel, who is still on the loose, out.

Ewwwww

-- Los Angeles is known for many things, but perhaps its most ignominious claim to fame is being the "clogged capital" of the United States on "Brown Friday" -- the day after Thanksgiving, when plumbers nationally go out on emergency calls 65% more often than on other Fridays. Analysis by Yelp showed that plumbing-related searches went up 73% in L.A., followed by 37% in Miami, United Press International reported. Roto-Rooter said the most common problem areas were kitchen sinks, toilets and garbage disposals.

-- Looking for a different type of pizza than the standard pepperoni or sausage? At Pizza Hut restaurants in China, customers are being offered deep-fried frogs on top of their pies, the Independent reported on Nov. 21. The pizza has a thick crust with red sauce and basil, with a whole fried bullfrog on top. The limited-time variety is being offered in a collaboration with Dungeons and Dragons and is called "Goblin Pizza."

-- Starting on Jan. 1, the Garden of Remembrance cemetery in Stoke-on-Trent, England, will welcome visitors from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, the Stoke Sentinel reported. But should family members want to visit at other times, they'll be required to buy a VIP pass for 5 pounds (or 10 pounds, if they also want to visit the rose garden). "Now I need to pay a membership fee to visit my dad's grave," groused Jode Bourne, whose father, Mark, is buried there. "This is an absolute disgrace." A posted notice says the new rules will make "the site secure for our staff, families and visitors."

A prop gravestone for Ebenezer Scrooge, left behind after a 1984 movie adaptation of "A Christmas Carol" starring George C. Scott, was smashed on Nov. 24, the BBC reported. The cemetery next to St. Chad's Church in Shrewsbury, England, was part of the scene where Scrooge meets the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come; much of the movie was filmed there. Town council clerk Helen Ball said the stone is "in multiple pieces. I think it's one of those things that's very dear to everybody's hearts." She said the council would determine whether the stone could be repaired.

Nigel Carter, 64, of Comrie, Perthshire, Scotland, collected 500 bikes to send to a charity in Sudan that helps people who need cheap transportation to school or work, the BBC reported on Nov. 22. But a Scottish Environment Protection Agency inspector said the shipment could not leave the port because some of the bikes needed minor repairs, such as oil on chains and new brake cables. Carter said he found it "ludicrous" that the bikes were returned to him. A SEPA official said he had a duty to ensure that Scotland's waste was not dumped on another country, but Carter said the Sudanese charity had picked out the bikes and were happy with their condition. They will likely be returned to the recycling center where they came from and scrapped.

It's a Mystery

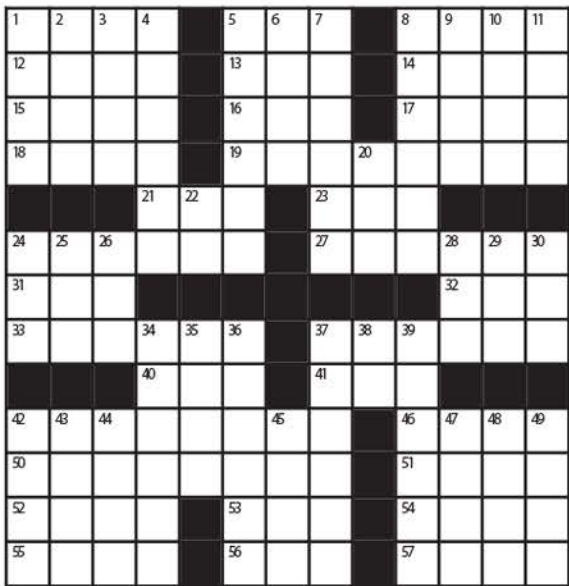
George Oliver of Calvert County, Maryland, often walks the beach looking for fossils, NBC News reported. As he strolled along Chesapeake Bay on Nov. 4 during low tide, he spotted a coffin in the water. Inside was a nearly whole human skeleton. Oliver removed the skeleton and dug the mostly submerged coffin out of the water. "When I first found it," he said, "you could not tell that there was human remains. You just thought that it was full of beach sand." Oliver called the sheriff's department, who called an archaeological society. Based on the construction of the coffin and the condition of the body, it's believed to be at least 100 years old. Kelcey Ward, a crime scene technician with the sheriff's office, said the skull showed signs of "a gunshot wound or blunt force trauma of some sort." The remains and coffin will be interred at a local cemetery.

