BANKING ON LEGALIZATION

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## NEWS...6
Uber pays $10 million to L.A. and San Francisco to settle false-advertising suit. **BY DENNIS ROMERO.**
Caltrans will share its roadway data with Waze, making driving in L.A. easier for all. **BY DENNIS ROMERO.**

## EAT & DRINK...27
How the bakers at Lodge Bread found success by breaking with tradition. **BY SCOTT REITZ.**

## GO LA...33
Dinosaurs take over the L.A. Zoo, vinyl lovers celebrate Record Store Day, Bard lovers celebrate Shakespeare Day and more stuff to do and see in L.A. this week.

## CULTURE...38
In CULTURE, local comedian Bobbie Oliver has created a place where other female comedians can thrive. In ART PICKS, sculptures create a beautiful laboratory. In STAGE, the Central American refugee crisis comes to L.A.'s Eastside.

## FILM...51
**BILGE EBRİ** swears that Disney's *The Jungle Book* is good, and **APRIL WOLFE** finds Emma Watson starrer *Colonia* hard to peg, plus reviews of *Francofonia*, *Green Room*, *Sing Street* and other movies OPENING THIS WEEK, and YOUR WEEKLY MOVIE TO-DO LIST.

## MUSIC...59
**MATT WAKE** delves into the unlikely origin of Slash's Appetite for Destruction guitar, and **JEFF WEISS**

## ADVERTISING
**CLASSIFIED...77**
**EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT...78**
**REAL ESTATE/RENTALS...78**
**BULLETIN BOARD...79**

---

**BANKING ON LEGALIZATION ... 11**
Here’s how marijuana legalization will change California ... and how it won’t. Who benefits and how much will it be worth? **BY DAVID FUTCH, DENNIS ROMERO AND MADISON MARGOLIN.**

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**ON THE COVER:** PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN ORANGE

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UBER SETTLES LAWSUIT OVER FALSE ADS

Ride-hail company will pay $10 million to Los Angeles and San Francisco

BY DENNIS ROMERO

Uber’s going to send checks worth a total of $10 million to the people of Los Angeles and San Francisco. In late 2014, the district attorneys of L.A. and San Francisco sued the ride-hail company for allegedly lying to consumers about the strictness of its driver background checks.

Critics have long decried ride-hail companies’ lack of fingerprinting for drivers, arguing that would-be drivers with criminal records could pose as upstanding citizens and the app firms might never know.

Uber admitted no wrongdoing, but it did agree to pay $10 million upfront along with a guarantee of an additional $15 million if it didn’t adhere to terms of the settlement in the next two years, Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office officials said. The settlement was reached April 7.

Prosecutors cited past Uber advertising that claimed the company was “setting the strictest safety standards possible” with background checks that used “industry-leading standards.” One company rep was quoted as saying Uber’s checks were “often more rigorous than what is required to become a taxi driver.”

Taxi drivers are required to be fingerprinted, and those prints are checked against federal and state criminal records. Such Live Scan fingerprinting tends to be more expensive and time-consuming.

At the time the suit was filed, L.A. district attorney Jackie Lacey said Uber “put consumers at risk by misleading the public about the back-
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Waze’s L.A. Freeway Info Is About to Get Better

CALTRANS WILL SHARE ITS ROADWAY DATA WITH “WAZERS”

BY DENNIS ROMERO

Your experience may vary. But every time we get on the 10 freeway at the behest of Waze, it’s the wrong call. Maybe the 10 is just always a parking lot.

The good news is that traffic app Waze’s freeway and highway info could be getting a lot better. Caltrans this week announced that it will be providing its own roadway data to the app firm. We’re talking “road condition reporting data, construction and road closure information,” according to a statement from the state agency.

In return, Waze will give its user-generated traffic data to Caltrans. The agency will make that information available on its online QuickMap.

“Combining the real-time anonymous data from Waze with Caltrans’ vast network of traffic management systems is a win-win for California drivers,” said Caltrans director Malcolm Dougherty.

Happy trails.

Lyft settled a similar suit, agreeing not to exaggerate the efficacy of its background checks and submitting to local rules for airport pickups and dropoffs. Likewise, Uber must adhere to pickup and dropoff rules at all California airports, pass along all airport fees it charges passengers, and submit to California Department of Agriculture’s Division of Measurement Standards for free calculations, Los Angeles prosecutors said.

The deal is part of a stipulated judgment approved by a San Francisco Superior Court judge, they said. Uber also was barred from making false or misleading statements about its background checks under a previous injunction.

“With this settlement, the ride-sharing company has pledged to communicate honestly about its driver background checks and airport fees, important steps to protecting the residents of California,” Lacey said. Uber said in a statement, “We’re glad to put this case behind us and excited to redouble our efforts serving riders and drivers across the state of California.”

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To hear Troy Dayton tell it, California is on the brink of a gold rush — or, more specifically, a green rush. While insiders are working behind the scenes to put the question of recreational marijuana to voters on the November ballot, investors and business owners throughout the Golden State are getting ready to jump into the recreational pot business.

That business could be very, very big. Medical marijuana infuses $2.7 billion a year into the California economy, and market watchers expect the pot economy to more than double if California voters legalize adult use this fall (see “Growing Money on Trees,” page 14).

“California is responsible for half of all legal cannabis sales in the United States,” says Dayton, CEO of the investment and market research firm ArcView Group, which publishes the report “The State of Legal Marijuana Markets” and represents 500 high-net-worth individuals who have invested $70 million in the cannabis sector.

“California is definitely the biggest prize in the union. We looked at California’s current medical marijuana market. You can times that by 10.”

In addition to an increase in marijuana sales, where’s all this economic growth going to come from? There are some surprising sources, along with the ones you would expect. Everyone from local government officials and almond growers to millennial tech execs and manufacturers of inventory-tracking systems are lining up to get their piece of the brownie.

■ The San Bernardino County city of Adelanto is striving to become a cultivation mecca. City commissioners in this salt-of-the-earth community have approved 31 applications — which cost $7,000 apiece — to qualify as a marijuana grower. And The New York Times reports that the price of land has tripled in Adelanto and Desert Hot Springs as parcels where pot growing is permitted have been snatched up.

■ Central Valley farmers are under attack from conservationists due to high-water crops such as almonds. Some farmers have held meetings in Modesto to consider removing almond trees and planting marijuana in their place. At a recent meeting of farmers and politicos at the Gallo Center for the Arts in Modesto, Stanislaus County Sheriff Adam Christianson received applause (and some laughs) when he told the crowd that the marijuana growers in his county produce some of the best pot around.

■ Canna-tourism is very much a thing. Colorado tourism is up 8 percent since 2015, when pot became legal there. An 8 percent spike in California, where the tourism industry is many times the size of Colorado’s, would have
Inventory-tracking systems will see sales spike, because growers and retailers likely will have to maintain records on every plant from seed to sale. A Florida company now makes the Colorado-required plant tags containing computer chips.

Techie millennial executives in Silicon Valley are more likely to sink money into cannabis than their more traditional corporate counterparts, who may be hesitant to invest for fear of jeopardizing the company name.

“If it becomes legal, the same people who are in it now are going to invest,” says Osiris Santos, a green entrepreneur whose company, AmeriCann, works with dispensary owners on branding and marketing. “The new people who jump in are the people who were afraid to get in before.” Santos works out of KushMart medical marijuana dispensary, four blocks north of the 10 freeway on South Hill Street. From his headquarters, the millennial with long, black hair pulled into a ponytail runs not just AmeriCann but also a separate company that trains dispensary employees on everything from the difference between THC and CBD to being kind and respectful to patients.

Santos also points out that one of the biggest L.A. opportunities in cannabis will be real estate. Warehouses for cultivation are expected to be in high demand. That certainly was the case in Denver, where Jason Thomas, CEO of Avalon Realty Advisors, provides commercial real estate services to the cannabis industry.

Three years ago, just as Colorado was implementing adult use, warehouse vacancy rates sat at 6 percent and rent was $5 a square foot — if you can even find a place zoned for pot cultivation. Now the vacancy rate is 3 percent, and warehouse rent is $13 to $18 a square foot — if you can even find a place zoned for pot cultivation.

Denver warehouse sales in 2013 averaged $65 a square foot. Now the rate is $110, Thomas says. “I liken it to the dot-com boom in Silicon Valley or the entertainment boom in Santa Monica.” Thomas says he’s planning to expand to either the Bay Area or L.A. He pays a Sacramento lobbyist to educate legislators.

“Legalized pot creates opportunities across the spectrum,” says Taylor West, deputy director of the National Cannabis Industry Association. “When an industry of this size comes in, it impacts construction, retail, accounting, the legal field, food, food testing (of marijuana edibles), licensing fees, taxes, banking. California makes up 50 percent of the national market just on medical marijuana alone.

“If [recreational use] passes, it’s going to mark a significant shift in the center of gravity within the industry.”

Steve Berg, chief financial officer of OpenVAPE, which makes cannabis oil products, says, “What escapes people from outside the industry is that our business needs everything a conventional company needs. It’s a tide that floats a lot of boats.”

But it’s not going to be a boon to every business. Defense attorneys won’t have as much work as they once did, says L.A.’s top pot attorney, Bruce Margolin. [Disclosure: Margolin’s daughter wrote the story on page 21.]

“People like me are going to be in trouble, because not many people are going to get busted,” Margolin says. “Judges keep asking me what I’m going to do when marijuana is legalized. I tell them I’m going to try some.”
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By 2007, so many medical marijuana dispensaries had opened in Los Angeles that the City Council imposed a moratorium on new shops. In the next few years, however, illegal collectives mushroomed—to the point that, if one estimate is to be believed, there were more pot shops than Starbucks in the city.

Despite the moratorium, those years were a bonanza for weed sellers.

The big question now is whether that could happen all over again if voters, as some expect, legalize recreational marijuana in November.

The Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA), backed by Silicon Valley billionaire Sean Parker (of Napster and Facebook fame) and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, would allow Californians 21 and older to buy and hold up to an ounce of weed at a time.

A new report, “The State of Legal Marijuana Markets,” by cannabis business analysis firm New Frontier, in partnership with ArcView Market Research, says California’s legal pot revenues could more than double following “adult-use” legalization.

The legit medical marijuana market in the Golden State was worth $2.7 billion in 2015, the report found—more than any other states, including Colorado and Washington, where recreational pot is legal. In 2020, if adult use goes into effect, California’s $2.7 billion could balloon to a whopping $6.6 billion, according to the report.

The 2016 U.S. legal marijuana market, by comparison, is valued at $5.7 billion. Americans are predicted to buy $7.1 billion in pot next year and $21 billion in 2020.

Despite what critics have described as the conservative nature of AUMA—it doesn’t necessarily open the door for more dispensaries or legalize delivery in towns where dispensaries aren’t legal (see “How Recreational Weed Will Change L.A.,” page 17)—the report’s author believes there could indeed be a second wave of growth in California if recreational legalization becomes a reality.

John Kagia, director of industry analytics for New Frontier, acknowledges that AUMA might not expand the retail scene in America’s largest pot market, L.A., where city law imposes strict limits on the number of shops. But he says it could increase demand by eliminating barriers to cannabis, such as a doctor’s recommendation. “One of the things full adult-use legalization does is normalize it a step further,” Kagia says.

Then there’s the prospect of marijuana tourism.

“California, being one of the most important tourism destinations in the country, would be a very significant cannabis-tourism market if it passed adult use,” Kagia says.

Eight percent of tourists in Colorado visit a dispensary, according to “The State of Legal Marijuana Markets.” If that were applied just to Los Angeles, which had 45.5 million visitors last year, it would amount to 3.6 million tourists sampling the local greenery.

Get your cash registers ready.

### Banking on Legalization

**GROWING MONEY ON TREES**

Recreational marijuana in California would be worth billions

By Dennis Romero
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Los Angeles’ green rush started 10 years ago, when entrepreneurs opened the doors of hundreds of medical marijuana dispensaries. Not everyone was on board. Critics and activists decried the invasion of dispensaries into neighborhoods like Eagle Rock and South Carthay, and the city cracked down. In 2007 a moratorium was declared in L.A., and about 135 dispensaries that had registered with the city at the time were ultimately grandfathered in as quasi-legitimate. That didn’t stop a free-for-all explosion of illicit storefronts. Despite 2013’s voter-approved Proposition D, which outlawed pot shops while allowing “limited immunity” from prosecution for those 135, state tax officials estimated last year that there were still 935 “active cannabis businesses in the city of Los Angeles,” which would be more than the number of legal pot outlets in the entire state of Colorado.

With recreational pot aiming for California’s November ballot, a new wave of entrepreneurs has high hopes that the weed business in Los Angeles will explode anew. But some experts point out that the Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA) bases much of its regulation on the Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act (MMRSA), signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in December. That legislation doesn’t allow an increase in the number of L.A.’s legal dispensaries.

But those in the business of marijuana are still psyched. Colorado has hogged the spotlight since legal recreational sales began there in 2014. The passage of recreational, or “adult use,” in California could restore Los Angeles as the nation’s cannabis capital.

“The market’s going to go crazy,” predicts Chris Lindsey, senior legislative analyst for the Marijuana Policy Project. “You’ll get this whole new wave of businesses.”

Optimists say that even if the city continues its restrictions on the number of marijuana dispensaries in town, the demand, including the market for pot tourism, will explode. The hurdle of having to fake an ailment so a doctor will write a $40 recommendation would be eliminated under AUMA. While it’s highly unlikely that you’d see cannabis neatly packaged at your local drugstore, you’d be able to walk into a dispensary without a doctor’s note as long as you’re 21 or older.

Lindsey says the number of recreational pot users is 10 times the number of medical marijuana patients. “L.A. is a mighty market,” he says.

While Colorado’s marijuana retail scene features airy, mall-like retailers that can appear to be like Apple stores for indica, most L.A. shops currently are foreboding fortresses with security guards, buzz-in systems for customers, and a record of being targeted by violent criminals. Where there are drugs and cash, there’s a hustler who wants them. Recreational legalization could change that in L.A.

“I think adult use is going to transform the marijuana business tremendously,” says Mieke ter Poorten, an attorney who has represented L.A. dispensaries. “For those who have been operating under the law, it could transform their businesses into true retailers.”

But tapping into that market won’t be as easy as putting some chronic in a glass case and opening your doors. The adult-use initiative, AUMA, will allow cities like L.A. to continue to ban dispensaries. If City Hall figures out a way to issue permits for the 135 limited-immunity shops in town, or if the Legislature passes an exemption for local permitting, which is in the works, it would still mean that the city would have no more than 135 legal shops, albeit ones that could sell recreational pot to anyone of legal age. If the city’s 2013 ban is not extended (AUMA would require the city to revisit its ban), AUMA could allow for more...
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Legalizing recreational marijuana in L.A. might not lead to more dispensaries, but it could bring more customers to existing ones, such as downtown’s DTHC.

“I actually see L.A.’s dispensary scene contracting,” says Lynne Lyman, state director of the Drug Policy Alliance. “It’s going to be harder to get a license.”

There are proposals in Sacramento and at City Hall to increase taxes on marijuana retailers, and December’s pot regulations will create a state cannabis bureaucracy funded by state weed taxes. Lyman says the funding is likely to finally add teeth to enforcement in Los Angeles. Cops and prosecutors have long complained that they lack resources to close rogue shops. With these proposals, including AUMA, the resources could be around the corner.

