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*By Barbara Beckley*

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# KICK OFF YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON WITH A PERFORMANCE BY THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

On Saturday Evening, December 11, 2021 at 8:00 pm at the Scherr Forum Theater - Bank of America Performing Arts Center - 2100 Thousand Oaks Blvd, Thousand Oaks, Conductor/Composer James Domine and the San Fernando Valley Symphony Orchestra will perform an evening of classical music including excerpts from Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker Suite".



The orchestra is a showcase for some of the finest musicians and composers in Southern California. This next performance will be the world premiere of the "Symphony #2." New works are a major undertaking and there is a story behind the music. Another would be David Pinto, a masterful pianist who is appearing as soloist in the Rachmaninoff "Piano Concert #2," a favorite of audiences everywhere and a blockbuster virtuoso piece.

David Pinto has been active in the field of music performance and education for over forty years. Beginning his career as a concert pianist, he has toured the nation playing solo concerts and also been soloist with many symphony orchestras including the Glendale, Long Beach, Nevada, and the San Fernando Valley Symphony Orchestra. David has also worked in the popular and

jazz mediums in Radio, TV, Theatre and Film as a pianist, conductor and arranger for many celebrity music performers.

David and his wife Gayle founded the non-profit Academy of Music for the Blind (AMB), a unique school that serves the special challenges and aptitudes of musically talented blind youth.

## INTERVIEW WITH JAMES DOMINE

VSM: This event feels like a holiday show with the "Nutcracker" excerpts to open things up. Should the audience expect that kind of vibe for this show?

This concert is very special, and we are doing two excerpts from Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Ballet," but it is by no means a traditional "Holiday Show." Our primary objective is to bring great live music close to home at affordable prices and to make an impact in the larger world of music by presenting uniquely interesting contributions to the orchestral repertoire, and that is our overarching objective for this concert. We are giving the premiere of my "Symphony #2 in D minor" subtitled "Ancient Scenes," a work that has been many years in the process of compositional gestation and is at long last ready for public performance. To witness the first performance of a large-scale musical work is by itself an event that is intellectually and aesthetically challenging in addition to having historical and social significance. To round out the program, we are doing one of the most beloved works by Sergei Rachmaninoff, his "Piano Concerto #2 in C minor." Our soloist for the concerto is David Pinto, a veteran of the concert stage who is a fiery and sensitive interpreter of the most demanding repertoire for piano and orchestra.

VSM: When you are preparing for a premiere event such as this one, how do you decide what instrument to feature and



the musicians that perform?

The choice of instrument is part of the larger process of orchestration, and that has largely to do with the emotional expressive message the music conveys to the listener. Different instruments have qualities that enable them to do special things like characters in a book or a movie, and to add their individual personalities and combined colors in the mosaic of sound that a symphony represents. When deciding which instrument to use in a given musical passage one asks (and answers) the

question of who can say it best, most effectively, most dramatically, poignantly or persuasively, in accordance with the nature and demands of the melodic line. It is somewhat like casting roles in a play.

VSM: Looking ahead, will most of this season for SFVSO feature new original works from you are will that be to determined later?

At our last concert in October we gave the successful premiere of my "Violin Concerto #2 in B minor" played by the outstanding young virtuoso Fiona Shea who received a standing ovation. I am looking forward to many more engaging musical experiences as the season progresses. We only live once, and our time is now.

VSM: How great does it feel to be back out in front of your orchestra after all you have been through during the COVID 19 shutdown?

If I could conduct every day, I would. That is how I feel about it. For me, music isn't a just vocation, it is a way of life.

For tickets and information go to [www.sfvsymphony.com](http://www.sfvsymphony.com)

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BY BARBARA BACKLEY

## IMMERSED IN THE MAGIC

Shrink to elf size in “The Elf on the Shelf’s Magical Holiday Journey” (<https://www.fairplex.com/events/viewent/the-elf-on-the-shelf-s-magic-al-holiday-journey-2021>) 4:45 to 10 p.m., through January 2, 2022, at the Fairplex in Pomona. Join Scout Elf Tiny Tinkerman in this interactive quest to build more Christmas Spirit through an outdoor wonderland of scenery, lights and live entertainment. Plus ice skating, a Christmas Village, Holly Jolly Open-air Trolleys, lighted

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tunnels and more. Tickets from \$19.95 for children; \$24.95 adults. Fairplex parking \$15.

“LA Zoo Lights!” (<https://www.lazoo.org/plan-your-visit/special-experiences/zoolights/>) Thrill to LA’s wildest holiday experience, through January 9, 2022, from 6 – 10 p.m. See more light animals than ever with tigers, lions, macaws, monkeys, meerkats and flamingos, plus favorites like the Animated Elephants, Luminous LAIR, Disco Ball Forest, the world’s largest illuminated pop-up storybook and spectacular new and fav interactive experiences. Enjoy live entertainment Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Tickets from \$22 for adults; \$16 ages 2 – 12.

Wrap your family in seasonal cheer at “The Holiday Road at the King Gillette Ranch” (<https://holidayroadu>

[sa.com/location-la/#calendar](https://www.kinggilletteranch.com/location-la/#calendar)) (<https://mrca.ca.gov/parks/park-listing/king-gillette-ranch/>) in Calabasas, weekends throughout December from 5 – 10 p.m. Walk through nearly a mile of larger-than-life installations,



thousands of lights, Santa, elves, gingerbread houses, polar bears, sugar plum fairies, nutcracker soldiers, gigantic candy canes, even a gingerbread carousel. The chocolate is hot – and so are the toddies (for grownups). Plus LA’s top food trucks and vendors. Tickets from \$34.99.

Frolic in a wintry playground at the “Snow ‘N’ Glow Holiday Festival” at Ventura County Fairgrounds (<https://www.snownglow.com/>) through January 31, 2022; Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 4 – 10 p.m. Play in real snow, go snow tubing, build a snow man, ooh and ah at a million glittery lights in the Holiday Light Trail. Add to the

magic with a private Igloo! Furnished VIP Igloos include inside and patio seating for 4 to 6 people (accommodates up to 10) and a fire pit. Igloos average \$199; S’mores Kits are \$24. Tickets include All Access Pass from \$38 per person; and Family Pass for four people from \$37.25 per person. Kids 2 and under free! Add \$3 Magic Holiday Glasses to accentuate the lights.

Make every day a holiday at Westfield Topanga & The Village! Take photos with Santa (<https://www.westfield.com/topanga/event-detail/PHOTOS-WITH-SANTA>) through December 24. On December 5 & 12, families with kids with autism and other special needs are invited to Santa ops in a subdued and calm environment. Thrill to “The Immersive Nutcracker Experience” (<https://www.westfield.com/topanga/event-detail/The-Immersive-Nutcracker-Experience>) November 26 through December 31, a multi-media adventure accompanied by Tchaikovsky’s timeless score. AND there’s more! The Village features “Let It Snow” (<https://www.westfield.com/topanga/event-detail/LET-IT-SNOW>) with Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening snowfalls December 3 – 19; and “Holidays Are Here” extravaganza December 11 & 12 with performers, kids’ activities, photo ops, festive lights, holiday carolers and DJs.

Explore the “Enchanted Forest of Light” (<https://www.descansogardens.org/programs-events/enchanted/>) at Descanso Gardens in La Canada Flintridge through January 9, 2022, 5:30 – 10 p.m. Stroll a mile of large-scale light and sound art installations, many you manipulate yourselves! Wow to a new “town” of stained glass creations, and fairytale-like lighting in the Ancient Forest. Tickets \$32 to \$35.

## LIGHT IT UP!

Make merry with your favorite team! For the first time! Celebrate the “Dodgers Holiday Festival” (<https://www.mlb.com/-dodgers/fans/holiday-festival?affiliateId=DC-9419794-13837095300-124643794-5820867505>) inside Dodger Stadium. Through December 31, weekdays 5 – 10 p.m.; weekends 3 – 10 p.m. Enjoy holiday entertainment, photos with Santa in the bullpen, an ice skating rink in the outfield, scenic and light displays and holiday-themed food and beverages. Admission from \$16 online in advance. Santa photos \$40 extra. Ice skating \$20 (skate rental included) extra.

## COMMONS CALABASAS



Skate like a King at the “LA Kings Holiday Ice” (<https://www.lalive.com/la-kings-holiday-ice-la-live>), November 27 to January 8, 2022, featuring outdoor ice skating at L.A. LIVE's Xbox Plaza. Tickets \$25 per person, on-site only. \$20 ages 6 and under; 62 and over; military and season ticket-holders. Show your ticket stub and enjoy discounts at nearby Fleming's, Katsuya and Lucky Strike restaurants.

Let the Holiday Illumination Begin!  
Oh, Christmas Tree ...

Say “wow” at the Holiday Tree Lighting at The Commons at Calabasas, (<https://www.shopcommons.com/>) Saturday, December 4th at 5 p.m. It's a merriment extravaganza including Santa meet-and-greets, nightly snowfalls, gift guides and special offers.

Free

Watch the 30-foot tree come to life at the “Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony DTLA at Union Station” (<https://www.unionstationla.com/happenings/holiday-tree-lighting-and-cocoa-concert>) November 30, 6:30 – 9 p.m. Plus snow flurries, vintage songs by the Beverly Belles, a rock band, a live “mural,” Santa, arts and crafts and free hot chocolate and cookies. Tree lighting is 7:15 p.m. Free.

Celebrate The Festival of Lights...

At the Sherman Oaks Galleria “Celebrate Chanukah” (<https://shermanoaksgalleria.com/event/celebrate-hanukkah/>) begins at 5 p.m., November 30, with arts, crafts, balloon-making, music, dancing, Kosher Latkes, donuts and the 6:30 p.m. Menorah Lighting. Free.

In Calabasas, the Menorah Lighting Celebration at The Commons at Calabasas (<https://www.shopcommons.com/events/>) is November 30, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. with live music, fireworks, food and more. Free.

