What makes L.A. the capital of the 21st century? Weaving together nature, culture, and creativity, this year’s “First Fridays” scopes out Los Angeles as the lab and factory for much of what makes the modern world modern. Look up: the nation’s first aviation show was here, then we broke the sound barrier and built rockets to the moon.

Look all around: the architecture of the homes we live in is striking, and so is the pleasure and the mess of the cars we drive to and from them, and the innovations that are prying us out of the driver’s seat. Look down: fleet feet have made this a sports paradise, home to three Olympic games and birthplace of the Zamboni. And look underground – that smelly, tarry stuff that waterproofed Native Americans’ baskets soon meant “black gold” to Angelenos, who stuck oil wells next to orange trees in their backyards. Join us for the genius of L.A.!
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DISCUSSION:
FROM LA, TO INFINITY – AND BEYOND!

BENJAMIN DICKOW

DIANA TRUJILLO

PETER WESTWICK

AND MODERATOR

PATT MORRISON
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BY BRETT CALLWOOD.
On January 1st, cannabis will be made legal for recreational use in California.

We think that calls for a celebration.

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Jurassic Park
Dinosaurs come alive as they did 65 million years ago at Jurassic Quest, a touring museum and the largest exhibit of dinosaurs in North America. More than 80 lifelike, animatronic models — some you can even ride — are displayed in their habitats, including the T. Rex, Triceratops and Pterodactyl. But don’t just stare or snap photos. Learn about these prehistoric creatures by taking part in guided tours, fossil digs and other activities at science stations, in addition to inflatable mazes, face painting and crafts. Pomona Fairplex, 1101 W. McKinley Ave.; Fri., Dec. 29, 3-8 p.m.; Sat.-Mon., Dec. 30-Jan. 1, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; $20, $18 seniors, free kids under 2. (909) 623-3111, jurassicquest.com. —Saran Babayan

Horsing Around
Has anyone ever given a horse a basketball and taught it to play HORSE? You can ask the riders at the Tournament of Roses Equestfest this and other pertinent questions after you watch them take their in action and in their stables, where you can enjoy seasonal snacks and find out more about the breeds scheduled to appear in this year’s Rose Parade: the Budweiser Clydesdales, Friesians and miniature therapy Palomino Appaloosas, American Saddlebreds, Friesians and miniature therapy horses. Los Angeles Equestrian Center, 480 Riverside Drive, Burbank; Fri., Dec. 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; $10 a family. —David Cotner

Kwanzaa
Do the Happy Dance
For more than 35 years, Lula Washington Dance Theater’s Kwanzaa Celebration has been closely associated with L.A.’s African-American community. Filled with dancing, singing and drumming, this respected contemporary dance company’s annual event long ago became a fixture of the season. A holiday celebrating African-American history and heritage, Kwanzaa began in L.A., and its focus on values of children, family and community are cause for all to celebrate. Lula Washington Dance Studios, 3773 Crenshaw Blvd., West Adams; Fri.-Sat., Dec. 29-30, 7 p.m.; $10-$65; (323) 829-3006, brownpapertickets.com/event/318435. —Ann Haskins

Satanic Revelry
Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ, but the holiday has pagan roots, so why not let Satan take part in the festivities? At UCB’s comedy-variety show Christmas in Hell!!!, Lucifer not only likes Christmas but throws his own holiday party. Adam McCabe plays the dark lord and invites guests to his living room to perform sketches, play live music and even host cooking demonstrations. Last year’s show featured Idi Amin, a drunken mall Santa, Mormon carolers and other unsavory characters who live in the netherworld. Satan also asks that you bring canned food to be donated. UCB, 5919 Franklin Ave., Hollywood; Fri., Dec. 29, mid., $5. (323) 908-8702, franklin.ucbtheatre.com. —Saran Babayan

Peddle Off the Pounds
Leaving your guilt in the dust with today’s Tacos y Churros Ride and enjoy all the churros and tacos you want along the way — you’ll just work off all those calories with an energetic bike ride throughout Lincoln Heights. Metro’s Bicycle Education Safety Training (BEST) Program takes you to the surprisingly affordable culinary delights of the Avenue 26 Taco Stand, where you’ll enjoy $1 tacos before you walk across the street to Garcia’s Desserts, get some fresh churros or homemade flan, and enjoy the hard work and splendor put into all those Christmas lights you’ll see during the ride. Metro Bike Hub, Union Station, 800 N. Alameda St., downtown; Sat., Dec. 30, 5 p.m.; free. (888) 659-2291, eventbrite.com/e/best-ride-tacos-y-churros-ride-registration-4105696919. —David Cotner

Dr. Blythe’s Lighten Up! Weight Loss Challenge
The ultimate New Year’s resolution and a New Year’s Eve extravaganza of seven world-renowned DJs (Alex Acosta, Eddie Elias, Micky Friedmann, Grind, Brett Henrichsen, Oscar Velazquez, Danny Verde), events at the Mayan, Stock Exchange and Avalon; and more debauchery than you can shake a highly suggestive stick at. The weekend begins with Game Show, a process of interrogation that boasts $25,000 in prizes. Thousands of men will converge at this onetime blue-movie hothouse to master the beats and dance until 2017 dies a brief and painless death, a smile dawning faintly on its debauched, exhausted face. The Mayan, 1038 S. Hill St., downtown; Sat., Dec. 30, 9 p.m. (through Mon., Jan. 1); $160-$350. (213) 746-4287, masterbeat.com/2018-kingdom/. —David Cotner

Dance the Year Away
It’s reigning men at Masterbeat, the New Year’s Eve extravaganza of seven world-renowned DJs (Alex Acosta, Eddie Elias, Micky Friedmann, Grind, Brett Henrichsen, Oscar Velazquez, Danny Verde), events at the Mayan, Stock Exchange and Avalon; and more debauchery than you can shake a highly suggestive stick at. The weekend begins with Game Show, a process of interrogation that boasts $25,000 in prizes. Thousands of men will converge at this onetime blue-movie hothouse to master the beats and dance until 2017 dies a brief and painless death, a smile dawning faintly on its debauched, exhausted face. The Mayan, 1038 S. Hill St., downtown; Sat., Dec. 30, 9 p.m. (through Mon., Jan. 1); $160-$350. (213) 746-4287, masterbeat.com/2018-kingdom/. —David Cotner

Fun and Games
Game Night starts early so you can go to it and still pack as much action into your New Year’s Eve as humanly possible — something that hosts Angela M. Webber and Joseph Scrimshaw already intuitively understand, since they’ve crammed more comedy, improvisation and music into the evening than anyone has any right to expect. Guests include comedian Jackie Kashian, The New Guy author Amy Spalding, Henson Company puppeteer Pheobe Bottoms, Erik Charles Nielsen (Garrett on Community) and Venture Bro James Urbaniaik, plus Sara Stevenson Scrimshaw interpretively dancing an entire movie within five minutes. NerdMelt, 7522 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Sat., Dec. 31, 6:30 p.m.; $8. (323) 851-7223, holdmyticket.com/event/300776. —David Cotner
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**COMEDY**

**Kids Need a Laugh, Too**
Teaching kids the value of double-negatives since 2009, *The Not Inappropriate Show* benefits nonprofit creative writing hive 826LA and delivers clean, G-rated sketch comedy and improvisation for an expressly young audience, ages 8 and up. Most comedians are pretty juvenile, so it’s a natural transition from curse words to asterisks and ampersands. The brainchild of Bob and Naomi Odenkirk, the show features comedy from Michael Churven, Allison Dunbar, Harrison Lampert, Lyric Lewis, Laird Macintosh, Michael Naughton and Eliza Skinner, a sketch from Tween Fest creators Nick Ciarelli and Brad Evans, and video from TV writer Dave Storrs. UCB Franklin, 5919 Franklin Ave., Hollywood Hills; Sun., Dec. 31, & Tue., Jan. 2, 4 p.m.; $21.50. (323) 908-8702, franklin.ucbtheatre.com/performance/58385. —David Cotner

**BURLESQUE**

**Glamour Gal**
It’s often said that where you spend New Year’s Eve has a great symbolic and prophetic impact on determining how the coming year will go for you. So why not ensclose yourself within the lavishly ornate chambers of the Theatre at Ace Hotel, which resembles an underground gothic cathedral with its stalactite-like adornments framing the stage? Burlesque star *Dita Von Teese* imbues her New Year’s Eve Gala Show with an air of sophistication and elegance that’s unrivaled in the world of modern burlesque. Not only does the former Helen Sweet use her balletic background to perch at times en pointe, she unravels herself dramatically out of a series of glamorous, Swarovski crystal-laden gowns, some of which will be on display in the theater’s mirrored lobby. Ms. Von Teese debuts new routines, and host Jonny McGovern welcomes Violet Chachki, Dirty Martini, Marawa the Amazing, Ginger Valentine and other performers. *The Theatre at Ace Hotel,* 909 S. Broadway; downtown; Sun., Dec. 31, 9 p.m.; $49.50-$225. (213) 823-3233, artoftheteese.com/nyc.php. —Falling James

**MUSIC**

**Viennese Waltz**
Offering a peek at when Austria ruled an empire, *Salute to Vienna* celebrates Austria’s famous Neujahrskonzert (New Year’s Concert), a nationally televised event somewhat akin to the New Year’s Eve crystal-ball countdown in New York City. In Austria, dancers perform in one of Vienna’s elaborate palaces to live music, with a live audience braving the cold during the live national broadcast. This touring show has become a New Year’s fixture, this year stopping at two local venues with a program brimming with waltzes, polka, ballet, singing and lots of music from the Strauss Symphony of America. Definitely *mit schlag*, but a fun way to stretch the New Year’s celebrating with a postconcert glass of Champagne before committing to those pesky resolutions. *Walt Disney Concert Hall,* 111 S. Grand Ave., downtown; Mon., Jan. 1, 2:30 p.m., $35-$125; salutetovienna.com/los-angeles. Also at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa; Fri., Dec. 29, 8 p.m., $49-$129. scfta.org. —Ann Haskins

**OUTDOORS**

**Fun Run**
New Year’s Day is the most wonderful time to do absolutely nothing. There isn’t much going on, most businesses are closed, and many folks are nursing hangovers waiting to the din of the night before to subside in their ringing ears. It’s the perfect day to stay in bed, and yet, the organizers of Trail Run Events suggest, why not take a quick daybreak dash up the side of a mountain instead? For 28 years, the local group Renaissance Runners has been leading the annual *New Year’s Day Run* to the Hollywood Sign, followed by a potluck for all ages. Hikers and runners meet at the pony rides and train in Griffith Park and make their way up the winding trail until they are rewarded with the most fantastic surprise of all — the great, big sprawl of Los Feliz, Hollywood and L.A. wallowing together gloriously in the morning sun like a brand-new gift just waiting to be opened. *Griffith Park Pony Ride,* 4400 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Feliz; Mon., Jan. 1, 7 a.m.; free. facebook.com/events/1511437822495838. —Falling James

**OUTDOORS**

**Bird Brains**
For the birds — but in a good way — the *Los Angeles Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count* is the oldest continuous wildlife survey in North America. You’ll join more than 45,000 birders across the nation to figure out how healthy the bird populations are in the community — animals are as much a part of a community as its people. Knowing how many birds nest within...
the 15-mile diameter circle that informs this survey helps define the conservation conversation — at the very least, you get to see beautiful things you’d never know were there until you looked. Del Rey Lagoon, 6660 Esplanade Place (at the old boat dock parking lot closest to the beach), Playa del Rey; Tue., Jan. 2, 8 a.m.; free. Fern Dell, The Trails Café, 2333 Fern Dell Drive, Griffith Park; Tue., Jan. 2, 8 a.m.; free. Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (Hahn Park, at the parking lot at the top of the hill, about a half-mile inside the main gate), 4100 S. La Cienega Blvd., Ladera Heights; Tue., Jan. 2, 7:30 a.m.; free. (323) 876-0202, losangelesaudubon.org/birding/christmas-bird-count/christmas-bird-count-cbc-los-angeles-jan-2-2018.