“This is going to create a system that’s so much more organized, with clear lines that will allow enforcement to happen in a much more effective way. The [next green] rush will be about who can get their act together.”

—Lynn Lyman, state director of the Drug Policy Alliance

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Indeed, some marijuana businesses are scrambling that the December legislation, along with AUMA, are poised to do little to legitimize what they call “gray-area” businesses, those that have paid taxes but still aren’t legal.

With AUMA, “All we’re doing is adding to the growing list of unallowed collectives,” says Dale Sky Jones, chair of the Coalition for Cannabis Policy Reform.

Critics also say the new state regulations and AUMA could create too much bureaucracy — a sort of Big Government that would thwart the expected green rush. Sen. Mike McGuire of Sonoma County is proposing a 15 percent state tax on marijuana sales to pay for state-mandated policing and licensing of dispensaries. With local and county sales and marijuana taxes, that could push the tax rate on weed to more than 25 percent in L.A.

“‘If they want to be taxing people to the gills, that’s just going to encourage a huge black market,’” says Sarah Armstrong, director of industry affairs for Americans for Safe Access. “Cities and counties do need to have money for regulation and enforcement,” she adds. “But do they need an amazing amount of money? Finding the balance will be difficult.”

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Diamond pot-leaf earrings, studded vaporizers and odor-proof Italian leather handbags are just a few, ahem, higher-end products by and for women that are elevating cannabis culture. These entrepreneurs are “a bit more Prada than tie-dye,” says Venice native Jeanine Moss, co-founder of Anabís luxury purses, which keep pot odor contained in hidden compartments.

Moss is among the growing number of pioneering women staking out space in one of America’s fastest-growing markets — one that could explode in California if voters approve recreational marijuana in November. More than 20 million American women who earn at least $75,000 per year have tried cannabis, according to a June 2015 Pew Research Center report.

Moss calls 2016 the “year of the upscale cannabis consumer.” She says this demographic, once underserved, is now the target of various new businesses cropping up around L.A. Take designer Jacquie Aiche’s “sweet leaf” diamond studs, which cost $440 (and appeared on Rihanna’s Instagram feed). They’ve grown in popularity as more customers come out as green. “It’s a statement, and it’s a strong movement,” Aiche says.

“We set trends on a global scale, and that’s why L.A. has an opportunity here to set a standard,” says Lisa Sweeney, Los Angeles chapter chair of Women Grow. “The women I see here are coming in because they see [the cannabis industry] as a level playing field with equal opportunities.” Indeed, women have advanced in this budding industry faster than in other, more well-established ones.

Women hold 36 percent of all executive-level positions in the cannabis industry (compared with 22 percent among all U.S. businesses), according to a Marijuana Business Daily survey conducted in October. The survey also found that women account for 63 percent of executives in cannabis testing labs and 48 percent of those in cannabis “processed or infused product” manufacturing.

More and more women-crafted, cannabis-related products — such as Whoopi Goldberg’s pot lighter for PMS or Bethenny Frankel’s “Skinnygirl,” munchie-free pot strain — are shattering stereotypes about pot smokers.

“In L.A., the women who are getting into the space are more mainstream,” Sweeney says. “As far as how that elevates the industry or changes the stereotype, those types of wellness products send out a positive message that cannabis has a medicinal purpose, a well-being purpose.”

After learning of Morton Salt heiress Pauline Sabin’s contributions to repealing alcohol prohibition in 1933 (Sabin used her socialite status, wealth and celebrity connections to lead a group of lady activists), marketing expert and media personality Cheryl Shuman felt inspired to do the same with cannabis.

“This is a really simple rebranding campaign,” says Shuman, director of the Beverly Hills Cannabis Club and Moms for Marijuana. “When people think of cannabis, they think of a bunch of weed in a Ziploc bag. Our packaging, with 14-karat gold leaves, porcelain and crystal, is very high-end, something you’d expect at Tiffany’s, [that] shows the high society, if you will, of cannabis.”

With cannabis tastings (similar to a wine-pairing dinner) led by five-star chefs, cannabis yoga retreats, secret speakeasy-style cannabis parties, cannabis-infused cosmetic products and a green cannabis juicing line, the Beverly Hills Cannabis Club promotes what Shuman calls “cuisine.”

Shuman says her normalizing approach empowers people to come out of the closet and talk about — and flaunt — their cannabis consumption. “When you have a vaporizer, it can either be a simple, black vape pen, or you can treat it as a fashion accessory. Decorate it with ruby or 14-karat gold, and people are like, ‘Oh my God, what is that?’ It gets the conversation started.”

“There’s a whole group of people who were using cannabis who didn’t feel at home,” says Whitney Beatty, founder of Apothecarry, a company that sells pot humidors (“cannadors”). “The industry didn’t reflect what their needs were or how they lived their lives as mothers, attorneys, doctors and executives.”

A clutch from Jacquie Aiche’s “sweet leaf” line ($2,000)

A diamond mini “sweet leaf” from Jacquie Aiche ($875)

Women are advancing in the marijuana industry at a greater rate than in other fields — and they’re helping make 2016 the “year of the upscale cannabis consumer”

By Madison Margolin
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SINE METU
How the bakers at Lodge Bread found success by breaking with tradition

BY SCOTT REITZ

On a recent Friday at dawn, while most of Culver City is still fumbling with the snooze button, the bakers behind Lodge Bread Co. are well into their workday. Alex Phaneuf, Alan Craig and Or Amsalam typically arrive at their bakery at 4 a.m. on weekdays, and by the time the sun paints the sky in pinks and yellows, the smell of sweet spices begins to yield to toasted, savory aromas.

Amsalam, who founded the bakery in January 2015 in a nearby carport (it opened in its current space last November), is hunched over, peering through his oven doors, waiting for the perfect moment to pull seeded country and wheat loaves from its hot, stone floors. This is after he’s pulled dozens of cookies, cinnamon rolls and other pastries from the same decks.

Phaneuf mans a mixing station just a few cranked steps from the oven, his golden locks gathered behind his head like a bundle of hay. Peering downward through thick-rimmed glasses, he multitasks, watching dough as it mixes and scrolling through his Instagram feed. Every few minutes he stops the mixer, lifts a guard that looks like a cowcatcher and probes the dough with a hooked finger.

He’s testing for strength: Mix the dough too much and it will become tough and glutinous, yielding small, dense loaves of bread; mix it too little and he’ll have to make up the work later by hand, a significant task considering he’s working with 150-pound batches.

Amsalam is navigating a tightrope of his own as he examines a few loaves that have just been pulled from the oven. Wearing leather gloves, he gently squeezes each loaf to test the crust.

They’re already brown — what some customers might think is approaching well-done — but they’re returned to the customers could watch the process unfold as the bread is shaped and crusted loaves that gave these bakers behind Lodge Bread its existence to a series of fortunate accidents. The open floor plan, bar counter and tables lead many customers to think the bakery is a full-fledged restaurant, but that wasn’t the goal when the team laid out the original business plan. They wanted an open, airy space where they could bake bread and where customers could watch the process unfold.

But not long after 8 a.m., when the bakery formally opens, the chairs are nearly filled with customers sipping expertly extracted coffee, and Lodge feels more like a hip cafe with an oven and mixer crammed in the corner. When bread shaping begins, racks spills out into the dining area. Shelves once meant for pictures, books and decorations now hold extra bags of test flour and other baking containers. At little more than 900 square feet, the tiny bread factory turned cafe is rising out of its mold like an over-proofed sourdough.

The place is packed. The bakers now adorn their toasts as aggressively as they bake their breads: Blackberry preserves cascade over the sides of a simple slice of wheat; sprouted rye bread is slathered so generously with butter that it heaves from the pores when a slice is lifted from the plate; avocado is laid as thick as the pavement on the nearby 405 and topped with radish petals sliced as thin as parchment. The hustle of a full-scale bakery and loud music fuels the energy in the room. Right now, it’s old-school hip-hop, and Amsalam is punctuating his bread-baking tasks with white-boy dance moves. Later, Jerry Garcia fills the space with meandering guitar solos.

Just last summer, a similar scene unfolded each day behind Phaneuf’s nearby apartment. The trio had recently quit their jobs at Goldie’s Downtown, where they helped manage an in-house bread program, and struck out on their own with a business plan they say was fueled by sleep deprivation and a cannabinoind-driven haze.

They worked on folding tables they got at Office Depot and battled squirrels that wanted nothing more than to piler every sunflower kernel from their seed-crusted loaves. They also developed their unique voice as bakers, honing a style defined by naturally leavened, whole-grain breads made from dough so wet it almost pours out of the wicker baskets that shape it. That’s why the loaves are so dark when they finally emerge from the oven — anything less and the remaining water vapor would turn those tough, chewy extesions into soggy, wilted crusts. They look like vintage footballs when heaped in a pile to cool, and paired with the kitchen antics of three young bakers (was that a bass drop or did a forgotten Cambro container of rye levain just explode?) they lend a unique facet to L.A.’s growing bread culture.

More changes are already under way, featuring the recently available office space next door. Amsalam, Phaneuf and Craig just signed a lease and are working with an architect to double the space and install a new pizza oven. They’re building on a popular Sunday night event that features chewy, wheat crust rounds — the product of another happy mistake when the finely milled white flour they originally chose for their pizzas ran out. Customers loved the substitution, and pizza night grew to the point that it shaped the bakery’s expansion.

“Stoner eclectic,” Phaneuf says of the expected decor, which will downplay the existing coffee-shop vibe in favor of “punk-rock” pies and more of the richly crusted loaves that gave these bakers behind Lodge Bread its existence to a series of fortunate accidents.

Like most classic bread recipes, Lodge Bread Co. are well

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the day, it’s disappeared.

When bread shaping begins, racks rolls the size of catcher’s mitts and a handful of spiced oatmeal cookies sit in the glass case near the register. By 2 p.m. a single boule sits alone in the window. Before the shop closes up for the day, it’s disappeared.

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Deep Dish From an East L.A. Warehouse

DOUGH BOX PIZZA DELIVERS

Picking up a pizza at the new Dough Box Pizza & Bread can feel like one of those illicit handoffs that go down in The Fast & the Furious movies. You’re driving though an industrial warehouse district just off the 10 freeway in East L.A., looking for an address with the word “OFFICE” in white lettering over the door frame. You park outside, make a phone call and a hefty Chicago-style deep dish pizza is run out to your car from a commissary kitchen inside. Of course, if you ordered delivery instead—that includes downtown, Boyle Heights, Highland Park, South Pasadena, Chinatown and most of Echo Park—the pizza would simply arrive at your doorstep. But where’s the fun in that?

If the concept of Dough Box sounds familiar, that’s because founder and East L.A. native Alexandra Gonzalez was one of the original partners in Hollywood Pies, the takeout-or-delivery-only pizza service that first appeared on the scene in 2011 and quickly gained attention for its weighty pies loaded with a thick strata of cheese and a generous layer of red sauce. If you were looking for proper deep dish, there was simply no better option. We even added the place to our list of the 10 Best Pizza Places in Los Angeles last year.

Gonzalez left Hollywood Pies in 2013 and set out to open Dough Box in East L.A., alongside former Bread Lounge pastry chef Tony Hernandez. Together they’re offering around a dozen varieties of pizza, with topping combinations named after local streets and boulevards. The Alameda is made with heaps of mozzarella, house-made ricotta, spinach and garlic, while The York comes loaded with mozzarella, pepperoni and crumbled Italian sausage.

If you’re not into deep-dish for some odd reason, there is also a thin-crust option, which is thinner than the half-inch crust on the deep dish but still substantial when compared with New York–style pizza. The most noticeable difference between Hollywood Pies and Dough Box is the flavor of the crust; at Dough Box, it’s still crispy and crunchy but with a bit more of a tangy sourdough flavor, which might be credited to Hernandez’s bread-making skills.

Prices for deep dish start at $10 for a 6-inch pie, which probably could feed two; and $15 for a 9-inch pie, which will easily feed two, with leftovers. The only caveat might be the requisite patience: Due to their thickness, these pizzas require 30 to 45 minutes to bake, which can mean delivery times of an hour or more.

—Garrett Snyder


Top Chef Alum Marcel Vigneron Debuts Wolf

When chef Marcel Vigneron announced he would be opening his first restaurant, it seemed a bit cliché (and confusing) for the Top Chef alum, a guy who made a name for himself as a molecular gastronomer, to describe the food at his new place as “rustic,” “farm fresh” and “made from locally sourced ingredients.” Fans of Vigneron’s short-lived molecular gastronomical SyFy series Quantum Kitchen might be disappointed at first glance by the menu at Wolf: burnt carrots, beets and citrus, baby kale, braised beef cheeks, roast chicken and Brussels sprouts read like menu déjà vu.

But what comes out of the kitchen at Wolf is far from boring. Those “burnt” carrots arrive beautifully plated around dollops of fluffy white pillows. At any other restaurant in town, the pillows
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might be globs of burrata. But here they are delicate, melt-in-your-mouth clouds of coconut espuma (or foam), a tropical touch that hints at the passion fruit sauce resting underneath. The plate is plated with oxalis and tarragon leaves, little piles of chopped macadamia nuts and baby coconut. Wolf’s nose-to-tail “zero-waste cooking” philosophy explains why the carrot stems are still attached and more carrot greens are sprinkled on top. It could also explain why there are sandy bits crunching between your teeth.

For a chef who is TV-famous and has worked at such glitzy places as the Bazaar in Beverly Hills, Vigneron’s Wolf is pleasantly down-to-earth. Located on one of the slightly grungier blocks of Melrose Avenue, the space is sophisticated and cated yet simple. With two large Spanish barn chandeliers and a blue-tiled bar, the decor matches the way Vigneron has described the food — rustic yet refined. A long booth with bohemian pillows lines one wall, while tables are laid out sparingly throughout the room. If you’re seated in the right place, you can see Vigneron in the kitchen, focused and holding an immersion blender.

Though the menu hints at tropical themes, the culinary throughline is simply whatever Vigneron has found inspiration from while living in L.A. In this case, the use of coconut and lemongrass stems from his time spent eating in East Hollywood’s Thai Town. The Thai Hi-Five cocktail made with gin, raw coconut oil and house lemongrass soda shows potential but comes out a bit too sweet. The sous-vide “roast chicken” — brined for 24 hours — serves as a good argument that chicken breast should never be cooked by any other method. The chicken is plated on some smears of celery root puree and accompanied by escarole and charred cippolini onions — and might seem one-note if it weren’t for the pickled salsify and charred cippolini onions — and might seem one-note if it weren’t for the pickled salsify that brightens the whole thing.

At 7:30 p.m. on a Friday night, guests are still trickling into the dining room. Clearly, Los Angeles has yet to discover Wolf. But Wolf has the potential to become a hard place to get into. When Vigneron combines his modernist tendencies with the first-rate produce L.A. is known for, the results can be worth the hype. —Heather Platt

Wolf, 7661 Melrose Ave., Fairfax; (323) 424-7735, wolfdiningla.com

The 10 Best “Big Salads” in Los Angeles

It can be argued that Los Angeles is the country’s salad capital. And when it’s lunchtime, sometimes you just need a great big salad. Many restaurants in the city offer terrific salads, but — in the words of Seinfeld’s Elaine — are they big salads? Do they tower above their plates? Contain tomatoes like volleyballs? Would you expect full meal credit for buying someone that salad?