It's called “The Chanukah Party of the Century” – and so it may be. The JEM Community Center Beverly Hills Chanukah Menorah Lighting (<https://www.jemcommunitycenter.com/la-chanukah-menorah-lighting>)



SHERMAN OAKS GALLERIA

Lightings) at the Montage Hotel Beverly Hills, November 28, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Festivities include music, entertainment, latkes, donuts, a raffle, face painting and a gift for every child. Free.

December 5 from 2 – 6 p.m. enjoy the Skirball Cultural Center “Chanukah Festival” (<https://www.skirball.org/programs/festival/hanukkah-festival>), with story-telling, music, art-making, traditional treats and the sunset Menorah Lighting. Kids \$13, adults \$18 including entry to “Star Trek: Exploring New Worlds.”

In Santa Monica, nightly Menorah Lightings begin at sundown at the Third Street Promenade November 28 to December 6. (<https://www.santamonica.com/event/menorah-lightings-third-street-promenade/2021-11-29/>) (<https://downtownsm.com/winterlit>). Free.

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Hooray for Holiday Lights!

Don't miss "Candy Cane Lane"

([https://www.woodlandhillscs.net/candy\\_cane\\_lane.html](https://www.woodlandhillscs.net/candy_cane_lane.html)), eight glittery blocks of lights and décor on Lubao and Oxnard streets in Woodlands Hills. Since 1952, these homeowners have been rocking the holidays

fireworks and carnival fun at Ventura Harbor Village. Free.

Fa La La La La – La, La, La, La...!

For enthusiasts, the closest to angels singing is the "Festival of Carols," with the LA Master Chorale, (<https://lamasterchorale.org/festival-of-carols>) December 4 & 11 at 2 p.m. at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Tickets \$43 to \$146.

You know the words! The "Holiday Sing Along" (<https://www.laphil.com/events/performances/1431/2021-12-18/holiday-sing-along>) is December 18 at 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. at Walt Disney Concert Hall, featuring the Angeles Chorale, a jazz combo and that massive pipe organ. Tickets \$35 to \$92.

Holiday carolers add to the best produce and fresh food at the Malibu Farmer's Market (<http://cornucopiafoundation.net/location/>) Sundays 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. through December 31st. And guess what? You're giving back. This market funds animal rescue, wild life and environmental programs.

Singing madrigals and carolers brighten the "Holiday Family Faire" (<https://theatricum.com/holidayfamilyfaire/>), an artisan holiday marketplace in Topanga, noon – 6 p.m., December 11 (rain date December 18) at Will Greer's Theatricum Botanicum. Admission \$10 to \$20. Kids under 4 free. Family 4-Pack \$50.

Bring Joy to Others

Brighten the season with a donation to the 29th "Spark of Love Toy Drive" (<https://supportlacounty-fire.org/spark-of-love/>) sponsored by Southern California Firefighters. Simply drop off an unwrapped toy (or toys) or sports equipment at your local fire station. The drive runs through December 24, after which the gifts are delivered evenly to kids in LA, OC, San Bernardino, Ventura and Riverside counties.

Or... Give and receive – the music of Stevie Wonder. His 23rd "House Full of Toys" (<https://www.microsofttheater.com/events/detail/steviewonder21>) benefit concert is December 18 at 8 p.m. at Microsoft Theater. Just bring an unwrapped toy or gift for Wonder's nonprofit, the "We Are You Foundation." Tickets \$30 to \$155.



December 11 to 31. Free.

Remember holiday memories and make new ones at the "Holiday Light Festival" (<https://www.griffithparktrainrides.com/holiday-light-festival/>) at Griffith Park & Southern Railroad. Through January 7, 2022, ride the train through a tunnel of lights and magical scenes. Monday-Thursday, 5 – 8 p.m.; Friday-Sunday, 5 – 9 p.m. Tickets \$5 for all ages at the train ticket booth.

"Sparkle DTLA" at The Block (<https://www.theblockla.com/sparkledtla/>) dazzles with more than 18 million!!! lights synchronized to festive tunes on West 7th Street.

Enhanced with a 32-foot Christmas tree and 16-foot holiday ornaments. Through January 2, 2022, 5 – 9 p.m. Free.

Lights reflected on the water double the cheer! The 59th Marina del Rey Holiday Boat Parade, "Joy on the Water," (<https://www.visitmarinadelrey.com/event/marina-del-rey-holiday-boat-parade-2021>) is December 11 at 6 p.m., with fireworks, carolers and food trucks. The 113th Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade and Ring of Lights, "Jingle on the Waves," (<https://www.christmasboatparade.com/>) sails December 15 – 19, 6:30 to 9 p.m. And the 45th Ventura Harbor Parade of Lights, "SEAing is Believing," (<https://venturaharbor.com/celebrate-the-wonder-and-magic-of-the-holidays-at-ventura-harbor/>) is December 17 & 18, 6:30 – 8 p.m., with



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## TOP FIVE REASONS TO GO LITTLE TOKYO THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

By Contributing Writer

**T**his season, Go Little Tokyo for the Holidays to shop and support one of Los Angeles' most historic and iconic neighborhoods. Whether dining in or ordering takeout from Little Tokyo's beloved restaurants, discovering one-of-a-kind gifts for everyone on your list, capturing the perfect holiday moment in a photo with Shogun Santa, or enjoying the festive scene with roaming carolers and Christmas tree in Japanese Village Plaza, there are a number of ways to show love to

Little Tokyo this season.

Skip the mall and shop small at Little Tokyo's many historic small businesses by picking up or ordering unique items not available anywhere else in LA! Celebrate this special community and make new memories in the heart of Downtown LA with the top five reasons to Go Little Tokyo for the Holidays.



Saturday, December 18 and Sunday, December 19 from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. For the health and safety of Santa and visitors, there will be a barrier around Santa, and sitting on Santa's lap will not be permitted. Shogun Santa is brought to you by the Little Tokyo Business Association (LTBA).

5. 'Tis the Season to be Festive: Take in the historic neighborhood's magical atmosphere with twinkling lights and showstopping Christmas tree in Japanese Village Plaza. Enjoy the sweet sounds of roaming carolers, JTOWN JINGLES presented by Go Little Tokyo and East West Players, featuring Philosophy as they serenade the neighborhood on Saturday, December 4 and Saturday, December 11 from 2-4 p.m. Stay to experience the free, public full set performance at JANM Plaza at 5 p.m.

Shop and support Little Tokyo's small businesses for a chance to win a \$50 gift certificate to your favorite Little Tokyo business. Simply submit your receipts from Little Tokyo businesses at [GoLittleTokyo.com/Holidays/](http://GoLittleTokyo.com/Holidays/) to enter. Two winners will be chosen, and multiple entries are encouraged. Receipts must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on December 31.

Businesses in Little Tokyo continue to monitor and adhere to guidelines put forth by local and state agencies and the CDC. It is recommended that unvaccinated guests wear masks when not actively eating or drinking and that all guests, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask when in line or when not able to maintain a six-foot physical distance from other guests. For more information about the holidays in Little Tokyo and to view the Little Tokyo Gift Guide, visit [golittletokyo.com/holidays](http://golittletokyo.com/holidays).

### ABOUT GO LITTLE TOKYO

Go Little Tokyo is a community-led effort aimed at highlighting the unique cultural programs, community events, and dining and shopping experiences found in Little Tokyo. As one of Los Angeles' most vibrant cultural hubs, there is an abundance of destinations and landmarks in and around this historic walkable neighborhood and Go Little Tokyo will help you uncover them. Go Little Tokyo is a Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC) project developed and produced by Community Arts Resources (CARS) and made possible with support from Metro. For more information, visit <http://www.golittletokyo.com/>.

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## Ghostbusters: Afterlife

By Mark Kennedy

“Ghostbusters: Afterlife” — the direct cinematic follow-up to the 1984 classic — is haunted. But not in a good way.

Director and co-writer Jason Reitman’s sequel leans so hard into his dad’s original that it sometimes seems like a checklist of the megahit’s touchstones, from the Ecto-1 tricked-out Cadillac, to Stay-Puft marshmallows, appearances from the surviving Ghostbusters and even the same Ray Parker Jr. theme song.

It has taken Ivan Reitman’s original — which had the feel of an anarchic “Saturday Night Live” skit taken as far as it could go — too seriously. It fetishizes the ghost-trapping equipment and limps along until the original actors arrive — one cynically resurrected — to wring some sort of emotion it hasn’t earned.

The film is set several decades after the events in “Ghostbusters,” trading in the urban for the rural and ignoring any other sequels. It focuses on a struggling single



mother Callie (Carrie Coon) and her two kids, the very, very teenage son Trevor (Finn Wolfhard) and her precocious science whiz daughter Phoebe (Mckenna Grace).

After Callie’s estranged father dies, the family pack up for his dilapidated farm in Summerville, Oklahoma, where the kids realize their grandfather was famed Ghost-

buster Egon Spengler (the late Harold Ramis), who abandoned their mom for reasons unknown and hasn’t been forgiven. “Take a little advice,” mom tells the kids, “Don’t go chasing ghosts.”

Eerie things happen for the first hour and it’s appropriate that Wolfhard of “Stranger Things” fame is here, mixing that show’s vibe with an early Steven Spielberg suburban-stressed-out-parents-and-their-quirky-kids movie feel. (The family’s motto: “Don’t be yourself!”) Chess pieces move on their own, flashlights get used a lot and proton packs get played with.

The amount of acting talent wasted in this film is astounding, from a Slimer-esque critter named Muncher “voiced” by Josh Gad (bravo, eating noises!) and Logan Kim playing an intensely weird podcaster, to acting greats J.K. Simmons and Tracey Letts (Coon’s real-life playwright-acting husband). A mom love interest is offered by Paul Rudd as a study teacher, but 2021’s Sexiest Man Alive is unable to create comedic sparks due to so much slime.

“Ghostbusters: Afterlife” meanders along like an after-school special — kids, did you know science can be cool? — until the inevitable: Original stars Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Ernie Hudson arrive in the final 10 minutes to save the day (curiously also appearing, but sidelined, are OGs Annie Potts and Sigourney Weaver). And then comes the breaking point: Ramis heroically reappears thanks to supernatural computer work, a moment that can seem either incredibly crass or honorifically crass.