—David Cotner

wed 1/3

ART

Healing Arts
The opening reception for the “Names Printed in Black” exhibition is curator Emily Butts’ reminder of something you’d like to forget: that memory affects the physical condition of the human body, and the trauma called up by memory can linger and destroy as surely as tuberculosis or tetter. With the artwork in this group exhibition — by such capable creative empaths as Carmen Argote, Adriana Corral, Carlos Motta, Lisa C. Soto and Samira Yamin — human rights violations, violence in cinema and general overall casual sadism can dictate how the body responds, copes, heals or disintegrates.


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thu

FILM/ART

Going With the Flow
Alison Klayman’s excellent 2012 documentary, Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry, chronicled the life and career of the Chinese dissident artist, from the installation of his exhibits in London and Munich and activism on social media to his frequent run-ins with Chinese authorities over his criticism of the government. In the new film Human Flow, the Berlin-based Weiwei goes behind the lens to document the millions who are part of the international refugee crisis. Weiwei tells some of their stories, following migrants who’ve been displaced by civil war, famine and political oppression over the course of a year in more than 20 countries in Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Mexico. Tonight’s screening is followed by a discussion with Weiwei.

Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., UCLA; Thu., Jan. 4, 6:30 p.m.; free, tickets required. (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu. —Siran Babayan
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The year was tough on pretty much everyone in L.A., especially our homeless and immigrant people

By Brett Callwood and L.A. Weekly staff

The year was tough on pretty much everyone in L.A., especially our homeless and immigrant people. The #METOO campaign empowered women to stand up and tell their harrowing stories. That followed the incredible Women’s March back in January. Alabama voters opted for Doug Jones in favor of the diabolical Roy Moore, making Jones the first Democratic Alabama senator in 25 years. And here in California, cities across the state declared themselves sanctuaries. Overall, many people have made it clear that everybody is going to be held accountable going forward.

Through it all, L.A. Weekly has been here for you covering it all and, in the great spirit of the American alternative weekly, offering a voice to the voiceless. Southern California certainly served up enough to write about.

Homelessness
As ever, how to tackle homelessness was a hot topic. As 2016 came to a close, Los Angeles voters passed two ballot measures. One to expand public transit and one to fight homelessness. The latter, Measure HHH, garnered 76 percent of the vote; it raised taxes by .01 percent to pay for permanent supportive housing and shelters.

Hillel Aron quoted L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas’ statement: “I commend the voters in the city of Los Angeles for recognizing the homeless crisis and stepping up to provide funding for permanent housing to restore dignity to those living in utter squalor. With the passage of HHH, it’s now time for the county to step up to provide critical supportive services for the homeless.”

In April, Mayor Eric Garcetti...
took the opportunity during his annual State of the City speech to promise to end homelessness once and for all. However, as Aron wrote, Los Angeles’ total number of people experiencing homelessness was 28,464 and rising. Still, Measure HHH could only help.

“I’ve been working in homelessness for 20 years, and I’ve never seen a moment of time where we have such an alignment of resources, between HHH and HUD, of both service dollars and housing dollars, and there’s flexibility to match them together,” Alisa Orduna, the mayor’s director of housing policy, told Aron.

That sounded great, but in May Dennis Romero reported that the housing numbers continued to bring bad news, with the median rent for a two-bedroom home in Los Angeles County a staggering $2,600.

A report by the California Housing Partnership Corporation, “Los Angeles County Renters in Crisis,” concluded that the county needs an additional 551,807 affordable units to meet the needs of the lowest-income renters.

“We’re in a real crisis in terms of meeting this need,” said Lisa Payne, policy director of the Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing, which co-presented the report. “It’s not complicated. People need a home. We need to invest in creating and preserving affordable homes.”

When the annual county homeless count arrived in June, there was little to feel optimistic about, with Romero reporting a 20 percent increase in Angelenos living in encampments, tents and vehicles, with a 23 percent increase in the overall number of people on the streets countywide. That theme continued into August, with Romero reporting that a further 2,000 Angelenos could be put on the streets within a year should the rent-hike trend continue.

But it’s not all doom and gloom. This is California, and the people here never fail to amaze when it comes to going above and beyond. In February, Clarissa Wei reported on a group of Muslim-American friends who started the Halal Project, distributing halal food in downtown Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley.

“The project is run by a board of volunteers who all juggle full-time jobs,” Wei wrote. “While most of the board is of Muslim faith, [founder-president Zia] Qureshi stresses that the organization is all-inclusive and that its meals are simply an option for halal-abiding folks on Skid Row who need it.”

Meanwhile, Liz Ohanesian talked to fine-art photographer Ed Freeman, who aims to change the public perception of the homeless community with a series of photographs, intended for compilation in a coffee-table book called I Am Somebody: Portraits of Homelessness.

“It’s an enormously complicated problem,” Freeman told Ohanesian, “but the first thing that needs to be done is to recognize people that are living on the streets as worthwhile, genuine human beings. ... They’re not statistics. They’re not aliens. They’re not scary.”

Overall, the narrative is one of widely held good intentions but statistics that continue to alarm. Stagnant downtown housing prices offer a modicum of hope, but there’s clearly much work to be done in 2018.

Immigration

The year kicked off with a presidential inauguration that was, naturally, overwhelmingly unpopular with L.A.’s pro-immigrant groups, who took the opportunity to protest against the president on that day. The anger and frustration was and is understandable; the president had spent much of the campaign marginalizing immigrants, as well as women, the economically disadvantaged and just about everyone else. And that makes no sense because, as Romero reported in February, L.A. immigrants brought $233 billion to the county in just one year.

“The study speaks to something we all know intuitively,” said Kate Brick, New American Economy’s director of state and local initiatives. “Immigrants are the engine that drives the local economy.”

Still, decency be damned, no time was wasted in destroying lives and tearing apart families. Jason McGahan reported in February that 50-year-old housepainter Manuel Mosqueda was taken from his apartment by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials at 5 a.m. as he was getting ready for work, part of the devastating sweeps conducted by ICE that saw 161 people arrested over a five-day period.

That was more than enough for many people, and that same month saw the protest “A Day Without Immigrants,” with immigrants nationwide encouraged to refrain from work, an effort to show the rest of the country just how crucial they are.

An L.A. health clinic, Clínica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero, was just one such institution that declared a sanctuary policy, after many patients stopped showing up for appointments because they were afraid to leave their homes.

“The move sends a powerful message that immigrants and their families are not alone,” said Jorge-Mario Cabrera, communications director for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights Reform.

But that theme has not gone away as the year has progressed, and the fears justifiably remain. As Romero wrote in March, the stories of immigrants being arrested at airports, courthouses and schools persisted. As a direct result, immigrants were reluctant to call the authorities when crimes were committed against them.
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choosing to try to take care of one another within their communities instead.

June saw the president make the Trump administration’s unfathomable decision to roll back DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans), which could have protected 5 million people from deporta-

tion. “These parents are at full risk of deporta-
tion,” Manuel Pastor, co-director of USC’s Center for Immigrant Integration, told Dennis Romero. “Because we’ve got a much more established undocumented population than most cities, it’s going to have a super big impact here.”

Similarly, Trump ended DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which protected nearly 800,000 young immigrants from immigration, though California’s re-
sponse was strong as Jason McGahan wrote. “We’re here as leaders of the state of Cali-

fornia to say that it’s important — as state leaders but also as the sons of immigrants — to put ourselves at the head of the struggle for all of the young people who took the risk to apply for the program and services of DACA. To those who took the risk, we want to tell them that it’s important they know that the leaders of this state are with them. And we are going to do everything possible to defend them in court and before the pub-

luc,” Attorney General Xavier Becerra said.

And we are going to do everything possible
to defend them in court and before the pub-

luc,” Attorney General Xavier Becerra said.

Gentrification and development

Perhaps surprisingly, an April story by Romero stated that, 25 years after the L.A. riots, conditions in many neighborhoods are actually worse, according to a UCLA report called “1992 Revisited.”

“Could these conditions actually be getting 
better, Romero wrote. “While I share the concerns of displace-
mant and rising costs of housing in Boyle Heights, race-based targeting or vandal-
isme of any kind, like what has been leveled against small businesses and art galleries, and most recently the Weird Wave Coffee Shop. Those sentiments, dubbed “hipster bashing” by U.K. newspaper The Guardian, led to L.A. city leaders calling on anti-genti-

fication activists to relax, as reported by Romero.

“Between January 2014 and April of this year, three of the fastest-rising home values anywhere in L.A. were in Baldwin Village/ Hyde Park (No. 4),” McGahan wrote. “What do all three neighborhoods have in common? They’re historically African-American, historically in the lower 20 percent of average income brackets and, perhaps most important, have been home to stations on the Crenshaw/LAX Line when it opens in two years.”

Unfortunately, residents in gentrified neighborhoods tend to be less patient with the homeless, and McGahan reported in October that the LAPD has been arrested homeless people at an increased rate.

“Some of the best ideas aren’t that good if total arrests are declining and arrest rates of houseless people is going up, it might indicate resources are being shifted to target that population,” said Danielle Dupuy, the UCLA “Million Dollar ‘Hoods” report’s lead author.

Happy New Year

We had drama of our own, of course, as L.A. Weekly's ownership changed at the dusk of the year. Changes were made, as were mistakes. But a new year brings new hope and determination. And in 2018, we’ll continue to dig up the stories that you won’t necessarily find elsewhere. We’ll speak out against injustice, and stand against prejudice. It’s what we do.
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Over 50 years in Japan

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It’s time to party like it’s 2018, and we’ve picked out nine L.A.-area restaurants offering special New Year’s Eve menus. To help ring in the New Year safely, Metro will operate 24-hour, plus Orange and Silver Lines. Free rides will be offered for all bus and rail service from 9 p.m. on Dec. 31 until 2 a.m. on the morning of Jan. 1.

Lucques presents “A Night in Monte Carlo.” Guests can virtually travel to the tiny principality near the south of France and live it up with a prix fixe menu, wine pairings, themed decor and costumed staff. The menu, prepared by chef de cuisine Mercedes Rosas, begins with de riqueur eggs and caviar à la Casino Royale, followed by a salad of bitter herbs and Champagne mousseline also included in the $65 prix fixe menu (plus tax). For $69 per person plus tax and tip, District in downtown L.A. has a four-choice prix fixe dinner that includes District winter salad, roasted apple and pumpkin bisque, prime rib, miso-glazed sea bass with winter root vegetables and pomegranate crème brûlée for dessert. Then there’s “The Party.” One seating from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., with live jazz from the Dave Damiani Quartet, a welcome NYE cocktail, multiple tasting platters, party favors and a midnight Champagne toast.