Salads with these specs can be found at many of the new salad places appearing on every corner these days. But here are 10 Los Angeles restaurants that have truly mastered the big salad.

The classic Cobb at Alcove Café & Bakery

Los Feliz’s much-loved garden bistro Alcove Café & Bakery serves a classic Cobb that could cure a hunger headache upon first bite. Topped with half an avocado, a whole egg, a generous helping of thick, applewood-smoked bacon and a fresh-baked pretzel roll, this meal is packed with protein while its base of romaine and iceberg maintains a respectable level of crunch. 1529 Hillhurst Ave., Los Feliz; (323) 644-0100, alcovecafe.com.

The organic kale salad at Follow Your Heart

On the corner of Sherman Way and Topanga in the West San Fernando Valley is Follow Your Heart, a vegetarian market and café that’s been serving gigantic salads since the 1970s. Follow Your Heart’s vintage glass bowls are brimming with super greens and dense, vegetarian proteins. The most substantial of the bunch is the organic kale salad, piled with tomato, avocado, carrots, whole raw cashews, bok choy and your choice of cottage cheese or cottage-style tofu. Top it with one (or two) of FYH’s homemade vegan dressings, including tofu tahini dill, creamy garlic and organic miso ginger, or with one of the usual suspects: vegan bleu cheese, ranch or Caesar. 21825 Sherman Way, Canoga Park; (818) 348-3240, followyourheart.com/market-cafe.

The Cheebo Chop at Cheebo

Here is a salad that appears light and refreshing yet is so filling it often can’t be finished in one round. The Cheebo Chop is an organic, mountainous helping of chicken, mixed greens, mozzarella, provolone, Genoa salami, garbanzo beans, tomato and olives, chopped and tossed with such precision that all flavors and textures are presented by the forkful. Dressed with light balsamic vinaigrette, it’s the Italian antipasto’s svelte cousin. 7533 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; (323) 850-7070, cheebo.com.

The Tri-Salad at Langer’s Deli

This salad is so big, it has salads on salads — literally. Here we have a perfect specimen of a deli-big salad, which includes chicken, egg and tuna salads on a bed of tomatoes, cucumbers and carrots for crunch. Round out with a mound of olives, sweet pickles and peaches with cottage cheese, this is a salad for the person who has to have a big salad but can’t quite decide on one direction. 704 S. Alvarado St., Westlake; (213) 489-8050, langersdeli.com.

The Kale Caesar at Mixto

Though a taco stand might not scream “big salad” to most people, Silver Lake’s Mixto Comida Latina, a new-wave Mexican-American walkup, offers a simple yet sizable kale Caesar for when you’re all taco’d out. A paper plate is piled generously with kale and dressed with pecorino Romano, croutons and a light, tart lemon vinaigrette. Top it with chicken or carne asada, and enjoy it on the streetside patio. 2827 Hyperion Ave., Silver Lake; (323) 668-1818, mixtomixo.com.

The California chicken salad at California
Chicken Café
California Chicken Café has outright owned the big-salad game for more than 20 years. Its California chicken salad reigns as one of the biggest, heartiest, most satisfying salads in the city. This stack of fresh lettuce, broccoli, carrots, bell peppers, tomato and avocado, tossed with pita croutons, fusilli pasta and white meat chicken, should be ordered with a to-go box. It’s the big salad all big salads wish they could be. 6805 Melrose Ave., West L.A.; (323) 525-1013, californiachickencafe.com.

The Chinese chicken salad at Joan’s on Third
A big-salad list wouldn’t be complete without a proper Chinese chicken salad, and the family-owned Joan’s on Third does it right with a heap of iceberg lettuce, sliced chicken breast, toasted almonds, crispy wontons and rice sticks in a big, round bowl. Dressed with their signature Chinese chicken salad dressing, this salad is not only big but tastes and feels like your (really talented in the kitchen) mom made it just for you. 8550 W. Third St., West L.A.; (323) 855-2885, joansonthird.com.

The Mediterranean salad at Crimson Mediterranean Cookhouse
With romaine, cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion, Kalamata olives, garbanzo beans and feta cheese, the focus here is on the key ingredients that make a Mediterranean salad great. It can be graced with salmon or antibiotic- and hormone-free chicken for protein and is served with a large pita chip for scooping, dipping or just plain crunching. 2901 Ocean Park Blvd. #127, Santa Monica; (310) 396-2400, crimsonla.com.

The fresh corn grilled salad at Fresh Corn Grill
Yes, the fresh corn grilled salad — the original dish of the two-location, California-style eatery — has grilled corn. It also has zucchini and asparagus mixed with a mound of fresh greens, tomatoes and avocado. Finish it off with one of many protein offerings, including chicken, salmon, shrimp, skirt steak, tofu or rockfish. 8714 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood; (310) 855-9598, 1266 Westwood Blvd., Westwood; (310) 470-0414. freshcorngrill.com.

The antipasto salad at C&O Trattoria
Everything about C&O Trattoria in Marina del Rey is big. Between the restaurant’s long tables and dining room—encompassing sing-alongs, a meal at C&O is an outsize experience in itself, and the family-style salads are no exception. While each of the salads is massive, the antipasto salad is highlighted here for its dense helpings of salami, turkey breast and mozzarella that sit atop a beautiful mess of roasted red peppers, Roma tomatoes, Kalamata olives, pepperoncini and chickpeas. Served along with bottomless garlic knots, this salad could easily fill two people to the brim. Though most dishes are meant to be shared, there’s no shame in ordering one of these large salads for yourself. And if big just isn’t big enough, they offer a “gargantuan” size for an additional $4.31 Washington Blvd., Marina del Rey; (310) 823-9491, cotrattoria.com. —Rebecca Pardess
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Dinos are pretty fucking rad. In celebration of their radness, the Los Angeles Zoo introduces the exhibit “Dinosaurs: Unextinct,” a wild ride through the 135 million years during which dinosaurs roamed the Earth. Get up close to 17 advanced animals you’ll find at the zoo today. From Carnotaurus to the tempestuous Tyrannosaurus, you’ll learn a thing or two while you thank God for sending those meteors down to make way for Jesus and you!

From about their lives and their similarities to the Earth. Get up close to 17 advanced unextinct,” a wild ride through the 135 million years during which dinosaurs roamed the Earth. Get up close to 17 advanced animals you’ll find at the zoo today. From Carnotaurus to the tempestuous Tyrannosaurus, you’ll learn a thing or two while you thank God for sending those meteors down to make way for Jesus and you!

Twelfth Night. The event also includes workshops, crafts and demonstrations that explore more about Shakespeare and the Elizabethan era, as well as the Huntington’s “First Folio” edition of Shakespeare’s collected plays and related works. Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino; Sat., April 16, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; $25, $21 seniors & students, $10 children, free kids under 4. (626) 405-2100, huntington.org. —Siran Babayan

THEATER

Master of Puppets

Skirball Puppet Festival is the museum’s fifth annual, daylong family celebration of the art form, featuring performances by Beth Peterson, Animal Cracker Conspiracy, Fratello Marionettes, the Devised Puppetry Project, Strings & Things Puppet Theatre, Robin Walsh, Jared Ramirez, Coyote Rising, Leslie K. Gray, Paul Zaloom and other artists. Small or large, these puppets range from hand to string to shadow puppets, and they tell stories inspired by Mother Goose, Leonardo da Vinci and Igor Stravinsky. The festival also includes films, workshops, stilts and a communal project led by the Noah’s Ark at the Skirball storytellers and Rogue Artists Ensemble. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Brentwood; Sun., April 17, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; $12, $9 seniors & students, $7 children, free kids under 2. (310) 440-4500, skirball.org. —Siran Babayan

MUSEUMS

Dino-mite

Dinosaurs are pretty fucking rad. In celebration of their radness, the Los Angeles Zoo introduces the exhibit “Dinosaurs: Unextinct,” a wild ride through the 135 million years during which dinosaurs roamed the Earth. Get up close to 17 advanced animals you’ll find at the zoo today. From Carnotaurus to the tempestuous Tyrannosaurus, you’ll learn a thing or two while you thank God for sending those meteors down to make way for Jesus and you!

DANCE

Skin Deep

Led by Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson, Complexions Contemporary Ballet evolved out of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, where Richardson and Rhoden were both star dancers. That’s also where Rhoden established his choreography cred through a series of riveting works that often reflect African-American culture and concerns. Drawing on dance genres ranging from ballet to contemporary to street, the ensemble is known for its wide range of subject matter as well as its spectrum of dance styles. The mixed repertory this visit includes a work honoring Maya Angelou, one in pointe shoes, one set to folk songs by Odetta and one set to “Summer” from Vivaldi’s Four Seasons. Among the 14 powerful dancers, don’t miss Los Angeles Ballet alum Andrew Brader. Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Fri.-Sat., April 15-16, 7:30 p.m.; Sun., April 17, 2 p.m.; $34-$138. (213) 972-0711, musiccenter.org/complexions. —Ann Haskins

HISTORY

Wild Bard

The Huntington’s Shakespeare Day is among the worldwide events marking the 400th anniversary of the death of the most performed playwright in the world. The daylong family celebration features traditional and new interpretations of the Bard’s canon throughout the library’s grounds: the Independent Shakespeare Company and Guild of St. George perform scenes from The Taming of the Shrew, Hamlet and Richard III, L.A. Opera sings songs from Shakespeare-inspired operas; Music Center’s Will & Company presents an adaptation of Romeo and Juliet for school kids; and students from the East L.A. Performing Arts Academy at Esteban E. Torres High School present excerpts from Twelfth Night. The event also includes workshops, crafts and demonstrations that explore more about Shakespeare and the Elizabethan era, as well as the Huntington’s “First Folio” edition of Shakespeare’s collected plays and related works. Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino; Sat., April 16, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; $25, $21 seniors & students, $10 children, free kids under 4. (626) 405-2100, huntington.org. —Siran Babayan

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COMEDY

Stranger Than Fan Fiction

NBC’s Seeso streaming platform boasts both classic and cutting-edge comedy, from seminal Saturday Night Live up through original offerings from Upright Citizens Brigade. This weekend, new meta-series The Comedy Show Show — which captures the live experience of the industry’s top weeklies and monthlies — films an episode of Bryan Cook’s Competitive Erotic Fan Fiction. The writers’ free-for-all/festival darling/Nerdist podcast invites a return lineup of former CEFF champions Moshe Kasher, Eliza Skinner, Ben Roy, Dave Hill, Ian Karmel,
Guy Branum, Andres du Bouchet, Jackie Kashian and Solomon Georgio. Meaning it’ll be creative, delightfully dirty and available online soon. The Virgil, 4519 Santa Monica Blvd., East Hollywood; Sun., April 17, 8 p.m.; free. (323) 660-4540, thevirgil.com. —Julie Seabaugh

**Monday, April 18**

**Books**

**Playing Chicken**

It’s one thing when you have to deal with your neighbors after they’ve found out you’ve got chickens in your condo — but when Joseph Stalin moves in? Longtime L.A. Weekly drama critic Steven Leigh Morris reads from his new book, *Fowl Play* ($16, Padaro Press), a surreal confection in which art not only imitates life, it makes it incredibly annoyed. As metaphors go, the chickens that frame Morris’ book, subtitled “A Novel in Three Acts,” are effective and trenchant. Siri, how do you say “hilarity ensues” in Russian? Skylight Books, 1818 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz; Mon., April 18, 7:30 p.m.; free. (323) 660-1175, skylightbooks.com. —David Cotner

**Film**

**I See France**

Celebrating its 20th year, the COLCOA French Film Festival returns to L.A. for nine days of premieres. The fest screens both new films, such as opening night’s North American premiere of *Monsieur Chocolat*, a biopic about the first black star of the French stage, and old films, including the world premiere of the restored version of Jean-Paul Rappeneau’s WWII farce, *A Matter of Resistance*, starring Catherine Deneuve. On Tuesday, April 19, the fest hosts Blind Date With a French Film, its annual free screening of a surprise movie. It just might be love. Directors Guild of America, 7920 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood Hills West; Mon., April 18-Tue., April 26; $13 per screening. colcoa.org. —Gwynedd Stuart

**Tuesday, April 19**

**Books**

**Comma Chameleon**

Writers Bloc presents Mary Norris discussing her book, *Between You & Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen*, with L.A. Times columnist and radio host Patt Morrison. Norris recounts the 30-plus thankless years she’s worked as a proofreader and copy editor at the *New Yorker*. In this part memoir, part grammar guide — pronouns, hyphens, spelling, four-letter words — Norris looks back on the string of jobs she had before joining the *New Yorker* in 1978 as a “page OK’er” and one of the “prose goddesses,” the venerated magazine’s style standards and some of the famous writers she’s copy edited, including John Updike, Pauline Kael and Philip Roth. Goethe-Institut Los Angeles, 5750 Wilshire Blvd., Miracle Mile; Tue., April 19, 7:30 p.m.; $20. writersblocpresents.com. —Siran Babayan

**Wednesday, April 20**

**Comedy**

**Gone to Pot**

UCB’s annual 420 Show celebrates the herb-honoring holiday with all things weed all night long. First, UCB co-founder Matt Besser and guests bring you “comedy, music and trippy shit” in *The 420 Show With Matt Besser*. Later, the six-man comedy troupe of Bath Boys Presents: Foggy Noggin performs “inside a stoner’s brain,” followed by Stoned Scenes with Big Grande, in which the club’s top cast members stage famous scenes and monologues from film and TV...
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while under the influence. Finishing out the evening is Weed Cram, where more UCB actors, writers and directors create an entirely new sketch show also while high. UCB Sunset, 5419 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Wed., April 20, 4:20 p.m.; $5. (323) 908-8702, sunset.ucbtheatre.com.
—Siran Babayan

COMEDY

High, Guys
Cheech and Chong’s Up in Smoke is to 4/20 what It’s a Wonderful Life is to Christmas. A movie about two stoners driving around and looking for premium pot in a van made out of weed couldn’t get any more iconic. If you’re sober enough to leave the house tonight, man, you can see the legendary comedians in the hazy flesh in Cheech & Chong — 420 Celebration. Richard “Cheech” Marin (still in a beanie, tank top and suspenders) and Tommy Chong (still wearing a bandanna) perform a mix of new and classic comedic bits and songs, and no doubt they’ll get all political on marijuana laws. The event also includes opening comedian (and Chong’s wife) Shelby Chong. The Novo by Microsoft, 800 W. Olympic Blvd., downtown; Wed., April 20, 9 p.m.; $35.50-$59.50. (213) 765-7000, thenovodtl.com. —Siran Babayan

thu

MOVIES & MUSIC

A Bitchin’ Time
A choicely oddball venue spices up a screening of director-photographer Olivia Wyatt’s Sailing a Sinking Sea, a feature-length experimental documentary about the Moken people of Burma and Thailand. The film explores the mythology-rich life of the seafaring Moken, who spend eight months of the year in thatch-roofed wooden boats, navigating the mermaid-populated waters among several islands dotted with dancing denizens and sea shanties on stilts. The film is scored by Drag City’s righteous psych-jazz ambientistas Bitchin Bajas, who’ll perform a live set following the screening; there’s also a Q&A with the director and DJ sets by Dublab’s Frosty and Arshia Haq. Velaslavasay Panorama, 1122 W. 24th St., University Park; Thu., April 21, 8 p.m.; $20. $18. (213) 746-2166, panoramaonview.org. —John Payne

FOOD & DRINK

Valley Eats
Who says there’s nothing good to eat in the Valley? The Taste of the Valley is the San Fernando Valley’s largest wine tasting and food festival, now entering its 17th year. This year’s event will feature food from more than 45 restaurants and beverage tastings from 120-plus wineries, spirits producers and craft brewers. Proceeds from the festival will benefit the Valley Cultural Center, which supports local arts and community programming. Westfield Topanga, 6600 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Canoga Park; Thu., April 21, 5-8:30 p.m.; $55 advance, $65 at the door. (818) 594-8740, valleycultural.org/the-taste-of-the-valley. —Garrett Snyder

BOOKS

Thou Dost Protest
Between Bernie’s “are you ready for a political revolution” battle cry, our delirious coast-to-coast illuminati-oligarchy paranoia and the right wing’s delicious, fist-shaking outrage over “paid professional protesters,” Micah White’s new book, The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution, could not have arrived at a more propitious moment. White, one of Occupy’s original Zucotti Park spearheads, has perpetrated a rich reflection on our quagmire of culture, corruption and the future of activism, politics and spirituality, which provides compelling context and proposes a call to action at a critical point in time, when misery-infused doom seems like the prevailing national menu selection. Vroman’s Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena; Thu., April 21, 7 p.m.; free, book is $20. (626) 449-5320, vromansbookstore.com.
—Jonny Whiteside

Micah White presents his book The End of Protest: See Thursday.
PHOTO BY TRAV WILLIAM

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In her colorful Fairfax nightclub, Tao Comedy Studio, Bobbie Oliver has created a space where female comedians can thrive

BY ADAM GROPMAN

It’s a Saturday night at Tao Comedy Studio, and Nina Manni is onstage nailing a bit about male insecurity.