“What the hell is going on?” asks one character and she’s right. Poorly edited, the film’s musical queues must often signal to the viewer what they should be feeling. Poorly explained, the plot relies on the audience already knowing about the first film and especially the same villains — Gozer, the Gatekeeper and the Keymaster. Come on, at least update the baddies.

Once viewers realize this is merely a greatest hits compilation, they can settle in and anticipate the reappearance of lines like “Are you a god?” and “Who you gonna call?” After all, this is not a movie that can stand alone. It is more like half a movie, standing in the shadow of its parent. It is a film made to sell us more lunchboxes.

## King Richard

By Alan Ng

Unless you pay close attention to the personal lives of celebrities, it’s real easy to let trolls on the internet allow you to pre-judge a person unfairly. I didn’t know much about Richard Williams, father of tennis greats Venus and Serena, but I thought I knew enough. Director Reinaldo Marcus Green paints a fascinating picture of the man in King Richard, as the feature film, written by Zach Maylin, is all about this man’s story.

The film opens with Richard Williams (Will Smith) hustling his way through an affluent Southern California tennis club, looking for a top-of-the-line coach to train his daughters, Venus (Saniyya Sidney) and Serena (Demi Singleton). He’s driven, determined, and very flawed. The film comes short of deifying the man, nor does it paint him as the villain or oppressive overlord. To me, this is unique storytelling because it bucks all the typical biopic tropes of stage parenting.

Through everything negative I’ve heard about Mr. Williams, it struck me how



well-rounded and humble the Williams sisters were throughout their careers. King Richard allowed me to know why. It’s easy to criticize the man for driving his daughters to greatness, but then you’ve never grown up in a traditional Asian household either; he’s nicer. As much as he pushed his kids to excellence, he still wanted them to be kids.

“...hustling his way through an affluent Southern California tennis club, looking for a top-of-the-line coach to train his daughters...”

William’s sole focus was raising strong and confident women who would one day rule the world. Williams makes dozens of

choices for his family that I never would. In hindsight, he was right, but then I still wouldn’t have made those choices. We also see how he went too far as an overbearing parent and achieved his “king” status, if you will.

For Will Smith, this is yet another role of a lifetime. I wouldn’t go as far as to say the role provided a difficult challenge for the actor... an opinion from a non-actor film critic. I’m not saying the part was easy, but I think there’s a lot of Smith in Williams, which means he’s already ahead of the game. What this allows him to do is focus intently on the deeper nuances of the character. For example, there’s a powerful

moment when some gang members confront Williams, and he chooses to take a beating rather than fight back — not your typical Will Smith movie-star reaction.

King Richard is not a movie about tennis, nor is it really about the famous daughters of the titular character. Still, it’s a movie about family and touches on universal themes of parenting... arguably an extreme form of parenting. It explores the idea that parents live for the betterment of their children. Parents don’t selfishly run out on their family but bear the responsibilities of the lives and direction of those they bring into this world. Parents teach their children to look beyond the obstacles life presents and become adults.

All around, King Richard is a solid, inspiring film. It does drag at times, and I felt the two-hour and eighteen-minute runtime. If you’re a parent, this will challenge the way you look at your children. Challenge is good, even if, like me, you feel his parenting philosophy goes too far. I appreciate his unorthodox style, though. I’m just wondering if the internet feels the same way.

# LA GUNS FIRES OFF A NEW RELEASE

By Contributing Writer

Long running hard rockers L.A. Guns released their latest studio album, "Checkered Past" this past Friday on Frontiers Music Srl. The band are playing select tour dates through the remainder of 2021.

Written and recorded during late 2020 and early 2021, "Checkered Past" sees Tracii Guns, Phil Lewis, and company continuing with the darker lyrical tone of the preceding studio albums, "The Devil You Know" and "The Missing Peace", while incorporating their classic rock influences into the mix. Heavier songs are mixed with bluesier, boogie inducing tracks and dark, introspective ballads, often harkening back to the first three albums the band made, but also pushing the band forward. When fans absorb the album as a whole, they'll see that the tracklisting is divided up into 'sets' or 'suites', where a sonic style is explored across multiple songs before moving on to the next, making for a remarkable

listening experience. Feeling inspired and excited like they did when they first started out, but with many years of wisdom and experience under their belts, and most importantly, a renewed and stronger creative and personal relationship, Guns and Lewis are maintaining a creative peak that started with "The Missing Peace". "Checkered Past" shows a band invigorated and ready to bash you over the head, as well as "wow" you with some epic, slower songs, and even make you dance a bit to some rock 'n roll.

Since their self-titled debut in 1988 to the widely praised comeback albums "The Missing Peace" and "The Devil You Know", L.A. GUNS, led by Tracii Guns and Phil Lewis have always delivered solid rock 'n roll to their fans. This current incarnation of the band has been touring non-stop, with a notable break coinciding with all other touring bands, and the cohesiveness of the unit, not to mention Phil's stunning and unique vocals and Guns'



mind-bending guitar playing, are on full display here. A must hear and listen for all fans of the band, both new and old.

L.A. Guns never looked like the pretty poster boys that so many of their peers did, but more the band that you would be terrified to bump into in an alley as they would likely be carrying switchblades and ready for a fight. But despite having many songs to back up that image, the band could also write powerful

ballads (see the smash hit, "The Ballad Of Jayne" for Exhibit A of this argument) that showed there were some serious songwriting chops in the band. Those chops are on full display on the band's two most recent studio albums and the upcoming new album, "Checkered Past," arguably one of the most vital and exciting releases in the band's catalog.

Catch them live December 31, West Hollywood, CA, Whisky A Go Go



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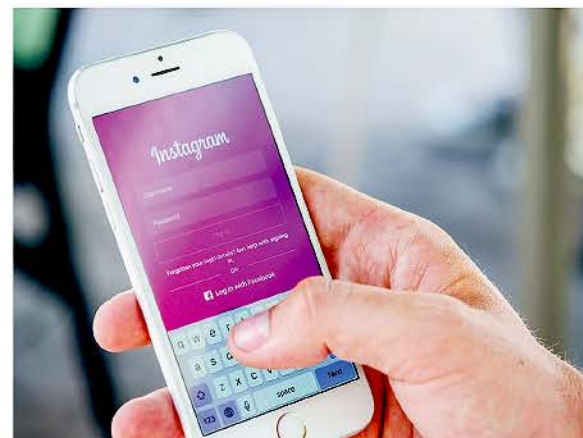
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By Hassam Aas

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# GREAT HOLIDAY MARTINI'S TO SHAKE THINGS UP

By Contributing Writer

The holidays are filled with many great things, including festive cocktails. Featuring all the favorite tastes of the season, these martinis include plenty of Christmas cheer. Serve them at holiday parties, holiday dinners, or any smaller gathering that could use a seasonal martini. They're all easy to mix up and the recipes are fun to explore.

The ultimate Christmas martini has to involve eggnog, of course! With vanilla vodka, amaretto, and store-bought eggnog, you can mix up a delicious eggnog martini in minutes. Garnish it with some ground nutmeg and a cinnamon stick for extra flavor, and you're ready to relax with a satisfying and festive cocktail.

**Peach Pomegranate Holiday Martini**

Filled with fruity flavors, this is a fun vodka martini that will have you in the holiday spirit in no time. The beautiful blend

of fruits begins with an impressive pomegranate vodka, which is accented by peach and orange. It is the ground cinnamon that really brings it into the Christmas season and makes it a drink to remember.



**Candy Cane Martini**

This little pink drink has everything that's great about the holidays, including a few twists. The candy cane is a creamy cocktail

with a fun mix of flavors. The recipe pairs the sweet fruit flavor of a berry vodka against that favorite combination of mint-chocolate. It creates a unique taste and a deliciously sweet treat.

**Ginger Snap Martini**

Bartenders love to transform holiday treats into adult libations. If you're up for an adventure in flavor, the ginger snap martini is the recipe for you. It has everything to love about its namesake, right down to the molasses. The mix also includes pear vodka and amaretto with a fresh blend of holiday spices to create a fantastic seasonal cocktail.

**Holiday Hopper Cocktail**

As seen in countless cocktails, chocolate and mint are a perfect pairing. When you want to add a little more dimension to the mix, try the holiday hopper. The trick to this cocktail is Midori, everyone's favorite green liqueur. The melon flavor puts a fascinating twist on a familiar taste and it works surprisingly well.

**Salted Caramel Martini**

The combination of sweet and salty, as well as the beautiful presentation, will make this cocktail the hit of the holiday. The caramel drizzle inside the glass, salted



caramel rim, and the caramel candy garnish will tempt those with a sweet tooth. The shaken mixture of vodka, caramel syrup, and Irish cream makes for a smooth and creamy cocktail.

**White Chocolatini**

Chocolate martinis are always a hit. They're irresistibly delicious and there are so many different recipes to choose from. The white chocolatini is a tasty variation that's as simple as any other. It begins with a shot of vanilla vodka and uses a white chocolate liqueur, such as that from Godiva. Add a touch of cream and consider this yummy martini complete.

These drinks are sure to make your holiday party a smash!



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# HANUKKAH FOODS WE FELL IN LOVE WITH

By Arielle Weg

For Jewish people everywhere, late November through December brings the time of year for Hanukkah. Unlike holidays like Shabbat and Passover where a specific sit-down meal is traditional, Hanukkah doesn't necessarily have a large family feast. Still, many families choose to throw a party and serve a meal of traditional Hanukkah foods.

The holiday, often called the Festival of Lights, commemorates Jews in the second century B.C.E. who were forced to accept Greek culture and religion and drop their Jewish observance. The Jews, led by Judah the Maccabee, drove the Greeks away and reclaimed their temple and religion. When the Jews returned to their temple, they found only enough olive oil to light the candelabra (known as the menorah we're familiar with today) for one night, but the supply miraculously lasted for eight days.