For $69 per person plus tax and tip, Crossings Restaurant in South Pasadena is offering a choice main course. Dessert selections are chocolate cake, financier cake or key lime verrine. Cost is $90 plus tax and tip. The trains run all night, folks! District is on the plaza level inside The Bloc. The trains run all night, folks! District is on the plaza level inside The Bloc. The trains run all night, folks! District is on the plaza level inside The Bloc.

FESTIVE DINING
Nine neighborhood spots to ring in the New Year

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

Melrose Ave., West Hollywood; (323) 655-6977, lucques.com.

AR Cucina offers options for everyone with its New Year’s Eve menu, in addition to its complete à la carte menu for this end-of-year bash. The menu is inspired by one of owner Akasha Richmond’s favorite regions in Italy, Emilia-Romagna. Many of the evening’s ingredients, including special imported cheeses and balsamic vinegar, were brought back from her recent trip to Italy. The New Year’s Eve starts with antipasti, zuppa de castagna (chestnut soup) with roasted pumpkin, celery root puree or grilled short rib with celery root puree or grilled short rib with celery root puree or grilled short rib with celery root puree. Dolci are plentiful, with all of the regular menu favorites plus zuppa inglese with vanilla and chocolate pastry cream and amaro-soaked sponge cake. Dinner is served from 5 to 9 p.m.; New Year’s Eve specials range from $10 to $35 per dish, plus beverages, tax and gratuity. Wine pairings will be offered along with mixologist Clare Ward’s Italian inspired specialty cocktails. 9531 Culver Blvd., Culver City; (310) 558-8800, arcucina.com.

For a romantic evening overlooking the Marina, Caffè del Rey is offering a choice of venison carpaccio, lobster bisque or Caesar salad for starters. The entree includes a choice of filet mignon, New Zealand lamb chops, lobster tail, roasted chicken or king salmon. Dessert selections are chocolate cake, financier cake or key lime verrine. Cost is $90 plus tax and tip. 4451 Admiralty Way, Marina del Rey; (310) 823-6395, cafedelreymarina.com.

Crossings Restaurant in South Pasadena features an à la carte menu that includes starters such as oysters on the half-shell, crab cakes, a winter greens salad and Crossings’ signature Caesar salad. Follow it up with your choice of entrees such as prime rib with horseradish mashed potatoes and broccoli, filet mignon with a loaded baked potato and asparagus; fresh filet mignon with a loaded baked potato and asparagus; fresh filet mignon with a loaded baked potato and asparagus; fresh filet mignon with a loaded baked potato and asparagus; fresh filet mignon with a loaded baked potato and asparagus. Dinner is served from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., with live jazz from the Dave Damiani Quartet, a welcome NYE cocktail, multiple tasting platters, party favors and a midnight Champagne toast.

The trains run all night, folks! District is on the plaza level inside The Bloc. The trains run all night, folks! District is on the plaza level inside The Bloc. The trains run all night, folks! District is on the plaza level inside The Bloc.

The Mar Vista will be open for New Year’s Eve brunch and dinner. The special 9:45 p.m. seating includes a multicourse menu featuring New Year strip roast, shrimp cakes, Mar Vista Waldorf salad and a complimentary Champagne toast at midnight for $70 per person. 12249 Venice Blvd., Mar Vista; (310) 751-6773, themarvista.com.

Alta Nordic Kitchen in West Hollywood has a seven-course tasting menu inspired by flavors from the Nordic countries. It includes borscht, blini with smoked Norwegian salmon, bleak roe and créme fraîche, venison loin with juniper sauce, potato tart and lingonberries. Wild sockeye salmon with morel mushrooms and Champagne mousseline also are included in the $65 prix fixe menu (plus tax and tip). 7274 Melrose Ave., Fairfax; (323) 746-5221, altanordickitchen.com.
HOT FRIED CHICKEN?

It always brings us much heartache and melancholy to report on the worst trends of the year. One would hope for another year of delicious, exciting, favorable long-standing trends, but usually that is far from the epicurean reality. 2017 is no different in that respect.

The sheer number of subpar Nashville hot chicken openings is doing a disservice to the regional specialty that cannot be underestimated. The overly saturated Sichuan restaurant scene in the sprawling San Gabriel Valley is not welcome news, especially when most diverge from the essence of the richly subtle cuisine. Even creative chefs have overemphasized the lowly lamb neck as the next big thing (When KFC starts marketing its take on lamb neck still comes out aggressively stringy, unappetizing. It’s a cheap cut of lamb that is far from the epicurean reality. 2017 is no different in that respect.

The policy of charging for “filtered” tap water (such as the use of pork belly or kale in the interminable queue would have you believe. Currently, more than enough menus are featuring this fried chicken preparation, from Dave’s Hot Chicken to Crawford’s to even your local KFC.

(When KFC starts marketing its take on hot chicken, you know that the formerly elusive foodstuff has reached ultimate carrying capacity.) Most of these Johnny-come-lately purveyors are despondently subpar and look to be milking the regional genre for all its worth. Sometimes there can be too much of a good thing, and hot chicken has surely oversaturated the market.

Sichuan cuisine

Just a few years ago, the uniquely tantalizing and novel interpretation of the cuisine from China’s Sichuan province acted as a refreshing change of pace from the Mandarin and Cantonese restaurants in the sprawling San Gabriel Valley. At the time, the pioneer restaurant in the genre, Chengdu Taste, opened to massive acclaim and endless waits. Ravenous patrons could not seem to get enough of the euphoria from the numbing sensation of dishes loaded with Sichuan peppercorns. In the majority of these entrees, the meat or fish took a back seat to the gargantuan heaping of Sichuan peppercorns and peppers covering the entire dish. Chengdu Taste was the forerunner of an onslaught of Sichuan restaurants opening in the Sichuan Impression, Legendary and even the curiously named Nothingness.

On a signed magnum of Sichuan peppercorns and peppers covering the entire dish. Chengdu Taste was the forerunner of an onslaught of Sichuan restaurants opening in the Sichuan Impression, Legendary and even the curiously named Nothingness. Once again, many of the restaurants are just relying on the Sichuan peppercorns without focusing on the subtle layering of spice and meticulous attention to culinary detail that makes this cuisine so magical.

Lamb neck

Lamb neck used to be one of those tough parts of the animal that were immediately discarded. However, recently chefs with an adventurous streak (those who have moved on from formerly exotic veal sweetbreads, beef throat and other not-so-user-friendly offal) have elevated it on their menus — a litany of menus to be exact. Sadly, these experiments did not tend to end up too felicitously. Lamb neck still comes out aggressively stringy, unyieldingly tough and egregiously unappetizing. It’s a cheap cut of lamb that in this instance has failed to transcend its
humble roots. The lamb neck trend needs to be put out to pasture.

Shakshuka

When done well, shakshuka — the dish of baked egg basted in stewed tomatoes and peppers popular throughout North Africa and the Middle East — is simplicity itself and infinitely comforting. The interplay between the runny, vibrant yolk and the piquant tomato sauce is a thing of utter beauty. Few local places do right by it, except for the lovely Tarte Tatin Bakery in Beverly Hills and Lodge Bread in Culver City, which do justice to the simple dish. Despite a few wonderful interpretations, most breakfast joints cannot seem to get it right. And too many places corrupt the essence of the shakshuka by adding extraneous cheese, bacon, sausage and ham to the mix, which detracts from its vegetarian simplicity. Hopefully in 2018, better shakshukas will be upon us.

Tarte Tatin Bakery, 9123 W Olympic Blvd, Beverly Hills; (310) 350-0011
Lodge Bread, 11918 Washington Blvd, Culver City; (424) 384-5097, lodgebread.com

Filtered water

You used to receive the dreaded question of “sparkling or still?” from restaurant waiters, which was a way for enterprising restaurants to charge another $9 or $10 for bottled water when all you truly wanted was free L.A. tap water. Nowadays there’s a new trend in L.A. restaurants, where unsuspecting diners are being charged for tap water that has been filtered. Once diners get the bill, they’re stuck with a charge for the formerly complimentary tap water. This looks to be another ingenious way for said restaurants to nickel and dime customers and aggressively pad restaurant tabs. Why not simply offer “filtered water” for free, as a courtesy and goodwill gesture, instead of the idea of terroir and makes whiskey specific to the Pacific Northwest. Its Garryana whiskey, for example, in barrels made from local Garry oak.) If you’re looking for the American answer to a Speyside scotch, Westland’s standard single malt is a perfect choice.

Westward American Single Malt

Not to be confused with Westland, Westward is from nearby House Spirits in Portland, Oregon. Its whiskey has the round, almost oily softness you might associate with an Irish pot still. A former brewer, master distiller Christian Krogstad uses ale yeast during fermentation to give the whiskey an earthy spice. If you want to impress the guys at the bar, be sure to mention that NFL legend Joe Montana is an investor.

Lost Spirits Abomination: Sayers of the Law

If you like a heavily peated Islay Scotch, look no further than L.A.’s own Lost Spirits, easily the strangest distillery on this list. Founder Bryan Davies created technology that ages alcohol in a reactor to make a “20-year-old” whiskey in six days. If you’re skeptical, know that whiskey critic Jim Murray gave it a rating of 94 out of 100 in his 2018 Whisky Bible. Take the distillery tour to find out why Davies is considered the Willy Wonka of whiskey. —Matt Carlson

Matt Carlson is the whiskey sommelier and manager of Vestry, a speakeasy and whiskey lounge on the second floor of Tom Bergin’s. Vestry is open to the public on New Year’s Eve for events all night with Dave Pickrell, the master distiller of WhistlePig Rye. For more information, follow them on Instagram and Twitter at vestryla or find them on Facebook.

Yes, We Make Good Whiskey Here in the U.S.A.

If you went home for the holidays, you might have seen your uncle who tells you every year that good whiskey only comes from Scotland. At your office Christmas party, maybe there was one co-worker who wouldn’t stop talking about how she couldn’t possibly drink anything but peated single malts from Islay. Or you’re at a bar and there’s a blowhard going on and on about how they don’t like bourbon because it’s too sweet.

This can start to get annoying rather quickly, especially if you love American whiskey. The major distillers in Kentucky have long favored bourbon and rye, but craft whiskey has started to embrace the new category of American single malt. Like the Scottish, they’re making whiskey from 100 percent barley, with not a single kernel of corn or grain of rye in the mix. If you’re looking to change minds (and the conversation), here are five American whiskies under $100 that rival their counterparts from Scotland.

Balcones Texas Single Malt

You know cowboys drink whiskey, but did you know they make it as well? Balcones won first place at Best in Glass in 2012, a prestigious blind taste test in London. This single malt from Waco, Texas, beat every scotch — including a few names you might recognize, such as Macallan, Balvenie and Glenmorangie — for that honor. If you’re looking to impress your uncle, pick up this single malt from the Lone Star State.

Stranahan’s Diamond Peak

Located in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, this Denver distillery makes several different single malts. You may have seen Stranahan’s Colorado Whiskey with its yellow label and tin cup atop the bottle. But Diamond Peak, its 4-year-old whiskey with a black label, is where it starts to get interesting. More elegant and refined than the flagship bottle, the Diamond Peak looks awfully nice poured neat into a Glencairn glass.

Westland American Single Malt

Like Stranahan’s, Westland exclusively makes single malt whiskey, with no plans for a bourbon or rye. The Seattle-based distillery is particularly concerned with the idea of terroir and makes whiskey specific to the Pacific Northwest. Its Garryana whiskey, for example, in barrels made from local Garry oak.) If you’re looking for the American answer to a Speyside scotch, Westland’s standard single malt is a perfect choice.

