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FEBRUARY 4 - 17, 2022 VOLUME 23 NO. 03



**THE BLACK PHONE**

**SPIRITS**



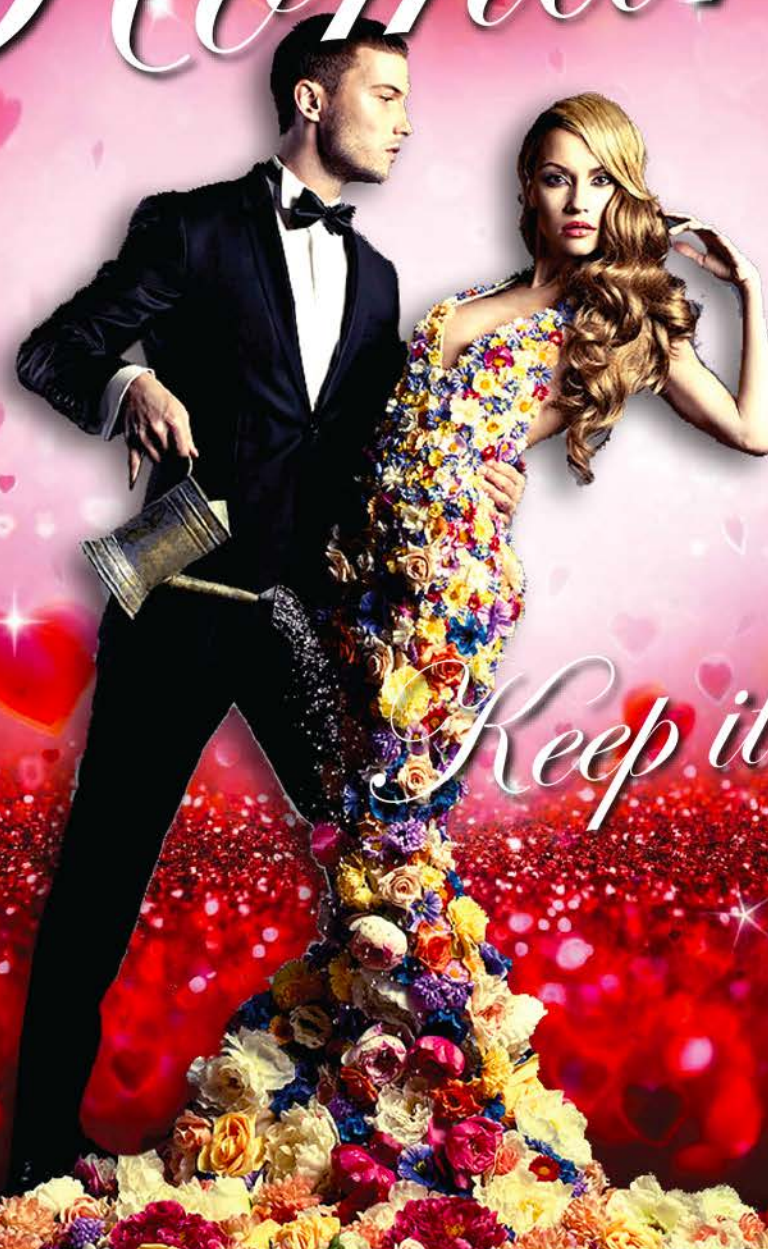
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*By Barbara Beckley*

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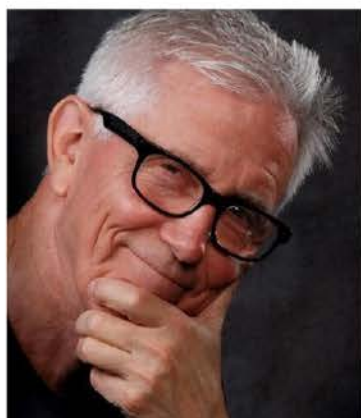
SUNDAY

MARCH 13 AT 2 PM

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SUNDAY

MARCH 20 AT 3 PM

GUEST STARRING

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# THE SORAYA PRESENTS BACH BY BELTRAMI

COMPOSER MARCO BELTRAMI REIMAGINES BACH'S PRELUDES

By Contributing Writer

Two-time Academy Award nominee, composer Marco Beltrami—known for his musical scores for *The Hurt Locker*, *A Quiet Place*, and Wes Craven's four *Scream* films—defies his childhood music teacher's warning not to mess with Bach's Preludes.

With his latest project, *Bach by Beltrami*, at The Soraya on March 3, he deconstructs and reimagines Bach's most sacred works, with the help of firebrand violinist Sandy Cameron, Lucia Micarelli, cellist Eric Byers, and L.A.'s own Delirium Musicum Chamber Orchestra. Delirium Musicum is headed by Etienne Gara, The Soraya's Artist-in-Residence.

## About *Bach by Beltrami*

*Bach by Beltrami* is a collection of material consisting of reimagined and transformed versions of the legendary Bach Preludes.

"I can think of no better way for me as a composer to fight against the anti-intellectualism climate, than to pay homage to Bach, the master. His music contains the musical seeds of the human condition. He transcends pain and suffering and oppression by offering freedom of thought. Many people are unaware of Bach because he has been stuffed into a rigidly labeled box which one is supposed go open without proper training. The purpose of this project is to take Bach out of this box and reveal side to



him that have remained obscured from public view. To clearly show his relevance and the variety of emotional content that he endured and transcribed, and which has resonated sympathetically with me. I have interpreted Bach's map with my own emotional compass."

Composer Beltrami continued, "I often ask myself why this project seems so vital to complete now. I'm inspired by the opportunity to remove the barriers caused by labels and listening habits. Popular trends in music do not dictate quality, and conversely traditional patterns should not dictate accessibility. When Bach composed *The Well-Tempered Clavier* some 300 years ago, the music was no longer fashionable. Counterpoint was replaced by the light stirring of the classical style. Bach knew the importance of his work and remained undeterred. Thank goodness, as it has influenced all of western music since, from Mozart to contemporary Jazz."

Marco Beltrami is a two-time Oscar nominated composer. He has collaborated with many iconic film directors including Kathryn Bigelow, James Mangold, Bong Joon-ho, Angelina Jolie, Robert Rodriguez, Luc Besson, Guillermo Del Toro, Wes Craven, Alex Proyas, Jonathan Mostow, Roland Joffé, Jodie Foster, David E. Kelley and Tommy Lee Jones.

The composer established an early reputation as a genre innovator with his non-traditional horror scores for the *Scream* franchise. Beltrami's musical palette has since expanded to virtually all film genres. Beltrami has received accolades for his music including two Academy Award nominations for Best Score: *3:10 to Yuma*, starring Russell Crowe and Christian Bale, and for Best Picture winner *The Hurt Locker*, starring Jeremy Renner, co-scored with frequent collaborator Buck Sanders. In

2011 Beltrami won a Golden Satellite Award (Best Film Score of the Year) for *Soul Surfer*. Beltrami scored the Marvel film *Logan*, directed by James Mangold, and Angelina Jolie's directorial debut, *First They Killed My Father*. He also wrote the theme for the hit video game *Fortnite*. Beltrami scored the critically acclaimed box-office hit *A Quiet Place*, which was nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Score and shortlisted for Best Score for the

Oscars. Beltrami won an Emmy for National Geographic's 2019 Oscar winning documentary *Free Solo*, (with co-composer Brandon Roberts) for Outstanding Music Composition for a Documentary, Series or Special.

He has lent his voice to such unique hit films as *Live Free or Die Hard*, *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, and *I, Robot*. His other scores include *The Homesman* directed by Tommy Lee Jones, the zombie comedy *Warm Bodies* directed by Jonathan Levine, the final installment of the Bruce Willis action series *A Good Day To Die Hard*, *Snowpiercer* starring Chris Evans and directed by Bong Joonho, the Brad Pitt action thriller *World War Z*, James Mangold's *The Wolverine*, and *The Night Before* also directed by Jonathan Levine, starring Seth Rogan and Joseph Gordon Levitt.

Beltrami scored James Mangold's *Ford v. Ferrari* (20th Century Studios) with Buck Sanders, for which they were shortlisted for Best Score for the 2020 Oscars, with the film going on to receive four Oscar nominations, including Best Picture. Other recent projects include Guillermo Del Toro's *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*, Jordan Peele's *The Twilight Zone* for CBS All Access, the Lionsgate comedy *Long Shot* starring Charlize Theron and Seth Rogen, the Zac Efron starrer *Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Vile*, and *Evil* and the Paramount Pictures adventure comedy *Love and Monsters*. Recent releases for Beltrami include the Paramount Pictures' horror sequel *A Quiet Place Part II*, Netflix's horror film *Fear Street*, Sony Pictures action horror sequel *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*, and the Lionsgate sci-fi feature *Chaos Walking* starring Tom Holland and Daisy Ridley.