Today, Jews remember the plight of the

Maccabees by lighting a menorah for eight nights, and of course, enjoying some traditional Hanukkah foods in celebration. And even though you may see some favorite Jewish foods like brisket, roasted chicken, bagels, smoked salmon, or kugel served at a Hanukkah meal, none of these foods have a specific tie to the holiday itself.

Most Hanukkah spreads are rich in carbs and oils, which can feel indulgent if you're following a specific diet. But it's crucial to enjoy the holiday season and give yourself freedom to eat the foods you love without harsh restrictions. "The thing is, there is so much guilt and good and bad words used for holiday dishes and foods. But they should not have a moral value. Especially when it's something that's a family value," says Lauren Harris-Pincus, M.S., R.D.N., author of *The Protein-Packed Breakfast Club*.

Unless you have an allergy or medical issue that prevents you from digging in, don't feel guilty about your choices, savor the foods you've been looking forward to,



and have fun. However, if you're particularly concerned about derailing your diet, Harris-Pincus suggests simple swaps in classic foods, like adding veggies for some variety and extra nutrients in traditional potato latkes or baking doughnuts instead of frying. It's ultimately a personal decision.

Ready to enjoy our favorite traditional Hanukkah foods? From classic dishes to new favorites, the picks below are worth adding to your holiday table.

Perhaps the most common traditional Hanukkah food found on the tables of Jewish families are potato pancakes, sometimes called latkes or levivot. Jews fill their holiday spreads with oil-fried foods during the holiday to commemorate the oil that lasted for eight days.

But why potato pancakes specifically? The custom of eating potatoes in these pancakes is normally associated with Ashkenazi Jews, who came from Eastern Europe and had easier access to foods like onions and potatoes during the frigid winter months. The most important question for most latke-lovers is: Are you topping yours with sour cream or applesauce?

Fried foods take center stage during the

Festival of Lights with doughnuts. Most American Jews are familiar with the popular jelly doughnut, but Sephardic Jews (Jews who were exiled from Spain and Portugal and later settled in some parts of Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa) eat a few varieties of deep-fried donuts. Some popular oil-fried doughnuts and fritters include sufganiyot, donut hole-like bunuelos, delicate sfenj, and funnel-cake like jelebi.

Many Jews incorporate dairy into their Hanukkah menus to commemorate a different story during the Maccabees' fight for their freedom. In the Book of Judith, a Syrian-Greek warrior named Holofernes attacked the town of Bethulia. To save the town, Judith befriended the warrior and tricked him into eating bread, cheese, and wine to make him drunk. Once he was intoxicated, she killed him and saved the people of Bethulia. In honor of Judith, many Jews will dine on cheesy foods, like cheese pancakes, blintzes, or cheese danishes during Hanukkah.

These foil-wrapped chocolate coins are customary to be enjoyed on Hanukkah. The word gelt is the Yiddish word for money, and children were often given coins to donate



during the holiday with the intention of teaching them about charity and giving. In modern day, it's common for children to enjoy the chocolate coins as a traditional Hanukkah food and gift bags of them to friends and family.

For Italian Jewish families, fried chicken often makes an appearance on a Hanukkah table. The dish is flavored with cinnamon for a sweeter bite, and skips the usual buttermilk to accommodate for dietary rules that prevent mixing milk with meat or poultry.

Leeks were long associated with Jews hailing from Spain, and the onion traveled with them throughout the Ottoman Empire. One of the most popular recipes is leek patties fried in oil, which quickly became a popular traditional Hanukkah food for many Sephardic Jews.

Oy!

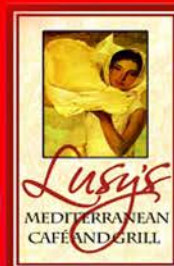
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# DR. KHANNA

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE EYES

### WESTLAKE VILLAGE

By Pamela Froman

Your eyes are unique and every treatment for clear vision is an individual journey. Refractive Surgeon Rajesh Khanna, MD, and the team at Khanna Vision Institute offer everything to make your sight clear.

Dr. Khanna grew up in India where he saw the need for vision specialists from an early age. It inspired him to specialize in eye surgery. Benefits of vision correction are threefold. It leads to vision correction of course, as well as improvements in both work or academics and improved social life.

What are the best ways to keep your eyes healthy? Eyes are made up of cells like

any other part of the body and we need to keep them in good shape. It starts with nutrition, green leafy vegetables, vitamins A and D, and plenty of water. Secondly, protect your eyes from UV radiation by wearing good sunglasses. Dr. Khanna also highly recommends washing your eyes with cool water in the morning and evening. It takes all the allergens and pollutants out of your eyes.

The Institute performs various state-of-the-art tests and will work with you to develop a customized treatment plan. The most common procedure is for vision correction to abandon glasses and contact lenses.. People want to ditch their glasses, and you can see why — after all glasses were invented hundreds of years ago. So it's



time to trade up. People above 40 start losing their near vision because their muscles become weaker and the natural lens becomes thicker with age. In today's world, everything is the middle distance such as computers, dashboards of your car, and smartphones. People need to see and changing glasses or wearing glasses just to see your phone can be very cumbersome.

Painless Lasik is offered at The Institute's Beverly Hills location. This procedure differs from typical Lasik because there is no pressure on the eye. Therefore there is no loss of vision during lasik, no pain and no redness. Lasik is perfect for people under 50 because it can correct nearsightedness, farsightedness and even astigmatism.

The other important treatment Dr. Khanna does is Presbyopic Implants. Very few skilled surgeons will offer this procedure, but Dr. Khanna does. Presbyopic Implants are great for people above 45 years of age who want to see far and near in each eye. People above 45 start losing their near vision because their muscles become weaker and the natural lens becomes thicker with age. In today's world, everything is the middle distance such as computers, dashboards of your car, and smartphones. People need to see and changing glasses or wearing glasses just to see your phone can be very cumbersome. In Presbyopic Implants, the doctor opens the natural lens and removes the contents by vacuum, then

implants a bio-synthetic implant that will be permanent for the rest of the patient's life.

In addition, the Institute performs cross-linking for keratoconus and ICL or implantable collamer lens for patients with extreme nearsightedness.

A consultation at Khanna Vision Institute is a must. They create a plan based on what you do, what you want as an outcome, and what are your hobbies or sports that you

participate in. They will custom design and custom select a lens. They measure the length of the eye, the curvature, the lens thickness and the angles. There are a lot of measurements so they can custom design and custom choose the power of the lens and if the patient has astigmatism which has to be corrected.

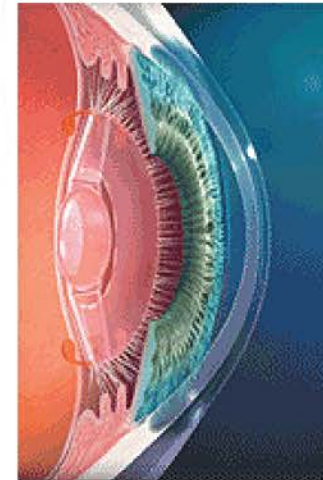
Khanna Vision Institute offers

cutting-edge diagnostic technology because they are highly computerized. Technicians can scan the cornea, measure its thickness, look at the angles, and the nerve for glaucoma. The Doctors can also see below the surface to see if the person is going to develop macular degeneration. They also take a picture to rule out retinopathy, hypertension, or any detachment "We are now going to the next step — robotic exams," says Dr. Khanna. "So if I'm in one office and my patient is in another office I can perform the exam using Remote video slit lamps.."

Dr. Khanna has even written a book on eye health (available on Amazon) called "Rejuvenating Aging Eyes - The Miracle of PIE." The book is written for the patient and not the medical professional,

Dr. Khanna believes in helping patients, regardless if they can pay for treatments. "We have a policy in our office," he says. "Any child that comes and can be helped we will improve their vision whether they can afford it or not."

Khanna Vision Institute has locations in Beverly Hills, Westlake Village, Inglewood, Sherman Oaks, and Moorpark.. For more information, call (310) 482-1240 or log onto <https://khannaInstitute.com>



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# TIPS FOR TACKLING SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

By Dr. Fumi Stephanie Hancock, PsychDNP

The days are getting shorter. The sun is setting earlier in the afternoon. It's a common sign that winter is fast approaching. Did you know the loss of sunlight can actually impact your mental health, and even bring about symptoms of depression? It's a real medical condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder, also known as SAD.

If you begin to notice that you're not feeling like yourself, or experience depression, feel less enthusiastic about activities that normally bring you pleasure, start eating too much or too little, have trouble sleeping or sleep too much, and just feel like there is no point to life, you might be experiencing SAD.

The good news is there are some simple steps you can take to reduce your seasonal depression and start feeling better. Here are eight strategies that can make a big difference.

## Light box therapy

The idea behind light box therapy is to supplement the deficiency in natural sunlight this time of year. The patient sits in front of the light box for 30 to 60 minutes each day, usually while working. Ideally, you want a full spectrum light box that emits at least 10,000 LUX. These can be found online inexpensively. Of course, always talk to your doctor first.

## Vitamin D supplements

Many people who experience depression from SAD also have lower vitamin D levels. Your doctor can do a simple blood test to determine your levels. Adding a vitamin D supplement is both easy and inexpensive and has helped many people feel better. Your doctor can best advise you on how much you need to take.

## Add a pop of color

The shortened days with less sunlight combined with gray overcast skies is what's behind SAD. When you can, add bright vibrant colors to your space. For example,

you could paint an accent wall a bright orange or yellow, decorate with a color pallet with bright and cheerful colors, and also wear colorful clothing.

## Exercise

Getting plenty of physical activity is great to reduce symptoms of SAD and improves mental health in general. If you workout indoors that's fine, but for an added bonus to help SAD, get outside when it's not too cold. You can do things like go for a walk, rake leaves, play in the snow or just anything that gets the blood flowing for at least 20 minutes.

## Head south

Make sure and use any paid time off and think about heading south for a break. The days are a little longer with more sunlight, and the weather is much warmer which will help relieve some of your depression. Walking around on the beach vs. being stuck indoors will definitely help improve how you feel.