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Firestone Walker Brewing Company’s Propagator pilot R&D brewhouse in Venice is the place for beer drinkers and locals to dine, hang out and sip on Firestone Walker’s latest creations.

The Propagator is the third location from Firestone Walker — which was created by brother-in-laws, David Walker (aka the Lion on the logo) and Adam Firestone (aka the Bear) — and it’s a unique experience from start to finish. Unlike the two other locations (the main brewery in Paso Robles and the Barrelworks wild ales facility in Buellton), The Propagator is a state-of-the-art small scale Kaspar Schulz brewhouse that operates as a hub of experimentation, setting the pace for what is next from Firestone Walker. Most recently, it has been the driver behind the brewery’s new Leo Ursus chronology of beers, as well as the Generation 1 IPA. In addition to Firestone Walker favorites, The Propagator offers one-off beers, and experimental beers that may or may not make it into the brand’s official lineup. The adjoining restaurant and bar feature pizzas (we’d try the Rustica Carne complete with Italian sausage, brisket, pepperoni and mozzarella), burgers, tacos (like the Drunken Cauliflower) and of course desserts (like a seasonal berry cheesecake). Even better — at least in our opinion — is that The Propagator has a Beer Brunch that is to die for. It features two signature beers, as well as coffee and OJ, and lots of delicious brunch food options. Deep fried bacon PB&J anyone? Yes, it’s a real thing, and you need it in your life. What are you waiting for? The Propagator is calling and you should listen… drink up!
FIRE, DOTS, GOLD AND TATTOOS

The best and most notable art exhibitions and events of 2017

BY RICHARD CHANG

A new year is rapidly approaching, thank our Higher Power. Is it just me, or did 2017, in general, largely suck? Before we pop open bottles of Champagne, kiss our sweeties and place bets on another political upheaval, it’s time to take a moment and reflect on the best and most notable art exhibitions, experiences and events of 2017.

Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA was the movement that couldn’t be missed. Nearly every major art institution in Los Angeles — and quite a few in Orange County, Santa Barbara, San Diego and other SoCal spots — had some sort of PST: LA/LA thing going on. The extensive, well-funded — it was sponsored by the Getty Foundation — initiative exploring Latino and Latin American art seemed particularly appropriate, given the ongoing political debates about immigration, diversity, language and “America first.”

Here, in no particular order, are the best and most notable art exhibitions and events of 2017:

“Playing With Fire: Paintings by Carlos Almaraz,” Los Angeles County Museum of Art. LACMA presented the first major survey of Almaraz, a crucially important Mexican-American artist and co-founder of the Chicano art collective known as “Los Four.”

In this PST: LA/LA exhibition, we witnessed cars crashing into one another on freeway overpasses and exploding; suburban L.A. houses set ablaze; expressionist fiestas in fauve and neon colors; and beautiful, vivid L.A. sunsets over Echo Park, making the lake, trees and hills shimmer with bright, transcendent beauty and tranquility.

Almaraz died from AIDS in 1989 at age 48, but his legacy of art and activism will endure for generations to come.

“Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985,” UCLA Hammer Museum. This is a huge and timely group exhibition featuring 116 artists and more than 260 works from 15 countries. Many of the works involve political themes, from repression and dictatorship to the female body, physical and psychological boundaries, and violence. Most of the art is nontraditional and experimental, eschewing painting for performance, video, installation and conceptual pieces.

This PST: LA/LA show was organized by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, who used to work at the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, and Andrea Giunta, a professor of art history at the University of Buenos Aires.

Catch this massive show while you can — it’s up through Dec. 31. And remember, the Hammer is always free. (No jokes about Hammer Time allowed.)

“Martin Ramirez: His Life in Pictures, Another Interpretation,” Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Here’s more evidence that you can be confined in a mental institution for 25 years and still produce great art. Ramirez, ultimately diagnosed as a schizophrenic, was a self-taught artist and draftsman, and his intricate, sometimes surreal, occasionally monumental works are remarkable. He proved that matchsticks, crayons and sheets of found paper are not just for kids. Fifty of his drawings and collages are on view through Dec. 31.

This PST: LA/LA show is an inaugural exhibition for the ICA LA, which used to be known as the Santa Monica Museum of Art, formerly at Bergamot Station. Since September, ICA LA has been housed in a bright yellow building in DTLA’s Arts District, and it’s free. It’s a great addition to the neighborhood.

“Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors,” the Broad. This may be the most popular and Instagrammed exhibition in Southern California. While it is sold out, and has been overrun with millennials, tourists and smartphone-toting hipsters, it represents a pinnacle of immersive, experiential art, which has undeniably been on the rise.

Japanese artist Kusama is interested in infinity, as well as the relationships between people, society and nature. If you count yourself as one of the absolutely determined, same-day tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Adult standby tickets are a steep $30, but children 12 and younger are free (tickets still required). If you’d rather avoid the crowds and observe from afar, check out #InfinityLA on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook.

“Damaged,” Shepard Fairey, LACMA. Fairey — the man behind “Obey” — has been the poster child of Los Angeles street art, despite many other worthy efforts. “Damaged” was his largest-ever solo exhibit, featuring new works done since the election of President You-Know-Who. The show was a collaboration with Detroit-based gallery Library Street Collective.

“Apathy is a really big problem, and choosing sides via social media is not enough,” Fairey told L.A. Weekly in November. “You actually need to vote and be rigorous about understanding the deeper dynamics of issues that matter to you.”

Needless to say, Fairey’s works in “Damaged” were deeply political and inspired by social movements, particularly those led by people of color. His “We the People” series, included in this show, was a collaboration with L.A.-based Chicana photographer Arlene Mejorado (Trina Calderón profiled Mejorado for L.A. Weekly in September).

“Tattoo: An Exhibition,” Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Yes, tattoos are cool. But this exhibition examines 5,000 years of skin art from all reaches of the globe. This show (running through April 15) offers the opportunity to learn about the history of ancient and modern tattoos, as well as techniques, rituals, ceremonies and tools of the trade. Who knows? Your next tat design may await in these halls.

“Building Material: Process and Form in Brazilian Art” and “Mike Kelley: Kandors 1999-2011,” Hauser & Wirth. “Building Material” was an important examination of three generations of Brazilian artists, along with the materials and processes they used.

Kelley continues to be a giant in contemporary art, despite (or maybe because of) his suicide in South Pasadena in 2012. This collection (on view through Jan. 21) is the first comprehensive survey of his “Kandors” series, which consists of sculptures, videos and large-scale installations. Kelley took the imagery and mythology of Superman and reworked it to contemplate loss, power and memory.

Incidentally, Hauser & Wirth lost an important figure in February. Former curator and director Paul Schimmel, whom many remember as longtime chief curator at L.A.’s Museum of Contemporary Art, left the gallery under mysterious circumstances. No public comments were made at the time. If anyone knows what Schimmel’s up to now, please drop me a line.

“Golden Kingdoms: Luxury and Legacy in the Ancient Americas,” Getty Center. By all accounts, this collection of gold and luxury arts from 1000 B.C. to the arrivals of the Europeans in the early 16th century has been a dazzling blockbuster (on view through Jan. 28). If you think nothing spectacular and glamorous occurred in the ancient Americas before Columbus, check this out and adjust your head. Also, here’s proof that the artistic exchange of ideas and materials from North America to the tip of Chile occurred long before the steam-powered engine hurtled people and goods from coast to coast.

Also worth noting: The Skirball Fire, which burned 422 acres in the poshest parts of L.A. earlier this month, threatened the Getty Center and the Skirball Cultural Center. Yet no art or museums were damaged.

“The safest place for the art is right here at the Getty,” the institution’s vice president of communications told the L.A. Times at the time. Wow, really? There must be some expensive underground vault/tunnel action happening there at the art castle upon a hill.

Much more happened in 2017, but with 2018 bearing down on us, we look forward, not back. Happy New Year, everybody!
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LA WEEKLY
THIS COSMIC PAGEANT

Powell and Pressburger’s *A Matter of Life and Death* remains a heartening celebration of American diversity

**BY ALAN SCHERSTUHL**

Epic and intimate, surveying nothing less than the breadth of creation and the first spark of new love, the opening reel of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger’s 1946 astonishment first surveys the rim of the cosmos, the starfields as rich as George Lucas’, the space between the pricks of a lovely blue rather than the black of the void. As so often happens in movies, an explosion shatters the interstellar silence. In *A Matter of Life and Death*, we’re told in wry voice-over that someone must have started splitting atoms.

*A Matter of Life and Death* (originally released stateside as *Stairway to Heaven*) takes place a year before its release, in a world still at war, in a country steeling its mettle. Moments in, our heads filled with galaxies, it cuts to an RAF pilot in a bomber in thick fog, his plane plummeting, his parachute tattered. Facing death with the ol’ stiff upper lip, Peter (David Niven) “Maydays” around on his radio until he reaches someone, anyone. Cut to Kim Hunter, as American radio operator June, in a facility lit by cinematographer Kim Hunter, as American radio operator June, in a facility lit by cinematographer

Jack Cardiff the red of *The Last Jedi*’s throne room. Her face, seen in close-ups, emits warmth and life enough to fill up those chilly starscapes. In quick, tender moments, before he crashes, they fall in love.

But he doesn’t crash, and Powell, Pressburger and Cardiff (making his first full collaboration with the British writer-director team) have more miracles to unveil. They show us a pip-pip bureaucratic afterlife, a modernist heaven (shot in luminous black-and-white) so British it would never have the temerity to call itself heaven. Everyone there is smiling, even the new arrivals; except for the staff, they’re all dressed for wartime. It’s a soothing fantasy but also a devastating reality: There’s so many of them.

Absent, though, is Niven’s Peter, who wakes up in the next unforgettable location: in the surf of a wide and empty beach that he at first mistakes for the great beyond. A naked local boy (!) points him toward civilization. Not long after Peter realizes — with impeccable calmness — that he’s not dead, that he now can enjoy a life with his new American love, the plot kicks in. A waistcoated 19th-century French aristocrat (Marius Goring), complete with boutonnière, turns up to collect him. Turns out Peter actually should have been spirited away to the afterlife, but all that fog confused everyone.

American viewers might expect light comedy or solemn moralizing to follow from this premise. Peter must make the case to the powers on high that he deserves to keep living the life they missed their chance to snatch. After all, in those extra minutes, he and June won each other’s hearts. The case, we learn, will go to trial. But Powell and Pressburger are after something richer than the laughs of *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* and more expansively philosophical than *It’s a Wonderful Life*. They regard death and what follows with a reserved awe, and the film — like all of their best — bursts with tantalizing ideas, surprising connections, suggestive flights of fancy. The most famous scenes here involve a grand staircase that stretches across the firmament. Its steps move upward as an escalator does; when one still-living character gets called to stand on it, just for a moment, she ascends with it, drifting irresistibly upward even though she belongs down here.

The trial, when it comes, is fascinating theater, expanded by the best of mid-century special effects. As in their other collaborations with Cardiff, 1947’s *Black Narcissus* and 1948’s *The Red Shoes*, Powell and Pressburger employ dazzling process shots to expand their sets, to situatate their characters and their dilemmas in a world more convincingly wide than had been seen on screen before. Their technique remains so effective that you can see its influence still in the biggest films of this year: Their countryman Christopher Nolan attempts a brawner conflation of sensation and thoughtfulness in *Dunkirk*, a film that (like Joe Wright’s similarly expressive *Darkest Hour*) serves as a sort of prequel to *A Matter of Life and Death*: How many of the British soldiers thronging the horizon-wide crowd shots in the trial sequences were boys who died on that French beach? Rian Johnson, meanwhile, has even put tiny alien versions of the nuns from *Black Narcissus* onto Luke Skywalker’s sad-dude island.

