L.A. PASSES LAW BANNING HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS

This past week, L.A. City Council passed a law banning homeless encampments from several public spaces. LAUSD also announced it will require all students and staff to take weekly COVID-19 tests. An indoor mask recommendation has also been made by California health officials as COVID-19 cases continue to increase in the state.

BY ISAI ROCHA

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti signed an ordinance on July 29 that would ban homeless encampments in several public areas.

With the new law, homeless encampments will not be allowed within 500 feet of schools, parks, bridges, overpasses, libraries and homeless shelters. The ordinance will also restrict people from sleeping in these areas, as well as sidewalks and bike lanes that would stop the flow of traffic.

The L.A. City Council voted 13-2 in favor of the ordinance Wednesday, July 28, with Nithya Raman and Mike Bonin being the two council members voting against it.

"People want housing, they do not want warehousing, they don't want shelter," Bonin said Wednesday. "LAHSA (Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority) said… we have shelter beds for 39% of the unsheltered population in Los Angeles County. What about the other 61%? Where can they go? Where can they sleep?"

Protesters rallied against the ordinance in downtown L.A., holding signs that read "Services, not sweeps," and "Poverty is not a crime."

As Garcetti signed the ordinance into law Thursday, Kenneth Mejia, an advocate for the unhoused, said the mayor and council "criminalized being homeless."

"I never understood how fining people who have no money or threatening them with arrest will help their situation," Mejia said. "How will they pay for these fines? Where will they go if they're not sure where they can sleep or rest?"

The majority of the council supported the order, saying it was necessary as encampments and people occupying the sidewalks interfere with the American Disabilities Act.

"If we all agree that the status quo is unsustainable, that street encampments are dangerous to both the housed and unhoused, why would we continue to allow them anywhere, if an alternative exists, like in my district today," Councilman Joe Buscaino said while addressing the ordinance Wednesday. "It's an improvement from what we have today."

When asked about the homeless in Los Angeles, council president Nury Martinez spoke against encampments, saying more shelters must be built.

"We cannot normalize people living in encampments," Martinez said. "We've got to encourage the building of homeless shelters, housing to be the priority… getting people off the street as soon as possible needs to be the mandate of the day. Encouraging people to remain on the street and normalizing this way of living and allowing people to die is not something that I will ever accept."

On the same night the city ordinance was signed, the Getty House, which is the official residence for mayors of Los Angeles, was vandalized with messages that opposed the ordinance.

While it is not clear if Mayor Eric Garcetti was home during the protest, the home's front gate pillars and nearby sidewalks were covered with graffiti reading, "F*ck Garcetti," "Housing is a right" and "Repeal 41.18 D," which was the municipal code for the ordinance.

LAUSD REQUIRING ALL STUDENTS TO TAKE WEEKLY COVID-19 TESTS

As the Los Angeles Unified School District prepares a return to in-person instruction, it announced that all students and school personnel will require weekly COVID-19 tests.

The tests will apply to all, regardless of vaccination status, reversing a previous plan to only test unvaccinated individuals.

"All students and employees, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, returning for in-person instruction must participate in baseline and ongoing weekly COVID testing," Interim Superintendent Megan K. Reilly said Thursday. "This is in accordance with the most recent guidance from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health."

Additional COVID-19 health measures will be in place with an emphasis on physical distancing when possible, mandated face coverings, hand washing, "enhanced" sanitation measures and a filtration system that was approved by L.A. Public Health and installed in all LAUSD campus buildings.

Even with the weekly testing, the district urged those who are eligible to get vaccinated as the city and county of Los Angeles continues to see rising COVID-19 cases attributed to the Delta variant of the virus.

CALIFORNIA RECOMMENDS INDOOR MASKING FOR ALL

California is recommending that all Californians wear masks in public indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status.

The state's announcement came a day after the CDC recommended all Americans use masks indoors as COVID-19 cases have risen, aided by the Delta variant.

"The Delta variant has caused a sharp increase in hospitalizations and case rates across the state," Dr. Tomas J. Aragon, CDPH director and state public health officer, said in a statement. "We are recommending masking in indoor public places to slow the spread while we continue efforts to get more Californians vaccinated."

Before the July 28 mask recommendation, vaccinated Californians were not required to wear masks in most indoor settings and vaccination status was primarily determined by self-attestation.