## Get excited about other things in life

We know that SAD comes about in certain people with a deficiency of certain brain chemicals like serotonin. You can naturally boost serotonin by making sure all areas of your life are going well. Are you happy with your career? Are your personal relationships healthy and thriving? Are you excited about the future? Getting these parts of your life in order will help combat SAD.

## Avoid alcohol

It might be tempting to want to unwind with a beer or glass of wine at the end of the day, but alcohol is a downer and will only make your depression worse. Stick to water as much as possible and also make sure to eat a healthy diet filled with nutrient-rich foods that help your body function optimally.

## Talk to your doctor

If you don't feel better or your symptoms get worse, see a doctor and get professional help. Some people need antidepressants and/or psychotherapy during the fall and winter months to help



them feel better. Remember, getting help is a sign of strength and is necessary for a lot of people.

## The takeaway

Seasonal depression is a very real condition. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms or you see a change in your mental health, it's important to do something about it. Do not be ashamed or

embarrassed. Make an appointment with a mental health professional and get evaluated for SAD. You deserve to be mentally healthy all year round.

Dr. Fumi Stephanie Hancock PsychDNP is the founder of POB Psychiatric Health and the author of 24 self-help books. Visit <https://www.pobpsychiatry.com/>



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# BEACH RETIREMENT LOCATIONS YOU WILL LOVE!

By Barbara Beckly

Retiring on the beach doesn't have to be a daydream for retirees on a narrow budget, according to the editors of International Living. These five beach towns around the world offer great-value living and attractive backdrops—all locales where retirees can live happily along the coast on \$26,000 a year, or much less.

International Living recently curated a list of 75 towns and cities that are worth retirees' attention all located in the good-value countries that make IL's Annual Global Retirement Index. From that list of noteworthy communities, the editors have highlighted a few

key beach town spots where retirees can live well for under \$26,000 a year and enjoy all the comforts and perks of a beach-side retirement.

By contrast from the U.S., in these overseas beach towns your dollars really stretch. And that means you can live close to the water or even have a view, enjoy the offerings of town—eating out, cultural activities like theater and concerts, sailing, snorkeling, and so on—and still spend much less than you would in the US for a more ordinary retirement.

The towns identified come with a price tag to suit all budgets—from as little as \$1,400 a month—and

are in Europe, Latin America, and South America:

Salinas, Ecuador

Salinas is a fully-fledged beach resort—among Ecuadorians, it's probably the country's best-known beach vacation spot. This is the place for those who like having all the necessary amenities at their doorsteps: modern condominium



buildings (which line much of Salinas's miles-long beach), restaurants, coffee shops, and bars.

The beach here is wide, sandy, and clean, bordered by the blue, calm Pacific waters. To the left, the sun is gleaming off a few dozen

motor yachts and sailboats parked in the marina. To the right, the curving shoreline stretches for miles into the distance, with scores of modern, tall buildings mixed with old-fashioned apartments and seaside restaurants.

For folks looking for an upscale beach lifestyle at an affordable price, then Salinas might be the

perfect destination. A monthly budget for a couple living in Salinas runs at \$1,405, or \$16,860 a year. Depending on the lifestyle folks choose, a couple can live well in Santa Marta on a monthly budget of \$1,190 to \$1,790, or

\$14,280 to \$21,480 a year.

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Puerto Vallarta has been an expat haven for over 70 years. During its early years, the city's main business was exporting agricultural products grown in the rich farmlands of the state of Jalisco and the surrounding area. Today Puerto Vallarta has become one of Mexico's biggest tourist destinations, a city that draws property shoppers, fun-seekers, and investors.

Puerto Vallarta has a vibrant culture that will stimulate your senses. You can hear and smell the food sizzling from local food vendors, feel the smooth texture of the multicolored bead arrangements sold by the Huichol people from the western Sierra Madres and see the 11 majestic sculptures from all across the world poised on a mile-and-a-half stretch along the malecón. The bronzed sculptures, contrasting with the soft powder blue of the ocean, are a must-see for art lovers.

Rocha is a department (like a state or province) that stretches more than 100 miles along Uruguay's Atlantic coast. It's an area where you'll find lush pastures dotted with palm trees, pine forests, lagoons, and areas of green hills with granite outcroppings. Rocha's coastline of long sand beaches is punctuated with bays, areas of dunes, rocky points, and small towns.

The most popular area for retirees in Rocha is in and near the coastal town of La Paloma.

La Paloma's Centro is on the Cape of Santa Maria. The main street is lined with restaurants, a few hotels, low-rise condos, markets, a casino, and many shops. At the end of the cape, you'll find a large bay, a lighthouse, and a commercial boat harbor. On each side of the cape, there are residential beach neighborhoods. You also find private communities and small farms near La Paloma.

A couple can live well here on a monthly budget of \$2,165, or \$25,980 a year.

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# DJ Hed of Real 92.3 Brings "Industry Thursday" to Downtown Los Angeles

By Contributing Writer

**D**J Hed of Real 92.3 takes over the Los Angeles music scene with another epic 'Industry Thursdays,' the culture-shifting weekly event series bringing locals downtown to knock elbows with music business elite and today's hottest breaking stars. Produced by Tvrnstyle Events, with support from Real 92.3 and Homegrown Radio, the nightlife



experience has featured a multitude of star talent in its first three installments including Billboard chart-topping artist, Blxst, viral-sensation Rapper O.T. Genasis, Grammy award-winning Songwriter/Producer Larrance 'Rance' Dopson of 1500 or Nothin', and multi-platinum Singer/Songwriter/Music Producer Ty Dolla \$ign.

Industry elite in attendance in previous weeks have included tastemakers and executives from EMPIRE, Interscope, Roc Nation, Pandora, Sirius XM, iHeart Radio, EPIC, Deathrow Records, Amazon, Kannon Entertainment and more. The red-carpet has seen several recognizable guests such as Grammy-winner Ant Clemons, Music

Executive Whitney Taber, Grammy-winner Candace Wakefield, Multi-platinum producer My Guy Mars, Artist Manager Hen-Gee, Melanie Halfkenny of 'Queen and Slim', Kris Lofton of "Power Book IV:Force" and HBO's "Ballers," Up-and-comer Zach Zoya, Comedian Slink Johnson, R&B Songstress and daughter of Chaka Khan, Ikhan, and others.

The iconic downtown venue, LA Reserve, boasts a vintage 920's era feel as guests enter through a historic vault entrance, leading to signature craft cocktails served from multiple bars, luxurious VIP booth seating, and two separate dancefloors. Entry is free for ladies before 11 p.m. with RSVP on Eventbrite, or with ticket purchase locals and visitors gain access to entertainment's elite and live appearances by celebrity guests. Private table reservations and VIP bottle service are available by contacting 213-716-9400. To provide for the safety of all guests, this venue will adhere to city and state COVID-19 safety guidelines.

From his hometown of Carson, California to radio broadcasting school to international tours to your favorite radio stations, DJ Hed is more than music. "The Coast Guard" as he's come to be known as, is a staple in the Los Angeles hip hop scene, yet has garnered national recognition. As a philanthropist, DJ Hed consistently contributes to the local community through charities, fundraisers, schools and strong political alliances. Hed keeps crowds moving worldwide touring superstars such as Lil Wayne, Kendrick Lamar, and Tech N9ne. He's also collaborated with Grammy-winning and multi-platinum talent like Snoop Dogg, Mack 10, Jay Rock, Nipsey Hussle, and Rick Ross. Hed is currently the official DJ / Host of Netflix' "Rhythm & Flow", BET Hip Hop Awards, Cypher DJ, and hosts and produces for Los Angeles' Real 92.3 'Home Grown Radio' show, which airs from midnight to 2 a.m. every Saturday and Sunday, along with partner and co-host, Chuck Dizzle.

## DENTAL Insurance

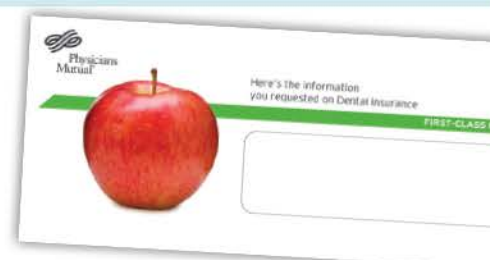
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## Is A Wet Suit Right For You?

### Maybe A Life Jacket Is A Better Option...

By Vikram Kumar

For anything that you do or try, what you are wearing becomes very important.

The men’s and women’s life jacket, or water skiing wetsuits, or any type of athletic swimwear helps to keep you comfortable and warm as against the cold waters, and they also look fashionable at the same time!

Buying the right life jacket or wetsuits that fit you with full comfort can get a little pricey sometimes. The main question that arises then is whether you should really invest on your swimwear. Do the men or

women’s life jacket, or the water skiing wetsuits have any special importance? Yes, we all know, a well-fitted life jacket will help to keep your head above the water; enabling you to breathe, and not drown at the same time; but what else?

Here in this article, we will tell you why you need a life jacket or wetsuits. Keep reading.

First, you should take note that your life jacket fulfils these three conditions:

The life jacket should be in a usable and good condition.

It should fit you appropriately.

It should be approved by the concerned authorities; for example, in US, life jackets



sports/boating, any sort of accident may occur, and a right fitting, good quality life jacket will prevent you from drowning in the water.

You will be prepared: Accidents related to water sports do not really depend on the weather conditions. Factors like the lack of attention of the operator, machine failure, excessive speed, and so on can also cause a mishap anytime. When you are wearing a life jacket, you are prepared to

face any sort of misfortune, and still be safe.

You will be warm: The modern life jackets are made of fabric and materials that help to keep you warm while you are dipping in the cold waters. If you are floating in the waters waiting for your boat to arrive, the ski jackets would be perfect for you.

In case you are not in your senses: Well, there are many who love to go on a leisure boat trip, and sip away some alcohol matching the day’s pleasant weather. Not hard to guess that such people may sometimes fall off the boat due to their drunkenness. This is when the life jackets come into the picture, and help to save their precious lives.