Crossword by Myles Mellor

Print this Page! Ctrl + P

- Across
- 1. Muscular strength
 - 5. NY village, with Harbor
 - 8. Showy trinket
 - 12. Capital on a fjord
 - 13. ET carrier
 - 14. 60's hairdo
 - 15. Train
 - 16. Block
 - 17. Salsa quality
 - 18. Accord
 - 19. Road up to a house
 - 21. Symbol on an Australian coin
 - 23. Get
 - 24. Tenant
 - 27. Mystical knowledge
 - 31. Be a pain
 - 32. "___ to Autumn"
 - 33. Ancient Greek weight
 - 37. Bow (to)
 - 40. Roman 3
 - 41. Exasperation
 - 42. Disdain
 - 46. Birthplaces of fungi
 - 50. Exaggerates
 - 51. Southwest Asian
 - 52. Alternative word
 - 53. Biological pocket
 - 54. Large lake
 - 55. Contributes
 - 56. ___ Wednesday
 - 57. Bird noses

- Down
- 1. Head honcho
 - 2. See at a distance
 - 3. Zest
 - 4. Makes
 - 5. Conquer
 - 6. Way off
 - 7. Wounding
 - 8. Small building with a roof in a park
 - 9. Not many
 - 10. Big Dipper
 - 11. Decayed
 - 20. Type of camper
 - 22. Augusta locale
 - 24. Ceiling
 - 25. Go off
 - 26. Relative of reggae



- 28. Drunkard
- 29. Repeats 5 times for an Abba song
- 30. Repair
- 34. Kumquat, for example
- 35. Hightailed it
- 36. Oj and champagne
- 37. Garish art
- 38. Quebecois gold
- 39. Enfeeble
- 42. Pepsi ___
- 43. "Ars Amatoria" poet
- 44. Distress
- 45. Black eyed ___
- 47. "No problem"
- 48. Cheat
- 49. 15th day of March



Previous Puzzle





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UNUSUAL CHRISTMAS & CHANUKKAH ORNAMENTS

Make The Holidays Weird And Wonderful For Kids

By Contributing Writer

The holiday season is a magical time for kids, filled with twinkling lights, festive music, and the thrill of decorating. But if you're looking to add a sprinkle of quirky charm to

your family's celebrations, consider embracing unusual Christmas and Chanukkah ornaments.

These offbeat decorations not only make your home more vibrant but also spark curiosity and joy in children, creating lasting memories.

The Rise of Unconventional Ornaments

Traditional ornaments—like glass balls, dreidels, and stars—are timeless and beautiful. Yet, in recent years, many families have leaned into the playful and unconventional, choosing ornaments that reflect their personalities, interests, or a sense of humor. From tacos and dinosaurs to avocado menorahs, these eccentric pieces offer a creative way to personalize your holiday decor.

Retailers and artisans on platforms like Etsy, Amazon, and local craft fairs have taken note, offering a wide array of handmade and novelty ornaments that cater to every whim. Whether it's a flamingo-shaped menorah or a Santa wearing sunglasses while riding a surfboard, the options are limitless.

Engaging Kids in the Fun

One of the best aspects of choosing unusual ornaments is how they engage kids in the decorating process. Instead of a generic setup, children can explore their interests and pick out ornaments that resonate with them. Does your child love outer space? Add rocket ship ornaments to the tree or a menorah shaped like a spaceship. Is there a family pet? Personalized paw print ornaments make a touching tribute.