Powell and Pressburger’s film is touched with eternity, but the specifics of that trial are fascinatingly of the year of production. Curiously, it’s an American patriot of the 1776 revolution (Raymond Massey) who serves as the attorney arguing that Peter must stay dead and not enjoy a half-century of marriage with June. The Yank’s case comes down to national enmity: Why make an exception for a Brit who, in his time on Earth, would subject a good American woman to the clammy draughtness of the Isles? He points out that the jury is certain to rule against Peter, as it’s comprised of souls from countries that England has warred with or colonized. Peter’s lawyer (Roger Livesey) asks for a new jury to be seated and, after some goading, consents to one populated entirely by Americans. This is his and the film’s master stroke: To the shock of the American patriot, an American jury of 1945 comes from all races and creeds, and is entirely open about the possibility of love and friendship between the upstart nation and its former ruler.

This cosmic/civic pageant remains overwhelmingly powerful, a reminder from across the pond that the strength of America is in its diversity, its capacity for forward thinking and humanistic decency. It’s an ideal to aspire toward, no matter how often this country manages to disappoint.

**A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH**

Directed and written by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger | Sony
film stars don’t die in liverpool
a true story of what happens when a hollywood legend discovers romance

starts friday, december 29
west los angeles
the landmark
at w. pico & westwood
(310) 470-6492, landmarktheatres.com
daily: 9:45, 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:50, 10:15

view the trailer at www.filmstarsdontdieinliverpoolmovie.com

opening this week

stars don’t die in liverpool

here’s a film in which excellent actors play fascinating people in interesting situations that somehow, in their adaptation from real life to memoir (by Peter Turner) to screenplay to movie have lost what’s fascinating/interesting about them. the finely realized Annette Bening performance at the heart of Paul McGuigan’s Film Stars Don’t Die in Liverpool doesn’t power the movie. McGuigan stages this anguished romance between the troubled, aging actress Gloria Grahame and her under-30 pick-me-up hunk Turner (Jamie Bell) as if that thumbnail description is all you need to know. Every scene of their coupling seems crafted to make the simplest of points: That Grahame is deluded and insecure about her age; that Turner, an actor himself, sees an affair with her as some sort of opportunity; that actors, in real life, act out the selves they wish to be. For all that, both leads summon full characters out of the sketches they’ve been given. Bening adopts a fluttery unreliability, making her character’s more than a little into lingering fragrance. Bell’s young man on the make seems torn between love and opportunism, though the screenplay avoids such complexity. In the real world, as here, Grahame — winner of a Best Supporting Actress Oscar for 1953’s The Bad and the Beautiful — fell out of her Hollywood success with the death of black-and-white film. The raw facts of her life afterward proved darker than the shadows her movie characters inhabited: an affair with her 13-year-old stepson; electrocosh treatment; facing cancer in a bedroom at her much younger boyfriend’s parents’ council flat in Liverpool. So it’s baffling that this Grahame seems so generic. (Alan Scherstuhl)

ongoing

bomshell: the hedy lamarr story

the famously beautiful actress Hedy Lamarr set movie screens ablaze in the 1940s and ’50s, but few knew that her true calling was as an inventor: Credit Lamarr with the Wi-Fi technology bringing you this review. And she’s back! In this superb documentary, first-time filmmaker Alexandra Dean uses newly discovered audio tapes from a 1990 interview to let Lamarr — with valuable insight from historians, her children and friends such as Robert Osborne — tell the amazing story of her life. Born in Austria, she shocked the world at age 16 by appearing in a scandalous nude pic called Ekstase (1933), which the then-denounced and Hitler-­­fanned. At 18, she married a munitions tycoon whose controlling ways (and ties to Mussolini and the Nazis) sent her fleeing to Paris in an escape story so wild and inherently cinematic that it cries out to be dramatized. Hollywood soon made her a star — Algis and Samson and Dally are among her best remembered films — but all along Lamarr was honing her skills as an engineer. As an inspired stroke, Dean uses animation to show how Lamarr visualized the inner workings of every object, such as player pianos and TV remotes, a way of seeing that helped her devise a frequency-hopping radio signal.

that would change the world. Recognition (and compensation) proved elusive in Lamarr’s lifetime, but in this marvelous documentary, a brilliant woman — “I’m a very simple, complicated person” — finally gets her due. (Chuck Wilson)

call me by your name

luca guadagnino’s romantic drama Call Me By Your Name sneaks up on you — by the end, it stings with the lingering ache of a late-summer sunburn. Adapted by James Ivory from Andre Aciman’s acclaimed novel, the story follows 17-year-old some-what introverted musician Elio (Timothée Chalamet) and 24-year-old doctoral student Oliver (Armie Hammer) through a long, frustrated summer of latent desire and thwarted courtship, culminating in a love/hate confrontation between the two and their families. When Elio’s father’s new summer research assistant Oliver arrives, the sleepy houseguest takes up residence in the family’s land. Elio, who swinks in and out of rooms to study the houseguest, at first takes offense at the new student’s “arrogant” goodbyes (a casual “Later!”) and then to his lingering hand on Elio’s bare back. But it’s really Elio’s bourgeois parents and then the story sings and surprises. Chalamet is magnetic and unpredictable as Elio. It’s thrilling to watch this film and realize that the 23-year-old actor will be in many others. I’m looking forward to the era of the Chalamet leading man. (April Wolfe)

coco

by the time it reaches its tearfully joyous finale, Pixar’s Coco plays like the movie that the most fervent Pixar fans have been waiting for a generation been telling me this. The living and the dead are in a reconciliation, and Peixar has finally made itsjsonpynchronized families, and the film is all the more salient for that careful, realistic interpretation. It’s the 1980s. Elio and his family reside in a palatial but rustic Italian villa in the northern countryside, where peaches and other succulent fruits dangle from the trees shading the family’s land. When Elio’s father’s new summer research assistant Oliver arrives, the sleepy houseguest suddenly takes on new life, Elio, who swinks in and out of rooms to study the houseguest, at first takes offense at the new student’s “arrogant” goodbyes (a casual “Later!”) and then to his lingering hand on Elio’s bare back. But it’s really Elio’s bourgeois parents and then the story sings and surprises. Chalamet is magnetic and unpredictable as Elio. It’s thrilling to watch this film and realize that the 23-year-old actor will be in many others. I’m looking forward to the era of the Chalamet leading man. (April Wolfe)

darkest hour

joe wright’s churchill-

the epic of lion girding, a rousing wii-deep summary of the gist of Winston Churchill’s first month in power as prime minister, building to his delivery of the second most famous-to-arms speech in British history, Wright’s film is self, wholly convincing in its production design, and in one crucial sense something rare: Here’s a war movie about rhetoric rather than battle scenes. “He’s mobilized the English language,” a rival of Churchill’s mothers, in awe, after one of the prime minister’s climactic speeches. To drive the point home, Wright (Atonement, Pan and the 2012 Anna Karenina) shows us the handbag visage of another rival, played by Stephen Dillane, who looks as if he were the director, who has no fear of overstating the obvious, has told him a sad trombone beat will score the shot. The idea that powers Wright’s film is that declaring the will to fight is itself a fight. We meet Churchill in May 1940, when the Nazis have stormed Europe right up to France, and outgoing prime minister Neville Chamberlain (Ronald Pickup) still insists that Britain’s best chance to avoid invasion is a peaceful deal with Hitler. Churchill, of course, vows to fight. Wright is adept at mesmerizing us in place, snaking his camera through this lavish re-creation of a secret London command center. And in lead Gary Oldman, he has an actor he can trust with both the biggest and smallest moments. The last lion roars, when appropriate, but this is a human Churchill. Too bad the sequence of Churchill quizz-}

HAPPY END (Alan Scherstuhl)

Happily, the author imagines Georges not in his down-to-earth digs of Amour but in a cold, sterile mansion owned by his daughter Anne (Isabelle Huppert), who's struggling to keep the family's construction firm afloat amid tragedies and one very bad accident. Anne's brother Thomas (Mathieu Kassovitz) and his wife Anais (Laura Verlinden) also live in the mansion. Thomas' daughter Eva (Fantine Harduin) is constantly asked how old she is — 13 — and Hanekeshow us through her eyes how adults seem obsessed with ages and numbers; magnifying a quotidian occurrence to examine its gravity has always been Hanekes's strength. When we ask someone's age, are we not really asking them how close they are to death? Georges and Eva are the heart and soul, the beginning and the end, of this story. They're both acutely aware of how precious — and, conversely, futile — life is, while everyone else is going through its motions. The film drags when Hanekes pulls focus to the other, dullest characters, perhaps inevitably, as it seems his intention for them to lack interest or thoughtfulness. (April Wolfe)

GO! I, TONYA (Craig Gillespie's raucous Tonya Harding biopic, $, Tonya, isn't all #TeamTonya or #TeamTruth — will we ever know the full, real story? Gillespie doesn't pretend to be definitive. Instead, he spins the tragedy of Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigans into a searing indictment of America's obsession with “America” and the ways in which public opinion can be irreparably warped by the media. Those expecting camp or catfishes won't find them in this movie, which instead offers thoughtful and somewhat objective critiques, plus seriously dark humor that will elicit uncomfortable gasps of laughter — and invites you to ponder difficult truths. To write the script, the filmmakers interviewed Harding and ex-husband/possible co-conspirator Jeff Gillooly, as well as family members and associates. The film unfolds as a kind of collage of these dramatized interviews with re-enactments — starring Margot Robbie and Sebastian Stan as Tonya and Jeff — that smash the fourth wall and span Hardings youth all the way up to and past “the incident.” Yes, you see Kerrigan scream out — “Why!” — but Gillespies story becomes about a different physical abuse, that of Hardings, first at the hands of her mother (Allison Janney) and then at Gilloolys. Using Hardings words infuses the story with devastating honesty devoid of sentimentalism. Gillespie never slides into condescending melodrama. One of the most beautiful moments comes during Hardings dramatized interview. Robbie as Tonya has just reminisced about the day she landed her first triple axel. She wipes at her eyes and ashes her cigarette, saying, “Sorry, no one ever asks me about that anymore.” ”I Tonya ensures they will. (April Wolfe)

HAPPY END (Michael Gracey)

Graceys carefully sanitized P.T. Barnum biopic is a film for folks who thought Moulin Rouge was too racy and had too many distinct songs with distinct flavor or genre (soul/funk/rock) and would prefer instead that a computer algorithm that over-emphasizes the words “eyes,” “stars” and “dream” spit out flattened, autocreated anthems. Hugh Jackman is charming, as ever, and two dance scenes are mildly inventive and well-executed, but that's not enough to earn the “greatest” in the title. The second the movie opens we're thrown into a big song-and-dance number, where Barnum (Jackman) sashays and spins through a circus ring, adored by his also-dancing “freaks.” And then that segues right into another song-and-dance number, where young Barnum (Elli Rubin) is the poor son of a tailor trying to charm a little rich girl named Charity (Skylar Dunn). Then that turns into a montage of little Barnum writing letters to Charity, caring for his dying father, and stealing bread to survive, before joining a traveling circus and returning to propose to Charity. There's no breathing room between scenes, no respite where we can assess story or character. We're bombarded by pop ballads that demand we look up at the sky but also close our eyes and dream. There are things to like. Zac Efron is infatuatingly talented. Efron (as Phillip Carlyle) and Jackman both radiate an impishness and glimmer. In another Efron number, Carlyle is paired with a trapeze artist, a character based on Anita Hemmings and played by Zendaya, who swoops down on a rope to meet Carlyle, only to fly away — what becomes dismayingly unfunny — what becomes dismayingly unfunny. (April Wolfe)