Upcoming events listed here:  
Website: [www.thesoraya.org](http://www.thesoraya.org)

## SAN FERNANDO VALLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

JAMES DOMINE, MUSIC DIRECTOR  
PRESENTS

2022 SEASON LINEUP WILL  
BE AVAILABLE SOON.  
KEEP UP WITH ANNOUNCEMENTS  
FOR UPCOMING EVENTS  
AND NEWS!



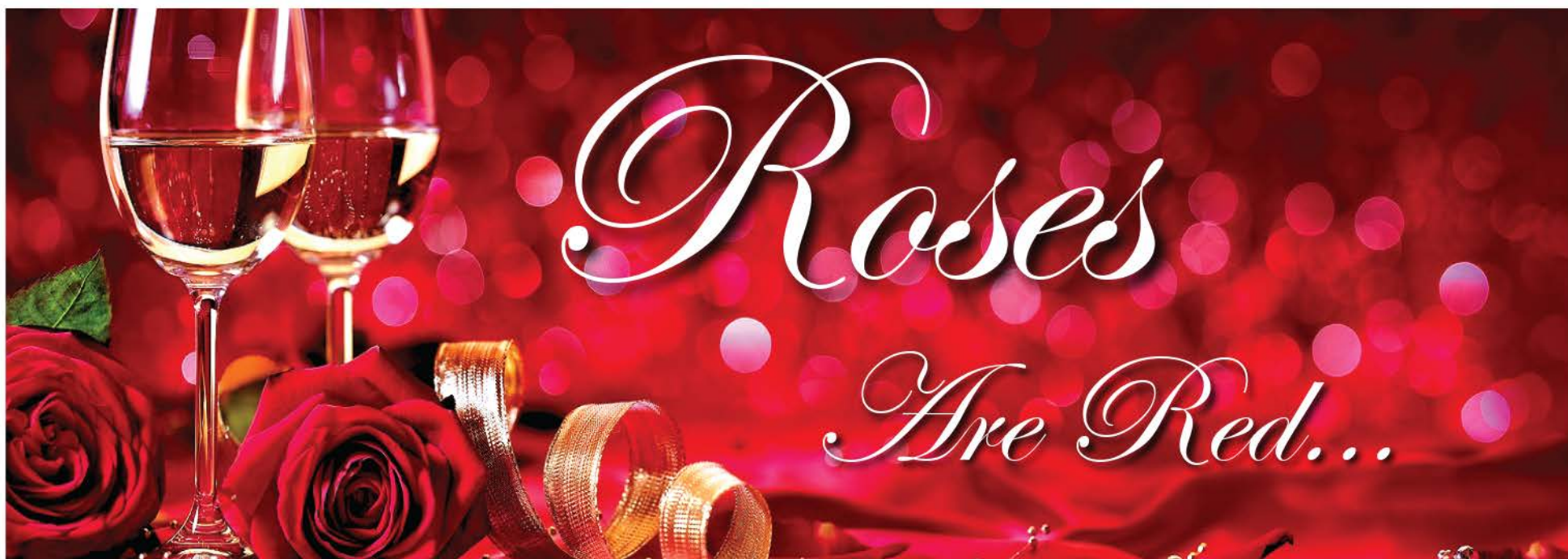
More information available on our website:  
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The San Fernando Valley Symphony Orchestra is supported, in part, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

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By Barbara Backley

## VALENTINE'S DAY!

Is it a Hallmark Day? True Love? Or an excuse to simply be romantic?

The Big Red February 14th has many meanings. And endless ways for youths, millennials and grown-ups to say "I love you." Giving cards and candy – check! Romantic candle-lit dinners – check! Dreamy activities like your favorite show or game – check! And the ultimate I LOVE YOU FOREVER crazy antics – check, check & check!

Cupid's arrow is poised. So ready! Set! Go! Here are our favs sure to melt your Valentine's heart:

Pop the Question & Declare Your Love Big Time! Make yours the proposal, anniversary or love declaration of a lifetime! You're over the moon in love so soar into the blue. Skydive! Jump out of a plane together, in sequenced tandem (each of you with a pro) jumps. Continue the adrenaline rush just before you jump, or the minute you land, with an engagement proposal! Local skydivers are expert at all the arrangements including keeping it a secret and having the RING ready for you to present. Just ask Skydive Santa Barbara (<https://skydivesantabarbara.com/>) in Lompoc. And Skydive Coastal California (<https://www.skydivecoastalcalifornia.com/>) at the Camarillo Airport. Its jumps range from \$229 to \$299, with a \$100 Priority Jumper Upgrade, including t-shirts and \$10 video discount (regularly \$89 to \$99). If you're a pro, do like Ray, a pilot/adventurer in Indiana, who in March 2021 jumped tandem with his love ([www.goskydive.com](http://www.goskydive.com)), held the ring in his teeth and presented it to her in midair!

Float above the clouds in a hot air balloon! Propose as you waft soundlessly above vineyards, wineries and citrus groves in Temecula with California Dreamin' Balloon rides (<https://californiadreamin.com/>). Choose their "Engagement Balloon Adventure" or "Anniversary Balloon



Adventure," done privately with just you two and the pilot. Or shared on a group flight for \$188 -- \$228 per person. Both include perks like a custom banner flying from the basket. After the flight, toast with champagne, enjoy a Euro-style breakfast of local breads, cheeses, fruits, mimosas and 2-for-1 wine tastings in the Vindemia Vineyard & Winery rose garden and a complimentary bottle of Vindemia wine for the anniversary couple. If you make it a surprise, you're welcome to invite guests to share the ride!

Look up! Declare your love for all to see – with a mile-high message written in the sky or a banner flying from a plane. Create a "Will You Marry Me?" banner, with hearts & flowers; or custom message of your choice with Los Angeles High Exposure Aerial Advertising (<https://usairads.com/>) generally \$625 to \$1,200 for a personal message and flight; Aerial Banners ([www.aerialbanners.com](http://www.aerialbanners.com)) or The Sky Writers (<https://theskywriters.com/>).

If your Valentine is more grounded – surprise her with music! Hire a mariachi band! Smiling musicians, big hats and unforgettable songs from romantic to "Guadalajara!" will serenade you almost anywhere you choose. Top LA bands for hire include Mariachi Teocuitatlan (<https://mariachiteocuitatlan.com/>), Mariachi Tierra Mia (<https://www.facebook.com/mariachitierramiala/>) from \$300 and hour; and Mariachi Alma Latina (<https://mariachialmalatina.wixsite.com/mysite-2>) from \$350 an hour.

Are you art lovers? Wrap yourselves in love at the Immersive Van Gogh LA exhibit (<https://www.vangogh-la.com/>). More than 100 couples have gotten engaged amid Van Gogh's animated masterpieces, during the "Date Night Package," featuring a private hour-long viewing in the "date night booth," limited edition poster, souvenir laminate cushion, box of chocolates and romantic Japonika candle and diffuser. The glamorous time is offered daily with morning, afternoon and evening sessions from \$300 to \$350. It's so romantic, it was the dating destination in a recent ABC-TV's The Bachelor episode; and named "One of the Most Romantic Things to Do in Los Angeles" in USA Today's 10 Best.

Be clever. Take a cue from a lad who was in love with a librarian. Instead of a ring, he came to her desk, grabbed a rubber stamp and inked her hand, "NOT FOR CIRCULATION," according to Reader's Digest Australia.

Continues next page...

Gift Like the Celebrities. Oh my! According to [www.people.com](http://www.people.com), Black Panther star Michael B. Jordan wowed girlfriend Lori Harvey last Valentine's Day by renting an aquarium for a candle-lit dinner by lux eatery Nobu amid countless flowers; followed by florals and rose petals by the millions in their hotel suite, and a gift of stock in A-list designer Hermes!! Word has it that in 2020, Hailey Baldwin gave hubby Justin Bieber a \$10,000 crystal encrusted Popsicle artwork. And in past years, Jay-Z gifted Beyoncé with a platinum-covered mobile phone, while David Beckham surprised wife Victoria with an \$8 million Bulgari necklace, according to [www.scmp.com](http://www.scmp.com).

From \$12 - \$250 and higher.

When Valentine's Day is "Date Night," think outside the box of chocolates. Celebrate your romance with a little wine, paint and fun at the "Painting with a Twist" (<https://www.paintingwithatwist.com/studio/los-angeles-chatsworth/>) studio in Chatsworth. Laugh and make lifetime memories as you sip, socialize create a beautiful unique painting to take home, with the guidance of professional artists. Classes throughout February feature romantic paintings such as a "Love You to The Moon and Back," February 11, and "Moon River Love," February 14. Class times range from noon, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. daily, \$28 - \$48 per person. Many classes include free movie



Tickets to Romance. Prove your endless love—and endless money—with TICKETS TO THE SUPERBOWL!!!! (<https://www.discoverlosangeles.com/superbowl>, <https://www.ticketmaster.com/superbowl>) Averaging \$10,000 a pop. But it's Valentine's and the game is February 13th at Sofi Stadium – so what they hey!!! Or your cultural side. The LA Opera (<https://www.la-opera.org/performances/2122-season-page/>) features Javier Camarena in Recital, (March & April) Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Or LOL at the Geffen Playhouse (<https://www.geffenplayhouse.org/>) watching the comedy thriller "Man of God," May 10 – June 19, \$30 - \$105, in the 149-seat Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater. Steal away to Palm Springs! For a mid-century fling with tickets to Modernism Week, (<https://modtix.com/e/mw22>), February 17 - 27, including tours of mid-century homes never before open to the public, programs, sales and parties, wow! Like the James Bond Themed cocktail party at Leonardo DiCaprio's architecture-wow Dinah Shore residence.

passes. Or enjoy the painting fun in your own home or wherever you choose with their "Date Night in a Box" kit, including paints, brushes, aprons, two canvases and written and video instructions. \$79.95 including Painting with a Twist's signature teddy bear and chocolates. \$89.95 including wine glasses and a wine opener.