“Do you guys know what the worst thing you can do to a man is?” she asks rhetorically. “Emasculate him — make him less of a man, weaken him, take away his power. And you do that by yelling at him in front of his friends or changing a tire better than him.”

The 38-year-old comedian, clad in a Van Halen raglan shirt, delivers the joke with tempered, well-informed indignation. And the audience is digging it. She continues: “Why isn’t our government harnessing this power that women have? Why aren’t I being sent to a cocktail party in Russia to correct Putin’s grammar in front of a bunch of dignitaries and just let me take that motherfucker down?”

It’s not that you couldn’t hear Manni’s act or acts like it at other Los Angeles-area comedy venues. But at a lot of clubs, female comedians might feel too intimidated to joke about gender, the fear being that female-centric comedy might crash and burn with male-dominated crowds.

Comedy impresario Bobbie Oliver opened Tao Comedy Studio — located on Beverly Boulevard in Fairfax — to foster provocative, issues-oriented material and to give female...
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> Thursday, April 21st, 2016, 6–8pm, West Hollywood
> Saturday, April 23rd, 2016, 10am–12pm, Downtown LA
> Tuesday, April 26th, 2016, 6–8pm, Paramount
> Thursday, April 28th, 2016, 6–8pm, South Los Angeles
> Saturday, April 30th, 2016, 10am–12pm
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>38) comedians a place where they can feel assured that the other comics on the bill, the management and the audience will all be fully on board. Her vision: no vicious hecklers, no crude sexism, no pressure to conform to the meanness that has a tendency to lurk in the dark corners of other clubs.

“So many things felt unsafe,” Oliver, 47, says about her time in the mainstream comedy scene. The Georgia native’s passion is palpable, onstage and off, especially when she’s discussing the deep gender unfairness she’s encountered.

She’s like a Southern, blond Roseanne Barr; her act is imbued with the same sort of world-weariness, enhanced by a down-home accent.

Oliver bemoans a “sheer lack of opportunity” for women in comedy.

“There’s 20 dudes on every show and, like, one woman. Comedy festivals have just a minuscule number of women. And on television, until Samantha Bee came along, there were no women late-night hosts. Out of 48 late-night stand-up spots, two go to women.”

Besides Bee, Chelsea Handler and Joan Rivers’ stints as a sub for Johnny Carson, late-night television has been an all-male playing field.

Veteran club comedian Betsy Salkind, who wrote for both Roseanne and the short-lived ‘90s sketch show Saturday Night Special, says the late-night landscape reflects what’s going on in comedy clubs all over the country. “A typical show at one of the L.A. clubs will include 14 male comics and one female comic, and she’s probably not headlining,” says Salkind, adding, “In the nonshowcase cities, it’s three men and no women, or five men and one woman.”

Salkind got her start in Boston, where she was essentially blacklisted for performing material that was perceived as too edgy.

“I was actually banned in Boston from nearly every club for performing a little piece called ‘The Emperor’s Getting Fucked,’” Salkind says. “It was about the misogyny, racism and viciousness in comedy at the time (the early ‘90s) and featured a character called Lois Common Denominator.

“The system is sort of set up to allow just a few of us through, and I refuse to compete with my fellow comics for token spots,” Salkind adds. “It doesn’t need to be that way.”

Oliver believes the lack of greater opportunities for women in comedy originates in those sorts of unaccommodating and uninclusive performance spaces.

“I feel like a lot of women stay away from open mics because they’re threatening, so they don’t get a chance to work vulnerable or personal material,” she says. “At Tao I see women work some really raw, vulnerable stuff and cry onstage while telling this story, and I watch it grow to this amazing bit, which they then take out in the world and slay with it.”

Tao, which hosts shows, classes and the annual Laugh Riot Grrrl Fest, offers three open mics a week, two co-ed and one for women only. And despite the feminist emphasis, it’s not uncommon that Oliver books lineups that are half men. Oliver’s partner in running the venue is her husband, Chris, who, she proudly points out, is a straight white male.

Gender politics aside, open-minded Angelenos are likely to find the atmosphere refreshing at Tao. Whereas most mainstream stand-up comedy venues cultivate a cold, nocturnal feel, Tao is more like a cross between a private screening room and a yoga studio.

Flickering candles sit on any available surface and Eastern religious knick-knacks adorn shelves near the front of the venue.

When Oliver was living in Athens, Georgia, after college, she happened upon mystical spiritual guru Alan Watts on the radio and started digging deeply into Buddhism and Taoism. Years later, when teaching comedy, Oliver found herself answering questions about the art form with wisdom from Asian philosophy.

“I discovered that comedy in L.A. is not about comedy,” Oliver says. “It’s a marketing scheme to get rich and famous. No one cared about the process. People would ask, ‘What should I write about?’ and I’d say, ‘What are you thinking about?’ Most comedy clubs were teaching the idea of a false persona, an inauthentic personality.”

Oliver spent four years researching and writing a master handbook of sorts: The Tao of Comedy: Embrace the Pause. In keeping with the far Eastern spiritual vibe, before classes she burns incense and leads her comedy students through meditation. “Using comedy powers for good and not evil actually supports Right Speech and Right Livelihood from the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Path,” Oliver says.

This spiritual approach might not have flown at Oliver’s old comedy haunt, Pasadena’s Ice House. Lest anyone think that Oliver’s endeavors are completely politically correct or devoid of edge, however, her latest comedy CD is titled Feminazi Cunt.

Onstage, Manni nears the end of her set. Her material has veered from the takedown of touchy men to the sort of classic self-effacement everyone can relate to. “I have found hope in kale,” she declares. “Crisp! If something as bitter and shitty as kale can make it, then maybe there’s a chance for me.”
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**BY CATHERINE WAGLEY**

This week, one artist turns a downtown gallery into an eerie laboratory, and another talks about recreating her father’s past.

**Small-timer**

L.A. native Richard Pettibone was young when the Pasadena Art Museum hosted a particularly iconic show: the first retrospective of French artist Marcel Duchamp. Credited with inventing the “readymade” (e.g., the famous urinal, titled “Fountain,” which the wily character debuted in 1917), Duchamp made an impression. Pettibone’s current show at Honor Fraser pays homage to him and a few other midcentury big shots, presenting intricate miniature replicas of their work. A version of Duchamp’s bicycle wheel on a stool sits in a far gallery. The replicas are perhaps the conceptual-art equivalent to model airplanes. There must be some thrill in remaking revered, purportedly innovative objects for yourself, so that you can own them and purge them as you see fit. Your own nether regions, replies, “Yes and no.” In another, a penis-shaped bulge approaches a microphone. “Is this thing on? If you got the time, I got the space.” Now Kahn is releasing a book called “Die Laughing,” and will give an R-rated reading from it this weekend at her local gallery, Susanne Vielmetter Projects. 6006 Washington Blvd., Culver City; April 16, 3-5 p.m. (310) 837-2117, vielmetter.com.

**Hide and seek**

In Linda Frank’s current exhibition at MaRS Gallery, dining room chairs have long, thin legs, so that they resemble spiders. A coffee table has been squeezed between bulging pink pillows big enough to hide a few bodies inside. A vintage cabinet stands in front of a mysterious mound of green carpet. There’s just enough order to keep the show from feeling like a domestic disaster zone. Instead, Frank’s installation conjures a squat, an outlaw living space built by people who’ve been salvaging stuff from middle-class neighborhoods and making it so their belongings double as hiding places. 649 S. Anderson St., downtown; through April 23. (323) 526-8097, marsgallery.net.

**Chic torture trap**

Little flames flicker from oil lamps clamped to the metal poles that weave through Elaine Cameron-Weir’s current exhibition at Venus Over Los Angeles. The whole environment is eerily, chichi clinical, like the lab of a mad scientist who frequents Paris Fashion Week. Petri dishes sit on minimally designed steel and stone tables, and shellacked, thick ribbons of snake scales descend from ceiling to floor. The show takes its title from these scales: “snake with sexual interest in its own tail.” Near the industrial gallery’s garage door, there’s an oddly shaped steel tub with sand at the bottom. A man’s weathered shirt and pants, bulky in a way that makes you imagine an invisible body inside them, hover above the sand. Each leg has long, thin legs, so that they resemble spiders. A coff ee table has been squeezed between bulging pink pillows big enough to hide a few bodies inside. A vintage cabinet stands in front of a mysterious mound of green carpet. There’s just enough order to keep the show from feeling like a domestic disaster zone. Instead, Frank’s installation conjures a squat, an outlaw living space built by people who’ve been salvaging stuff from middle-class neighborhoods and making it so their belongings double as hiding places. 649 S. Anderson St., downtown; through April 23. (323) 526-8097, marsgallery.net.

**Dirty jokes**

L.A. artist Stanya Kahn had a show in New York last year called “Die Laughing.” It included somewhat esoteric joke paintings, some of them dick jokes.” In one, a voice asks, “Did it work?” A naked witch, with phallic growing all over her body, just not near her own nether regions, replies, “Yes and no.” In another, a penis-shaped bulge approaches a microphone. “Is this thing on? If you got the time, I got the space.” Now Kahn is releasing a book called “Die Laughing,” and will give an R-rated reading from it this weekend at her local gallery, Susanne Vielmetter Projects. 6006 Washington Blvd., Culver City; April 16, 3-5 p.m. (310) 837-2117, vielmetter.com.
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GIMME SHELTER

Even when it’s staged indoors, Marissa Chibas’ open-air refugee drama is compelling

BY BILL RADEN

It was supposed to be a grand, visually stylized, outdoor stage spectacle befitting the urgency and epic scale of the human suffering it means to theatricalize — the perilous mass exodus of U.S.-bound child refugees fleeing the savage gang and drug cartel violence that has given Central America the dubious distinction of being the murder capital of the world.

Then the weekend rains came, forcing another kind of migration: Director Martín Acosta’s kaleidoscopic production of Shelter, playwright Marissa Chibas’ affecting and politically trenchant tapestry of all-too-real horrors, switched to Plan B and transferred from Lincoln Park’s sodden, open-air sandlot into the dry safety of the nearby Plaza de la Raza community arts center in a pared-down “suitcase staging.”

It’s hard to imagine that the indoor Shelter lost anything to the weather; the compelling power of Chibas’ oddly hopeful tale and the tautly riveting invention of Acosta’s dynamic movement-based staging could hardly be more on point or movingly intact.

Chibas’ real coup is in her portraiture. Where Nava’s idealized pair of sweetly innocent village teens was an exercise in fairy tale–like otherness, the characters in Shelter’s sharply sketched collage (vividly played by Cynthia Callejas, Peter Mark, Moriah Martel, Jonathan Bangs, Jazmen-Bleu Gutierrez, Emilio Garcia-Sanchez and Andrez Velez) are notable for the disarming, everyday sameness of their aspirations to those of any American adolescent living in Sherman Oaks or Highland Park.

Divided into four “chapters,” the show’s first half chronicles the literally murderous journey up the spine of Mexico, much of it spent illegally riding atop boxcars on a 1,450-mile migrant network of freight trains called “La Bestia.” It’s a hazard-filled ride in which the likelihood of being killed or maimed is only part of the route’s nightmarish gauntlet of kidnappings, homicides, disappearances, sexual violence and human trafficking.

The second half details the detentions and uncertainties that the refugees face on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. Acosta seizes on La Bestia and...
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— Charles McNulty, Los Angeles Times
Jonathan Bangs delivers an astonishing profile in courage as a 17-year-old Sudanese boy whose odyssey to rejoin his family in America spans two continents and includes the drowning of his twin sister, but who joyfully proclaims his victory from inside an ICE detention center as “everything my family hoped for.”

The critic Georg Lukács argued that naturalism can only describe, whereas the political drama “narrates” the causal connections. By the time Shelter reaches its finale — in a sort of PTSD-like fever dream set to the evocative wheezing and rumble of distant machinery — Chibas and Acosta stirringly connect the dots of the crisis in a way never imagined by El Norte. La Bestia is finally revealed as our monstrous indifference to yet another humanitarian tragedy of our own making.

SHELTER | CalArts Center for New Performance at Lincoln Park, 3660 N. Mission Road, Lincoln Heights Through April 17 | centerfonewperformance.org

with abortion rights under fire nationwide, a play starring a 17-year-old grappling with an unwanted pregnancy couldn’t be timelier. Ruby Rae Spiegel’s Dry Land, directed by Alana Dietz for the Echo Theatre Company, fits that description.

The high point is a riveting scene in which Amy (Teagan Rose), the pregnant teen, withers in pain on a locker room floor, then begins to bleed profusely as the abortion pill she’s swallowed takes effect. The scene goes on for a long time, so gripping that it’s impossible to look away.

A second notable sequence takes place between Ester (Connor Kelly-Eiding), Amy’s teammate and the sole person present to help her through her ordeal, and Victor (Ben Horwitz), a shy, awkward college freshman who’s offered to let Ester crash in his dorm room on the night before her tryout for the university swim team. Almost a stand-alone play by itself, this involves punching her in the stomach repeatedly and on demand; it’s Amy’s initial game plan for terminating the unwanted fetus inside her.)

Onstage on opening night, however, the relationship, with its power games, awkward secrets and hints of sexual attraction, was still a work in progress. As the reactive “friend” (and the target of Amy’s careless slurs), Kelly-Eiding is solid. Rose, though she exudes mountains of edgy energy in a difficult role, delivers a patchwork of vivid mannerisms that hasn’t quite cohered into a character portrayal of depth and power. (She still gets kudos for her bold and graphic performance in the abortion scene.) I also had issues with the open-in-the-round staging as distracting from the intimacy of many moments.