John Cox, a gubernatorial candidate in this year's upcoming special election, stated that mask-wearing sends the "wrong message" about vaccine effectiveness.

"I strongly oppose Gavin Newsom's latest mask mandate. It sends the wrong message on vaccinations and reopening our state," John Cox said Wednesday. "Vaccine hesitancy will increase and our small businesses will suffer from a state that feels like it's being shut down again by Gavin Newsom. Only .039% of vaccinated Californians have gotten an infection. That makes the latest order nonsensical and counterproductive."

While the statewide recommendation is not a mandate that can actively be enforced, a mandate in Los Angeles County has been enforceable since July 17. California counties have the power to order stronger mandates than the state, but never more lenient.
THE BUFFET IS BACK IN VEGAS — AND IT’S A BACCHANAL

BY MICHÉLE STUEVEN

While self-serve restaurants are slowly returning to business as usual, it’s still painfully slim pickins at buffets in Southern California. If you want a good food orgy, it’s still Vegas baby.

According to Anthony Curtis’ Las Vegas Advisor, the El Rancho Vegas launched the first buffet in Las Vegas. In an effort to keep patrons in the casino after the late headliner show, in 1946 owner Beldon Katleman inaugurated the “chuck wagon,” calling it the Buckaroo Buffet. It featured cold cuts and a few hot dishes, as the flyer advertised, “to appease the howling coyote in your inards.” The rock-bottom loss-leader price? One dollar. The rest is culinary history.

Here are three of our favorites that have recently reopened and are worth kicking up your spurs for.

A nod to the original gourmet Bacchanal Room from the ’60s at Caesar’s Palace, the Bacchanal dinner buffet is a royal feast for the gods. There are more than 220 menu items and 90 percent of the food is prepared right in front of you and plated in single portions to help cut waste. There are 36 desserts, plus 11 all-natural gelato and sorbet flavors, more than 100 plant-based, vegan
and vegetarian options and roaming carts offering wagyu hot dogs, dim sum and lobster bisque in the 25,000 square foot space. The Bacchanal currently goes through more than 1,000 pounds of crab legs and about 20 whole prime rib roasts a night. Price: $74.99.

The Wicked Spoon in the Cosmopolitan celebrates its 10 year anniversary this year. Over the last decade, more than 6 million guests have bellied up to the buffet. Dishes that have stood the test of time from the beginning include their Angry Mac & Cheese, Wicked Fried Chicken, bone marrow with pear and kimchi glaze, duck wings with soy caramel glaze, kale salad with ginger citrus dressing, apple pie cinnamon French toast with toasted oats, Oreo chocolate-covered strawberries, salted peanut gelato, zenith Mousse Cake with edible gold and carnitas taco with cilantro onion relish. They’ve also got beverage packages like mimosas, champagne, Bloody Marys or Bud Light Draft packages for up to two hours. Prices: Breakfast: $38 adults, $19 children ages 5 - 10; Lunch: $45 adults, $22.50 kids ages 5 - 10. Saturday and Sunday brunch: $48 for adults and $24 for kids 5 - 10.

Open for brunch seven days a week, the Bellagio buffet returned this month with a variety of live-action stations like Omlette Station as well as traditional breakfast items, pasta and pizza as well as extensive eggs benedict options, fried chicken and waffles and a toast bar. The seafood selection includes Alaskan king crab, poached shrimp, smoked salmon and scallop ceviche alongside far east options like Hong Kong BBQ buns and shrimp shu mai. The carving station is slicing up marinated flank steak, rotisserie chicken and St. Louis style ribs. In addition to fresh-baked pastries, there’s also a personalized gelato stand.

The Buffet at Bellagio is open seven days a week from 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. Pricing:

- Monday-Thursday: $39.99
- Friday-Saturday: $45.99
- Children 5 years of age and under eat complimentary
- Children 6-11 years of age eat for 50 percent off
VEGAS BABY!

A Guide to Sin City's Biggest and Best New (and Old School) Destinations

BY LINA LECARO

Disclaimer: We began compiling this guide to visiting Las Vegas a couple of months ago, as COVID-19 vaccinations were fully underway both in L.A. and L.V., and infection numbers were coming down. Both cities have suffered similar struggles in terms of financial losses, lay-offs and live entertainment gone dark. The lights have slowly been coming back on again in both cities, but at press time, the “back to normal” we had all been hoping for seems a little less likely due to the rise of the Delta variant. As of Friday, July 30, Nevada followed California’s lead, re-imposing its mask mandate for public indoor settings as local hospitals began to fill up again. Right now, if you plan to visit Vegas, your safest bet for a virus-free good time includes getting vaccinated, wearing masks while indoors, social distancing, and washing your hands/sanitizing frequently.