JUMANJI: WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE (Dennis Widmyer)

The new Jumanji movie is bigger and dumber than the previous, a feat considering the relentless clutter of the 1995 iteration. This time, the kids-to-be-harrowed — bickering, single-trait high schoolers — turn their noses up at the very idea of board games. Jumanji obliges, transmuting into a form they will find more appealing: a serious dark humor that will elicit uncomfortable gasps of laughter — and invites you to ponder difficult truths. To write the script, the filmmakers interviewed Harding and ex-husband/possible co-conspirator Jeff Gillooly, as well as family members and associates. The film unfolds as a kind of collage of these dramatized interviews with re-enactments — starring Margot Robbie and Sebastian Stan as Tonya and Jeff — that smash the fourth wall and span Hardings youth all the way up to and past “the incident.” Yes, you see Kerrigan scream out — “Why!” — but Gillespies story becomes about a different physical abuse, that of Hardings, first at the hands of her mother (Allison Janney) and then at Gillooly. Using Hardings words infuses the story with devastating honesty devoid of sentimentalism. Gillespie never slides into condescending melodrama. One of the most beautiful moments comes during Hardings dramatized interview. Robbie as Tonya has just reminisced about the day she landed her first triple axel. She wipes at her eyes and ashes her cigarette, saying, “Sorry, no one ever asks me about that anymore.” ”I Tonya ensures they will. (April Wolfe)

PHANTOM THREAD (Paul Thomas Anderson)

The 20th Century Fox biopic, starring Daniel Day-Lewis and Vicky Krieps, is a fascinating look at the life of the great Victorian designer Charles James. Day-Lewis delivers another masterful performance as the eccentric designer, while Krieps shines as his wife. The film is beautifully shot and directed, and the chemistry between the two leads is compelling. Overall, Phantom Thread is a must-see for fans of period dramas and fashion history.
End the Year With A Few Good Laughs Friday, Dec. 29
Ready for 2017 to be over and done? There are worse ways to finish out a stunning and grueling year than to indulge in some of the funniest films America ever produced. The American Cinematheque has programmed four evenings of screwball comedy. On Friday it’s His Girl Friday (in a crisp 4K scan), a mile-a-minute farce about a newspaperman (Cary Grant) who convinces to keep his ex-wife and colleague (Rosalind Russell) from marrying again. Chasing its tail is Ball of Fire, in which Barbara Stanwyck plays a nightclub singer fleeing the mob and finding sanctuary among a group of stuffy academics. Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica; Fri., Dec. 29, 7:30 p.m.; $12. (323) 486-4356, americancinemathequecalender.com.

Saturday, Dec. 30
Italian B movie maestro Mario Bava contributed some of the most outlandishly stylish films of the 1960s, among which Danger: Diabolik stands apart. A cheerfully amoral comic adaptation about a master thief (John Phillip Law, garbed in black body stocking and hood) with a villainous laugh, an underground lair and four arms, it still stands apart. A cheerfully amoral comic adaptation about a master thief (John Phillip Law, garbed in black body stocking and hood) with a villainous laugh, an underground lair and four arms, it still stands apart. The New Beverly Cinema is showing a 35mm print (what else?), which will showcase this swinging period piece in all its glaudy glory. New Beverly Cinema, 7165 Beverly Blvd., Fairfax; Sat., Dec. 30, 11:59 p.m.; $8. (323) 938-4038, thenewbev.com.

Monday, Jan. 1
In keeping with tradition, the American Cinematheque has programmed a Marx Brothers matinee to ring in the new year. The anarchic fun starts with Horse Feathers, the one in which Groucho plays the unscrupulous president of a college bent on winning the big football game. Spiked with a dizzying array of verbal gags, the film also features several musical interludes, including the classic “I’m Against It!” The double feature concludes with Animal Crackers, in which the foursome play thieves attempting to infiltrate a high society party held by the matronly Mrs. Rittenhouse (the always delightful Margaret Dumont). Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica; Mon., Jan. 1, 7:30 p.m.; $12. (323) 486-4356, americancinemathequecalender.com.

Tuesday, Jan. 2
LACMA’s Tuesday Matinees is serving up a generous four-week tribute to Dorothy Arzner, who for the better part of the 1930s and ’40s was the sole female director in Hollywood. First up is Working Girls, a nearly forgotten pre-Code drama about two sisters (Judith Wood and a shy, flighty Barbara Stanwyck) who move from the Midwest to NYC. Romantic complications ensue, giving a sharp-edged impression of the times. Written by Zoe Akins from a play by Vera Caspy and Winifred Lenihan, the film brings a strong feminine sensibility to a male-dominated market. LACMA, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Tue., Jan. 2, 1 p.m.; $4. (323) 875-6600, lacma.org.

Thursday, Jan. 4
The Cinema Center offers a free kids matinee as part of its ongoing family program. This time it’s Up, Pixar’s fanciful heart-tugger about a man who flies to South America in his balloon-powered bungalow. Once you get past the aggressively sentimental montage calculated to wring tears from every grown-up in the audience, the movie settles into an agreeably daft piece of whimsy — the kind that allows dogs to be dressed as WWI flying aces. Cinema Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Brentwood, Thu., Jan. 13, 12:30 & 2:30 p.m.; free. (310) 440-4500, skirball.org. —Nathaniel Bell

**MADUIE**

Maudie is hit-or-miss, but you’ll probably bail anyway. Its creators have elected to dramatize nothing but the things that traditional narrative features usually botch. The film, directed by Aisling Walsh, surveys the life of a beloved artist, Nova Scotia’s self-taught folk painter Maud Lewis, who produced scores of cheerily primitive — and marvelously composed — studies of her world as she was carried wherever she held a brush. Rheumatoid arthritis in her youth had left Lewis’ hands and shoulders twisted in on themselves. That means the filmmakers face not only the pressing challenges of dramatizing artistic creation while reducing the complex sprawl of a life to a cozy three-act structure but must do so while honoring the reality of Lewis’s day-to-day challenges. That is, they have achieved this much is a testament to Sally Hawkins, who plays Maud as a tiny, peevish fighter, her shoulders hunched but her eyes defiant and her smile quick and wild. But the script, by Sherry White, tends to hit one note per scene, showing Maud beleaguered or hopeful or content; only occasionally do the filmmakers hit a complete sentence. As the author of this column, as it were, Everett Lewis’ brooding and sometimes brutish husband, doesn’t demand much of him besides confusion, rage and signaling — through stiff and wary kindness — that Maud was right about whatever Everett and she had been arguing about several scenes before. Still, as Lewis weakens, the home around her bursts from farm-shack dreariness to Oz color, a springtime of the heart. (Alan Scherstuhl)

**MOLLY’S GAME**

With Molly’s Game, Aaron Sorkin has written and directed a lead female role that’s both powerfully ver- borese and cautiously thoughtful. As poker champ Molly Bloom, Jessica Chastain seems at times to be both the lead and her own supporting actor in this story, as she oscillates between traditionally feminine and masculine modes of behavior, sometimes inhabiting both at once. Yes, there are some Sorkinesque dialogic flourishes that’ll have you checking your watch, and — wow — lots of unnecessary cleavage shots, but these demerits are made up for by Chastain’s performance (and the absorbing charm of Idris Elba as lawyer Charlie Jaffe). Sorkin has adapted the real Bloom’s autobiogra- phy, and her drift of mind is fascinating enough that the frequent voiceover narration is engaging, especially performed by Chastain. Hell, if I ever write a book, please God let her record the audio version. The film is working well with Dean Keith (Jeremy Strong), a misogynistic industry type. He throws a bag of balls at Molly’s head, which she instinctively dodges. In that moment, it’s clear how Molly has continually adapted to the whims of whoathed or forceful men. You can’t change the man who will throw balls at your head, but you can duck and react. Her victory, Dean quickly realizes he has a woman willing to deal with his outbursts and orders her to start running his poker games at the Cobra Club. As she picks up the game like a pro, Sorkin gives us the kind of hot-shot-brilliant-mind montage we rarely see.
with a female character. (April Wolfe)

**MUDBOUND** “I dreamed in brown,” Laura McAllan (Carey Mulligan) muses in voice-over as Mudbound begins, and you have to believe her. Dee Rees’ gorgeous film opens with the sound of thundering rain and footsteps in mud. Set on a cotton farm in the Mississippi Delta in the 1940s, it offers a full sensory experience, capturing not just the sounds and sights but the smells and tastes of country life. Adapted from the 2008 novel by Hillary Jordan, Mudbound is a true ensemble piece — the film explores race and class in the South through the story of two fated families, the white McAllans and their black sharecropper tenants the Jacksons — narrated by several divergent characters. The trouble begins when the Jacksons’ oldest son, Ronsel (Jason Mitchell), comes home from World War II, where he was a tank commander, and befriends Henry’s dashing younger brother, Jamie (Garrett Hedlund), a fighter pilot also just back from the front. Ronsel can no longer abide the oppression of life in the Deep South — the constant exploitation of his family’s labor, both physical and emotional. Ronsel and Jamie’s friendship invites trouble, and they know it. It all builds, inevitably yet subtly, toward tragedy. The movie turns on a series of revelations about its characters, whose hushed, intimate narration reveals rich inner lives. Voice-overs build on top of voice-overs, and we feel as if we’re simply getting to know these people a little better, even while Rees is gesturing toward things to come. The result is a deeply engrossing film — its two-plus hours whiz by — about stumbling one step forward and two steps back toward a more enlightened existence. (Lara Zaram)

**PITCH PERFECT 3** Watching Anna Kendrick in Pitch Perfect 3 is something like watching Harrison Ford in Return of the Jedi or your high school’s football coach teaching health class. Here is a professional who can’t find the wherewithal to hide a boredom that seems tinged with disdain. As Beca, one of the film series’ singing/dancing a cappella dynamos, she again hoists gamely through the many production numbers, but there’s an aloof flatness to her delivery in dialogue scenes, like she’s running lines in rehearsal for one of her Joe Swanberg indies rather than light- ing up the screen in a tent-pole holiday musical sequel. That refusal to sparkle becomes the most interesting thing in this exhausted installment, which finds the Bellas — the collegiate a cappella troupe who can’t find the wherewithal to hide a boredom that seems tinged with disdain — the portrait of a troubled child, but the smells and tastes of country life. That refusal to sparkle becomes the most interesting thing in this exhausted installment, which finds the Bellas — the collegiate a cappella troupe who can’t find the wherewithal to hide a boredom that seems tinged with disdain — the portrait of a troubled child, but the smells and tastes of country life. That refusal to sparkle becomes the most interesting thing in this exhausted installment, which finds the Bellas — the collegiate a cappella troupe who can’t find the wherewithal to hide a boredom that seems tinged with disdain — the portrait of a troubled child, but the smells and tastes of country life.
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自治 DJ's, fabulous performers, masquerades, flashback-driven affairs, and themes ranging from prom to prohibition to punk... NYE nightlife in L.A. is once again all over the place in the best possible way, with more options than ever this year. And why not? It was a hard one. Time to let it go, if only for one night. Here, an assortment of the best bases in town actually deserving of dressing up, drinking and dancing the night away in L.A. KISS not out!