Letting kids take part in selecting or even crafting ornaments encourages creativity. Many craft stores offer DIY ornament kits where kids can paint or decorate their own designs. For Chanukkah, families can create unique menorahs using clay, wood, or even Legos, combining tradition with personal flair.

Wacky and Wonderful Themes

Some families take the fun a step further by choosing a specific theme for their holiday decorations. Here are a few ideas:

Foodie Fun: Turn your tree into a smorgasbord of delights with pizza, donut, and sushi ornaments. For Chanukkah, look for latke or gelt-themed decorations.

Pop Culture Parade: From Baby Yoda to classic superheroes, pop culture-inspired ornaments are a hit with kids.

Animal Kingdom: Go wild with ornaments featuring sloths, llamas, and narwhals.

Bonus points for pairing them with Chanukkah-themed counterparts like a "Hanukkah Llama."

Silly Santas and Dreidels: Opt for whimsical takes on classics, like Santa riding a flamingo or dreidels with googly eyes.

These imaginative themes transform decorating into a game, where kids can hunt for specific types of ornaments to complete the look.

Cultural and Educational Opportunities

Unusual ornaments also offer a unique way to teach kids about cultural diversity and the deeper meanings behind the holidays. For example, you might find ornaments featuring iconic landmarks from Israel for Chanukkah or representations of global holiday traditions for Christmas.



Using decorations as conversation starters can help kids learn about customs from around the world. An ornament shaped like a sukkah can lead to discussions about Jewish holidays, while one inspired by a European Christmas market might inspire curiosity.

The Joy of Collecting

For many families, ornaments become treasured keepsakes that grow in significance over the years. Starting a collection of unique ornaments for each child is a heartfelt tradition. By choosing ornaments that reflect milestones, interests, or family jokes, you create a collection that tells a story. Over time, these quirky additions will evoke fond memories and laughter with every unboxing.

Where to Find Unique Ornaments

Finding these unusual gems is half the fun. Here are some suggestions:

Local Craft Fairs: Support artisans who create one-of-a-kind ornaments.

Online Marketplaces: Etsy and Amazon have extensive selections of novelty decorations.

DIY: Craft your own ornaments with the kids for an extra-special touch.

Boutique Stores: Many small businesses offer exclusive designs.

Making the Holidays Special

Incorporating unusual ornaments into your holiday decor is more than just a trend; it's an opportunity to make the season uniquely yours. By stepping outside the box, you invite whimsy, creativity, and joy into your celebrations. And for kids, these imaginative touches can transform the holidays into an enchanting adventure, filled with laughter and wonder.

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THE MAGIC OF DISNEYLAND

Comparing Japan And America's Iconic Parks

By Contributing Writer

Disneyland is often described as "The Happiest Place on Earth," but its manifestations around the globe are far from identical. Disneyland in Anaheim, California, and Tokyo Disneyland in Japan offer unique experiences shaped by their respective cultures, preferences, and visitor expectations.

Park Layout and Design

Anaheim: Disneyland Anaheim was the first Disney park created. Its layout revolves around Walt Disney's original vision, featuring themed lands. The park's size is compact, which lends to a cozy, nostalgic atmosphere.

Tokyo: Tokyo Disneyland was heavily inspired by the original Disneyland and Disney World. Its design reflects attention to detail, with a focus on wide walkways and architecture. Tokyo Disneyland's castle is modeled after Disney World's Cinderella Castle, offering a grander appearance compared to Sleeping Beauty Castle in Anaheim.

Key Difference: Tokyo Disneyland feels more spacious and offers a cleaner layout.

Cultural Adaptations in Attractions

Anaheim: Disneyland's attractions are steeped in American pop culture. For example, "Pirates of the Caribbean" reflects a love of swashbuckling adventure, while "Haunted Mansion" captures eerie fun and humor. Seasonal overlays like "The Nightmare Before Christmas" bring a holiday spirit.