Still, there’s no denying the relevance of this piece, which lays out the predicament of millions of trapped, bewildered women.

—Deborah Klugman

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**BOOKS //**

**A LOT OF SONGS CONSIDERED**

In new book *Your Song Changed My Life*, NPR host Bob Boilen invites musicians to geek out on their favorite tunes

**BY TONY MOSTROM**

As Frank Zappa right when he said, “Most rock journalism is people who can’t write interview journalism; people who can’t talk for people who can’t read?” Let’s just say “more truth than poetry, perhaps.”

A more generous observation, as quoted in NPR music host Bob Boilen’s new book, *Your Song Changed My Life* (HarperCollins, $25.99), comes from William S. Burroughs: “The essential ingredient for any successful rock group is energy — the ability to give out energy, to receive energy from the audience and to give it back to the audience. A rock concert is in fact a rite involving the evocation and transmutation of energy.” As Boilen comments, “What a perfect way to describe rock & roll.”

Boilen, a veteran NPR music programmer and host of All Songs Considered, clearly loves his job and loves musicians, and this good-naturedness comes through in the 35 interviews that make up *Your Song Changed My Life*. It’s a short peek out of a music book that deftly hews this and that and that and that and that 

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In his autobiographical introduction, Boilen recalls his teenage love for rock music (he remembers transistor radios), sitting on his back porch in Queens one sad night in 1965 knowing, painfully, that The Beatles were at that moment performing at Shea Stadium.

Given the subject matter, the writing here is necessarily facile, though Boilen does aim for lyricism, as when he’s describing how enraptured he was on first hearing The Beatles’ brand-new Sgt. Pepper album, as a kid in 1967. “Imagine,” he writes,

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**A Lot of Songs Considered**

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Boilen, a veteran NPR music programmer and host of All Songs Considered, clearly loves his job and loves musicians, and this good-naturedness comes through in the 35 interviews that make up *Your Song Changed My Life*. It’s a short peek out of a music book that deftly hews toward the mainstream, the interviewees ranging from David Byrne (“While many of the punk bands of the day were angry or pugnacious, Talking Heads were whimsical”) and Dave Grohl (who as a kid would “set up pillows on his bed as if they were drums and pound them until...”) to a lot of folks with one name. The tally amounts to 33 rock stars and singer-songwriters, one avant-garde composer and one Icelandic drone artist (though the author admits to his own, private enthusiasm for artists such as Brian Eno and Anthony Braxton).

In his autobiographical introduction, Boilen recalls his teenage love for rock music (he remembers transistor radios), sitting on his back porch in Queens one sad night in 1965 knowing, painfully, that The Beatles were at that moment performing at Shea Stadium.

Given the subject matter, the writing here is necessarily facile, though Boilen does aim for lyricism, as when he’s describing how enraptured he was on first hearing The Beatles’ brand-new Sgt. Pepper album, as a kid in 1967. “Imagine,” he writes, “growing up in a city and walking into a forest for the first time — that’s what the experience of this album was like.”

Following some intriguing late-’60s and early-’70s memories of avoiding the draft and his unfolding musical discoveries (besides loving Bowie, Jimi Hendrix and Roxy Music, he loathed The Eagles, which would seem to qualify as Music 101), the book then presents the at-times-insightful opinions, memories and nerd-outs of rockers and hip-hop artists, some of them actually interesting to nonfans, some not.

David Byrne, recalling his early days in folk clubs: “The folkies didn’t know rock & roll music…” I’d do a Who song or a Kinks song … on acoustic guitar and it was kind of like, ‘That’s a really nice song. Where did that come from?’

Jimmy Page, the book’s first interviewee, on Led Zeppelin’s *Physical Graffiti*: “It’s like the mother of all double albums. Isn’t it? Really, let’s be honest,” and on William Burroughs: “He’d actually been to see Led Zeppelin. … He was connecting the essence of trance music, with riffs that repeat over and over, with what he had experienced … in Tangier … connecting this whole aspect of things with … what we were doing.”

Lucinda Williams’ discussions with her poet-father on whether Bob Dylan was a poet or a songwriter: “I tell you, as soon as I sat down with one of my dad’s poems and tried to turn it into a song, then I knew the difference.”

For me, the best part of this book is the surprise factor, those unlikely meetings of people and tastes you wouldn’t expect. Boilen recalls his surprise at hearing Jackson Browne singing a Nico song, “These Days,” on his second album; as it turns out, not only were Browne and Nico a couple back in ’67, but Browne wrote the song at age 16. Browne here recalls growing up in Highland Park with that ultimate rarity, a cool dad (“He took me to see Lightnin’ Hopkins!”)

Including a minimalist composer such as Philip Glass in this book feels like a sop, an exercise of this album was like.”

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Including a minimalist composer such as Philip Glass in this book feels like a sop, an exercise
NO, REALLY, IT’S GOOD

In The Jungle Book, Disney builds a better blockbuster

BY BILGE EBIRI

Here’s about as convincing an argument as I can imagine for the existence of the modern Hollywood blockbuster. Disney and Jon Favreau’s The Jungle Book reinvestigates an oft-told tale with star power, technology and calculated charm. It’s been billed as a live-action remake (it’s too good to be called a “reboot”) of the 1967 Walt Disney animated classic based on Rudyard Kipling’s 1894 stories. Of course, Disney has already given us a live-action version in 1994, with Rudyard Kipling’s The Jungle Book, an Indiana Jones–ified take that bore little resemblance to either the animated film or the original tales. And perhaps the best Jungle Book out there might still be Alexander and Zoltan Korda’s magical and odd 1942 film starring the young Indian actor Sabu; that one was even less faithful to Kipling. Over the years, there’s been a Russian adaptation, an anime series, a Chuck Jones cartoon, plus a brace of sequels and sorta-sequels. Oh, and apparently Warner Bros. is at this very moment working on its own iteration, due in 2018.

In other words, there’s no real need for another Jungle Book, which makes this new one’s job even harder. The story itself isn’t too dramatically different from the familiar Disney animated film. Our hero Mowgli (Neel Sethi, delightfully vivacious and chatty) is a young boy who’s been raised by a family of wolves ever since the black panther Bagheera (voiced by Ben Kingsley) found him abandoned in the woods. Living as a wolf isn’t easy: Mowgli is a layabout; Johansson’s snake vamps it up for the boy’s point of view that we don’t always see what’s pursuing him — a classic tactic Favreau and others probably learned from its most brilliant practitioner, Steven Spielberg. But the film has a stirring, storybook grandeur as well, particularly in its rhapsodic portraits of animal togetherness, which in turn helps sell all that dialogue about unity and the power of the pack.

These franchise movies usually have to be all things to all viewers: fun for the kids, gritty for the grown-ups, snarky for the teens. Very often, that results in an inchoate sprawl of competing tones and set pieces. But The Jungle Book is fast and light. It manages to be just scary enough to make us feel the danger of solitude in the middle of a massive jungle, but never indulgent or gratuitous. At one pivotal point, Shere Khan kills a major character by biting into and then quickly casting the body off a cliff. It happens swiftly, suddenly and without any melodrama. You can imagine that the filmmakers and the studio don’t want to upset younger viewers too much by focusing too much on death. Yet the offhand cruelty of this character’s speedy dispatch has a real sting, too. If only all blockbusters could be this exciting, engrossing and beautiful.

THE JUNGLE BOOK | Directed by Jon Favreau
Written by Justin Marks | Walt Disney Pictures | Citywide

A MARVELOUS MEDITATION ON THE LOUVRE — AND CULTURE ITSELF

Skipping across ages and genres, the cine-essay beguilement Franconia, from Russian Ark director Alexander Sokurov, considers the Louvre — and the miracle of the transmission of art and culture across the history. Sokurov’s musings encompass history, aesthetics, philosophy and extended metaphor; in scrappy and dramatic vignettes, he compares France during World War II to an overburdened cargo freighter hauling containers filled with the great accomplishments of civilization through storm-tossed seas. Should the captain cut the containers loose and survive, or go down trying to save history itself? That choice echoes in crisp re-enactments of the Nazis’ arrival at the Louvre during the Occupation. Though the Germans vowed to preserve and protect the culture they had conquered — Sokurov quotes an edict informing occupying soldiers that “bronze chandeliers are not to be used as coat hangers” — the French squelched away most of the paintings in a countryside chateau. After being put in charge of the Louvre, Count Franziskus Wolff-Metternich risked himself rather than the timeless collection: Despite Berlin’s demands, he continually found bureaucratic excuses not to track down art he knew was safest undiscovered.

Sokurov tells that story between reveries on Assyrian relics, the art of portraiture (he marvels that we can behold the eyes of people who lived centuries before) and the ways that war has both destroyed and safeguarded the art and artifacts that the Louvre houses. He’s puckish in teasing out the complexities, juxtaposing footage of Hitler motoring about Paris with rich costume-comedy of Napoleon, today, wandering the galleries in search of his own image — and bragging about all the war treasures he ensnared there. —Alan Scherstuhl

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THE PRICE OF LOVE

COLONIA'S NAZI-CHILEAN PRISON TERROR LOSES OUT TO MOVIE ROMANCE

BY APRIL WOLFE

Colonia is not a "thriller," so let's get that out of the way. It's a love story that also happens to be set in one of the most viscerally horrifying cult prisons in history. (The story is “based on true events.”)

If that premise sounds jarring to you, you're not alone — even the marketing for the film is confused. One of two key-art posters released hints at an ominous atmosphere, the other at romance. It's nothing new for studios to offer different versions of what they want you to think the movie is selling, but neither of these visions seems accurate, suggesting misinformation about what story everyone wants to tell.

The elements of Colonia promise intrigue: a kidnapped lover, a young woman (Emma Watson) stranded in the Chilean upheaval of the Cold War, an ex-Nazi colluding with Pinochet to run a religious zealot colony that doubles as a torture-and-work camp for political activists. There, all the women are “sluts,” and the leader calls bras “harlot” clothes with the same frothy fervor that Carrie White’s mom carried on about “dirty pillows.” With Watson's newfound reputation as a real-life fighter for justice, the idea of watching her battle wicked Nazis and defend the sanctity of womanhood should put butts in the seats. But the gears don’t all churn at the same speed or with unison of purpose: Is it supposed to be a romance or a thriller?

That distinction matters. There are vast differences in the filming of the two genres. For Colonia, romance usually focuses the camera on the two romantic leads, as the story is nearly all theirs to tell. In a thriller, the shots tend to allow us to take the vantage point of our protagonists, seeing what they see as they see it to build tension, then flipping back to see their reaction, again and again. Colonia is most assuredly directed as a romance, so even though we find ourselves in this scary place, the tension is remarkably low, and we don't “see” a lot of it.

Take the scene where Watson's lover Lena is put before a court of men to be judged and punished for swimming naked. There's little setup. We don't see her being led into the room. We don't search the faces of the men from left to right to gather how complicit they are in what's about to happen, or even spy what else is in the room at all. We simply see a restrained Lena while a charismatic ex-Nazi played by Michael Nyqvist rants about the “stink” of whores, i.e. women. It should be scary. It's not. Audiences can't help but feel disappointed, then, because all signs of the story and scenery point to suspept that the film is actually a slasher film. The sound design has romantic flourishes, and the editing is middle-of-the-road, neither speeding up nor slowing down the pacing from scene to scene. Rather than a grand buildup, Colonia just gives the sense of one thing happening, and then another thing happening.

Still, there are talented actors here. Nyqvist should be given an Oscar to his name, which is more tenable than Franco's mopey self-pitying tool whose motivations are never so much as hinted at. The filmmakers lazily rely on that cipher’s physical appearance — hair that looks like it’s been singed off, guttural voice that sounds like an afflicted zombie — to signify his malice. This one-dimensional characterization likely will elicit eye rolls rather than scares, like Jason Voorhees without the hockey mask or machete. Ryan, meanwhile, is a philandering tool whose impatience with his pregnant wife might have you counting down the minutes until the film turns into a slasher film, preferably with him as the first victim; when it finally goes down that path, however, the thriller never follows.

In a conceit that actually could be exploited more, the action is sometimes seen through the lens of those hidden cameras, low-grade and grimy in a way that befits the nasty material. Mild schadenfreude aside, however, the film inspires almost no feeling at all — even the Friday the 13th movies bother giving the bad guy a back-story. (Michael Nordine)

THE ADDERALL DIARIES

In this sketchy adaptation of Stephen Elliott's The Adderall Diaries: A Memoir of Mood, Masochism and Murder, James Franco portrays the author as a fabulist and dilettante. Franco, who’s also a producer (and hired Pamela Romanowsky to write and direct her first feature), alternates between flighty entitlement and tortured preening as a literary star whose best-sellers detail his abuse, addiction and institutionalization.

Romanowsky cherry-picks details from the real Elliott’s life (including sadomasochistic proclivities) and uses slow-motion flashbacks to visualize how he replays past traumas. Regarding his memories as gospel truth, Stephen dismisses the contradictory revelations from his father (Ed Harris in Sam Shepard bad-dad mode) that send his reputation into free-fall.

Stephen shifts gears to write about the trial of accused murderer Hans Reiser (Christian Slater), but can't be bothered to show up to court on time or do his own research. The latter is left to New York Times reporter Lana Edmond (Amber Heard), who's just damaged enough to pique his predatory interest. Lana exemplifies the degrading cliche of female journalist as girlfriend-in-waiting, opting to comfort the charming liar she just met instead of pursuing the unfolding story. Stephen's sharp-tongued friend (Jim Parrack) provides the only respite from Franco's moody self-indulgence, reinforced by Romanowsky's view of writing as creative outbursts yielding perfectly polished prose. As an author (and star of Elliott's first film, About Cherry),
Franco seems the ideal interpreter of The Adderall Diaries, but he’s reduced the memoirist’s tough introspection to misery porn. (Serena Donadoni)

**BARBERSHOP: THE NEXT CUT**

The effortless charisma of Ice Cube and Cedric the Entertainer, the headliners of the first two Barbershop movies (released in 2002 and 2004), helped keep those over-plotted comedies buoyant. Cube and Cedric are back as Calvin and Eddie in Barbershop: The Next Cut, but even their enormous appeal can’t rescue the third installment in the franchise. The Next Cut is glutted even more than its predecessors with ancient fellas-versus-females debates, unauxiliary sociopolitical commentary and top-40 superstars trying to diversify their brands.