Countdown NYE: Even if you’re not a “raver,” NYE is a night to rave, and Insomniac’s annual dance music festival looks to be the ultimate place to do just that. Insomniac’s two-night affair features headliners Porter Robinson and Deadmau5, plus dozens and dozens (and dozens) more including huge names in the EDM and producer world such as Diplo, Flosstradamus, Borgore, Zeds Dead b2b Jauz, Shiba San and Yellow Claw. This one is worth the drive out to San Bernardino, if you can get a room nearby and are looking to escape in mind and body for a few days before coming back to the reality of 2018. There will be three stages, Champagne, confetti, art, food trucks, enclosed heated seating areas and other “interactive activities.” VIPs pay a little more for fancy cocktails and hang time on the elevated, heated deck. insomniac.com/media/countdown-nye-2017-lineup-here

Minimal Effort NYE: When it comes to immersive production and a killer dance-music DJ lineup based in L.A., the Minimal peeps always put in a lot of effort. This year, their celebration at the MacArthur (which they’ll always call the Park Plaza) features Maya Jane Coles, Justin Martin, DJ Tennis, Jimmy Edgar, J. Philip, DJ Three, Ardalan, Öona Dahl, Droog, Trent Cantrell, Human Resources, Astley, Matt Oxentink, Jia, Toks, Lukberg er, Shanto and Ray Kash on four stages (indoor and outdoor). facebook.com/events/1765152143750750

Union: NYE: Four of dance music’s biggest names join forces for this multiroom extravaganza: L.A.’s premier soulful house happening DEEP, SCI-TECH, Cycline & Decibel and Understated. Headliners include DJs Marques Wyatt, Dubfire, John Tejada (live) and Todd Edwards; other faves include Patricio, Big Ceel, DJ Pierre Shadez (live), Julia Goldhar, Lupe Fuentes, Lee K, Leo Leal, Amir Javasouli, HAAS, Nordic Soul, Volen, Harvard Bass, PILO, Matthew Anthony, Monsieur Frazier, Micah Smith, Hannah Monica and more. This one goes all night, from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. (bar reopens at 6 a.m.). facebook.com/events/610396826445998

New Queer’s Eve: The Boulets host along with Mario Diaz, Monster, Daddy Issues and Planet Queer. Boulets’ and friends’ fanciest femme-boy queers” downtown, and fuses some of the best night of the year to do it. The popular retro club will take over the downstairs main room of Los Globos with “Club 90s vs. Club Y2K” featuring DJs Jason and Jeffrey spinning pop, dance and alternative anthems from the ’90s and early ’00s (Britney, Spice Girls, NSYNC, TLC, Avril, Backstreet Boys, No Doubt, Selena, Destiny’s Child, etc.) The upstairs area of Globos will be a bootie-bumping zone with their “JUICY” jams — hip-hop and R&B from the likes of Biggie, Missy, Ja Rule, etc., spun by DJs Ryan and Bruce. There’ll be a New Year’s photo booth by And! and free props and goodies at the door plus a special midnight countdown. facebook.com/events/5562853448050006

Glitter & Gold NYE: The Abbey will shine brighter than ever for NYE, with DJs, plus a five-hour premium open bar, four rooms of music and a “Hollywood's Elite Countdown” with LED wall and giant projections. VIP bottle service packages available. Party favors.facebook.com/events/199870676882724/

Giorgio’s Black & White Masquerade Ball: The Sunset Strip’s sexiest nightclub infuses its usual dance-party decadence with some New York glamour, presenting two NYC superstars: Haute hostess Susanne Bartsch will be on hand and androgynous torch-singing goddess Joey Arias performs. A tantalizing two-some that promises to bring a blindingly glamorous end to another successful year for promoters Bryan Rabin and Adam Bravin (DJ Adam 12). Wear black or white or both, but make it chic, babes. facebook.com/events/756417524569369/

The Edison’s New Year’s Eve Ball: Cathedral of Industry and Imagination presents a unique party that’s part living history, part retro hulabaloo, with live music from Parlor Social, aerialists flying about all night, and stilts walkers and dancers enacting the interactive festivities. facebook.com/events/128075084694003/

Part Time Punks NYE: The cool kids usually go to house parties on NYE, but the Echoplex is sure to come in a close second this year. With NYE falling on a Sunday for the first time in more than a decade, PTP plans to punk it up like never before with a big dance night. Singing, dancing and shaking yo shaggy head to indie ’80s, ’90s, Britpop, Bowie, glam, Morrissey, The Smiths, post-punk, New Order, Joy Division, The Cure, Iggy and more will be going down all night. Guest DJ Jose Maldonado (Sweet and Tender Hoooligans) joins Michael Stock on the decks spinning all vinyl. facebook.com/events/131993788402632/

Club 90s NYE: For some, celebrating the present (and future) is best when pretending they’re in the past, and for the kids who frequent Club 90s, NYE might be the best night of the year to do it. The popular retro club will take over the downstairs main room of Los Globos with “Club 90s vs. Club Y2K” featuring DJs Jason and Jeffrey spinning pop, dance and alternative anthems from the ’90s and early ’00s (Britney, Spice Girls, NSYNC, TLC, Avril, Backstreet Boys, No Doubt, Selena, Destiny’s Child, etc.) The upstairs area of Globos will be a bootie-bumping zone with their “JUICY” jams — hip-hop and R&B from the likes of Biggie, Missy, Ja Rule, etc., spun by DJs Ryan and Bruce. There’ll be a New Year’s photo booth by And! and free props and goodies at the door plus a special midnight countdown. facebook.com/events/5562853448050006

Prohibition NYE: Vintage glamour will be conjured for the return of this 1920s-themed New Year’s Eve celebration at historic Union Station. The roaring affair will offer theatrical burlesque, live jazz ensembles, a premium open bar and DJ Goldroom playing classic electronic grooves on the main stage. Sixty-foot, mid-night ball-drop celebration. Formal attire and vintage glam encouraged. facebook.com/events/1387078344742756/

Markus Schulz at Avalon: The EDM producer extraordinaire drops down an epic 12-hour set for New Year’s at Avalon, and we’re tired just thinking about it. Disco named a must-see for NYE, and Avalon’s NYE will not disappoint. IGA & VIP open bar tickets are available. avalonhollywood.com/event/avalon-pres ents/090217-markus-schulz-open-to-close/

Hollywood Prom: Get those tuxes and gowns ready, kids, Prom is here to make NYE a multilayered milestone. DJs spin ‘80s ballads, ’90s/2000s hip-hop jams and more in three rooms, plus a live nine-piece funk & soul band. (The Pussycat Revue.) Hosted by the “Prom Committee” aka “the popular kids”: Jeremy Burke, William Reed, Dan Keyes, Allison Harvard, Stevie Be, Sisley Treasure, David Morrison and more. Champagne toast, balloon drop, countdown, photo booth, VIP area, four bars and more. All tickets include Champagne toast. HollywoodPromNYE.com
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RELEASE PARTY: APATHY &
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Mac Sabbath, Dwarves
@ THE REGENT
Heavy metal godfathers Black Sabbath are the launching point for local musical pranksters Mac Sabbath. But instead of being yet another slavish re-creation that can’t hold a candle to the original, this L.A. band throws classic metal anthems such as “Paranoid” and “Children of the Grave” through a meat grinder and turns them into satirical skits skewering the fast-food industry. The two aforementioned Sabbath fan favorites become “Pair-a-Buns” and “Chicken for the Slaves,” and are performed by nightmarish costumed characters that are loosely based on a clown named Ronald and his friends. The live Mac Sabbath experience resembles a bad acid trip inside a McDonald’s playhouse. The irreverence of the evening will be amplified by an appearance from Dwarves, a band with a 30-year history of delivering shock-punk odes to sex and drugs such as “F*ck You Up and Get High.” —Jason Roche

Primus
@ THE WILTERN
The glory of Les Claypool’s San Fran outfit Primus is that, since forming in 1984, they’ve been wonderfully difficult to nail down. 1991 breakout Sailing on the Seas of Cheese and accompanying singles “Jerry Was a Race Car Driver” and “Tommy the Cat” allowed an alt-rock–loving public to believe this was a funk-rock band, in a scene with the likes of the Chili Peppers, Fishbone and Faith No More. But there was so much more to Primus than that, despite the fact that Claypool is one of the best bass players in rock. There are shades of prog rock to Primus, thanks to the intricacies of the compositions and the technical wizardry. Absolutely completely, zany punk-rock elements inspired by bands such as Pere Ubu can be heard. Primus have always confused people, and that’s why they’re great. Hear for yourself at a show that will surely be a party. Also Saturday, Dec. 30. —Brett Callwood

Misfits
@ THE FORUM
Years before he first howled “Mother!” at the top of his lungs, heavy metal icon Glenn Danzig crooned punk-rock odes to the horror and sci-fi movies he grew up with. Alongside bassist Jerry Only, guitarist Doyle, and a revolving door of drummers, Danzig’s voice helped birth the horror-punk movement of the late ’70s and early ’80s, and influenced generations of metal and punk bands in the years that followed. The band broke up in 1983 and was embroiled in legal battles for years, with Danzig experiencing later solo success, Only reviving the Misfits name in 1996 and performing with various lineups since, and Doyle performing off and on alongside both. The trio reunited for festival appearances alongside Dave Lombardo (ex-Slayer, Fantomas) on drums, but Los Angeles fans will be rewarded with a headlining set to end the year screaming along with “Last Caress” and other fan favorites. —Jason Roche

Riot Grrrl Carnival
@ THE SMELL
“Chronic homelessness” is defined as lasting a year or more, and Housing Works is one of the few organizations working alongside the city of L.A. that alleviates the pressures that beset some of the 47,000-plus residents stuck on the streets every night. Tonight’s Riot Grrrl Carnival! benefit for Housing Works stars Causa, the Los Angeles anarchopunk quintet with dueling Housing Works stars Causa, the Los Angeles anarchopunk quintet with dueling guitarist possesses one of those big, dramatic, wraithlike voices, and she sounds like a metallic Grace Slick backed by Blue Cheer or Black Sabbath as bassist Yam and drummer Austin Zamachaj lower the boom with a thick wall of sludgy noise. Noble belts out such momentarily moody originals as “Pull Your Mask on Tight” as if she’s standing on top of a mountain, and she needs all that vocal power to surmount her own savagely distorted guitar and Yam and Zamachaj’s punchy hard-rock attack. Combining elements of punk, grunge and psychedelia with Noelle’s goth-y, kohl-streaked makeup and exotic outfits, the Ventura power trio seem destined for grander venues than the tiny sports bars they currently play. “On and on forever/I do persist,” she simmers. “Even if the whole world is doomed.” —Falling James