What happens in Vegas hasn’t always stayed in Vegas. The suggestive slogan, part of one of the most iconic marketing campaigns ever, might feel like a classic pop-culture catchphrase, but in fact, it’s relatively new. Debuting in February 2003, it was conjured by R&R Partners ad agency for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, who sought a rebrand for the city that retained its “sinful” rep but also showed it had more to offer beyond blackjack tables and slot machines. It worked. Vegas has become synonymous not only with gambling, but also with dance clubs, strip shows, bars, restaurants, dazzling stage shows (from Cirque du Soleil to Celine Dion – who coincidentally started her first residency in 2003), conventions and thematic Disneyland-like hotels.

Welcoming tourism from all walks of life, Vegas has been attracting a mix of young and old, rich and poor, nightlife lovers and sun worshippers, hedonism-seeking adults and families looking for good clean fun more than ever in the past couple of decades. They’ve added new demographics to the mix in recent years too, with huge music festivals including Electric Daisy Carnival (EDC), Life Is Beautiful, Psycho Las Vegas, Viva Las Vegas and Punk Rock Bowling, to name a few.

Then 2020 happened. In the wake of the pandemic and stay-at-home orders, the Vegas Strip (and its surrounding areas), much like Times Square in New York and to a lesser extent Hollywood Blvd. here in L.A., became a dead, desolate ghost town. And while it’s been a struggle coming back for every hotspot, the glitziest place on the globe might have the biggest challenges ahead. Or not. People don’t go to Sin City to be responsible, or careful, or safe. Even as coronavirus remains a very real threat, visitors – and particularly those relatively close, like Angelenos – look to Vegas for frequent, quick and easy escapes from the stress and drudgery of daily life. Many of us really need that right now, too. Here, we provide a guide list for the best ways to do just that, from the newest stuff you probably haven’t seen yet to some old-school standbys you may have forgotten about or never even knew existed. We can’t promise what happens there will actually stay there, but the memories will definitely stay with you.

Waking Up in Vegas

Billing itself as “the world’s first pur-
understand it all. But we do know that the Meow Wolf collective features five L.A. artists (Amanda Sage, James Peterson, SHRINE / Brent Spears, Thomas Lynch III and Travis Jackson) whose contributions happen to be some of the most interesting and beautiful parts of this unforgettable multisensory journey. (area15.com/)

Likened to Star Wars’ Death Star due to its imposing black exterior, Allegiant Stadium is hard to miss as you drive into the city from L.A., and for some of us, it will conjure mixed emotions. It was built to serve as the new home for the Raiders football team, which was and still is much beloved in Los Angeles. Many of us wanted the team back, too. But the black and silver clad NFL warriors make sense in Vegas and the new stadium is – visually anyway – a perfect fit. Construction of the $1.9 billion 10 level building began in late 2017 and was completed last year. It features a 275 feet media mesh video screen facing Interstate 15, retractable curtain-like side windows facing the Strip and an endzone area with an 85 ft torch (touted as the largest 3D printed object in the world) with a flame honoring the late Raiders owner Al Davis. In addition to the Raiders, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) college football team, fittingly called The Rebels, also play here and their first game was held on Halloween of last year. The seats were mostly empty for both teams when they first took to the field after the decision was made not to have fans attend the 2020-21 season due to COVID. But as of now, games and some mega music acts are scheduled there including Guns N’ Roses (Aug. 27) and The Rolling Stones (Nov. 6). (allegiantstadium.com)