Turn the right way: You may have fallen unconscious with your face touching the water, which can be very harmful for you. There are certain life jackets that help to flip you in the right way and save you from any danger.

Be an example: Safety first! You wear a life jacket and set an example for the rest of the group by following the safety standards effectively. Educate the others about the benefits of a life jacket in case they don’t know.

Similar to life jackets, water skiing wetsuits help to keep you warm in the cold waters by trapping some heat in the fabric used to make it. A thick and well-fitted wetsuit would be beneficial for you, and could help you to swim faster.

have to be Coast Guard approved.

Let us see the benefits of a life jacket: Your life will be saved: During water

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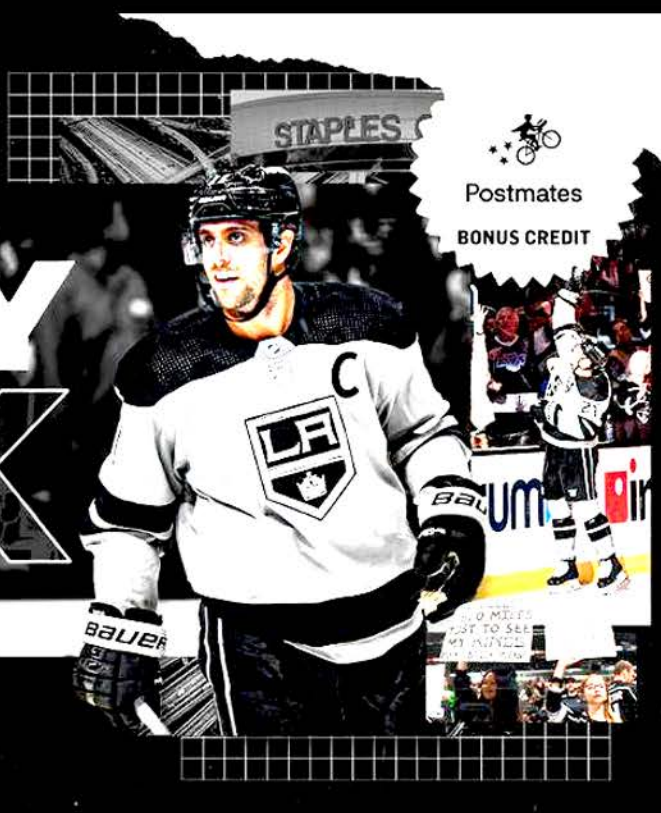
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## HOW TO CRATE TRAIN YOUR DOG IN 9 EASY STEPS!

By Shannon Sharpe

We all want a well-behaved dog that doesn't tear things up and goes to the bathroom outside — and dog crate training is an important part of that. A crate creates a safe environment for your dog and a space that belongs to them.

While many people view crates through the human lens of being “caged up,” dogs are naturally den animals and most enjoy being in small, enclosed places. A crate provides them with a feeling of security, and when trained to use them from an early age, crates can help calm anxiety.

**Step 1: Choose the Right Crate for Your Dog**

You want to get one that's durable, comfortable, and flexible with whatever training you're doing. For dogs that prefer to sleep in the dark, she recommends kennel or airline crates (which are more enclosed), while wire crates work best for other dogs. It's important, she notes, that you don't buy a crate that is too big for your dog. “Depending on how big your dog is going to get, buy the right crate for their adult size,” she advises. “Then get a divider so you can build the space and grant them more and more space.”

**Step 2: Establish the Proper Mindset**

The more the dogs associate the crate with a relaxed mindset, the more they'll ultimately enjoy hanging out in there. If you put the dog in the crate when they're playing, then they'll want to come back out and continue to play. But if you bring them in it when they're calm, they will likely view it as a place of rest. Start by bringing them in for 10 minutes at a time and work your way up from there.

**Step 3: Determine How Your Dog Will Be Most Comfortable**

Some people use dog beds or towels to create a comfy environment, but that may not always be the best option. Once again, it's trial and error. “Depending on the dog you have, they may tear a dog bed apart or they may use it to pee on,” she warns. “It's not a bad thing for them to just sleep on the crate mat itself. Dogs actually do prefer hard surfaces.”

**Step 4: Give the Dog a Treat After They Go Into the Crate**

Give them a treat that they are familiar with. When they're hanging out in the crate, they want something that comforts them. It gets the dog used to being in the crate for a longer period of time,

while also associating it with an enjoyable activity.

**Step 5: Keep an Eye on the Time**

Your dog needs time outside the crate to play, eat, and use the bathroom. Dogs don't want to soil where they sleep, but if there's too long of a stretch without a walk, they might end up doing so.

**Step 6: Play Crate Games**

The dog shouldn't see the crate as a negative place. To ensure this, incorporate the crate into fun games where the pup goes in and out of the open crate at their own will. Throw the ball in the crate when playing fetch or hide treats inside for the dog to find.

**Step 7: Keep Your Dog “Naked”**

Dogs should never, ever have collars or tags or anything on when they're in the crate. If the tag gets caught in the crate the dog could strangle.

**Step 8: Set Your Dog Up for**



**Success**

Once you are ready to give your dog more time inside the crate, do it in small steps. You don't want to go out to dinner for six hours. Maybe just go get a cup of coffee and come back. Some use a recording device to determine what your dog does while you're gone. Are they anxious? Are they pacing? Or are they calm? Then you know — and when you come back, you can


reward them.”

**Step 9: Be Patient**

Prepare yourself for at least six months of training. There will be ups and downs since dogs aren't linear learners, but success will come. Even when it feels like you're banging your head against a wall, as long as you stay calm and consistent in your methodology, your dog will eventually look for the reward and you'll have the opportunity to reward them.

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## How To Build A Home Theater Within Your Budget

By Contributing Writer



ogy with 800 unit brightness. To safeguard, motorized fabric covers the screen. Therefore it's the luxurious display you can have.

**The Speakers.** Obviously, you feel more excited and encourage towards watching your more wanted movie particularly when you experience amazing sound quality. With "AMINA LOUDSPEAKERS", you will, experience true theater sound without disturbing the home atmosphere. The speakers are crafted in such a manner that those can be fitted into the wall under just a thin plaster layer so they become invisible completely. The best thing is that with this amazing sound solution you easily hear every word spoken quietly. In fact, with these speakers, your action movies will become action-packed and scary ones will become scarier respectively.

**The Seats.** No one like you want to sit on the uncomfortable seat until the movie gets over. Of course, to enjoy every scene of the movie you will want to have the ultimate seat doesn't matter whether watching at your home. "ROW ONE" evolution provides leather and medium solidity foam seat and your body will be adapted and you will get all support you need. With LED light equipped and cup holder, you can choose to buy this one.

**The Media Player.** If you spare an impressive sum of funds to buy a screen but don't spare a good amount on buying a media player, you will spoil your movie-watching experience. The "OPPO UDP-205" media player featuring high dynamic range and 4K viewing will affect video quality very well. It's a dream choice for audiophiles with greater fidelity audio show. Having a classy hitherto simple design, it will perfectly match with your home theater set.

**The Snack.** Always moving watching experience will be incomplete if you compromise with eating favorite snacks. "Popcorn Nostalgia1911 Popper" is one of the best pieces to add. It pops the popcorn you always like to have while watching the movie.

**Finale.** To have a complete set of long-run home theater will allow you to enjoy the movie at any time without moving out in heavy rainfall or hot sunny day.

If you are the one who is always audio & visual keen, it's possible that you find yourself dreaming about buying and using the long run home theater. A cinema promising very good audio-visual quality, relaxing seating and impressive décor will set your mood. What your TV would display your much-loved movie scenes? What sound quality your TV would produce? What seat would allow you to relax and watch the movie? Everything easily becomes a failure in front of the home theater system your purchase.

And the budget factor should be of no distress. Here is the list of all that you need to establish a complete home theater for you from Home2decor

**The Display.** If you want to have an amazing experience of movie watching at your home, you should look at "C SEED 262", the world's biggest 4K widescreen TV. You will get a better visual experience that you never had found in cinema halls. In addition to that, it provides a world record-sized screen, big 262". This display is well equipped with 2 surround sound configurations- 9.1 and 7.1 respectively. Also, it is equipped with UHD technol-

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# NEWS OF THE WEIRD

By Andrews McMeel Syndication

When David Saunders, 98, died of COVID-19 in late August, his family donated his body to Med Ed Labs for medical and science research. But KING-TV in Portland, Oregon, reports that Med Ed sold the cadaver to Jeremy Ciliberto, the organizer of the Oddities and Curiosities Expo, which travels around the country and charges spectators \$500 to observe in person the autopsy and dissection of a human body. When investigators alerted Mike Clark, the funeral director in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, who had prepared Saunders' body for donation, he was mortified: "I was totally horrified ... he and his family thought that his body was going for the advancement of medical students." Instead, it went to a Marriott ballroom, where participants were invited to examine and touch the body -- which might still have been infectious. Ciliberto says he can "guarantee" that the departed and his family knew what his body would be used for, but a Med Ed spokesman says the event organizer was "beyond dishonest."

In Winnipeg, Manitoba, a heist went wrong on Oct. 31 when thieves broke into a vacant house to steal a furnace. The Winnipeg Police Service told the CBC that neighbors reported smelling natural gas, and when officers responded, they saw two unconscious people inside the home. The thieves, who had been "overcome by the noxious gas fumes" after the gas line became dislodged, regained consciousness outside and were questioned, but, because this is Canada, were later released without charges.

Islamic police in Karo, Nigeria, arrested 26-year-old Aliyu Na Idris on Oct. 26 because he was trying to sell himself for 20 million nara, or about \$49,000, Oddity Central reported. He works as a tailor, but said, "The decision to sell myself was due to poverty. I plan to give my parents 10 million nara when I eventually get a buyer." Police said what he did was "forbidden in Islam," but he was released the day after his arrest and said the police only gave him advice.