Tokyo: Many attractions are identical to American counterparts, but subtle changes reflect Japanese preferences. For example, Tokyo's Haunted Mansion places a greater emphasis on story and visuals. Unique rides like "Pooh's Hunny Hunt" and "Monsters, Inc. Ride & Go Seek" use innovative trackless ride systems.

Key Difference: Tokyo's attractions feel more technologically advanced and visually immersive, catering to Japan's high-quality craftsmanship.

Food and Dining Options

Anaheim: Classic American staples like churros, turkey legs, and corn dogs dominate menus. Fine dining options, such as Club 33 or Blue Bayou, provide elevated experiences. Seasonal foods are popular and add to festive atmosphere.

Tokyo: Food in Tokyo Disneyland is a highlight, with menus reflecting Japanese preferences. Popular items include Mickey-shaped steamed buns, teriyaki chicken legs, and curry popcorn.

Presentation is key: even quick-service meals are beautifully arranged.

Key Difference: Tokyo Disneyland's food offerings are more diverse and creative. **Merchandise and Souvenirs**

Anaheim: Souvenir offerings focus on timeless Disney characters and franchises. Items like Mickey ears, pins, and spirit



jerseys are fan favorites. Limited-edition merchandise draws collectors.

Tokyo: Merchandise in Tokyo Disneyland is varied and whimsical. Items like character-shaped popcorn buckets, exclusive plush toys, and themed household goods are in high demand.

Key Difference: Tokyo Disneyland's merchandise emphasizes exclusivity, design, and novelty. **Park Etiquette and Visitor Behavior**

Anaheim: The vibe is casual, with a mix of families, tourists, and locals. Guests often wear themed outfits or Disneybounding attire. Lines can feel chaotic, and guests may stretch the rules around seating and waiting areas.

Tokyo: Japanese visitors are renowned for their orderly behavior. Lines are meticulously followed. Matching outfits and coordinated group costumes are extremely popular.

Key Difference: Tokyo Disneyland's orderly visitor behavior contributes to a pleasant experience.

Seasonal Events and Celebrations

Anaheim: Seasonal overlays and events, such as Oogie Boogie Bash and Disney's Merriest Nites, are highlights. Parades and fireworks shows often incorporate iconic American themes.

Tokyo: Tokyo Disneyland's seasonal events are lavish and immersive, often featuring exclusive shows, decorations, and merchandise.

Key Difference: Tokyo's seasonal events feel grander and more immersive.

Cleanliness and Maintenance

Anaheim: Disneyland is generally well-maintained, but its older infrastructure sometimes shows signs of wear.

Tokyo: Tokyo Disneyland is famously spotless, with a level of cleanliness that's unmatched. Staff attention to detail ensures the park remains pristine.

Key Difference: Tokyo Disneyland sets the gold standard for cleanliness and maintenance.

Cast Member Interaction

Anaheim: Cast members are friendly and engaging, often going out of their way to create magical moments for guests. Interactions can feel spontaneous and relaxed.

Tokyo: Cast members in Tokyo are exceptionally polite and professional. Small gestures, like perfectly timed bows or warm smiles, elevate the experience.

Key Difference: Tokyo Disneyland's cast members exude formality and dedication that aligns with Japan's emphasis on hospitality.



Themed Hotels and Accommodations

Anaheim: Disneyland's resort area includes the Grand Californian Hotel & Spa, Disneyland Hotel, and Pixar-themed Paradise Pier Hotel.

Tokyo: Tokyo Disneyland's hotels, like the Tokyo Disneyland Hotel and DisneySea

KIDS FORUM



Hotel MiraCosta, are extensions of the park's immersive experience. Themes are intricately woven into the architecture and design.

Key Difference: Tokyo's on-site hotels provide a more cohesive and immersive experience.

Cultural Representation in Shows and Parades

Anaheim: Entertainment focuses on Disney's global brand, with parades and shows highlighting popular franchises. Live performances often include nods to American history and culture.