Casinos and hotels will always be the heart and soul of Vegas and it’s always fun to see new ones pop up when we visit. The most eye-catching currently has to be Resorts World, the majestic two-tower structure that now lights up the skyline in red, facing Las Vegas Blvd. with some monster 100,000 square foot LED displays promoting its upcoming music slate including Katy Perry and Carrie Underwood. It stands on the land that used to be home to The Stardust, and it’s the first brand-new, ground-up, major resort to open on the Strip in over a decade. Utilizing the Hilton brand via a franchise agreement with Malaysian developers Genting Berhad (who added the Hilton name and the company’s high-end Conrad brand labeling to its 57-story towers) it also touts European casino brand Crockfords on its exterior. The 88-acre site has a massive casino surrounded by a slew of restaurants and bars, plus a 5,000-seat theatre and a two-story retail district featuring clubs and entertainment galore, not to mention a 20-million-pixel digital sphere illuminating mesmerizing content 24/7. Yes, this is the Vegas a lot of us grew up with – over the top, extra-sensory and packed with something for everyone, but it doesn’t come cheap. Room rates are some of the highest on the Strip – upwards of $400 a night on weekends. We recommend visiting, if not staying there. (rwlasvegas.com)

Though its restaurants have always been looked upon as a homogenized take on rock n’ roll culture, the Hard Rock brand managed to capture something edgier beyond its touristy “cafés” with its hotel in Vegas. Because of this, it always attracted a music-minded crowd and it was a go-to for those of us seeking like-minded in Vegas. We made a tradition out of playing the Sex Pistols and KISS-themed slot machines there every visit and more often than not, we’d check out bands and shows there before venturing to the main strip. But that’s all in the past now that Hard Rock is gone and the space has been replaced with the brand new Virgin Hotel & Casino. Owned by the Hilton corp,
this new one is all Richard Branson branding, with its red and white color scheme, clean lines and design. Amidst COVID fears it should do well with its focus on outdoor entertainment and environments; it’s got a 5-acre pool complex with an event lawn and a 4,500-person capacity theater for live music. Its current hottest show, called 27, celebrates the music of the “27 club” – celebrating rockers who died at 27 years old, including Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, Kurt Cobain and Amy Winehouse. And before you assume it’s another cheesy lounge tribute, note that it’s produced by a genuine L.A. rocker Erik Himel, former host and producer of “The Sunset Jam” at The Viper Room. (virginhotels.com/las-vegas/)

Recently named Best Casino in Downtown L.V. (aka the Old Strip), by Las Vegas Weekly, Circa opened last year during the pandemic, but has found its footing this year with those who want the feel and amenities of new Vegas with the surroundings of the old. The 1.25 million-square-foot property offers an impressive sportsbook (with a 78-million-pixel high-def screen that can play up to 19 games at once), a huge sunbathing area with six pools, two swim-up bars and a 143-by-40 foot, 14-million-megapixel LED screen amidst an amphitheater setting. Also, the famous kicking cowgirl neon sign seen in countless TV and film backdrops can be found inside, now overlooking a cool bar called Vegas Vickie’s Cocktail Lounge. (circa-lasvegas.com)

Shop Like a Showgirl

If you’re the type of traveler who brings an extra-large suitcase on vacays so you have room to fill it with purchases, you might just want to bring another piece of luggage to Vegas. There are countless places to drop your dough (hopefully won in one of the casinos). For mall shopping, we love Fashion Show which has all the mall staples (some, like the Forever 21, are massive!) plus a few out-of-the-box must-sees such as Lip Lab by BITE, where you can create, design and name your own custom lipsticks; and Honey Birdette, the sexy lingerie brand known for personalized service. Both are top spots for Vegas’ ubiquitous bachelorette party crews. After shopping, we recommend Galpao Gaúcho, an authentic Brazilian steakhouse adjacent to the mall where all-you-can-eat fine meats are cut off a spit right at your table. The 2 million-square-foot shopping and dining complex recently rebranded with a new logo and focus on “creativity, fearlessness and inclusivity,” and this is reflected in its look and inventive use of empty spaces post-COVID – currently artwork by local artist Pretty Done adorns the entirety of a retail space welcoming selfies and walk-thrus. (fslv.com/en.html)

For a more upscale spending experience, check out The Shops at Crystals, a high-end luxe-o-rama featuring the likes of Christian Louboutin, Jimmy Choo, Versace (or as Nomi Malone calls it “Ver-say’s”... sorry we had to!), Dolce & Gabbana and Prada to name a few. It’s Rodeo Drive in a mall basically, and really not our bag but it deserves mention for the installation by legendary light artist James Turrell called Akhob. Google it. (simon.com/mall/the-shops-at-crystals)

Beyond the head-spinning spending options in Vegas, we prefer to give our money to smaller independently owned stores in the area. Our faves include Cash 4 Chaos (cash4chaos.com), a well-stocked punk rock paradise that puts Hot Topic’s mall goth merch selection to shame, and Wax Trax (waxtractiononline.com), known as “Elton John’s favorite record store” after word got out he purchased over 11,000 pieces of rare vinyl from the shop, which is housed in a converted stucco house on Vegas’ west side. (And yes, John sent assistants to buy for him at first, but he did peruse the place himself during his Caesar’s Palace residency). We also think L.V’s Antique Mall of America (antiquemallofamerica.net/) is worth a visit, with 23,000 square feet full of vintage furniture, collectibles and oddities.