The New York Earth Room was created in 1977 by artist Walter De Maria and consists of a second-floor apartment at 141 Wooster Street that is filled with ... dirt. The room's caretaker, Bill Dilworth, waters and rakes the dirt regularly, Oddity Central reported, and welcomes up to 100 visitors a day. "The artist never attached any meaning to it," Dilworth said. Admission is free to view the 250 cubic yards of soil, but people are not allowed to take photographs or touch the dirt.

Tahonee Fickes, 20, chose the closest weapon at hand to assault Kimberly Pittman, 52, inside a Walmart in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, on Oct. 7. A criminal complaint filed on Oct. 27 charges that Fickes "threw a cold chicken" at Pittman, striking her on the back of the head, according to The Smoking Gun. Fickes and Pittman are not related, and police have not determined a motive for the chicken hit. Fickes is facing an unrelated child endangerment charge as well.

As Braiden Lankford, 20, and her mother, 50, argued about the "cleanliness of the house" on Oct. 23 in their home near Tampa Bay, Lankford struck her mother in the head with two tacos, The Smoking Gun reported. When police arrived, "the victim had food debris all around her on the couch and on the back of her shirt," police reported. The mother was not injured, but Lankford was charged with domestic battery.

In International Falls, Minnesota, the city council voted in late October to stop dressing up the 26-foot-tall statue of Smokey Bear that stands in the center of (where else?) Smokey Bear Park, Minnesota Public Radio reported. The residents of the city have adorned Smokey for decades with seasonal attire, such as fishing gear during the summer or earmuffs, mittens and a 25-foot-long scarf during winter months. But when Mayor Harley Droba talked with other Minnesota towns with giant statues (Paul Bunyan in Bemidji, the Jolly Green Giant in Blue Earth), he learned that they "thought it was kind of crazy" that Smokey was getting dressed up. Council member Mike Holden said he would miss decorating Smokey, but "they don't want the importance of Smokey the Bear to be degraded."

Around 9:30 p.m. on Oct. 31, surveillance cameras at the WJHG-TV property in Panama City Beach, Florida, captured a man cutting and removing cables attached to satellite dishes, taking the company's eight stations off the air. An employee saw that the feeds were interrupted and went outside to check, where the man said he was with Tyndall Air Force Base and was told to cut the wires because of a power issue, WJHG reported. Then he ran away. "This is not just a random act of vandalism," said general manager Ulysses Carlini. "This person knew what he was doing." The stations were back on air by Nov. 2, but police are still looking for the culprit.

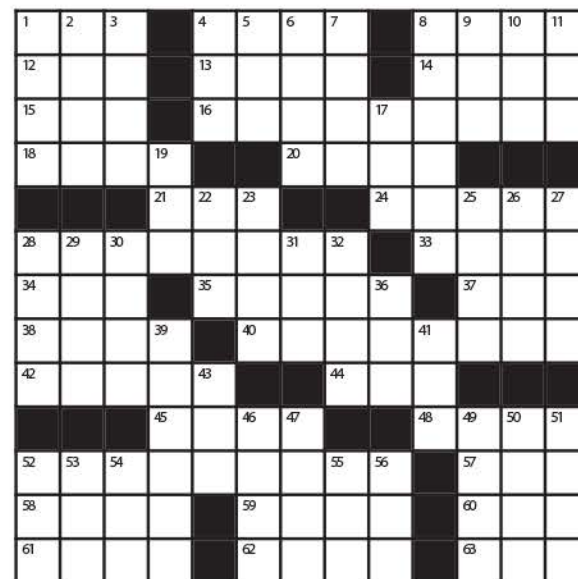
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## Across

- Prime example of stubbornness
- Pinball paths
- Presage
- Cold war leader
- Fasten your coat
- Dutch \_\_\_\_
- Bomber pilot in "Catch 22"
- Uncultivated area
- Ukraine city
- French cheese
- North pole pixie
- Fort near Lafayette
- It preys on snakes
- Reed section member
- Genderless pronoun
- Excel feature
- Florida county
- Polaris, for one
- Unthoughtthrough reaction
- S African language
- Running bird
- Majestic
- Prepare for action
- Problem from too much reading
- Feathered stole
- Squire
- 1952 Olympics site
- Suffix with ideal
- Collection of musical notes
- It's a gas
- Fall guy

## Down

- Frenziedly
- Eastern attire
- Ticked
- Magazine revenue source
- Mythical bird
- Rein in
- Sharp projection
- Ravel classic
- Some germ cells
- Household study
- Conclusion
- Chest protector
- Take it easy
- Fireplace piece
- Pay, with "over"
- Up to it
- Commuter
- Tech expert
- Green tree covering



- Placed above
- Orderly
- Japanese title
- Sword type
- Enclose
- Indian monkey used in experimental medicine
- Large liquid container
- Select, with "for"
- Multivitamin supplement
- Carrier
- Nile bird
- Alps second highest
- Steamy
- Abate
- All right!
- Musical talent
- Worker bee interest group
- Alternative to smoking

## Bad Dad Jokes

Got my wife a wooden leg for Christmas.  
-Not her main present, it's just a stocking filler.



## Previous



# VENTURA HARBOR VILLAGE HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

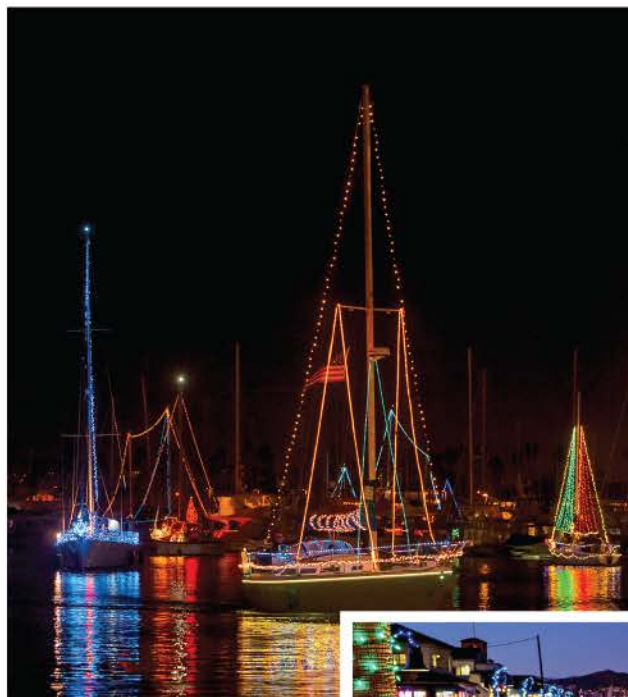
By Susan Bejeckian

It's the most wonderful time of the year and Ventura Harbor Village, located off of Highway 101, invites visitors to celebrate joyous TIDEings with friends and family in true nautical style. Holiday goes from near and far can embrace the sights, sounds, and smells that are unique to the seaside destination.

Putting you in the holiday spirit – Ventura Harbor Village is creating a spectacular backdrop with ocean-inspired seasonal decorations in a color palette of sparkling blue, aqua, and green beachy hues Thanksgiving through New Year's, and is showcasing festive spiraling sea pearls, whimsical holiday trees, vibrant wreaths and other glistening décor that reflects off the marina waters as part of the "SEAsons Greetings" holiday display.

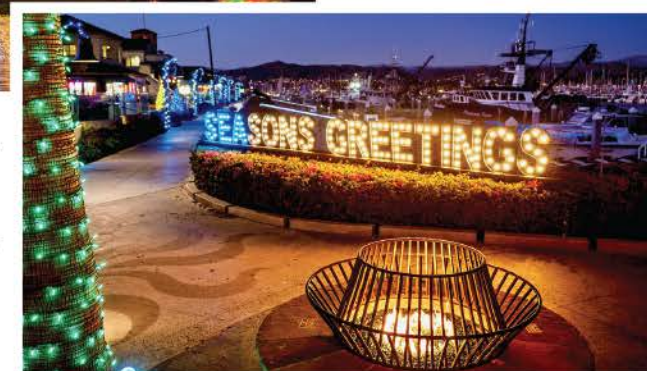
The wonder and magic of the SEAson comes alive at this haven for sun and fun. Planned are a series of spectacular "must-sea" events as part of a two-day holiday celebration that includes Small Business Saturday on Saturday November 27, Winter Wonderland & Holiday Marketplace at Ventura Harbor Village on Saturday, December 11, featuring Santa and Mrs. Claus, live reindeer, faux snow flurries, and carolers clad in traditional costumes plus a Santa Paddle at 11 a.m.), and the popular 2021 Ventura Harbor Parade of Lights & Fireworks on Friday December 17 & 18 at 6:30 p.m. and scenic holiday cruises with Island Packers.

The already picturesque harbor will shine even brighter during the holidays with fabulous seaside dining on scenic covered



Friday, December 17 and Saturday, December 18, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Vivid and bright, the procession of colorfully-decorated boats is a spectacle to behold. Everyone is invited to kick off this "Back to Seality" themed boat parade. Multi options for getting on the water are available too. Make reservations to dine seaside and come enjoy the beauty of the holiday season.

Visitors can also revel in the true spirit of the season with additional special happenings and holiday



patios where diners can enjoy cuisine from around the world. Following a relaxing meal, visitors can stroll along the promenade to browse one-of-a-kind finds from Ventura's locally owned makers with no shortage of gifts found seaside.

The seaside destination entices shoppers with a Ventura Harbor Village Holiday Shopping Passport, whereby they can get stamps and enter to win a \$150+ holiday gift package plus \$25 each week of gift cards from November 27- December 19, 2021. No shortage of fabulous coastal gifts found her at Ventura Harbor Village. Makers, artists and small business owners offer plenty of stree-free shopping and make gift-giving fun and easy!

Add a little joy to your holidays with Ventura Harbor Village's annual Winter Wonderland & Holiday Marketplace, Saturday, December 11th from noon- 4 p.m. Visit with Santa & Mrs. Claus and their live reindeer, enjoy live carolers, a faux snowfall for kids and much more while you shop at locally-owned stores and art galleries. Give JOY -by bringing canned goods and socks for drives for those in need + receive free gifts for donations.