Tokyo: Tokyo Disneyland's shows incorporate Japanese elements, such as taiko drums or traditional costumes. Parades like "Dreaming Up!" showcase a seamless blend of Western and Japanese influences.

Key Difference: Tokyo's entertainment offerings celebrate a fusion of cultures.

While both Disneyland Anaheim and Tokyo Disneyland deliver unforgettable experiences, their differences reflect the cultural values and preferences of respective audiences. Anaheim's park is steeped in nostalgia and American charm, while Tokyo's park stands out for its design, attractions, and hospitality. Exploring these differences not only enhances the magic of Disney but also offers insight into how global entertainment can adapt. Whether you're a first-time visitor or a seasoned Disney fan, both parks promise memories to last a lifetime.



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FASHION

UP-AND-COMING JEAN TRENDS IN 2025

By Contributing Writer

The world of denim is evolving, with each season bringing new trends. The jean industry is shifting towards sustainable, inclusive, and creative designs. Denim lovers can expect nostalgic influences, combined with fresh takes on comfort, durability, and style.

Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Fabrics

Sustainability has been a major force in fashion. As eco-conscious consumers demand responsible options, denim brands are upping their game. In 2025, expect to see organic cotton, recycled fibers, and innovative materials. There will be a rise in brands using plant-based dyes and offering jeans that are biodegradable.

Straight and Relaxed Fits

While skinny jeans may never disappear, 2025 will see a shift to comfortable and

relaxed fits. Straight-leg jeans will take center stage. Relaxed and wide-leg jeans will continue to be popular. These jeans offer a laid-back, easygoing aesthetic.

Patchwork and Upcycled Denim

The upcycling trend continues, with denim brands experimenting with patchwork and repurposed materials. Denim will be used in creative ways, with pieces from old jeans, vintage denim jackets, and surplus fabric being reworked.

Patchwork denim will be popular, featuring a mix of denim washes, textures, and colors. These jeans offer a playful, artisanal look that adds personality and individuality.

Bold Colors and Dye Techniques

While classic blue jeans will always have a place in the denim world, 2025 will bring bold



colors and innovative dye techniques. Expect to see jeans in jewel tones like emerald green, deep purple, and sapphire blue, as well as pastel hues.

In addition, tie-dye and ombré effects will continue to make waves in denim. These techniques, which were huge in the '90s and early 2000s, will be reimagined for a more modern audience.

Denim Dresses and Jumpsuits

New jean-inspired garments are gaining popularity. Denim dresses and jumpsuits will become essential staples. Denim dresses will range from casual, button-down styles to more elevated designs featuring details like ruffles, puffed sleeves, or asymmetrical cuts. Denim jumpsuits will also see a resurgence. These pieces provide versatility and can be dressed up or down

Artisanal Details and Embellishments

Artisanal details such as embroidery, beading, and lace will be making a comeback, adding a unique, handmade touch. Expect to see floral embroidery on the back pockets or along seams, as well as beaded or metallic accents on the waistband and cuffs.

Tech-Infused Denim

As technology continues to influence, tech-infused denim will take off. Expect to see built-in UV protection, moisture-wicking fabrics, and even temperature-regulating properties. There will be a rise in denim that integrates smart textiles, such as fabrics that change color in response to the environment or that are embedded with sensors to track fitness and health data.

Gender-Neutral and Inclusive Sizing

As the fashion industry moves towards inclusivity, denim brands are embracing more fluid and diverse sizing options. Expect to see a rise in jeans designed to be worn by anyone. The focus will extend to creating jeans that are comfortable and flattering for all body types.

The denim landscape will continue to evolve, embracing sustainability, innovation, and style. From relaxed fits and bold colors to gender-neutral sizing and tech-infused fabrics, the future of denim is exciting. So, get ready to embrace the fresh, forward-thinking trends that are shaping the next generation of jeans.



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