Treat your sweetie to "Valentine's Day at Malibu Wines & Beer Gardens" in West Hills (<https://www.malibuwines.com/malibu-wines-beer-gardens-reservations>) on February 6, 1 – 5 p.m. Peruse the free Valentine's Day Market for the perfect gift from skilled artisans, sip Saddlerock wine and craft beer and enjoy delicious hand-made eats. Better yet, be a part of Malibu Wines' exclusive "Valentine's Holiday Weekend Specials" (Friday, February 11 through Monday, Friday 14) and reserve a table and add on the special "Valentine's Day Bundle for Two" enjoying a bottle of Saddlerock wine, cheese and charcuterie board, gourmet chocolates and two branded keepsake wine glasses for \$30 per person.

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The Valley Economic Alliance



Snuggle up on velvet seats for an old fashioned horse-drawn carriage ride through acres of lush vineyards in the Temecula Valley with the Temecula Carriage Company (<https://www.temeculacarriageco.com>). Charming private “Vineyard Romance Packages” are available throughout February. Enjoy a picnic or evening under the stars. Arrange to stop at wine tasting rooms along the way. One-hour private rides are \$185 per couple and two-hours private rides are \$295 per couple. Each includes a gourmet picnic of meats, cheeses, olives, crackers and decadent chocolates for dessert. Yes, please bring your own bottle(s) of wine.

Dinners for two – a recipe for perfect love! Alone together. Prepare your Valentine’s favorite meal and enjoy the best V-Day gift of all – each other! Start with cocktails, of course. Maybe your love doesn’t drink. L’OR espresso (<https://lorespresso.us/>) to the rescue with its “Valentine 2022 Espresso Mocktini.” L’OR was created in France in 1992, so it’s delish. (It was chosen as the first coffee capsule compatible with luxe Nespresso machines.) Blend 1 shot L’OR, 1 tbsp. chocolate syrup, 4 oz. ½ & ½, ½ cup of ice, unsweetened cocoa powder,



and edible GOLD FLAKES!!!! Pour into a martini glass, top with the gold flakes and serve! Love at first sip.

Be even more romantic – and love struck – and surprise your heartthrob by hiring a private chef! Enjoy each other’s company, while the expert prepares your favorite meal

Be even more romantic – and love struck – and surprise your heartthrob by hiring a private chef!

brandied cherry & chocolate pain de mie and more by Chef James. Choose your budget, menu and chef. From \$79 to \$200 per person. Make it a flaming entertainment night with Fujioka Teppanyaki (<https://fujiokateppanyaki.com/>), who cooks up an amazing fire show. Westwood-based Cozy Meal ([www.cozymeal.com](http://www.cozymeal.com)) has an elegant 4-course “Land and Sea” dinner for \$119 per person, including perfectly cooked steak, prawn croquettes, shrimp ravioli al uovo and more by Chef Cregg. Also “Rustic Tuscan Countryside Fare” with Chef Rebecca at \$99 per person. Plus, wow! “Michelin Star Surf & Turf” prepared to Michelin-star standards by Chef Pierre C for \$99 per person. Thirdly, Haute Chefs LA (<http://hautechefs.com/>) when you want to go all out. “If you need a chef at ‘the manor’ in Beverly Park, rented a Malibu house for the summer and need 10 bottles of 1982 Petrus stat or an 8-course tasting menu with wine flights – WE GOT IT. Real requests – all fulfilled,” states their website.

– or one of your choosing. Table at Home ([www.tableathome.com](http://www.tableathome.com)) offers 4- and 5-course meals from handmade pasta by Chef Massimo and Citrus Soy-glazed salmon by Chef Kyle to a “French Inspired Winter Tasting” with sumptuous Sole Meuniere, braised short ribs, prime sirloin,

♥ THE SEA IS CALLING ♥

Valentine’s Day Weekend

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# Valley Scene Magazine

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Torrential Publishing publishes  
Valley Scene Magazine every  
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## REIMAGINED DESERT SPA DEBUTS AT THE JW MARRIOTT

By Staff Writer

The largest spa in Palm Desert has reopened its doors after undergoing a major refresh as part of the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa multi-million dollar redesign. The Spa at Desert Springs boasts significant aesthetic improvements to the impressive 38,000-square-foot space along with the debut of an extensive new treatment menu, featuring exclusive offerings that promise to nurture, relax and re-energize. Ancient healing methods and natural, locally-sourced

ingredients are incorporated into the treatments, which include a range of essential oil and therapeutic massages, one-of-a-kind body wraps and bespoke facials, including one devised by Harvard Medical School skin biologists.

The redesign of the expansive spa has been inspired by the stunning physical, historical and social environments of Palm Desert. The water that defines human and plant life is referenced throughout the design with cool refreshing tones to create a serene



energy. Guests will be instantly transported into an oasis of relaxation from the moment they step into the spectacular new lobby. The refreshed locker rooms and Spa Shop are also inspired by the healing powers of water. Centuries ago, life and revitalization centered around the legendary Cahuilla Lake. Today, water flows underground via the Coachella valley aquifer which directs water like a vein from the heart of the Colorado River, bringing vibrant life to the city, flowing into pools, springs and waterways.

“Now more than ever, people are looking for a peaceful escape from the everyday stresses of life. A place to safely unwind” says Dawn Ferraro, JW Marriott Desert Springs Spa Director. “The spa’s inspiring new look and unique array of therapeutic services provide an exclusive, revitalizing experience for guests in a clean and spacious environment.”

The reimagined spa manages to maintain a feeling of intimacy and privacy throughout with gender separate and co-ed relaxation lounges, a spa wardrobe, Aromatic Hammam, Finnish Sauna, Turkish Steam Room and Spa Bistro. There’s also the opportunity to connect with the beauty of nature by swimming or lounging by the outdoor heated salt water lap pool, which overlooks the 450 acres of vibrant desert gardens, breathtaking mountain views and signature lakes that the property is known

for.

For those looking for a truly indulgent VIP experience, which comes complete with a personal butler, there is the exclusive Spa Sanctuary Suite, which can be booked for two to ten guests. The luxurious suite has a private entrance and fully embraces the “spa together” concept so groups can enjoy a spa within a spa. There’s also a personal changing room, treatment tables, desert rain showers, high definition TV, indoor and outdoor fireplaces and a courtyard with whirlpool, cascading waterfall, loungers and spectacular views of the mountains. Guests in this suite also receive champagne, fruit, cookies, and food service.

And before leaving, guests can treat themselves to some retail therapy from the revitalized Spa Shop, which features a unique collection of luxurious lifestyle products, apparel and gift items. Among the high-end brands are Lululemon, Kerstin Florian International, handmade Eminence Organic Skin Care, LEEF Organics (topical CBD offerings) and TARA Spa Therapies (Ayurvedic inspired treatments). The shop also just debuted Think Royln, an NYC-based, women-owned brand focused on fabric designer handbags for women on the go.

For more information and to book spa services, visit The Spa at Desert Springs website or call 1-800-255-0848.

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# RONNIE'S

By Sebastian Scotney

It was Ronnie Scott's trips to New York as a member of the dance bands on the transatlantic liners that crystallised the idea in his mind to start a club run by the instrumentalists, to play the bebop music they had heard on 52nd Street. Club Eleven, folded within just a couple of years of

The film explains well the combination of factors which resulted in its longevity, and at the heart of it was the relationship between Scott and Pete King. Their complementary characters and the special bond of their long-term friendship comes across very well. Scott had the vision, but King was the effective, steely negotiator he needed alongside him. The interviews with King's widow Stella King give revealing insights, and she comes across as particularly sane and grounded. Ronnie's widow Mary Scott, daughter Rebecca and partner Francoise Venet are also perceptive witnesses, and there are illuminating contributions from the doyen of British jazz critics, John Fordham.

There are some especially intriguing recollections from a third figure actively involved in the running of the club, the club's lawyer for several decades, Walter (Wally) Houser. He is particularly eloquent on the subject of how a gangland enforcer, Albert "Italian Al" Arthur Dimes – for reasons nobody could ever fully explain – just happened to like Ronnie and Pete and wanted them to succeed.

Oliver Murray (pictured photo above filming in the club) clearly has the priorities to ensure that the story be well told and to give that story a convincing shape. A documentary like this is bound to be a partial record. Pedants and sticklers (and the jazz world does have more than its share of them) are bound to point out, for example, that some of the music footage screened before the story has been told of the move from its first location in Gerrard Street is actually of the new club in Frith Street. I don't see a

problem, because the music footage has been picked for its quality, and there is an absolute feast of it.

Among examples, we see Ella Fitzgerald launching into a joyous duet with her bassist Keter Betts, Sarah Vaughan just being divine, and Sonny Rollins in glorious close-up. Murray has also found two fascinating first-hand accounts and a sound recording to tell the story of Jimi Hendrix's last ever appearance on any stage the evening before he died, sitting in at the club with Eric Burdon's band War.

Murray makes clever use of aspect ratios. He keeps the original ratio for the historic footage, so the film is repeatedly changing back and forth between 4:3 for the old music footage and 16:9 for the current material. He has said: "Part of my style is to be reverential to the original aspect ratio the material was filmed in. It's a nod of respect to the cinematographers who went out and filmed the footage in the first place." It works superbly.

Ronnie's also tells the story of the man, and there is a well-placed darkening in the mood just after the hour mark, as attention shifts to Scott's history of depression. Clues have been given earlier as to how difficult it was to get to know him, and the "reveal" of his battle against depression, and the catastrophe of his disastrous dental treatment, is effectively and sensitively handled.