Switching gears from clothing, music and chotchkies to cannabis, we must make mention of Las Vegas’ growing marijuana marketplaces. Many have popped up since weed became legal in the state, but we’ll give it to Planet 13 for size, selection and groovy atmosphere. With 15-foot-tall interactive LED lotus flowers on the roof of the building and an 18-foot outdoor water spectacle greeting guests upon entry and an aerial orb show inside, it’s got just the kind of trippy vibe tokers can appreciate. Keep in mind that while it’s legal to buy and possess up to an ounce, it’s only legal to smoke on private property. That means not in your hotel room, car or outside in public. Clearly, if you’re a smoker, it pays to know a local or two who are too. (planet13lasvegas.com)
Light Up The Night
Carlos “Big Daddy” Adley and wife Ava Berman have made names for themselves here in L.A. separately and together, owning and promoting countless nightclubs and restaurants including Vertigo (and later Glam Slam), the Dragonfly and Velvet Margarita. When they moved to Vegas they became leaders in reviving Downtown and specifically the area known as “Fremont East,” with their adjacent venues, Backstage Bar and Billiards and Fremont Country Club. We’ll disclose here that we’ve become friends with the pair covering their endeavors in L.A., and now Vegas. And boy do they have some major endeavors – a $100 million boutique hotel called Indigo/Central Las Vegas, to be erected on the property behind their clubs, their own streaming network (which will provide music, gambling and original content for a nominal fee) and of course, staying busy with their two clubs which have brought an L.A.-feel and cred to the old strip, booking hot acts that would play venues like The Roxy or the Fonda here. They’ve also become known for some of the most sought into after-parties during festival season. Coming up: Their all-star Punk Rock Bowling pre-party with Cheetah Chrome (The Dead Boys), Rat Scabies (The Damned), Monique Powell (Save Ferris), El Vez and more on Sept. 23. (backstagebarlv.com)

Interestingly, it was a visit to the Double Down Saloon with their pal Vince Vaughn that inspired Berman and Adley to turn their attention to old Vegas. And speaking of DD, it’s been the divey alternative to Vegas’ conspicuous consumption for decades now. Conjuring the grit and spit of L.A. punk rooms of yore like Al’s Bar and current ones like The Burgundy Room, the Saloon has been touting itself as the “anti-Vegas” since it opened back in 1992 with house specialties including their signature “Ass Juice” (served in a ceramic toilet bowl mug) and their original Bacon Martini. With smaller indoor watering holes closing left and right due to coronavirus-related concerns, we’re happy to report that his smokey spot (whose promo tagline is “Shut Up and Drink!”) is still making guests see double nightly. (doubledownsaloon.com)

Attracting a similarly colorful crowd, L.V.'s got a pair of charming tiki spots to choose from and if you like a kitschy-cool scene and tasty umbrella drinks you should check out both. Frankie’s Tiki Room (frankiestikiroom.com) – which, like its sister bar Double Down is open 24 hours a day – is the older, though it wasn’t tiki-themed originally. The ’50s-era bar underwent a makeover in 2008, meshing a modern primitive decor with inviting tropical touches. Built by famed tiki bar designer Bamboo Ben (grandson of the guy who designed Disneyland’s Enchanted Tiki Room and the tiki-themed Aku Aku restaurant at the now-gone Stardust), Frankie’s boasts potent potions and cool souvenir mugs you’ll definitely want to pay extra to take home with you. Newer on the Polynesian paradise scene, The Golden Tiki (thegoldentiki.com) in Vegas’ Chinatown region offers live entertainment nightly as well as a festive atmosphere and of course, fanciful cocktails. Don’t forget to snap a selfie in front of its centerpiece photo opp – a giant clam shell-shaped bench!