“Lately, we’ve been having trouble,” laments Calvin, the owner of the South Side shop that bears his name. Calvin is determined to stay in the neighborhood, despite the gun violence that has plagued Chicago; to keep solvent, he has expanded his one-time all-male sanctum to include a ladies’ salon overseen by green- ringleted Angie (Regina Hall). Yet the coed space only intensifies the Mars/Venus divide: “The only man you can trust is the man upstairs,” fumes stylist Bree (Margot Bingham), one of several lines suggesting the film too often relies on rote sermonizing when tackling the city’s scourge of violence. Bree often clashes with coworker Draja (Nicki Minaj), a weave specialist who also must contend with some serious side eye from Terri (Eve). The reigning hip-hop queen appears contractually obliged to say “flyeek,” if only to provoke old-timer Eddie’s grumpy lecture on neologisms. The smack talk is much sharper and funnier between the gray panther and One-Stop (J.B. Smoove). But the film too often relies on rote sermonizing when tackling the city’s scourge of shootings, a grave topic that The Next Cut is simply too feeble to examine with any real depth or meaning. (Melissa Anderson)

**ECHO PARK**

In Where We Stand: Class Matters, bell hooks argues that people with wealth sometimes have a difficult time understanding the fact that they’re wealthy because they know there are others who have more than they do. It’s hard not to think about that contention while watching Echo Park, set in the Eastside Los Angeles neighborhood whose predominantly working-class Latinos are being displaced by hip, wealthier residents. The film sets an unlikely romance between a struggling black composer and a wealthy white woman from Beverly Hills in the quickly gentrifying enclave, mostly shrugging off light tensions around race and class when it’s not caricaturing them. When Sophie (Mamie Gummer) pulls up in her Mercedes to buy a couch from Echo Park local Alex (Tony Okungbowa), she’s wearing casual, trendy clothes you could find at a run-of-the-mill vintage store. She doesn’t seem to act much different from Alex — even though we’re explicitly told in the dialogue that they’re worlds apart. Alex actually owns his Echo Park home, which means he has money, despite the movie’s failure to acknowledge it. And then there’s Alex’s Latino friend Mateo, an Echo Park native who somehow doesn’t know he shouldn’t lean against the trees at Elysian Park, where men urinate before Dodgers games. Outside the framing of class matters, Echo Park hits a few good notes with relationship dynamics. This is a quiet film, relying on the subtlest of looks to take us from one scene to the next. Often, Gummer and Okungbowa can achieve this in performance, as in their moments of friendly banter. But this is a film where understanding the fact that they’re wealthy can’t rescue the third installment in a franchise that has more charisma of Ice Cube and Cedric the Entertainer, the headliners of the first two Barbershop movies (released in 2002 and 2004), helped keep those over-plotted comedies buoyant. Cube and Cedric are back as Calvin and Eddie in Barbershop: The Next Cut, but even their enormous appeal can’t rescue the third installment in the franchise. The Next Cut is glutted even more than its predecessors with ancient fellas-versus-females debates, unauxiliary sociopolitical commentary and top-40 superstars trying to diversify their brands.

THE NEXT MONDAY IN MAY is one hectic point in Andrew Rossi’s The First Monday in May, a documentary outlining the production of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s hugely popular “China: Through the Looking Glass” exhibition, Chinese film director Wong Kar-wai declares, “Seeing too much is seeing nothing.” Wong is one of many creative consultants on this exhibition, and his words serve as an apt critique of this stylish but troubling film. It’s produced in part by Condé Nast Entertainment, which has created a glossy advertisement for itself with Anna Wintour as a key figure overseeing the increasingly stressful exhibition planning and celebrity wrangling with characteristic hauteur. Some issues arise. The real possibility of the exhibition coming across as imperialistic is briefly addressed, but everything gets too quickly resolved to be revealing. Still, the documentary is not without its pleasures:

From the Writer and Director of ONCE and BEGIN AGAIN
The looks at sumptuous couture layered with sequins and tulle, and handled deliberately by a team of women in lab coats and gloves, bring to life the textures of seemingly untouchable clothes; a visit to the Yves Saint Laurent archive is a trip for those interested in vintage fashion. Early on, the curators in the Met's costume division talk passionately about fashion as art, and the clothes speak for themselves. It’s frustrating, then, when the final 15 minutes essentially become a game of spot-the-celebrity, lavishing so much attention on stars we see too often to begin with (Kim Kardashian! George Clooney! Rihanna!). Rossi provides an attractive overview of the exhibition for those who did not attend it, but we are left feeling something like Wong, seeing a lot of pretty things surrounded by vapid- ity. (Abby Bender)

HOSTILE BORDER | Formerly known by the stronger (but less gringo-friendly) name of Pocha, a slang term for Mexican-Americans who don’t speak Spanish, Hostile Border lives up to both of its titles. Claudia (Veronica Sixtos), an undocumented immigrant who’s spent almost her entire life in America, is the non-Hispanicophone in question; that poses something of a problem when the 20-something is deported to Mexico for credit card fraud and forced to choose between her father’s ranch and attempting to re-enter her adoptive country. Casually striking and often hand-held, co-director Michael Dwyer’s cinematography makes Claudia’s sun-drenched home-away-from-home look so postcard-prety that you may have trouble believing her eagerness to leave — at least until the local mob boss shows up and abducts one of her dad’s employees. Sixtos’ performance lends her double-outsider character a refreshingly unaffected air that never devolves into message-movie saccharinity; wisely, she plays Claudia as a bit standoffish and unaware of how in-over-her-head she is. What follows is like No Country for Old Men from the perspective of Anton Chigurh’s collateral damage, those unlucky souls who get mixed up in nasty business simply by virtue of where their parents and grandparents chose to lay down their roots. Co-directors Dwyer and Kaitlin McLaughlin prove more adept at the first act’s low-key character building than the action-movie showdows they’re building toward, but Claudia’s use of a makeshift flamethrower late in the game is an unexpected joy. (Michael Nordine)

MARINONI: THE FIRE IN THE FRAME | In bland racing doc Marinoni: The Fire in the Frame, filmmaker Tony Girardin indirectly juggles several angles in his attempt to explain the competitive genius of 75-year-old bicycle maker and racing cyclist Giuseppe Marinoni. He ultimately focuses on Marinoni as a cranky workaholic driven to break a racing world record, but still paints a frustratingly vague portrait of the craftsman, husband and athlete, partly because nobody seems to want (or even know how) to describe Marinoni’s character. The man himself shooe Girardin away whenever the puffy documentary tries to film him working on bikes; talking-head subjects provide banal answers to personality quiz-style questions. Asked for a one-word descrip-
A PUNK BAND FACES MURDEROUS SKINHEADS IN GREEN ROOM

Jeremy Saulnier’s Green Room is an impeccably crafted cinematic torture machine — in the best possible way. The premise will make some cringe, while making others giddy: A punk band, trapped in a club in the middle of nowhere, has to fight off a bunch of murderous skinheads to get out. Count me among the initially skeptical. The idea sounds less like a grindhouse classic than a juvenile music video, but Saulnier distinguishes the concept with artistry and expertise.

The band is called the Ain’t Rights, and when we meet them they’re struggling through a pathetic tour of the Pacific Northwest, stealing gas for their van. A canceled club gig and a desperate need for cash prompt them to play a backwoods venue attended and run by neo-Nazis. “Just don’t talk politics,” they’re warned. Still, they can’t help but sing the Dead Kennedys’ “Nazi Punks Fuck Off.” Things truly get tense, however, after one member of the group walks in on a grisly murder scene back-stage. Suddenly, the Ain’t Rights are witnesses, and the whole club has turned against them. The band barricades itself in the green room, desperatly trying to figure a way out of the situation.

Enter the club’s owner, Darcy (Patrick Stewart), an older skinhead whose efficient, downright reasonable demeanor somehow makes him that much creepier. That tension between unhinged panic and taking-care-of-business cool gives Green Room its unique kick. The blood flows, the limbs fly, and our hardcore poser heroes have to learn to get in touch with their inner berserkers. So does the movie, though its madness is a controlled one. Can a film be both graphic and subtle? —Bilge Ebiri

GREEN ROOM | Directed by Jeremy Saulnier
A24 | ArcLight Hollywood

A Married Woman (Une Femme Mariée) is an impecably crafted cinematic torture machine — in the best possible way. The premise will make some cringe, while making others giddy: A punk band, trapped in a club in the middle of nowhere, has to fight off a bunch of murderous skinheads to get out. Count me among the initially skeptical. The idea sounds less like a grindhouse classic than a juvenile music video, but Saulnier distinguishes the concept with artistry and expertise.

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GREEN ROOM | Directed by Jeremy Saulnier
A24 | ArcLight Hollywood
Galega dismisses as impossible. Iremar, a dreamer himself, won't rule it out, as he engages in a scheme to jack off a prize stud for its semen. Without really noticing one another, these characters are mired in a roundelay of yearning and disappointment, of lives shaped by the peddling of animals and people, of the commodification of sex itself. Mascaro’s camera observes transactional sex with the same matter-of-fact frankness it captures the branding of livestock or the alien presence of modern factories on this rugged landscape. (Alan Scherstuhl)

THE SYNDROME “Shaken-baby syndrome is in the realm of mythology,” says neurosurgeon Ayub Ommaya in archival footage featured in the documentary The Syndrome. Yet it was Ommaya’s research on monkeys in the 1960s upon which law enforcement and a few medical experts built the shaken-baby syndrome hysteria-industrial complex—a fact he tried to undo before his death. In recent decades, prosecutors have arrested and convicted the parents and caregiv-ers of babies and small children who have suffered from the poorly named condition. The filmmakers, cousins Meryl and Susan Goldsmith, meticulously litigate the problems with what is increasingly accepted as a problematic medical diagnosis and a flimsy basis for accusations of child abuse. They expose the issue with depth and breadth; this well-researched investigation is loaded with credible facts and has a workaday broadcast-newsmagazine feel. Doctors and law enforcement seem to be coming to terms with the end of “shaken baby” as a legiti-diagnosis, but the film makes clear that the problem is by no means over. That’s especially galling when Americans so often struggle to separate ideology from observable fact concerning vaccinations and climate science. Compounding the tragedy: In these cases, the gullible followers are police officers and prosecutors with the power to deprive people of their freedom. The Goldsmiths offer suggestions for why some physicians are sticking to their guns: Ego? Power? Grant money? Those scientists don’t hesitate to employ circular arguments in rejecting hard evidence from peer-reviewed research. Worse, they’ve gone Orwellian, renaming the syndrome “abusive head trauma” and creating a definition designed to further cloud things for the accused and the convicted—mothers who have never harmed their children. (Daphne Howland)

**VAXXED** Vaxxed, the new “documentary” about the alleged connection between vaccines and autism, is directed by Andrew Wakefield, the disgraced doc-tor responsible for duping parents into believing vaccinations could give their children autism. This needs to be stated up front, and before the end credits roll, just in case you’re unclear who’s behind this. Autism is a misunderstood and sometimes terrifying disorder, often striking young children with no previous history of medical problems. Wakefield capitalized on this lack of clear cause when he published his now-discredited paper linking the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine to autism. Every major study conducted by reputable institutions has since failed to find a connection. Wakefield and the vaxxed team present the other side in the form of news clips with vaccine proponents. Vaxxed asserts no less than that the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) destroyed data in a 2004 study that showed no link between autism and the MMR vaccine. Wakefield, et al., base this on the statements of one man, William Thompson, a former senior scientist with the CDC, who was taped in conversations with environ-mental biologist Brian Hooker. The crux of the entire movie—and understand, Thompson’s statements are present only because Hooker recorded him without his knowledge—is Thompson assert-
ing that his fellow study authors threw certain documents away, invalidating the study. And... that’s it. In the decades-long absence of supporting evidence for his MMR “hypothesis,” Wakefield and Hooker hinge their argument on the word of a “whistleblower” who unwittingly gave his story to a non-epidemiologist (Hooker) and non-doctor (Wakefield’s license was revoked in 2010). (Pete Vonder Haar)

**WEDDING DOLL (HATUNA MENIYAR)**

Nitzan Galidy’s Wedding Doll is neither inspirational nor miserable, which would be faint praise if it didn’t have more to offer. But laughing — seemingly (don’t ask), you might find yourself stifling a chuckle. The figurines she crafts by hand betray her obsession with marriage, which itself betrays how little else there is to aspire to in her small town. When she isn’t busy daydreaming about her nuptials, Hagit finds herself dealing with an overprotective mother, the imminent closure of the toilet-paper factory where she works and her secret relationship with the son of her boss. So secret, in fact, that he has yet to tell his two closest friends, who amuse themselves by making fun of his paramour — like many a would-be nice guy in the movies, he’s only a decent person until it becomes uncool. Galidy never treats her heroine as a prop in someone else’s redemption arc, and Rosenberg’s performance will have you looking for her restraint, but you can’t help wanting to know her. (Michael Nordin)

**EVERYBODY WANTS SOME!!**

Richard Linklater’s Everybody Wants Some!! is being billed as a “spiritual sequel” to his 1993 high-school stoner classic Dazed and Confused, but in some key ways it feels closer to his animated 2001 philosophy bull-session Waking Life — a freewheeling grab-bag of ideas, ruminations and loose ends held together by the director’s generous sensibility. Or maybe the new film is the missing link between the two, turning these apparently disparate works into a continuum, a journey between checking out, self-knowledge and transcendence. That might seem like a lot of weight to put on a movie about a bunch of college baseball players trying to get laid. But Linklater’s great talent is to remain light on his feet while drifting into the metaphysical — to balance the earthly with the profound, and to find the people somewhere in between. There are certainly a lot of people in Everybody Wants Some!!, and Linklater does a fine job of keeping them all in play. The nominal protagonist is Jake Bradford (Blake Jenner), a freshman pitcher who has just arrived at Southeast Texas University in September 1980 to live in a rundown house with his teammates. Chief among his crew is the philosopher-hoodoist Finnegan (Glen Powell), who matters so end- lessly — the latest addition to Linklater’s roster of lovable blowhards. But as Everybody Wants Some!! proceeds, the tone switches from the ribbing and hazing and courting of young men to something more questioning. The experience of watching this film is one of re- thinking the importance of us. It’s a movie about people who arrive sure of themselves and depart in the quiet confidence that all they know is that they know nothing. (Blige Ebiri)

**THE MEETING INVITATION**

Karyn Kusama is best known for her debut film, Girlfight, which introduced Michelle Rodriguez as a teen tough training to be a boxer and, behind the camera, Kusama herself as a 27-year-old. John Sayles—approved indie wunderkind. She went on to direct the flaccid Anon Facio and the Diablo Cody-penned horror-comedy Jennifer’s Body. Her latest is a foray into isolation horror that he’s decisive, but not whether we can trust his judgment about the gathering that follows. Eden and her partner (Michael Huisman) introduce increasingly disquieting activities, among them a home-video screening of a woman dying. Only Will seems to suspect something awful might be brewing — or is he letting his paranoia ruin the evening? Alongside Theodore Shapiro’s angry score, The Invitations greatest asset is Blanchard, who plays Eden with such expert melodramatic instincts that even her most menacing behaviors seem sympathetic. The build-up stretches longer than it should, but the payoff comes with a satisfying bang. Will ultimately isn’t the one who puts this party out of its misery, but watching as the atmosphere of decorum explodes into carnage is a rare pleasure, both vindicating and horrifying. (Abby Garrett)

**MIDNIGHT SPECIAL**

In Jeff Nichols’ gripping domestic thriller Take Shelter, Michael Shannon played a family man who convinced that Armageddon was upon us. Until the final seconds, we had no idea if our hero was madman or prophet. It didn’t really matter: Nichols’ careful suspense-building, along with the film’s deeply empathetic performances, proved hypnotic. Nichols’ new film, Midnight Special, creeps further into science-fiction territory: It’s a thriller about a father (Michael Shannon) and mother (Kirsten Dunst) trying to protect a son (Jaeden Lieberher) with mysterious powers from both governmental forces and a violent cult. When it works, it works in the same way that Take Shelter did — by grounding its drama minimizing the paranormal histrionics. Nichols has a light touch when it comes to genre, which is Midnight Special’s great blessing and curse. The film keeps us guessing for a while as to what, exactly, this child is, Messiah? Alien? Demon? A government experiment gone wrong? Initially, Nichols reveals his story’s fantastical elements in capsule and dribbles. He’s more interested in character and setting than in wow ing us with plot reveals. The most impressive parts of Midnight Special center on the parents’ dilemma. They love Alton dearly, and are both determined and torn about their mission. Their boy won’t be with them for much longer, and they know they have to get him to his mysterious appointment. Shannon and Dunst can give us volumes in a glance, and Nichols uses them well. But as we get more clues and revelations — beams of light, earthquake-like rumblings, mushroom-cloud-like starbursts — we may find ourselves yearning for the mysterious drama we were watching earlier. (Blige Ebiri)
The Jungle Book in Disney Digital 3D
Fri., 10:25 a.m., 1:00, 3:00, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40 p.m.
Sun., 10:25, 12:20, 2:20, 4:20, 6:20, 8:20, 10:20 p.m.