Ronnie's tells a fascinating story very well. These are uncertain times, and it is to be hoped that this club with its unique heritage will ride out the current crisis for live venues, and that its landlords, owners and the public authorities will all act responsibly and ensure its future.



Ronnie Scott was remarkable: "Jazz Musician, Club Proprietor, Raconteur and Wit, he was the leader of our generation," reads the memorial to him at Golders Green Crematorium. Oliver Murray's documentary film *Ronnie's* is an affectionate and portrait of him.

operation, but Ronnie Scott's club, which opened in Gerrard Street in October 1959 and moved to Frith Street 10 years later has just completed its sixth decade. These days, managing director Simon Cooke describes it in the film, it is both a "national institution" and a "responsibility."

# THE BLACK PHONE

By Amelia Emberwing

The Black Phone had big shoes to fill. Nearly a decade ago, C. Robert Cargill and Scott Derrickson debuted *Sinister*. Their terrifying spectacle would strike fear in our hearts, with one scientific study ruling it the "scariest movie of all time." Five years prior to Cargill and Derrickson scaring the pants off of us with *Baguul* and several nightmare children, Joe Hill was publishing his short story "The Black Phone." Now, the stars have aligned and *The Black Phone* is making its way to the big screen with Derrickson and Cargill adapting Hill's chilling story.

The first third of the film follows Finney (Mason Thames) and Gwen Shaw (Madeleine McGraw) as they navigate pre-teen suburban life in the '70s. Unfortunately for these siblings, bullies and scraped knees aren't all they have to contend with. In addition to their drunk father

(Jeremy Davies), there's a kidnapper on the loose, and he's snatching up little boys left and right. It's not long before Finney finds himself trapped in the basement of the terrifying mask-wearing Grabber (Ethan Hawke), and Gwen finds herself in a race against time to find her brother.

This story is personal to both Cargill and Derrickson, a fact that's highlighted through the stark set pieces of the '70s that play a more pivotal role. While some viewers from the younger generation may balk at parents' use of belts and fists, plenty born before 1990 may sink back in their chair and recall some not-so-fond memories. Was it monstrous? Sure. Was it commonplace? More than "kids these days" will ever know. The Black Phone feels like a time machine with no interest in nostalgia. It doesn't look like the '70s. It feels like it. There's a grit there, and it's not just



because of the dirt basement. The authenticity make it clear that there's a connection here between the creators and their story. Said authenticity is what makes it so easy to find yourself lost in and subsequently terrified.

Because a good chunk of *The Black Phone* takes place in the dirt basement, the film has to rely on the talents of its cast. Thankfully, Mason Thames and Madeleine McGraw were up to the

challenge. Derrickson revealed that they held production for McGraw. A lot of attention — and thus, a lot of the praise — will rightfully be for Thames' stellar performance as his character is forced to stand up for himself in the face of a monster. But McGraw's contributions to *The Black Phone* cannot be understated. The little sister trope may have become more common of late, but this kid's comedic timing is impeccable.

## HERE'S TO YOU MR. SINATRA!

### JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa Introduces the “Sinatra Smash Happy Hour”

By Barbara Beckley

Who knew? Frank Sinatra’s very last live public performance was at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, California. The year was 1995. And now, in 2022, the luxury resort wants everyone to know – and enjoy a special cocktail in tribute to the entertainment icon during its new “Sinatra Smash Happy Hour.”

Taking a page from The Chairman of the Board’s cocktail playbook – promptly at 4:05 p.m., a Sinatra cocktail flag is unfurled at the Aquifer65 Lobby Bar, free mini Sinatra Smash cocktails are served, and the sounds of Ol’ Blue Eyes singing “Come Fly with Me” and “The Best is Yet to Come” (the last song he ever sang live in public, right here in the Desert Springs’ Grand Ballroom) fill the air. The ritual lasts from 4:05 to 4:11 p.m. daily. However, the full-size Sinatra Smash cocktail (\$17) can be enjoyed anytime at the lobby bar.

Would Sinatra have liked it? Absolutely, say the Desert Springs’ mixologists who crafted the unique drink using Sinatra’s favorite alcoholic beverage – Jack Daniels whiskey. The tasty Sinatra Smash is a mix of 1.5 oz. Jack Daniels Old No. 7, 1.5 oz. sweet and sour, ¾ oz. Crème de Cassis, ¼ oz. vanilla infused simple syrup, five black berries, and garnished with a sprig of mint.

Why the flag? Sinatra lived just down the road in Rancho Mirage. Legend says that in the afternoons, he would raise a flag atop a tall flagpole in his compound, signifying to his Rat Pack buddies, and neighbors that it was time to come to Frank’s house for cocktail hour.

The Frank Sinatra Ballroom The Sinatra Smash Happy Hour is the latest of myriad new offerings following the resort’s multi-million dollar, top-to-bottom redesign, which began in 2020 and ended December 2021. In a second salute to Ol’



Valley Scene Magazine Associate Editor Barbara Beckley Blue Eyes, the resort’s grand ballroom, where the singer made that last live, public performance, has been renamed The Sinatra Ballroom. At 25,000 square feet, it’s the largest indoor hotel ballroom space in Greater Palm Springs. And with more than 235,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event space, 884 guest rooms including 101 suites, a 38,000-square-foot luxury spa, two Ted Robinson-designed championship golf courses, a tennis complex, five outdoor



pool, lakes, swans and pink flamingos on 450 acres, the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa is the Coachella Valley’s largest event property.

The resort’s new look is modern and airy, with fresh shades of blue, grey and crisp white and desert-inspired elements. Guestrooms feature hardwood floors, mountain-inspired silhouette murals, and bathrooms with quartz vanities and rain-style showers. More than 300 guestrooms have free-standing soaking tubs. It’s also more family friendly now, with the new 12,000-square-foot JW Entertainment Zone Arcade – the largest resort arcade in California – and Family Passport Program.

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# Big Screen TVs

## A Buyer's Guide

By Matthew Holin

When it comes to home appliances, it is hard to deny that the television is the most popular. It is arguably a type of appliance that underwent a large number of technological advances that comes with a number of additional features. But with such advances and features, buying a television can be overwhelming. The technology are advancing in a rapid rate that for an average consumer, can be quite a daunting task.

Back in the old days, buying a television set is much simpler. Nowadays, television sets are considered large investments,



so it is important that you put some thought and consideration into your purchase. First thing you need to consider is the size of the room where you are planning to place your big screen TV. Televisions nowadays can measure as large as 60 plus inches. When it comes to television screens, there is no doubt that the larger the screen is, the better. But you have to consider the size of the room where you are planning to utilize the TV because it factors highly in your enjoyment of the product. For the best visual experience, you need to be seated at an appropriate distance away from the screen. Another thing that you need to keep into account when purchasing a big screen TV is the type. Basically there are four types of

TVs that are available in the market today: direct view tube, plasma screens, LCD and rear projection TV. Direct view tubes are televisions that are rather bulky but still offers excellent quality for an affordable price. If you are looking for a modern television solution for your home that has the combination of looks and high quality display, then your best option is to go for LCD or plasma screens. The resolution

of these TVs can reach up to 1080p, which is the currently the highest standard. Rear projection TV is the best solution if you do not plan on mounting your television set into your wall. Modern rear

projection TVs are also available in 1080p resolution, so they are a nice affordable alternative to LCD and plasma TVs. Of course, when you are planning to buy a big screen television you have to stick with your budget. Big screen TVs are used to be very expensive with high-end models that can reach up to \$7,000. Fortunately, the price of big screen television are fast becoming cheaper. Now a good quality 42-inch plasma TV will cost about \$3,000 or even lower. The larger the size, the more costly it gets. The technology behind big screen TVs are indeed moving in quite a fast pace, so if you are planning to purchase a big screen TV soon, it is important to know what are the options that are available to you.



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# VENTURA PORT DISTRICT INKS DEAL WITH AARMARK BEER GARDENS, INC. FOR NEW VENTURA HARBOR VILLAGE ENTERTAINMENT & RESTAURANT VENUE

By Colleen Graham

A state-of-the-art family entertainment venue, managed by Aarmark Beer Gardens, Inc., will join the seaside attraction mix at the Ventura Harbor Village with the approval of a multi-year lease on January 19, 2022 by the Ventura Port District Board of Port Commissioners. The 5,736 square foot venue, with plans to open in 2023 and its official name still to be announced, will specialize in artisan food, top-rated international beers, a legendary wine list, and

multitude of entertainment activities.

CEO of Aarmark Beer Gardens Inc, Aaron Running states, "Friends and family can leave their worries at the door as the new endeavor offers a wide array of entertainment options for all ages featuring multi-sport simulators, virtual reality, retro arcade games, a stadium seating sports viewing, and more."

Aarmark Beer Gardens, Inc., currently operates four popular restaurant facilities



including SB Biergarten in Santa Barbara's Funk Zone, Fire & Vice in Moorpark and Santa Maria, and Copenhagen Sausage Garden in Solvang. CEO Running shares insight into the new waterfront menu highlighting wood-fired pizzas, artisan sausage, grass-fed burgers, salads, giant pretzels, a full kid's menu, plus some fun theme focused menu items. "Come for the food, stay for the fun - an experience like no other," promises Running.

Ventura Port District, who manages the Ventura Harbor Village, plans to invest \$725,000 in facade and infrastructure improvements to the building prior to turning the space over to Aarmark Beer Gardens, Inc. Aarmark will also invest an additional \$651,500 towards tenant enhancements.