Speaking of photo ops, there are many at our new favorite food place (and is actually quite old): the Benihana at The Westgate, which was built in the ’70s and looks like a technicolor Japanese garden brimming with lanterns, a faux rain waterfall, and red swathed authentic private dining rooms. Westgate also deserves mention for its
retro feel. Both Elvis and Liberace played and stayed there, and Barry Manilow calls it home (taking up residency in the hotel’s gilded Sky Villa Penthouse atop the hotel) when he performs there, which is so often he has his own themed gift shop. (westgateresorts.com/hotels/nevada/las-vegas)

The view from the Sky Villas – which we recently got to tour – is almost as breathtaking as the giant circular “ride” called The High Roller on the Linq Promenade. If you’ve seen it and wondered what it’s all about, your perspective might be a bit off unless you actually go to the Linq Hotel or near it. The 550-foot tall, 520-foot diameter attraction is considered the world’s tallest Ferris wheel, but it doesn’t feel like a carnival thing when you’re on it. It’s more like an observation experience. Despite what you might have heard, there is no bar inside each pod, but there is one just before you get on and drinks and snacks are allowed as you slowly complete a 30-minute rotation in the sky with up to 40 other people. (caesars.com/content/cet-global/caesars-com/linq/high-roller.html)

Linq is also home to one of three Minus5 Ice Bars (the other two are at The Venetian and Mandalay Bay) and after checking it out, all we have to say is, why isn’t there one in L.A.? This cool concept features drinking spaces made completely of ice, from the walls to the tables and chairs to glasses you drink from. Admission includes a parka and gloves and faux-fur coats for VIPs. Ice sculptures, flashing lights and lively music (wish we’d heard some Vanilla Ice during our last visit) make this one of Vegas’ coolest things to do. (minus5experience.com)

We’ve all seen enough Scorsese films to know that Las Vegas is pretty much the city that the mob built. Organized crime outfits created and ran the casinos, and The Mob Museum lays it all out, in engaging and visually compelling detail that both locals and tourists enjoy. Located in a 1930s restored former federal courthouse and U.S. Post Office, it houses artifacts, photos, weapons and other ephemera on three floors, unraveling the growth of Vegas and the evolution of mafia-backed businesses as well as the law enforcement groups who tried to hold them accountable. Highlights include a simulated courtroom screening and a distillery and speakeasy in the basement serving hooch like it was before it was legal. (themobmuseum.org)

Leaving Las Vegas

Vegas is about excess and this guide is by no means a complete one; even a seasoned visitor is bound to miss something amazing. We hope to continue to add to our Sin City favorites list in the months and years ahead and with the city working on countless new projects, themed restaurants, bars, clubs and other novel amusements, it shouldn’t be too difficult. See our the web version of this story for an expanded guide that also includes info on the following: art collections at The Palms, Aria, Wynn, and Cosmopolitan; Millennium Fandom Bar, Count’s Vamped Bar, Evil Pizza, Vince Neil’s Tatuado, Top of the World, The Chocolate Lounge/Sugar Factory, The Mermaid Lounge, The Burlesque Hall of Fame, The Atomic Testing Museum, The Haunted Museum, The Pinball Hall of Fame, The Liberace Museum, The Erotic Heritage Museum, The Black Room Fetish Shop, Writer’s Block Book Store, The Neon Boneyard, KISS Mini Golf, and maybe even a few strip clubs.

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Las Vegas’ Newest Openings

Resorts World Las Vegas and The Élia Beach Club offer an escape from reality.

BY TARA FINLEY

Vegas has only gotten bigger and better with the recent openings of two new hot spots: The Élia Beach Club at Virgin Hotels Las Vegas and Resorts World Las Vegas.

World-class pools are among our favorite Las Vegas amenities, and both these properties blew our expectations out of the water. From lux IG dreamscapes to spacious layouts, we’ve never been more thankful for hot weather that gives us an excuse to explore some of the best pools in Vegas again and again.

The Élia Beach Club at Virgin Hotels Las Vegas

Part of Curio Collection by Hilton, Élia Beach Club at Virgin Hotels Las Vegas has already made quite a splash since it opened on June 10, 2021, winning the “Best New Oasis” award for Las Vegas Weekly’s Best of Vegas 2021.