The Boss
Fri., 3:15, 10:30 a.m., 1:30, 4:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 a.m.
BUILT FOR DESTRUCTION

How a soft-spoken luthier from Redondo Beach made one of the most iconic instruments in rock history: Slash’s Appetite for Destruction guitar

BY MATT WAKE

The man who hand-built the guitar Slash played on most of Appetite for Destruction lived in an old trailer behind Redondo Beach’s Music Works. His name was Kris Derrig.

Even though he was just in his early 30s, Derrig’s waist-length hair was already gray. The replicas he made of 1959 Gibson Les Pauls, a holy- relic instrument, were stunning in their rich sound and flame-top beauty. Derrig would pour any money he made from selling these replicas into converting his beloved red 1967 Pontiac LeMans convertible into a light-blue GTO.

But he never finished that convertible. In 1986, Derrig was diagnosed with cancer. Within a year, he was dead.

His craftsmanship lives on in Slash’s starburst intro to Guns N’ Roses’ “One,” the Southern rock-gone-trash flurry at the end of “Paradise City.”

Alan Niven, Guns N’ Roses’ Appetite-era manager, bought the “lemon drop” — finish Derrig guitar from Music Works as a gift for Slash. The cork-screw-haired guitarist was unsatisfied with his guitar tone on Appetite’s basic tracks, recorded at now-defunct Canoga Park facility Rumbo Recorders using two Jackson guitars and a B.C. Rich Warlock, and he was growing increasingly frustrated as he attempted to re-record all his parts with producer Mike Clink at Take One Studios in Burbank.

A few days before purchasing the Derrig, Niven dropped by Take One and parked next to the band’s rental van. “There was a fucking [Gibson] SG though the windscreen, neck-first,” Niven recalls, in his rascally New Zealand accent. “And that’s a message that even I can understand.”

Niven asked Music Works owner Jim Foote if the store had anything Slash would like to try. Foote pulled out a guitar case and opened it up. “And I just went, ‘Oh my God, look at that. That’s beautiful,’” Niven says. He thinks he might have paid several months to break, but it eventually sold for 1.5 million dollars. According to the Massachusetts Registry of Vital Records and Statistics, Derrig died just two months earlier, on May 17, 1987, at the age of 32. So he never knew the impact his guitar had or heard how amazing it sounded on GNR’s earth-scorching debut.

Asked how his brother might’ve reacted to his guitar being at the core of one of rock’s greatest albums, Dale says, “He’d be laughing his ass off. Because he was very self-effacing.” In 2010, Gibson released a signature Slash Les Paul model based on Derrig’s 1959 replica.

The only other guitar Slash used on Appetite that made the final mix, Clink says, was a borrowed Gibson SG — the same one that ended up through the van wind- shield — which can be heard on the dark, drug-laced tune “My Michelle.” Clink says the SG “was going to be the sound of the record,” and that guitar, a horned model favored by rock greats such as AC/DC’s Angus Young, “would have been, if Alan had not brought that Les Paul in.”

Derrig guitars often featured authentic 1959 Gibson pickups. It was Foote’s idea to install toothier-sounding, “zebra-style” white and black Seymour Duncan Alnico II Pro pickups in what became Slash’s Appetite guitar. This crucial tweak helped Slash’s tone and the entire record sound simultaneously classic and contemporary. Of course, there were other factors, too: Clink’s studio expertise, a customized Marshall amplifier rented for Slash, the infectious Appetite material, the band’s volatile chemistry, and Slash’s rare combination of virtuosic chops and bluesy feel.

Marc Canter grew up with Slash and first saw him play guitar as a teenager in a garage. Years later, he received a shoutout in the Appetite liner notes and published the early GNR concert photo book Reckless Road. Now owner of Canter’s Deli, he says, “It’s really more the guitar player, not the guitar, not the amp.”

Canter recalls a 1992 jam session during which Slash coaxed his signature tone from a borrowed “$200 Strat” and “crappy amp”: “It sounded like Slash using a Les Paul. Not just how good he was playing, but the sound. Right away you hear Slash.”
**Only the most stylishly attired will survive**

**Survival of the Hippest**

Don’t Make Your Annual Pilgrimage to Coachella Without Reading This First

By Jeff Weiss

Only elderly shamans and energy healers can remember the dark ages before the Coachella Music Festival first bloomed out of the polo-riddled deserts east of Los Angeles. Popular lore holds it was founded in 1999, when Beck, Rage Against the Machine and Morrissey united for worshippers fearing imminent global doom via Y2K. But anthropologists scouring the fringes of the Mojave have found evidence that the Morongo Band of Mission Indians actually threw the first Coachella Festival shortly before Father Junipero Serra arrived.

After sacred peyote rituals, members of the tribe bustled out flutes, bone whistles and water drums before a stunned audience of swift foxes, snakes and warriors. Thus the venerable tradition of bros wearing feathered headdresses began, and the band Fleet Foxes got its name.

After such humble origins, Coachella has become the most famous festival since the Romans’ Lupercalia, where youths clad in bloodied goatskins whipped onlookers for purification purposes. (According to rumor, this is now the easiest way to get an “All-Access” festival pass.)

Last year, Coachella shattered records for most tickets sold (198,000) and total gross (more than $84 million). With the impending reunions of LCD Soundsystem and Guns N’ Roses, most observers believe that this year’s festival will eclipse those previous marks and avoid losing its edge to art-school Brooklynites in little jackets and borrowed nostalgia (popularly known as Governors Ball).

As its popularity has soared, guides have emerged on how to survive 72 hours amidst potential winds, dust and the ever-present threat of getting your eyes gouged out by errant glow sticks. So in the interest of helping you withstand an otherwise joyous experience that writers often describe as being like a Soviet gulag, here are survival tips for Coachella 2016:

- Your cellphone will die and many texts won’t go through. A portable charger is effective, but what if it breaks? Do you know how many likes you’ll sacrifice if you can’t Instagram a sunset photo of the Ferris wheel? Your best bet is to sneak a portable generator in your underwear. If security asks what you’re hiding, just wink.

- Spend 10 hours (minimum) meditating in total silence about what aesthetic you want to cultivate. Are you boho? Grunge? A hippie princess? A gypsy mermaid? A cornrowed, aging Sunset Strip rocker? (Very chic this spring.) No one will take you seriously until your look is the most [insert three emoji fire symbols].

- Flower crowns: You spent $400 for a GA pass and a lot is riding on this. So buy a Shenzhen Nongke Orchid crown — a steal at just 1.68 million Yuan ($200,000).

- Hats: Try the sexy beekeeper look, which is both practical (keeps the sun off your face) and a sure bet to steal festival fashion roundups of the Neon Carnival. Nor should you underestimate wearing a hat made of snails (escargot only) during the set from Snails.

- Water: I hear good things.

- If you’re wondering whether that’s Chloë Sevigny, it’s always Chloë Sevigny.

- Get a Flash Tattoo: Make sure it’s tribal. Any tribe will do, as long as it’s authentic. Bring forged documentation of your indigenous heritage in case anyone tries to ask questions.

- In case a Mad Max–style apocalypse breaks out during Calvin Harris’ closing set and you wind up in some music website’s slideshow recap, you need to look fashionable. Carry a haute couture tie-dyed crossbow to fend off rivals trying to kill you or starve you by hijacking the last slice of Spicy Pie.

- Remember to have fun.

An L.A. native, Jeff Weiss edits Passion of the Weiss and hosts the Shots Fired podcast. Find him online at passionweiss.com.
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His Saturday will be Record Store Day once again. I have gone through the lists of releases for the USA and the U.K. and there are a lot of titles I hope to pick up. There seems to be less major-label in-for-the-kill cloggage this year, and the independent labels are larger and in charge.

Record Store Day is, to me, the greatest “day” of recent invention. More than once, record labels almost killed off the record stores that struggled to vend their wares. I hate to wax nostalgic, but great record stores — such as the midsize and excellent Aron’s Records, which used to live at 1150 Weteringschans in Amsterdam, always remembers me, and I have never been able to the point that the place that supplied the fall out of love with going to the record store, didn’t understand how so many people could.

As the 1980s gave way to the incoming decade, it became a recurring drag to walk to as many of them as I could.

As the 1980s gave way to the incoming decade, it became a recurring drag to walk to as many of them as I could.

As the 1980s gave way to the incoming decade, it became a recurring drag to walk.

From then to now, it has been one of my favorite rituals — and I know I am not alone on this — to go into a record store in a town I don’t live in, to be greeted by the person behind the counter, who actually remembers me from the last time and the time before that.

Jan van Dorsten, who for almost 30 years in town a couple of years ago, the building was full of these fuckin’ lizards.

When Second Coming Records at 235 Sullivan St. in NYC closed, I was gudled. One of the reasons why vinyl has made such a strong comeback is that the bands demanded their music made into records, no matter how the execs howled about the inconvenience. Another reason is that independent bands never stopped going for the analog groove. Labels like Dischord have made vinyl from day one to now.

One of the best parts of playing records is they are a fantastic pain in the ass. They are heavy and easy to ruin. They make moving records they scored only hours before.

Now and then, I run into them. They’re nothing but the very best moments of human engagement with music came back — right up there with comic books.

Labels like Dischord have made vinyl from day one to now.

Records force your devotion because nothing but the very best moments of human engagement with music came back — right up there with comic books.

Music is the highest bar of human excellence and will not be kept down for long. After countless quantities of data were coded onto compact discs (which, by their definition, actually hold no music whatsoever) and fisted down the gullets of the global consumerate, the unerring human need for analog engagement with music came back with a vengeance.

While major labels seemed to have no interest in music, thankfully the bands did, since a lot of them came from years of going to record stores. One of the reasons that vinyl has made such a strong comeback is that the bands demanded their music be made into records, no matter how the execs howled about the inconvenience. Another reason is that independent bands never stopped going for the analog groove. Labels like Dischord have made vinyl from day one to now.

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THU. APRIL 14
ABK
BONEZ DUBB, LIQUID ASSASSIN, BAKE LO & MORE

THU. APRIL 14
THE GATSBY AFFAIR
ROSS & RACH, JULIETTE MROE, JIN CRESSWELL & BENTLEY MONTES

FRI. APRIL 15
KLUB LA

FRI. APRIL 15
FADE TO MIND X WILD STYLE
KINGDOM, NOVITZINGU, MALICA & MORE

SAT. APRIL 16
XCELLERATED & HEAVY DUB PRESENT
DJ PROFILE & MC FATMAN D

SAT. APRIL 16
CLUB 90'S PRESENTS: SELENA BALL

TUE. APRIL 19
TUE. APRIL 19
WHITNEY
GOLDEN DAZE & DICK STUSSO

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4/20 ROJAS FEST LA
4/22 LEFT ALONE
4/22 COLORS LA
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4/24 COMEBACK KID
4/24 FREDO SANTANA
4/25 “I GOT TRAP MONEY” TOUR
4/25 INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS
4/26 RICKY DAVILA / LBE PRIDE
4/26 BODINSKI
4/29 CRÈME DE LA CRÈME
4/29 TRAUMA LIVE AND UNITED IN HARDCORE PRESENT: HARDRUSH
4/30 KLUB LA
5/5 GLOBAL BASED LOS ANGELES
5/6 DAS BUNKER STAR WARS NIGHT V
5/7 NO VIOLENCE FEST 2016
5/12 MR. C
5/17 B.O.B.
5/20 NOBUNNY
5/21 KLUB LA - LBE PRIDE
5/22 FATHER
5/27 ESCALATOR GEOMETRICO
5/27 106
5/29 GIRLS NIGHT OUT THE SHOW
5/29 KINGDOM
7/9 THE DEFECTS

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FT. ANKYoRHYTHMA', ILL CAMILLE, NOCANDO & MORE

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GOLDIE

SAT. APRIL 16
THE RAP PARTY
SAT. APRIL 16
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TUE. APRIL 19
THE RAP PARTY
FT. BLONDIE BEACH, BIG KNEE & AMI REAYSOMETHING

TUE. APRIL 19
THE MOTH
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4/15 YE!
4/16 VICTORY VARIETY HOUR BURLESQUE
4/16 THE CLARENDONIANS
4/17 CARIBBEAN INFUSION
4/20 #HEALTHYBOYZ
4/21 JUSTJENNY PRESENTS
LOCAL FUNK/HIP-HOP
4/22 SEAN HEALY PRESENTS:
HIP HOP SHOWCASE #15
4/23 JOHNNY CRAIG
4/23 SOUNDBELL W/ ROME WILL BURN
4/24 DAVE EAST
4/26 LOCAL VIBES

4/26 BANJEE BALL
4/26 COLORS COMEDY
4/28 ONE MORE PARTY IN L.A.
4/29 SHOEBOX RECORDINGS
5/5 DROPDEAD
5/6 YENI TURKU
5/6 LOCAL DREAMZZZZ
5/7 A WILHELM SCREAM
5/14 LOCAL BLISS
5/14 AMUDSIA
5/19 WALSHY FIRE
5/20 STARS AT NIGHT

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Saturday • April 16

RECORD STORE DAY!
Amoeba joins with record stores worldwide to celebrate record store culture.
- Hundreds of exclusive, limited edition RSD releases*
- 20% off used DVDs & Blu-rays, Turntables, Posters & Used Books
- Live T-shirt silk-screening
- Spin the Prize Wheel for charity
- Food / Drink / More Sales outside the store (3-5pm)
- Free caricatures for kids and tarot card readings
- GUEST DJ SETS:
  1PM: Tommy Damm II
  3PM: LANCE ROCK
  5PM: FRED ARMISEN

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*store coupons cannot be used for RSD titles

Saturday • April 16 • 6pm

RECORD STORE EVENING
@ Space15Twenty
Join three of our favorite artists:
- MNDGSM DJ set - 6pm
- Kevin Morby performance - 6:45pm
- Best Coast DJ set - 7:30pm
plus free beer and giveaways.
(In the courtyard at 1520 Cahuenga, ½ block North of Amoeba — enter on Ivar).

Wednesday • April 20 • 7pm
JOSHUA ROMAN
Live In-Store Cello Performance.
Presented by Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Roman will be in Los Angeles as part of their Guest Artist Residency program. Also appearing April 16th at Alex Theatre & April 17th at UCLA’s Royce Hall.