"This exciting and vibrant entertainment use will continue to expand upon offerings springing up at Harbor Village, joining many long-time favorites," said the District's General Manager, Brian Pendleton.

Members of the Board at the public Ventura Port District hearing shared their positivity for the business.

"His location in Santa Barbara is lovely and I can't wait to see Mr. Running bring that caliber of business with a strong focus

on entertainment to our Harbor," said Chairman of the Board of Port Commissioners, Chris Stephens.

Ventura business and tourism leaders have also voiced their enthusiasm at the hearing for the new venue. Stephanie

Caldwell, President and CEO of the Ventura Chamber of Commerce, cited Running's success in both Santa Barbara and Ventura counties stating, "His history and experience is exactly what we need more of in Ventura to elevate business and provide additional opportunities for residents and visitors alike."

Marlyss Auster, President and CEO of the Visit Ventura praised the new Village endeavor. "The family entertainment, complemented with fresh restaurant offerings, add to the wonderful variety of options available at Ventura Harbor Village, and will encourage visitors to stay longer to enjoy its scenic setting," said Auster.

The new Aarmark Beer Garden Inc, restaurant and entertainment center will be located at 1575 Spinnaker Drive, Suite 100 at the Ventura Harbor Village, present site of the Village Carousel & Arcade. For more information on the seaside attraction, visit [VenturaHarborVillage.com](http://VenturaHarborVillage.com)

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# THE STORY BEHIND SUSHI

By Contributing Writer

**F**or a night out at the most exquisite fine-dining restaurants in the city, we are always compelled to order a portion of sushi. With a multitude of options available, one or the other kind always manages to occupy a place on the table. These rice rolls are not only healthy; they are scrumptious and addictive too. The popularity stems from the fact that it is a simple dish with raw seafood and rice, yet manages to attract so much attention.

Did you know that sushi was first created with the purpose to keep meat fresh in the absence of refrigeration? By keeping raw fish folded in rice, its freshness could be preserved for over months. This was the main purpose when sushi was invented in Southeast Asia back in the second century A.D. It is hard to believe that preservation of seafood was the main aim of this rather exotic dish. By allowing the fish to ferment in rice over a period of time, it was made edible.

The rice was then thrown away, while the fish was eaten. Just like all things ancient, the origin of sushi is not free of old wives tales and folklore.

How did sushi get its name? Tracing its trajectory is as fascinating as the name sushi itself. It is believed that the word sushi literally means 'it is sour' which is used to describe the ancient process of making sushi, with raw seafood rolled into the rice along with salt for facilitating the fermentation process. Gradually, the preservation method was discovered in China and Japan, where Japan went a step further. Today, Japan has the most exciting nightlife, and back then, there were significant transformations taking place. With Edo as the Capital of Japan, entrepreneurs developed quicker ways to prepare sushi. Vinegar aided the process. The Japanese began eating the rice along with the fish. It was Matsumoto Yoshiichi of Tokyo who began to add vinegar in his sushi to sell it. This allowed the customers to eat it immediately rather than waiting for the process of fermentation to start. This is why the sushi kitchen is called tsuke-ba or "pickling place." The process of fermenting the rice releases acid that allows the fish to last longer. The evolution of Hanaya Yohei is known to be responsible for the shift in the way sushi was



originally presented and prepared. Before him, in the 1820s, chefs used raw fish in their sushi, known as 'Edo-style' sushi. This is the style you will find in most sushi restaurants. Then, Yohei began a method whereby rather than wrapping the fish in rice, he began to place the fish on top of the roll and that is exactly the way we eat Japanese sushi today. It is also commonly referred to as 'nigiri sushi'. At his time, it was fast food available on the streets. He set up his stall on the banks of the Sumida River,

this meant that sushi could be prepared within minutes rather than hours or days. You could be on the go and fill yourself with a box of freshly prepared sushi. It was slowly being favored and is now one of the most widely ordered dishes.

Today, Japan's iconic street food has become a sophisticated and unique dish globally. Upscale sushi restaurants are creating fusion forms, inventing and innovating at a rapid rate to meet customer needs.

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### John Kelly Chocolates

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[JohnKellyChocolates.com](http://JohnKellyChocolates.com)



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[cani-wellness.com](http://cani-wellness.com)



### Backyard Candles Coconut Candles

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[backyardcandles.com](http://backyardcandles.com)



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# VALENTINE'S DAY GIFTS



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HAPPY  
VALENTINE'S DAY



# MIDNIGHT MOON CABINS IN SOCAL'S BIG BEAR LAKE RESORT

By Contributing Writer

It's early in the work week and, not for the first time or the last, you find your mind drifting away from the mundane to the sublime. And in that moment of fantasy, you're no longer seated at a desk, standing behind a counter, crowded around a conference table or glued to a computer screen. Instead, you've just been magically transported to a stunningly inviting mountain resort with a lake so blue no other color would dare taint it and a sky so clear no cloud would dare darken it.

Fortunately, for residents of Southern California and beyond yearning to rediscover their love of nature, recapture their youthful spirit of adventure, or rekindle their passionate sense of romance, translating such a common workday reverie into reality is as easy as driving to the nearby enchanted community of Big Bear Mountain in the glorious San Bernardino National Forest. And better still, experiencing this natural bastion of year-round recreation and excitement has never been as appealing as it is right now thanks to a forward-looking designer and real estate expert named Sarah Salvatore - the force behind the most modern, upscale, eco-friendly and unique vacation rentals to come along in the area in years: Midnight Moon Cabins.

## Designing A Better Vacation Destination

Stylish yet homey, elegant yet bucolic, and supremely romantic yet eminently family and dog-friendly, Midnight Moon Cabins represents the best of all possible worlds to anyone visiting Big Bear - comfort, natural authenticity and stunning design all a short walk, drive or cross-country ski hike away from Big Bear Village and Big Bear Lake, as well as the star attractions for winter sports enthusiasts - Bear Mountain and Snow Summit.

Located in different but equally picturesque areas of Big Bear, Midnight Moon Cabins is comprised of three vacation

destinations that each have their own distinct sizes, settings, features and personalities but share the common goal of making vacationers feel both at home and yet a million miles away from home at the very same time.

Offering mid-century modern decor that celebrates minimalism and sustainable luxury, Midnight Moon's three dog-friendly cabins include Moondance, Firefly and Moonshine. So let's put on our parkas and ski boots and visit all three Midnight Moon Cabins now!

**MOONDANCE** - Modern comfort meets mountain charm at Moondance, where every design, décor and amenity has been carefully selected for maximum comfort. Welcoming local adventure-seekers and global travelers alike, Moondance boasts a cozy open floor plan, inspiring mountain views, and two private bedrooms able to accommodate up to five guests looking for a truly unforgettable experience.

Nestled in one of the most desirable neighborhoods in all of Big Bear, Moondance also offers visitors convenient access to the area's varied mountain resorts, wilderness hiking paths, Big Bear Zoo (a new must-see attraction for families) and, of course, the town of Big Bear Lake Village.

**FIREFLY** - A picture postcard-worthy cabin offering couples, families and friends the perfect opportunity to escape, relax, and unwind, Firefly features stylish modern decor and thoughtfully appointed amenities. Situated in one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Big Bear, Firefly has two bedrooms and accommodates up to four guests. Explore miles of adjacent trails, walk two short blocks to the Bear Mountain and Snow Summit shuttle, or take a brief two-mile ride to Big Bear Lake Village.

**MOONSHINE** - Like its two other Midnight Moon counterparts, Moonshine is another true work of art by Sarah that offers guests a one-of-a-kind getaway experience



Lake and are specially designed to offer visitors optimal luxury and comfort. In addition, all three Midnight Moon cabins have EV chargers - a unique amenity among vacation rental cabins in the Big Bear area.

Midnight Moon Cabin's prices currently range from \$299 to \$499 per night, though prices vary seasonally and special offers are posted periodically throughout the year. Anyone interested in

reserving a Midnight Moon cabin may visit [midnightmooncabins.com](http://midnightmooncabins.com).

Adventurous couples can enjoy a day on the slopes or a romantic hike in the area. If cozy fireplaces and lazy snow days wrapped in luxe bedding are your style, then this is exactly where you will want to be.

[www.midnightmooncabins.com](http://www.midnightmooncabins.com).

any time of the year. Offering the comfort of timely modern amenities combined with the majesty of timeless natural splendor, Moonshine is located in near proximity to all of Big Bear's most desirable attractions and welcomes up to six guests per night.

All three Midnight Moon Cabins are surrounded by towering pines, are only a short drive away from pristine Big Bear



# "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" Star on Upcoming Season

By Contributing Writer



2020 SAG Award-winning actress Caroline Aaron is reprising her role as 'Shirley Maisel' opposite Rachel Brosnahan, Tony Shaloub, and Alex Borstein in season 4 of Amazon/Amy Sherman-Palladino's Golden Globe, SAG Award and Emmy Award winning comedy "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" which premieres Friday, February 18th on Amazon. Caroline stars as 'Shirley Maisel,' Joel's enigmatic Jewish mother who hails from the Upper West Side. A modern matriarch, Shirley stands firm as a pillar of support for the family and her grandchildren, despite her occasional hijinks.

"The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" is about many things – standup comedy, living in NYC in the 1950s, Jewish family life, etc, but also tackles important issues such as women's roles at the time. Social justice is something deeply rooted in Aaron's soul, having grown up Jewish in southern Richmond, Virginia. Her late mother was prominent civil rights activist Nina Fried-

man Abady, a Selma, Alabama civil rights activist who walked with Martin Luther King Jr. and Aaron endured cross-burnings on her Virginia front lawn. Her mother, who worked full time to support three kids, is also her real-life inspiration for playing 'Shirley Maisel' who is also a liberated woman for the times and full partner in the family business.