A Mykonos-inspired daylife venue, once you step inside it feels as if you’ve been whisked away beachside. This was the designers’ intent, hoping to emulate the vibes of Tulum, Miami and Mykonos. Sounds are a large part of crafting the perfect atmosphere, and their resident DJs have put together a playlist of all genres of house music, creating a relaxed yet energetic dance vibe inspired by international beach destinations. Put it all together and you have a rhythmic, transformational experience for guests, different from any other Vegas pool and nightlife offering.

Talented house artists are joined by world-class guest performers like Deadmau5, Loco Dice, Sofi Tukker, Lane 8, Sam Blacky, Sigala and SNBRN. Escape into a world of your own as you float away, riding on good vibes and tropical dreams. The thatched roof stage overlooks the Mediterranean-colored pool, lending to an immersive experience for all (though the VIP cabanas definitely make it feel like you are up on stage yourself).

They recently hosted a three-day grand opening with deejay performances by Loco Dice and headliner DeadMau5. Mario Rodriguez Jr., Alessandra Ambrosio, Flo Rida, AnnaLynne McCord, Rachel McCord and Audrina Patridge were some of the many notable guests, all in attendance to celebrate LV’s newest beach club. Accurately described as ethereal, the club is now open for all to enjoy.

Élia Beach Club is open Thursday - Sunday from 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Check them out @EliaBeachLV and reserve your table at eliabeachlv.com

Resorts World Las Vegas

Opened June 24, 2021, Resorts World Las Vegas is the first integrated resort to be built on the Las Vegas Strip in over a decade. Built in partnership with Hilton, the development includes Las Vegas Hilton, the resort’s full-service brand; Conrad Las Vegas, Hilton’s contemporary luxury brand; and Crockfords Las Vegas, one of the first hotels to debut in the U.S. from LXR, Hilton’s collection of bespoke, independent luxury properties.

The entire property features 3,500 guest rooms and suites; an innovative, next-generation gaming floor; over 40 world-class food and beverage options; a 5,000-capacity theatre; distinct nightlife venues; an extensive retail collection boasting a wide spectrum of internationally known brands; and of course, pools.

Their 5.5-acre elevated pool complex features seven unique pool experiences, including an 1,800-square-foot infinity pool that’ll have you staring blissfully out over the sparkling strip. It is, in fact, the largest elevated pool deck in Vegas, with five different experiences over nine bodies of water. Not to be outdone, guests can also enjoy a 27,000-square foot world-class spa and a 5,000 person capacity state-of-the-art theatre intended to host A-list residencies (and swanky corporate events).

It’s Vegas, so of course, you know the casino will be over the top. Resorts World Las Vegas boasts a next-generation 117,000-square-foot casino complete with a giant Entertainment Zone, which includes a race and sportsbook, featured live entertainment and high-limit gaming areas.

The club life is covered as well, with distinct concepts meant to cater to everyone’s tastes: Technologically advanced nightclub Zouk and the beautiful AYU Dayclub. Inside the resort, you’ll also find extensive food and beverage options, from new concepts to famous street foods and Michelin-rated plates.

As we mentioned, entertainment is one of the shining stars of this new resort. Known as The Theatre – a joint development between Resorts World Las Vegas and AEG Presents – the space will be exclusively programmed and operated by Concerts West, a division of AEG Presents. Concerts West / AEG Presents and Resorts World Las Vegas announced recently that global music stars Celine Dion, Carrie Underwood, Katy Perry and Luke Bryan will become the founding headliners at The Theatre at Resorts World Las Vegas.

Learn more @resortsworldlv and rwslasvegas.com.
MUSIC

RA, RA, RA!
The Pom Pom Squad Kill Their Inner Cheerleader

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

Berrin of Brooklyn alt-rockers the Pom Pom Squad is not going to take any of your shit. None of it! The emotive vocalist and songwriter has a voice that can cut through diamond while simultaneously soothing the savage beast. Take recent single “Lux” – a slab of punk therapy written when she was 17 about unwelcome male attention. That was the Pom Pom Squad’s first single for City Slang Records, a long-awaited release for a song that everybody should hear.

The band formed in the summer after Berrin’s senior year of high school, completed by Shelby Keller (drums), Mari Ale Figeman (bass), and Alex Mercuri (guitar). She had long been an obsessive music fan (her words). But it wasn’t until she was 18 that she realized she could actually release her own stuff.