It's a "wow" moment when spectators get their first glimpse of the magnificent boats amid festive décor at the 2021 Ventura Harbor Parade of Lights & Fireworks on

cruises at Ventura Harbor this December.

In the true spirit of the season, The Ventura Pottery Gallery, which features handcrafted pottery from more than 35 local potters, is giving visitors a shopping incentive: a handmade pottery gift when you spend \$25 (one per customer while supplies last) in November from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. while supplies last.

Santa is trading wind chill for sunny shores with 5th Annual Santa Paddle, on Saturday, December 11, 2021 at 11 a.m. This delightful event is complimentary to participants, however visitors can rent a kayak, SUP, or stand-up YOLO board or character pedal boats from Ventura Boat Rentals.

Cruise in style to view holiday lights with friends/family during a one-hour Island Packers Public Harbor Light Cruise: December 8-12, December 15 and 19 and December 20-23, 2021 - 6:30-7:30 p.m. Cost: \$17 for adults, \$14 for seniors 55+ and \$11 for children. For advance reservations call 805-642-1393 or visit www.IslandPackers.com

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## CHOOSING SAFER GIFTS FOR YOUR KIDS THIS HOLIDAY

By Rachel Ehmke



This Holiday Season, Medical and Tech Experts Warn Against Gifting Smartphones and Wi-Fi Enabled Toys to Children

Radiation risk poses danger to children. “Choose safe toys for your children, not wi-fi connected toys or smartphones,” is the message the Environmental Health Trust is sharing after recently winning a victory in the U.S. Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia Circuit. The court ordered the Federal Communications Commission to explain why it ignored scientific evidence showing harm from wireless radiation. Included in the evidence that the FCC ignored, are studies on the impact of wireless exposure to children.

Because children’s skulls are thinner and their brains and bodies contain more fluid, they will absorb more cell phone microwave

radiation. The American Academy of Pediatrics has made recommendations that parents should limit cell phone use by children, keep the phone away from the head and instead of streaming wirelessly, pre-download games and videos so children can use the technology more safely in airplane mode.

Studies at National Institutes of Health National Toxicology Program found cell phone radiation led to cancers in the hearts and brains of male rats. DNA damage was also found. In 2021, a study by the Environmental Working Group published in Environmental Health, analyzed the NIH NTP study and concluded that U.S. safety limits needed to be 200 to 400 times stronger to protect children. A Yale Medicine study found that mice prenatally exposed to cell phone radiation had increased hyperactivity and impaired memory.

“Cell phones were never pre-market tested for long-term safety,” said Devra Davis, Ph.D., president of the Environmental Health Trust, a scientific think tank that promotes healthier environment through research, education and policy. “Safety limits for radiation were set 25 years ago, based on 35-year-old science and using a model of a large, adult male. Over a dozen countries inform parents to limit their children’s exposure because they are more vulnerable and will have a lifetime of exposure,” Davis explained. “Parents assume they’re buying devices and toys that have been deemed safe but no U.S. health agency has ever completed a systematic evaluation of the health risks of wireless radiation.”

While all cell phones have fine print warnings about keeping a distance between the phone and the body, the instructions are easy to miss. For instance, the Apple iPhone 13 should not be closer than 5 mm. The Amazon Echo has a distance of 20 cm, or about 8 inches. Laptops and many wi-fi toys advise keeping an “8-inch distance” from the body. When cellphones and wi-fi devices are held close to the body, the wireless radiation absorption can exceed U.S. safety limits that were set for adults more than two decades ago.

Here are EHT’s recommendations for parents this holiday season to keep kids safe:

- Gift toys, dolls and games without cellular and wireless connection.
- Hold off on getting your child a smartphone.
- Choose a regular watch—wi-fi free instead of a smartwatch.
- Ensure cameras have a setting to turn the wi-fi antenna off.
- Teach children to set devices onto airplane mode so wireless antenna are OFF.
- Avoid drones as gifts.

Because smartphones, smart toys and other smart home devices have become ubiquitous in our daily lives, we rarely think about how this technology works. But it’s not holiday magic—it’s wireless microwave radiation. All wireless devices from smartphones to wi-fi and connected dolls and stuffed animals, are two-way microwave radios that send and receive a type of non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation called radio frequency or RF radiation or microwaves.

Many physicians are cautioning about how this daily exposure will affect children’s health in the long term. Before buying your child a wi-fi toy or a cell phone this holiday, be sure to learn the facts. EHT has resources for parents on how to reduce exposure at home.

Visit [www.EHTTrust.org](http://www.EHTTrust.org) for more information.

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## HOLIDAY ROAD CALABASAS AN IMMERSIVE HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE

By Katherine Lee

Television Production and Event Industry veterans Ben Biscotti, Tony Schubert and Bobby Rossi announced today that Calabasas' renowned Holiday Road holiday experience will expand to two additional markets for the first time ever this year in Atlanta and Virginia. The enchanting walking trail filled with illuminated lights, larger-than-life holiday installations and iconic holiday scenes will dazzle visitors across the country, providing a safe and festive outing for guests of all ages.

Holiday Road is the premiere holiday attraction. Expansive grounds filled with eye-catching, twinkling lights and festive installations will welcome visitors as they meander through the winding trail in each city. Guests will be transported into a winter wonderland complete with everything from the North Pole, Elf Village, Gingerbread Lane, light tunnels, Christmas tree forests, and much more!

"We're thrilled to introduce our annual Holiday Road holiday event in an even bigger way this year by expanding to two new markets this season in Virginia and Atlanta," said Holiday Road founding team members Ben Biscotti, Tony Schubert, and Bobby Rossi in a joint statement. "We can't wait for guests across the country to experience the magic of Holiday Road and fully immerse themselves in an unforgettable winter wonderland."

Holiday Road is committed to ensuring the safety of all patrons and staff. The event encourages attendees to follow all health and



safety guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid-19. To see what measures the staff will be taking, visit the Health & Safety page.

Additional Information

Holiday Road will be open to the public from December 3 through December 31 from 5:00pm – 10:00pm

Tickets can purchased at Tickets: [www.holidayroadusa.com](http://www.holidayroadusa.com)

Location: King Gillette Ranch: 26800 Mulholland Hwy, Calabasas, CA 91302 Price is \$29.99 and up depending on day of the week and time of season (2 years and under are free admission)

About Holiday Road

Holiday Road is a holiday event tailored for all ages. The immersive experience showcases thousands of festive lights as well as iconic holiday scenes situated throughout the stunning property

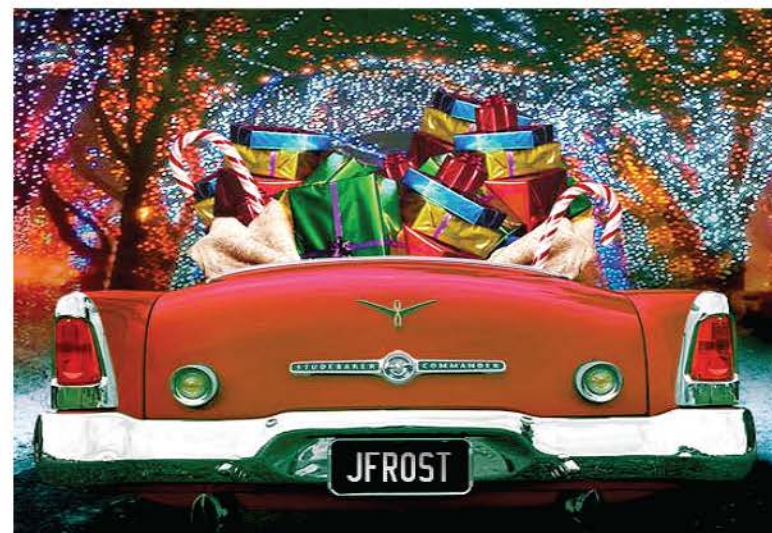
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at King Gillette Ranch in Calabasas, CA. The team behind this holiday happening is a partnership comprised of production and hospitality industry veterans Ben Biscotti, Co-Founder & President of Iiota Productions, Award-winning event producer & designer Tony Schubert of Event Eleven,

and hospitality & marketing impresario Bobby Rossi of Motley Projects.

To learn more and join the conversation, use the hashtag #HolidayRoad and follow Holiday Road on social media:

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## A Career Wardrobe On A Budget

By Contributing Writer



In the workforce, as the job market becomes more competitive, appearances can either make or break you. Yet, many Americans don't have the money to keep up with their bills, much less update their wardrobe with fashion-forward staples. But looking professional doesn't have to require a bank loan. It just takes a little clothing-care know-how.

According to a recent national survey sponsored by Woolite, 70 percent of American women surveyed admitted to throwing away clothing at least once a year due to misinformed laundry decisions that resulted in pilling, fading, stretching or bleeding of clothes. In fact, nearly \$2 billion worth of clothing was ruined last year due to laundry-related mistakes.

Stacy London, co-host of TLC's fashion show "What Not to Wear," offers these tips for the working fashionista looking to maintain her look on a budget:

### First and foremost, take care of the clothes you have.

Avoid ruining the clothes you already own by following each garment's cleaning instructions. Using a non-harsh detergent, like Woolite, on all of your favorite fashions can help to protect your style investments and extend an outfit's life.

### Shop your closet.

A-line skirts and simple cardigans never go out of style, so if you already own a few, stop pushing them to the back of the closet. Combine that A-line skirt with a colorful blouse and a curve-complementing blazer, and you'll be more than ready for your next presentation.

### Invest in versatile pieces.

When you do shop for professional clothing, look for pieces that can be worn in and out of the office. The blazer is an easy flattering transition piece that can be translated from day to night. Find a "little black dress" in three season fabrics to get the most wear all year round.

Having recently partnered with Woolite to create the "Find the Look, Keep the Look" program, London is dedicated to educating clothes-minded individuals on looking their best every day. Ten boutique owners from across the country have also joined this partnership to offer their insight on regional style trends. Together, they created the "Look Book," a compilation of basic wardrobe must-haves. The entire book is available online for free at [www.findthelookkeepthelook.com](http://www.findthelookkeepthelook.com).

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