After studying performing arts at American University in Washington, D.C., Aaron moved to NY and debuted on Broadway in Robert Altman's Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean. The following season, Caroline starred in the back to back Broadway

smashes The Iceman Cometh, and I Hate Hamlet, cementing her as the big apple's most stirring acclaim to fame.

On the big screen, Caroline has built her acting career as a loveable and unforgettable character actress. She has appeared in

over a hundred box office hits, including Hello, My Name is Doris, 21 & 22 Jump Street, Beyond The Sea, Just Like Heaven, Nancy Drew, Sleepless in Seattle, Edward Scissorhands, and many more. She has also appeared in four films directed by Woody Allen: Crimes and Misdemeanors, Alice, Husbands and Wives, and Deconstructing Harry.

Her television work includes "Grey's Anatomy," "Modern Family," "Sex and The City," "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "Transparent," "Episodes," and most recently in the new FOX series "Outmatched." When she is not on the set of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel", Caroline enjoys catching up with her two children, playwriting, and producing her podcast series, Angst And Daisies.

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## FOOTBALL HELMET SAFETY IN THREE SIMPLE STEPS

By Contributing Writer



It's Superbowl season and as the high school and college football seasons heat up, the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) is encouraging parents, coaches and athletes to refresh their knowledge on helmet safety and safe play.

Keep these three simple steps in mind:

### Know Your Helmet

There are no concussion-proof helmets. No football helmet completely prevents all head injuries, including concussions.

A concussion is a complex event that involves a variety of factors. Advertising or other media claims that a particular helmet is anti-concussion or concussion-proof are not supported by research and can be misleading and dangerous.

Avoid relying on any single data point, rating or measurement when considering helmet options.

### Proper Fit Is Critical

Helmets are designed for safety and performance based on proper



fit, specifically contact with the head. Ask your athlete how the helmet feels — helmets should not be too tight or too loose. Find fitting and wearing instructions through the CDC Foundation at [www.cdcfoundation.org/HeadsUp](http://www.cdcfoundation.org/HeadsUp).

Look for the logo on the back of the helmet that reads, "Meets NOCSAE Standard." The NOCSAE logo signifies that a

helmet model has passed the most rigorous, science-based performance standards in the world.

Do not alter or change your football helmet. Adding accessories and removing padding can alter how the helmet was intended to function and potentially interfere with its performance.

### Maintain Your Helmet

Helmets should be reconditioned and recertified to the NOCSAE standard on a regular basis. Helmets that have been recertified will have a label inside the helmet indicating the name of the recertifying company and the date of recertification. If you have doubts, ask your coach or school administrator about their policy for reconditioning and recertification. Replace the helmet after 10 years.

### Prioritize Safe Play

Football helmets are just one part of helping to protect against head injuries. Use proper blocking and tackling techniques and demand enforcement of rules that prohibit players from leading with their helmets to hit other players.

Know the signs and symptoms of concussions — which can include headache, nausea, confusion, dizziness and memory difficulties — and encourage everyone to report any and all symptoms. If a concussion has been diagnosed, athletes should not return to play until cleared by medically trained experts following return-to-play guidelines. Remember: if in doubt, sit it out.

For more information visit [www.NOCSAE.org](http://www.NOCSAE.org).

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# UNDERWATER GIFTS FOR YOUR VALENTINE



they will be about 3-inches. Bettas are often seen in small ornamental tanks, but they should really be housed in larger tanks.

### Angelfish

Angelfish are pretty fish, displaying a wide array of colors and patterns. Fully grown, they be up to 6 inches long and 8 inches tall.

Like Bettas, they are also omnivorous. They will be most happy in a tank of at least 20 gallons. If the tank is too crowded, they may become aggressive.



By Dale Harris

Looking for a gift for your significant other on Valentine's Day? You may be surprised to learn that freshwater fish are actually the most popular pet across the United States.

According to a recent survey, there are over 139 million freshwater aquariums in homes across the country. Some say they choose fish because they are easy to care for. Others cite the health benefits having an aquarium offers.

Whatever the reason, freshwater aquariums are sweeping the nation in popularity.

If you're looking to add some cool freshwater fish pets to your aquarium, you're in the right spot. Keep reading to learn what freshwater fish make the best pets!

### Cool Freshwater Fish Pets

Ready to add some new cool fish to your aquarium? The following are some of the most popular freshwater fish that are readily available from most pet stores.

Visit [www.whichfishtank.com](http://www.whichfishtank.com) for more detailed guides on growing your aquarium.

### Bettas

You've probably seen Bettas before. They are vibrantly colored and quite easy to care for.

However, the males of the species are notoriously aggressive towards other males. Because of this, only one male Betta should be kept. They get along fine with other species.

Bettas enjoy a diet of both plant and animal foods. Full-grown,

# PETPOURRIE

In general, they are a good community fish.

### Goldfish

When you think of goldfish, you may think of the small fish bowls won as prizes at fairs. However, goldfish can grow up to 14 inches and need ample space in their tanks. Twenty gallons is the minimum for happy goldfish.

There are many different varieties of goldfish. Most of them get along swimmingly, as long as they aren't breeds that would typically compete with each other for food.

### Plecostomus

These are actually a breed of catfish. They are sturdy, with heavy armored plates on their bodies. And they are natural cleaners with their sucker-shaped mouths; they will feed on any algae in your tank.

They will also eat an omnivorous diet and live for up to 20 years with proper care.

They get along well with many different species. The exception being fat/flat-bodied fish, like goldfish, as they may suck on them.

### Killifish

These cool fish come in a variety of bright colors. There are over 700 species and quite hardy. You can easily find the right one for your tank.

They are peaceful fish and do well in community tanks. Like Bettas, the males can be aggressive with one another, so it's best to keep one male to each tank.

Most species of Killifish are carnivores.

### So Many Freshwater Fish, So Little Time

Freshwater fish come in a huge variety of shapes, colors, and sizes. We've shared just a few favorites, but there are many more cool freshwater fish pets out there for you to discover.

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# CREATE A MAN CAVE FOR THE SUPERBOWL

By Contributing Writer

an upgrade. With needs like plumbing or cooking, this will take more work.

## Find A Theme

Perhaps you're a sports nut, and your walls will be adorned with jerseys, pennants, and scarves from teams. Or maybe you're a movie buff and prefer a wall-to-wall DVD collection and vintage posters. A theme can be nothing more than a certain style. Wood panels give a comfortable feel. Alternatively, you could opt for modern metal and glass. Having a theme will help to inform all of your decisions.

## Choose A Focus Point

In your man cave, there should be one central attraction. It could be a TV screen, a



Every guy needs some alone time. A place where you can block out the outside world and watch sports, play video games, and doing whatever it is you do. A man cave gives you private space, and you can fill it with whatever you like: books, snacks, video games, a pool table, even a home cinema. It entirely depends on your own preferences.

## Seek Inspiration

The possibilities are endless. The best way to narrow down your choices is to seek inspiration from other people's designs. Search the internet for other man caves around the world.

## Find A Space

When you have a plan in mind, you need to pick an area of your home. You could use the main living room, but this might not work if you live with a partner. A basement, garage, or loft are excellent ideas, although they may require more renovation.

## Sort Out The Technicalities

The most important consideration is electrical requirements. If you plan your man cave to feature technology, you might need

pool table, or even your own home bar. Plan your design around this object.

## Install The Technology

No man cave is complete without technology. You will want a TV for watching films, sports, and playing video games. You'll need your favorite games console and a state-of-the-art sound system. Other options include music players, a drinks fridge, and even a treadmill.

## Add Furniture

Keep your seating plan open to avoid dead space. If you'll be watching movies and sports, then a reclining chair might be best. If you're a hardcore gamer then a high-end gaming chair will help you optimize your performance. Remember to include enough seats for guests.

## Don't Forget The Snacks

You'll be in your man cave more often than you think, so you'll need food and drinks. A mini-fridge is a great way to keep yourself energized without having to keep heading to the kitchen. Fill it with beers, water, chips, fruit, and all your favorites.

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By Andrews McMeel Syndication

## Top Stories

Clive Jones, 66, a retired teacher in Derby, England, calls himself the "world's most prolific sperm donor," having fathered 129 children, with nine currently on the way. Jones has been donating his semen for nine years through Facebook, he told DerbyshireLive, because of the "happiness it brings" to donee families. But his wife of more than 40 years isn't so pleased; they now live apart. Jones explained that he drives to a park near the donee's home and collects the sample in the back of his van (complete with window curtains), then texts them to say he'll "be round in three minutes." England's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has issued a medical warning about Jones, saying, "If arrangements are made outside of the clinic environment, there can be medical and legal risks."

Tourists and locals in Venice, Italy, got all judge on Jan. 21 when a 30-year-old Czech woman stripped off her top and went for a swim near the Monument to the Partisan Woman, a bronze sculpture of a reclining woman that rests partly in and partly out of the water. After her dip, the unnamed woman climbed onto the monument and posed for pictures, CNN reported. "It's like going to Rome, leaping in the Trevi Fountain and then saying, 'What do you mean, you can't do this?'" said Mario Nason, who was walking by with his son at the time. "Why do people do these things in Venice that they wouldn't do elsewhere? They probably didn't know that the statue of the woman lying there was a dead partisan. But it's treating Venice like a beach." Police banned the woman from Venice for 48 hours and fined her \$513.