Stones Throw Holiday Takeover
@ UNION
Wouldn’t it be great to hang out with Egyptian Lover at the King Tut exhibition at the California Science Center in March? If you can’t wait for that heavy level of self-awareness, Egyptian Lover appears at tonight’s Stones Throw Holiday Takeover, performing his poetry-rivaling-Shakespeare opus “What is a DJ If He Can’t Scratch?” alongside fellow Stoners Dâm-Funk, Mayer Hawthorne, J Roc and Peanut Butter Wolf. There’s no better way to hurdle headlong into 2018 than with a night of boogie, funk and soul courtesy of some of the finest architects of the ass-shaking codec that moves the West Coast harder than the San Andreas Fault. Many of these creative maniacs continued to churn out greatness in 2017 — most notably Hawthorne’s Tuxedo II album — and they’ll keep on keepin’ on with more of the same in the coming year. —David Cotner
embracing embarrassing behavior by online trolls, is dressed up in new-wave electronics and sugary la-la-harmonies before surges of punk guitar power the mocking chorus. “I got enemies, a million enemies, but, baby, I’m feeling fine,” Williams insists on “Million Enemies,” which marches along with a glamy Duran Duran dance-pop groove instead of the group’s traditional Ramones/Descendents–style surf-punk approach. Waves just released a version of The Vince Guaraldi Trio’s Charlie Brown homage, “Christmas Time Is Here,” which they’ve transformed into a bizarre soundscape of watery melodies stretched out with train-tunnel echoes. —Falling James

LA Guns, Faster Pussykat
@ WHISKY A GO GO
How better to celebrate the dawning of 2018, and all the hope and joy that comes with the introduction of another year, than to spend the transition period with two of the Sunset Strip’s more infamous and roguish bands. Taime Downe of Faster Pussykat is the perfect party compère — a walking filthy joke with a mischievous, tobacco-stained grin and more leather get-up than the BDM room at a swingers den. Most important, the current incarnation of Pussykat is a tight-as-nuts band that does tobacco-stained grin and more leather get-up than the BDSM room at a swingers den. Most important, the current incarnation of Pussykat is a tight-as-nuts band that does justice to old faves like “Bathroom Wall,” “Babylon” and the gloriously smutty “Slip of the Tongue.” As for LA Guns, main men Phil Lewis and Traci Guns recently reunited and put out an album, The Missing Peace, one of the year’s best. Put the two outfits together, and you have a show that’s quintessentially Hollywood, at an iconic venue, on one of the biggest nights of the year. Perfect. —Brett Callwood

VNV Nation
@ THE REGENCY
VNV Nation’s ultra-positive, contemplative yet upliftingly danceable “futurpop” (“VNV” stands for “Victory Not Vengeance”) is an apt soundtrack for mulling over the year past and launching into the new with wide-eyed optimism. For more than a quarter-century, the now Germany-based project — essentially the solo expression of Irish singer/songwriter/producer/sole VNVN constant Ronan Harris — has been a deet intersection of indie-pop songcraft, edgy EBM dance-ability and synth-cinematic future pop — and shows no sign of stopping. Also, if you do a 1080 onstage, you summon the spirit of Dr. Gene Scott! —David Cotner

With Our Arms to the Sun
@ THE REGENCY
A sonic sanctuary forstoners and shredders alike, With Our Arms to the Sun are thoughtful, young, post-metal torchbearers endorsed by some storied shapers of the subgenre (former Isis drummer Aaron Harris engineered their 2014, A Far Away Wonder opus, and this year’s Orenda was produced by Buzz Osborne). WOATTS comprises two brothers and their childhood friend from the self-described “middle of nowhere” Arizona desert, and their peer pressure–free incubation since forming in 2012 is evident in Orenda’s wonderfully experimental, nonself-conscious nipping between the spacy, sludgy, progessive and, in places, downright poppy (with actual single pink hoodoo). While certainly for lovers of Pink Floyd, Mastodon and Thrice, WOATTS could take this to another place entirely, their rare sense of dynamic restraint and super-saturated, almost Billy Corgan–y guitars shaping, inadvertently or otherwise, into invaluable signatures amidst a cluttered, oft-samey scene. —Paul Rogers

Flamin’ Groovies
@ BOOTLEG THEATER
Flamin’ Groovies might have seemed like the right band at the wrong time when they emerged from San Francisco in the late ‘60s. At a time when other Bay Area bands were stretching out with endless solos and taking on the profound responsibilities of saving the world with their songs, the Groovies stubbornly went back to the garage to craft a style of music that evoked early rock & roll, with short, punchy and catchy power-pop songs. A few years ago, singer-guitarists Cyril Jordan and Chris Wilson re-formed the band and started basking in the long-overdue attention they rarely received in their ‘70s heyday. Not only are the duo still cranking out past classics such as the cautionary drug-abuse tale “Slow Death” and the heartbreakingly determined pop gem “Shake Some Action” but they have finally released a new album, Fantastic Plastic, which bursts with lively tunes such as “Crazy Macy” and “Let Me Rock.” —Falling James

Conor Oberst & the Mystic Valley Band
@ LOBBY ROOM
If you’re looking for an escape far from the madding crowds, glitz, fireworks and embarrassing behavior by online trolls, is Tonight’s Eve promises performances that are like a box of chocolates. Some will hold in your hot little hands until you have to lick the sweetness off your fingers. Others might reject because they’re nuts. Gun Outfit’s new album, Hard Coming Down, expands on their lonely eddyrich twang, while Shannon Lay plays tracks from Living Water, brimming with folkish bigheartedness. Nissan’s vaunted Nissan Baywatch descend upon an already chaotic scene to play constitutionally unhyp sounds in one of Hollywood’s most traditionally chic locales. Rounding out the night is the scuzz-jangle of Bud Overdose, the sweltering garage haze of Cosmonauts and the day-glo freak flag-flyin’ of White Fang. —David Cotner

Raekwon (The Chef)
@ THEATRE AT ACE HOTEL
The great thing about being a fan of the Wu-Tang Clan over the past 25 years is that there are so many members in the group that some of them are probably out performing at any given time somewhere near you. Raekwon (The Chef) cooks up another night of New York nomenclature and noises at tonight’s MNC Skateboards official launch party for their new boards (What, no Inspectah Deck?). Raekwon’s latest album, The Wild, has contributions from everyone from CeeLo to Lil Wayne to Andra Day, and he’ll probably play some of the better tracks off it. Expect surprise guests, giveaways and other reasons to be cheerful, including the fact that the newly revitalized MNC turned 20 this year and shows no sign of stopping. Also, if you do a 1080 onstage, you summon the spirit of Dr. Gene Scott! —David Cotner

Gnar Year’s Eve
@ THE STANDARD HOLLYWOOD
It was a banner year for the cassette culture revival, so indie pop powerhouse labels Burger Records and Gnar Tapes join forces to celebrate another year of depleting the nation’s already emaciated stock of magnetic tape. Disc jockeys including DJ Lee NOISE! of Burger Records, DJ Jimmy from Gnar Tapes, DJ Cold Leatherette (bassist Kristin Cooper of The Flytraps), DJ Naughty No No (Noah Wallace, he of the brain-busting bubble-gum braintrust that is Velvet Timmune), DJ Killed by Beth (guitarist Beth Boyd of The Flytraps) and DJ Chruux of Guantanamo Baywatch descend upon an already chaotic scene to play constitutionally unhyp sounds in one of Hollywood’s most traditionally chic locales. Rounding out the night is the scuzz-jangle of Bud Overdose, the sweltering garage haze of Cosmonauts and the day-glo freak flag-flyin’ of White Fang. —David Cotner

Gun Outfit
@ THE ECHO
FOMO Week promises performances that
ODDISEE
The Iceberg
Explicitly political and topical: Oddisee crafts a sound that seamlessly combines programmed beats with live band instrumentation, creating buoyancy for weighty subject matter.

LUKE BRYAN
What Makes You Country
Produced by Jeff Stevens and Jody Stevens, the 15-track collection includes the phone-obsessed lead single “Light It Up,” currently a top 20 hit on country radio.

NICK CAVE & WARREN ELLIS
WIND RIVER O.S.T.
Possessing a sparseness aching with emotion, this soundtrack collaboration by Nick Cave and Warren Ellis conjure the wild, desolate American landscape of Taylor Sheridan’s film, Wind River.

SLIPKNOT
Day Of The Gusano [Deluxe]
Documents the band’s first ever visit to Mexico in 2015. Features exclusive interviews, incendiary footage from the live show, and chronicles the rabid devotion of the Mexican fans.

FLEET FOXES
Crack-Up
Masterful, dreamy, wall-of-sound Americana-infused indie rock; Fleet Foxes sound better than ever. Their hazy, melancholy melodies envelop, and their haunting harmonies dig at the heart.

JOHN MORELAND
Big Bad Luv
A one of a kind album of roots-based music that feels vibrant and contemporary; free of dogmatic beliefs that would make it sound like a relic.
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ROCK & POP

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Fang, Hrenchen, The Bourbon Saints, Fri., Dec. 29, 8 p.m., $17. NYE Ballroom Blitz, Sun., Dec. 31, 8 p.m., free. Telephone Lovers, Autogramm, Bar Bag, Thu., Jan. 4, 8 p.m., free.

BAR MATTACHINE: 221 W. Seventh St., Los Angeles. Damon Hall, Mon., Jan. 1, 7 p.m., $0-$50.


THE FEDERAL BAR: 102 Pine Ave., Long Beach. Grateful Shred, Pearl Charles, Thu., Jan. 4, 9 p.m.

GENESIS COHEN: 410 N. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles. Ro Sub, Sun., Dec. 30, 10 p.m., $5.


HOUSE OF BLUES ANAHEIM: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim. Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, Sun., Dec. 31, 8 & 10 p.m., $55.

LARGO AT THE CORONET: 366 N. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles. Jeff Tweedy, Fri., Dec. 29, 8:30 p.m., $50.


CATALINA BAR & GRILL: 1432 Fourth St., Santa Monica. Buddy T, Chase Bell, Dec. 29, 9 p.m., $25. Cafe R&B, Sat., Dec. 30, 9 p.m., $20. The Toledo Show, Sundays, 9:30 p.m., $10. The House of Vibe All-Stars, Wednesdays, 9:30 p.m., $5.


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2, 9 p.m., free. The Ploughboys, Wed., Jan. 3, 9 p.m.

Magnolia Blvd., Burbank. The Mary White Band, Fri., 10 p.m., $5.

9:30 p.m. DallasK, Bravo, Tate Sedar, Meirlin, DJ Santa Monica. NYE 2018, Sun., Dec. 31, 8 p.m., $10-$20. Blue Mondays, 31, 10 p.m.


Remix Fridays, Fri., Dec. 29, 10 p.m. Sultry Saturdays, night of reggae, Wednesdays, 9 p.m., $7.

Maldonado, Sun., Dec. 31, 8 p.m., $27. Dub Club, a Part Time Punks’ New Year’s Eve Party, with DJ Jose 31, 9 p.m., $25.

Chatsworth. Moonridge, Fri., Dec. 29, 8 p.m., free.


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GNAR YEAR’S EVE 2017:

With Culture Abuse, French Vanilla, 8 pm., 10 p.m., The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., Los Angeles. See Music Pick.

SNAPMCH N.Y.E.: 11 p.m., $30 The Observatory, 3053 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana.

STRANGE CHINOS: 8 p.m., $55-$125. Shrine Auditorium & Expo Hall. THE GAME: 7 p.m., $55-$175. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles.

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Research Investigators:
Dan George, MPH, MBA, Jeremy Martinez, M.D. & Tasnim Shamji, M.D.

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livd; JUAN RAMIREZ, an indi-
livd; and DOES 1-10, In-
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