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Music Pick

Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival
@ EMPIRE POLO CLUB
Two of the biggest surprise bookings by Goldenvoice at this year’s Coachella involve reunions of ‘80s bands that couldn’t sound any less alike. Lush expand on their trademark shoegazer style Saturday with the shimmering gauziness of their new EP Blind Spot, their first recording in 20 years. Later that night, Guns N’ Roses will be more visceral than dreamy as Slash lets loose his buzzing beekeeper of dense guitar flurries over Axl Rose’s ragged howling, following a two-decade split. Morosely engaging crooner James Murphy and LCD Soundsystem make their on-stage return Friday night, five years after a purportedly final show in New York. The rest of the weekend is a speed-dating sprint through a random assemblage of more expected names, from Calvin Harris’ euphoric electro-pop and Ice Cube’s thunderous declamations to Beach House’s languid reveries, Savages’ serrated intensity, Run the Jewels’ sonic terror and Bat for Lashes’ spellbinding incantations. Also Saturday and Sunday, April 16-17, and Friday through Sunday, April 22-24.

Iron Maiden
@ THE FORUM
More than three decades into their career, Iron Maiden’s continued status as a vital heavy-metal band is a testament to sticking to your strengths. The British legends’ galloping metal anthems — often inspired by historical events, classic literature or tales of fallen civilizations — have remained some of the most timeless records in heavy music. It also helps that frontman Bruce Dickinson, now in his late 50s, still leaps and runs across the stage with the energy of a college athlete, and remains the powerful vocalist who earned the nickname “the Air Raid Siren.” In 1998, Iron Maiden’s sprawling, double-disc epic full of new songs that fit perfect alongside classics such as “The Trooper.” Also Saturday, April 16.

Kirk Franklin
@ THE WILTERN
Kirk Franklin doesn’t sing a lick, but this fact has not prevented the Grammy-winning master pianist and lively choir director from becoming one of the best-selling gospel artists in history. A forerunner of urban contemporary gospel, Franklin (amid accusations of blasphemy from some peers) was one of the first to incorporate elements of hip-hop, R&B and funk into gospel, a sound heard on his 1993 crossover debut, Kirk Franklin & The Family — the first debut from a gospel artist to go platinum — and all subsequent releases. His 12th album, 2015’s Losing My Religion, spent 21 weeks on Billboard’s Top Gospel Albums chart. At tonight’s show, Franklin celebrates his two storied decades in the music industry and will perform selections from his vast catalog backed by a full choir. —Jacqueline Michael Whatley

Vijay Iyer, Wadada Leo Smith
@ THORNE HALL, OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE
Wadada Leo Smith is one of the grandmasters of free jazz, although the septuagenarian trumpeter takes issue with calling his improvisatory systems “free.” More than a decade ago, Smith invited a pianist 30 years his junior, Vijay Iyer, to join his Golden Quartet; Iyer would prove to be adept at his own systems of music. Today, Iyer is at the pinnacle of modern composition and improvisation, as a 2013 MacArthur Fellow and Harvard professor. Now it’s Iyer’s turn to enlist his former mentor Wadada, with their latest collaboration for ECM, A Cosmic Rhythm With Each Stroke, an expertly patient collection of pieces inspired by the works of Indian artist Nasreen Mohamedi. This rare (and free) show at Oxy will demonstrate how to bridge a generation gap through shared experience and collective inspiration. —Gary Fukushima

Rock the Night with Cat Power, Jakob Dylan
@ THE TROUBADOUR
Tonight’s benefit for the charity Connecting to Cure Crohn’s and Colitis brings Cat Power and Jakob Dylan together onstage locally for the first time since they appeared at the Echo in the Canyon show at the Orpheum Theatre in October. That concert of nostalgic covers of psychedelic-pop songs by ‘60s L.A. bands was mainly Dylan’s show, with Power singing only a couple tunes, including a mesmerizing duet with Dylan on The Turtles’ “You Showed Me.” Presumably, Power will get to do more this time around, although Dylan turned out to be an amiable host and supportive musical partner. After relatively modest beginnings with The Wallflowers in the early ‘90s, Dylan revealed unexpected soul and gravitas on his second solo album, Women + Country. Power’s intuitive songwriting is deepened further by her expressively yearning vocals. —Falling James

Mbongwana Star, Wondem
@ THE ROXY
Mbongwana Star rose from the ashes of Kinshasa’s late, great Staff Benda Billi. In the shantytowns of the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s capital city, former SBB members Coco Ngamballi and Theo Nzonzana formed a new band to fully explore “mbongwana” (change) — and, good God, the outrageously smashed-together sound of the seven-piece combo’s debut platter, From Kinshasa, is one mind-blowing mess of music. Ngamballi, Nzonzana and their bandmates strew ruff-tuff Lingala vocals over traditional Congolese rhythms combined with post-punk bass, supple guitars, spacy synths and some seriously eccentric electronics, often played on recycled and re-constructed instruments and overdriven to maximum distortion. It’s some of the most hair-raisingly joyful sonic weirdness currently available on planet Earth. Also: L.A. guitarist-singer Dexter Story’s Wondem band, inspired by Ethiopian, Somalian, Eritrean, Sudanese and Kenyan culture. —John Payne

Photo by Jonah Takagi
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The Freightshakers
@ THE ECHO
Honky-tonk conjurers The Freightshakers have an almost mystical depth to their brand of raw outlaw country. Fronted by burly, brilliant singer Gethen Jenkins, the group has evolved over the last seven or so years from a reliable local bar band to a strikingly potent powerhouse with a persuasive, original set. Their rich, luxurious ensemble sound alone is remarkable — the balance, presence and lovingly wrought dynamism of the pedal steel, guitars and acoustic bass all cut through with gorgeous, individual tone. Fanatic, big-time, hard country heads to a man, The Freightshakers effortlessly deliver as ideal a dose of renegade country perfection as anyone could wish for. — Jonny Whiteside

The Kills, L.A. Witch
@ MAYAN THEATRE
English guitarist Jamie Hince and Florida singer Alison Mosshart are a pair of visual and sonic opposites. He pries chunks of noise from his strings and stoically chops them up, curiously cutting them off with funky stops. She finds her way through his maze with sinuous melodies, prowling the stage with restless abandon until his riffs pull her back again. The Kills’ upcoming album, Ash & Ice, was largely recorded in Los Angeles, and there are newfound hints of bone-dry Santa Anas swirling around the spaghetti Western guitar ringlets of new single “Doing It to Death” and the hard-blues desert canyons of “Heart of a Dog” and amid the rolling post-punk rhythms of “Hard Habit to Break.” The record reportedly was delayed by multiple surgeries on Hince’s hand, but his minimalist chords are as starkly effective as ever. — Falling James

M83
@ FOX THEATRE POMONA
Junk, M83’s follow-up to 2011’s monster Hurry Up, We’re Dreaming, is perfectly timed with the return of Full House on Netflix as Fuller House, as M83 mastermind Anthony Gonzalez has based many of the album’s musical ideas on ‘80s sitcoms. In the guilty-pleasure cheese of “Moon Crystal” and the head-shaking kitsch of “For the Kids,” Junk has ready-made themes for songs yet-to-be-conceived ‘80s television revivals. Lo-fi “The Wizard” sounds as if it was captured standing alongside a pinball machine, and “Road Blaster” could have been snatched off the classic, fast-paced video game Jet Set Radio. Also, the guitar you’re hearing on “Go” is Steve Vai — yes, that Steve Vai, who, if you recall, is also from the ‘80s. — Lily Moayeri
Sinners, Strawberry Smog, Sat., April 16, 8 p.m., $25.
Beach House, J. Mascis, Tue., April 19, 8 p.m., $35.
Deerhunter, Unknown Mental Orchestra, Wed., April 20, 7 p.m., $32; Melody’s Echo Chamber, Wed., April 20, 11 p.m., $20. Mike Snow, Bob Moses, Thu., April 21, 8 p.m., $30.

Media Jeweler, Let’s Paint TV, Ice Cooler, Doo Sng, Sat., April 16, 9 p.m., $5. Sparkle Water, Windy, Red Pony Clock, High Keys, Mon., April 18, 8 p.m., $5.

THE REDWOOD BAR & GRILL: 316 W. 3rd St., Los Angeles. Los Angeles, To Kill, Oct. 21, 9 p.m.; LA, $10.


SASSAFRAS SALOON: 1233 Vine St., Los Angeles. The Rayford Brothers, Fri., April 15, 10:30 p.m., free. ViceVersa, Sat., April 16, 10:30 p.m., free. Highland Kites, Wed., April 20, 9 p.m., free.

THE SATELLITE: 1717 Silver Lake Blvd., Los Angeles. Adam Green, Jenny O., Fri., April 15, 7:30 p.m., $15.

THE SMELL: 424 S. 24th St., Los Angeles. Drossy Bessy, Goldenboy, Mute Swans, Thursdays, 8 p.m., free.

THE TROUBLEBARD: 9081 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood. Chon, Polychroma, Strawberry Girls, Fri., April 15, 7:30 p.m., $38. Rock the Night to Cure Crohn’s Disease with Joe Peloets, Sat., April 16, 7 p.m., $200-$5,000 (see Music Pick).

THE VELASLANAY PANORAMA: 1120 W. 24th St., Los Angeles. Bitchin Bajas, Frosty, Arshia Haq, performing after a screening of the Olivia Wyatt film Sailing a Sinking Sea, Thu., April 21, 8:30 p.m., $20.

THE VIPER ROOM: 8852 W. Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood. Voño, Sacristia, Sonicas or the Black Moon, Zenith, Sat., April 16, 9 p.m., $20. Michele, Mon., April 18, 8 p.m., $10. TBA, Wed., April 20, 8 p.m., $20. Problem, Wed., April 20, 8:30 p.m., $10 (see Music Pick); Ivery, Wed., April 20.

THE WIND & THE WAVES: 9001 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood. TBA, Fri., April 15, 9 p.m., $15.

THE WINDMILL: 1122 W. 24th St., Los Angeles. Sunday Night Jazz, Thursdays, 8 p.m.; $10-$20.

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CONCERTS
FRIDAY, APRIL 15
BIG LUCKY: With Nick Ariondo, 7:30 p.m., $43. Torrance Cultural Arts Center, 3330 Civic Center Drive, Torrance.
BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY: 8 p.m., TBA, Fox Theater Pomona, 301 S. Garey Ave., Pomona.


MONDAY, APRIL 18

FIESTA INTERNATIONAL: With Esperanza Flores Ballet Folklorico and a mariachi band TBA, 2 p.m., $22. San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, 320 Mission Drive, San Gabriel.

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$8 MILLER LIGHT OR COORS PITCHERS
SPEARMINT RHINO'S
Dames n' Games
TOPLESS "SPORTS" BAR & GRILL
2310 EAST WASHINGTON BOULEVARD
LOS ANGELES, CA 90021 (323) 589-2220
OPEN DAILY 11AM-2AM DAMESNGAMES.NET
FULL BAR • FINE FOOD
ONE FREE ENTRY WITH THIS PASS
VALID ONLY AT DAMES N' GAMES
LOS ANGELES. CANNOT BE COMBINED
WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. NOT VALID
DURING SPECIAL ENGAGEMENTS
OR PAY PER VIEW EVENTS.
LAWEEKLYFREE EXPIRES 06.01.16
1/2 OFF ENTRY
THIS COUPON IS GOOD FOR 1/2 OFF ENTRY
INTO SPEARMINT RHINO - CITY OF INDUSTRY.
NOT VALID DURING SPECIAL EVENTS.
ONE PERSON PER COUPON ONLY.
CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER OFFER.
LAWKLY Expires 05.31.16
ABBY LEE
BRAZIL
APRIL 28TH-30TH
THURSDAY: 10:30PM FRIDAY & SATURDAY: 11PM & 1AM
SPREAD THE POLE VISIT SPREAD THE POLE
SHOP AS A COUPLE AND RECEIVE
25% OFF ANY TWO ITEMS!
$10 minimum purchase. Only valid on Saturdays.
One coupon per couple only.
Cannot be combined with any other offer.
LA WKLY Expires 05.31.16
SPEARMINT RHINO SUPERSTORE
VIDEO BOOTH TOYS SEXY ATTIRE
25% OFF ANY 2 ITEMS
25% OFF ANY TWO ITEMS!
15429 E. Valley Blvd. | 626-961-1724 Inside Rhino Plaza
To object to the settlement, you must follow the procedures as set forth in the full Notice of Proposed Class Action settlement.

the Settlement Administrator at the address set forth above postmarked or delivery receipt marked no later than

dated March 11, 2016. I understand that by requesting exclusion, I will not be eligible to receive any payment or other benefit from the Settlement.

For further information you may also contact Class Counsel at:

For a Class Member and do not wish to remain in the Settlement Class, you may exclude yourself (or “opt out.”) If you wish

For further information you may also contact Class Counsel at:

If you believe you are a member of the Class and want to make a Claim, you must submit a Claim form. You may do this by mail or fax. If the mailing or other transmission must be postmarked or otherwise have date confirmation by August 8, 2016. You may be asked to submit a Settlement Questionnaire in order to determine your eligibility as a Class member and your entitlement under the Settlement. You will receive a copy of the Notice, Settlement Questionnaire and Claim Form by contacting the Claims Administration office.

The completed Claim Form should be sent to the Claims Administrator at:

In Re: Paradise Showgirls Claim Administrator.
c/o ILM Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 2031
Tustin, CA 92781

Telephone: (888) 250-6810
Fax: (888) 843-6185

Email: Claims@paradiseshowgirlsettlement.com

For further information you may also contact Class Counsel at:

K.L. Myles
KNAPP, PIETERSEN & CLARKE
550 North Brand Boulevard, Suite 1500
Glendale, California 91203-1922

Telephone: (818) 547-5250
email: ParadiseClass@kpcgcal.com

If you are a Class Member and do not wish to remain in the Settlement Class, you may exclude yourself (or “opt out.”) If you wish to exclude yourself from the Settlement Class, you must file and mail a written request for exclusion, which must contain your full name, a stage name (if any) used while you performed as a dancer at Paradise, the specific dates, if known, or date range(s), month(s), year(s) you performed as a dancer at Paradise, and your current address. Your request for exclusion must also contain the name of the State of California, Los Angeles County, (the “Court”), Case No. BC437919. I The Action includes claims of unlawful wage and tip collection, denial of rest periods and reimbursement for uniforms, and not providing itemized wage statements. A judgment was obtained on behalf of the class against the Defendant after trial.

On February 10, 2016, the Court issued an Order which, among other things, granted preliminary approval of the Settlement and established procedures for notice, final approval of the Settlement and other related matters. A hearing will be held before the Honorable Michele Rosenblatt in Department 40 of the Stanley Mosk Courthouse, located at 111 North Hill Street, Los Angeles, California 90012, on September 21 at 8:30 a.m. to consider whether the Settlement is fair, reasonable and adequate to the members of the Class.

If you believe you are a member of the Class and want to make a Claim, you must submit a Claim form. You may do this by mail or fax. If the mailing or other transmission must be postmarked or otherwise have date confirmation by August 8, 2016. You may be asked to submit a Settlement Questionnaire in order to determine your eligibility as a Class member and your entitlement under the Settlement. You will receive a copy of the Notice, Settlement Questionnaire and Claim Form by contacting the Claims Administration office.

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ELEVATE YOUR CANNABIS EXPERIENCE
Read news, explore strains, find dispensaries. If it’s about cannabis, it’s on Leafly.
Download the free Leafly app.