Diners eating on the deck at Flip Flops Dockside Eatery in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, were plunged into the Intracoastal Waterway when the deck partially collapsed on Jan. 21. NBC6 South Florida reported that three people swam to a nearby boat, where they were pulled out of the water, and two of them went to the hospital with minor injuries. Fire Rescue Battalion Chief Stephen Gollan said the dock had apparent signs of decay and areas that had visibly been recently repaired.

-In an elementary school classroom in Berlin, one student is a little ... different from the others. Joshua Martinangeli, 7, is too ill to attend school in person, so a robot avatar sits at his desk and relays lessons to him at home. "The children talk to him, laugh with him and sometimes even chitchat with him during the lesson," the school's headmistress, Ute Winterberg, told Reuters. The avatar displays a

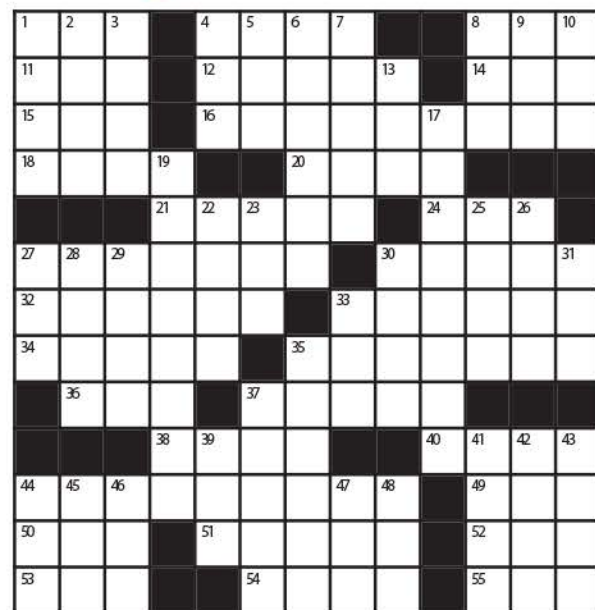
blinking signal when Joshua wants to say something. The school district bought four of the avatars for use in the classrooms during COVID-19, but officials believe they'll be used beyond the pandemic. Classmate Noah Kuessner said he likes it "either way because I like the avatar."

- Zachary Taylor Blood, 33, of Galveston, Texas, pleaded guilty on Jan. 25 to trying to smuggle two men into the United States in a flag-draped coffin, The New York Times reported. Blood showed up at a border patrol checkpoint near Encino, Texas, on Oct. 26, where he told the agent he was hauling a "Dead guy, Navy guy" when asked about his cargo. But the agent, who was a military veteran, noticed the "rusty and dented coffin" and saw that the flag had been "crudely taped" to it. Agents explored further and found two live men, cousins, inside the coffin. One man told agents that it had been hot and hard to breathe in the box, and he had agreed to pay \$6,000 to be smuggled to San Antonio. Blood will be sentenced on May 11 and could receive up to five years in federal prison.

Robin Hughes teaches special education students at SouthShore Academy in Tampa, Florida, where most of her kindergarten kids had never seen snow, United Press International reported. So Hughes got in touch with her sister, Amber Estes, who lives in Danville, Kentucky. "I said I want you to make me a snowman, and I want you to overnight him to me and see if he can make it to the school," Hughes said. "I want these children in Florida to see snow." Estes said she wrapped Lucky the snowman in foil and packed him with ice in Styrofoam, and "off he went to the local UPS Store." Hughes said her students had looks of "pure joy" on their faces when Lucky was unwrapped on Jan. 20.

Augie's Grocery Deli in Jersey City, New Jersey, was the target of three robberies by the same crook over six days, Oddee.com reported. Not only did the masked perp take cash and merchandise, but he assaulted Augie Lopez, 77, and his wife, Nilda Moldonado, even though Lopez is disabled. The robberies took place on Jan. 10, 15 and 16. But when he came back on Jan. 21, Officer Maurice Johnson was lying in wait for him. "He (Johnson) was going to stand outside the store, but I told him to come inside and sit down, but don't let yourself be seen," Lopez said. When the robber saw Johnson, he ran out the front door and into the arms of Lopez's son, Officer Agustin Lopez Jr. Travis Nealy, 34, was arrested and charged with several crimes. "I feel much, much safer now," Lopez said.

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Across

1. Cousin of reggae
4. Soothing substance
8. Scold
11. Parker part
12. Going to the dogs, e.g.
14. Cocktail addition
15. Flabbergast
16. Response to a thank you
18. Hummus holder
20. Unfortunate
21. Quite the expert
24. Mozart's "L' \_\_\_ del Cairo"
27. Shone
30. Young fowl
32. Off shore driller
33. Start liking
34. Ancient Celtic priest
35. Domain of a noble
36. Everyone
37. Having a dense coat
38. Place to hibernate
40. Spring tide
44. Spaghetti dish
49. Like
50. Poem of praise
51. In tune
52. Special effects abbreviation
53. Tally (up)
54. Fill beyond full
55. Suffered from

Down

1. Center's pass
2. New Zealander
3. Support
4. Trash receptacle
5. Bother
6. Tight- \_\_\_\_
7. Numbskull
8. Nothing
9. Perfect tennis serve
10. Diamond, e.g.
13. Farm call
17. NYC borough
19. City in Texas
22. In between
23. Take it easy
25. Prompted
26. Chorus member

27. Pan, e.g.
28. Old money
29. Last Hebrew month
30. One of Henry VIII's six
31. Mr. Turkey
33. Road crew supply
35. I found it!
37. Finland natives
39. Back then
41. Respectively
42. Aquatic plant
43. Gave the cash for
44. Feathered stole
45. Offbeat
46. Came first
47. Undertake, with "out"
48. "Red \_\_\_" thriller, starring Rachel McAdams

## DAD JOKES



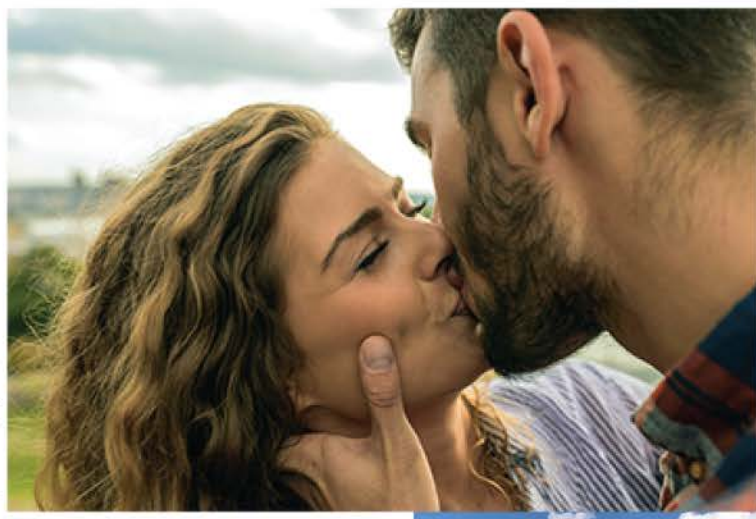
What do a tick and the Eiffel Tower have in common?  
They're both Paris sites.





# Ultra Romantic Valentine's Day Experiences

By Saumya Aggarwal



## Packages in Las Vegas

If you are looking for some over-the-top celebration, you should head towards Las Vegas. This fascinating city is dotted with numerous hotels that offer interesting packages during the time of Valentine's Day. The different romantic travel packages of this city are sure to sweep you off your feet.

With Valentine's Day coming up, you must be wondering how to spend the day with the most special person of your life. A host of things can be done to make a perfect V-day. One of the most common ways of enjoying and celebrating this special occasion is going for a holiday.

### Packages in India

With its beaches, mountains and forests, India is one of the leading tourist destinations of the world. The country can be an ideal place to spend Valentine's Day. The different states of India come with numerous romantic V-day packages. While the Kashmir package will give you an opportunity to enjoy the breathtaking natural beauty of the

state, if you settle with Kerala package, then you will get a chance to soak in the azure water with you loved one in the beaches of Kerala. In case you are willing to celebrate this special occasion in the lap of the Himalayas, then opt for the Himachal package or the Darjeeling package. In addition, the ample of hotels and resorts of India are sure to make your Day a memorable one.

### Packages in Paris

There can be nothing better than getting an opportunity to spend Valentine's Day in one of the most romantic places on earth, Paris. The capital of France, Paris during the celebration of V-day, offers various travel packages. The city is flocked by

lovers and couples from the various parts of the world during the time of V-Day. You can choose from an array of romantic Valentines Day travel packages offered in this city; that include Bateaux Parisiens Valentine's Dinner Cruise, Eiffel Tower Dinner & Seine River Cruise, Dinner/Show Moulin Rouge and many more.



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## VALENTINE'S DAY MEANS MORE THAN JUST CHOCOLATES AND FLOWERS!

By Contributing Writer

Valentine's Day is about more than presents. Find ways to give the gift of love to your children by showing & teaching them the true meaning of love!

Just when it seems like the commercial excess of winter holidays is winding down, along comes Valentine's Day and the advertising barrage of "stuff = love." It's tempting to want to give our children material items and Valentine's Day treats, often at the expense of simple acts of love and other small meaningful gifts.

As parents, we may fall into this mindset because we want to provide the best life possible for our children. Rest assured, teaching the meaning of love, creating loving memories with children, and spending unhurried family time together are truly more valuable than any gift you can buy. Valentine's Day is a good place to start.

### TIPS TO TEACH & SHOW CHILDREN THE MEANING OF LOVE

Here are a few ideas for Valentine's Day that can be used throughout the year to show your children you love them:

- Express "I love you" in words and notes. A simple note that says, "I love you," under a pillow, in a backpack, or in a lunch bag can remind your child throughout the day of your love, even when you're not together.

- Spend meaningful time with your children. As busy parents, we often find ourselves rushing from place to place and chore to chore. Even though it can be difficult at times, turn off the television, put down the cell phone, and spend meaningful time with your child. A simple place to start is to have dinner as a family as often as possible. Turn the television off and talk; talk about your day, your friends, maybe even take turns asking "what would you do if..." questions.



- Make something with your child for Valentine's Day. It doesn't have to be an elaborate or complicated project. Keep it simple: do a Valentine's Day craft for kids using everyday objects: make up a song while driving in the car, write a poem with refrigerator magnets, or cook a meal together.

- Celebrate your child's best efforts rather than focus on achievements. Consider when your child was an infant learning to walk. You cheered every effort from pulling up, to walking while holding onto furniture, to first steps. As children get older, we tend to focus more on accomplishments like grades or winning games than we do on efforts, like learning a new concept or being willing to try a new activity. Be sure to offer words of encouragement to recognize your child's efforts, even if they don't result in winning achievements.

- Dream with your child. Remember as a child lying on your back and looking at the sky, naming the shapes of clouds floating by and thinking about life—just daydreaming. Simple thoughts and conversations can spark the imagination, plant a seed of curiosity, or begin a dream. So hang out and dream with your child.

- Let go, listen, and laugh. Our schedules have become so hectic and our commitments so plentiful that we often become rigid in our routines and focused on what needs to get done, rather than enjoying the present. Show your kids you love them by committing to slow down—even if it's only one day a week—and let the schedule go. Lie on the

couch and read a book together even when there are dishes in the sink. Make up jokes together even when there is dusting to be done. Take a walk together and ask your child what he wants to talk about, and listen intently, even if you have something else on your mind.

### TEACHING CHILDREN HOW TO EXPRESS LOVE

Teaching children how to show love can be a gift that lasts for a lifetime. Here are a few simple ways to teach your child how to express love throughout the year:

- Model and teach your child about love, friendship, kindness, and inclusion. Being a conscious role model is as important as any other teaching strategy. Show your child the meaning of acceptance: what it means to be a good friend, to include others, and to demonstrate kindness.

- Express your love, gratitude, and compassion for the community. Giving and expressing love can be very powerful for both the giver and receiver. Think of ways to show gratitude, compassion, and love for the world and community.

- Be a good friend. School Valentine's Day parties are common and the trading of cards is an exciting activity in most classrooms. This is a great opportunity to help children think about friendships. Whether you purchase or make cards, sit with your child as she creates or signs them and talk about her classmates and what it means to be a good friend.

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# CRYPTOCURRENCY FOR KIDS WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE THEY BUY

by Contributing Writer

A cryptocurrency is a type of currency which uses digital files as money. Usually, the files are created using the same methods as cryptography (the science of hiding information). Digital signatures can be used to keep the transactions secure, and let other people check that the transactions are real. The first cryptocurrencies were made to be independent of government-issued currencies.

Cryptocurrencies use 'decentralized control', which means that they aren't controlled by one person or government. This is different to 'centralized' electronic money and central banks. The control of each cryptocurrency works through a distributed ledger (a list of transactions shared by everyone), usually a blockchain, that serves as a public financial transaction database. Bitcoin, first released as open-source software in 2009, is often called the first decentralized cryptocurrency. Since then, over 4,000 cryptocurrencies (sometimes called 'altcoins', which is short for alternative coins) have been created.

The value problem

In many cases, cryptocurrencies cannot be converted to real currencies; it is only possible to convert them to other cryptocurrencies, or to use them to buy things. Some cryptocurrencies can be converted to real currencies: They usually have a high volatility, and using them carries a high risk. They are also a target for so-called Pump-and-Dump-Attacks. They act like a big distributed economic system: As they are not issued or controlled by

central banks, their value is difficult to influence: For this reason, they cannot really take the place of a stable currency.

Cryptocurrencies are prone to speculation, which makes building a system of more or less stable exchange rates very difficult. Another problem is the inequality of distribution: Many cryptocurrencies are held by only few people. As an example: about 1,000 people hold half of the total amount of bitcoins in the world. This means that if any of these persons starts using their cryptocurrency, this has an effect on the exchange rate. It also means that these people have a great



influence on the value of the currency, and are able to change its value easily. The currency itself only documents ownership changes. Exchange rates of cryptocurrencies are established outside the system. Exchange rates are issued by brokers and traders; their indication is no

guarantee that the currency is traded at the value proposed. In itself, the unit of cryptocurrency has no value.

In contrast to cryptocurrencies, real currencies are issued and controlled by central banks. Certain economic phenomena such as inflation or deflation may change the value (and exchange rate) of a currency. The people who own units of the currency have no

direct influence on its value.

Formal definition

According to Jan Lansky, a cryptocurrency is a system that meets six conditions:

The system does not require a central authority, distributed achieve consensus on its state.

The system keeps an overview

of cryptocurrency units and their ownership.

The system defines if new cryptocurrency units can be created. If new cryptocurrency units can be created, the system defines the how to create new units, and how to determine the ownership of these new units.

Ownership of cryptocurrency units can be proved exclusively cryptographically.

The owner of a unit of cryptocurrency can transfer this unit. For this transfer to be successful, the current owner must prove the ownership.

If two different instructions for changing the ownership of the same cryptographic units are entered at the same time, the system performs at most one of them.

In March 2018, the word "cryptocurrency" was added to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

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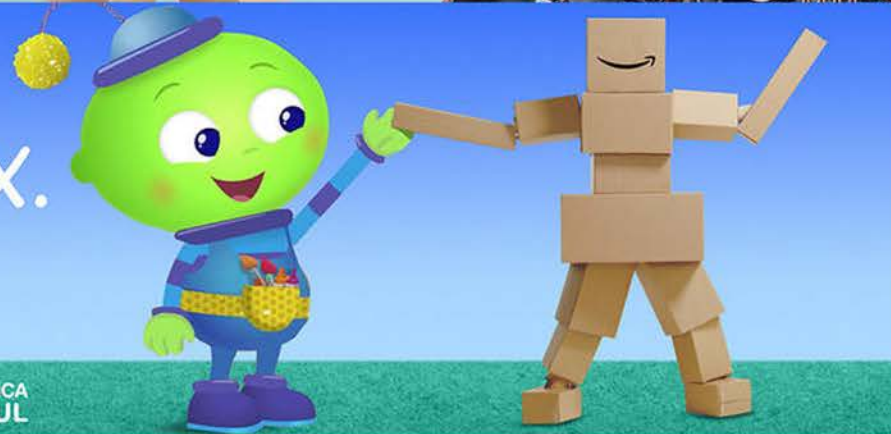
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## Getting Engaged on Valentine's Day

The Perfect Ring is the Ultimate Fashion Staple

By Contributing Writer

Valentine's Day is upon us, and it's the perfect time to say I do! But for that you'll need a ring.

And engagement rings are expensive jewelries. You should purchase them only after an extensive comparison of their various designs and the prices. Many aspects such as diamonds, gemstones, settings, choice of metal, wedding band, appraisal and insurance etc are crucial to buying engagement rings.

Men do not know much when it comes to shopping for an engagement ring for their bride-to-be.

But women are very choosy and may not like the ring purchased by their men. So, it is very crucial for you first have all aspects of these jewelries. Here, we present a simple guide that will be useful in finding out the right jewelry.

It is always advisable that you determine a budget for the shopping. Without an amount in your mind, the shopping is not going to be convenient. If you are clear about the amount you can spare, then you will be searching for

the rings of a certain price range. The jeweler will also be impressed with your confidence.

Engagement rings come in many varieties. For example, diamond solitaire ring is one of the popular jewelries that you also can opt for. Three stone rings, pave set rings, channel set rings and others are equally attractive options. All of these jewelries feature a diamond or colorful gemstone, a metal band, settings and some engravings. Make sure that these features are of good quality.

While purchasing a loose diamond or a pre-set ring with a mounted diamond, you

must ensure that the precious stone comes good on four C's---color, clarity, cut and carat. But know that with some invisible flaws inside of it and with a slight yellowish color, a diamond is still brilliant and has fire in it. But such a stone will be affordable due to its lower prices. So, go for this option when you're facing financial constraints.

Another aspect of engagement rings is to decide if you want to buy a wedding band to go with it or not. A wedding band is generally

sold with the ring as a set. But you should first talk to her if she likes to have a wedding band or not. Some women prefer having the ring only.

After you have done the purchasing, make sure that you have immediately taken an appraisal certificate. This certificate mentions the current market price of the ring you have bought. But ensure that the prices are set at existing market rates and not the reduced

prices at which you bought the jewelry. Get the appraisal certificate from a professional.

You should also insure the engagement ring as it is expensive. You will recover the amount, if you have lost the ring or its diamond falls out. See if your home policy covers the jewelries also.

In the last, we advise you to purchase engagement rings only after comparing of various designs and their prices. For competitive prices and extensive comparing Health Fitness Articles, prefer online jewelers over the physical shops.



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