“I loved bands,” she says. “I was following the New York and L.A. DIY scene throughout high school so became very accustomed with all of the DIY venues on the east and west coasts and the major cities. It was like, DIY artists were real rock stars to me. It became more accessible, seeing something like that. I think I started the band initially as a form of self expression, and then also I am very visually influenced so it became this multimedia outlet and a way for me to connect all of my artistic interests.”

She quickly found a sound through her adoration of punk, grunge and riot grrrl, but also ‘50s and ’60s pop and Motown.

“I really love how cinematic the music of that era was,” she says. “There’s this classic rockist versus popist argument of, ‘pop is artificial and rock is organic and analog.’ Something that was so interesting is that pop music of that era has that creepy saccharine feel to it. But it also has the mystique of an analog recording process. As a person of color, I was always treated like I was weird for liking rock music. So carving out that space and then also being able to tie it into the roots of rock music as I know and understand it. Playing on the history of music through my own lens.”

Berrin and the band remain based in Brooklyn, and she describes the scene there and in NYC as “resilient.” It sure has had to be of late, though Berrin admits that she has enjoyed the alone time in lockdown.

“Pom Pom Squad has been my band since high school, and then for the last five years I was in college and doing day jobs,” she says. “Playing my own way and playing six or seven times a month until you could afford to do a show every couple of months. I needed some time for my brain to readjust and tap back into a creative space.”

City Slang Records came calling during lockdown; they were the one label that remained interested when the rest of the world was falling apart. “Lux” was the first single, a song that she says is the “first good song I wrote.”

“When you’re that young I don’t think you understand everything you need to know about yourself,” she says. “But I think for me, in retrospect, I was grappling with early experiences of male attention and sexualization. The discomfort of feeling like there’s nothing you can really do or say. When I thought that I was a person who was romantically interested in men, there is this culture that you just don’t say anything.”

“The me now might be quicker to say, ‘Hey, I’m not into you like that, fuck off,’” she continues. “‘Me as a younger person was like, ‘You don’t ever want to upset anyone and put yourself in a situation where someone could potentially be violent. You don’t ever want to hurt a man’s feelings or speak up for yourself at all.’ When I found punk music, particularly grunge and riot grrrl, putting it in my own context and approaching it from my own emotional perspective, I think it just unlocked something for me and I think I wrote it because I needed to learn something.”

The video is equally effective and compelling. A specific kind of loneliness and frustration.

“It represented this isolation that I felt as a young woman,” she says. “It hits on a universal, collective teenage girl experience in a way. A specific kind of loneliness and frustration.”

The single was followed by the debut Death of a Cheerleader album in June of this year. Like the name of the band, the title of the album is based on her own acrimonious relationship with the American cheerleader stereotype.

“I had a formative experience a couple of years ago, where I really came to terms with my sexuality because I fell in love with somebody,” she says. “I realized that I had been living in somebody else’s skin. So I have always played with this cheerleader archetype since I started the project. I was growing up in these predominantly white neighborhoods. The young women with the most value were beautiful athletic popular cheerleaders. I was aspiring to, 1) an impossible standard, 2) a white standard, and 3) something that I didn’t even want, which was the validation and attention of the dudes around me. When I fell in love and realized that I didn’t want that at all, it just changed everything about me.”

“Death of a Cheerleader,” then, is about killing off that character. Allowing herself to be herself – something that we can all applaud. The most important thing, of course, is that she’s happier now. But the musical results have also been staggering. And with the album out, the Pom Pom Squad will be touring from mid-August through November.

“We have two tours – a tour coming up in August with a band called Bully,” she says. “Then we’re going on tour with Nada Surf later in the year as well. Super-excited – we’ve never been on tour before so it’s going to be a new experience.”

The Death of a Cheerleader album is out now.
APRIL BEY & SANFORD BIGGERS AT CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

A pairing of solo shows weaves powerful narratives

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT

In the exhilaratingly original Afrofuturist tapestries in April Bey’s installation Atlantica, The Gilda Region and the history-laden mixed media works in Sanford Bigger’s 12-year survey of his quilt-based Codex series, Codeswitch, what is perhaps the coincidence of both being textile-centric exhibitions offers a perfect way to experience each exhibition and their confluence. As Bey channels the scale and production quality of art historical palatial wallhangings to explore a surreal and gentle alternate realm, Biggers gathers vintage (pre-1900), intimately crafted blankets and through collage, paint, shaping and symbolism transforms them into narratives of comfort within trauma.

It's not clear that these solo presentations were intended to be shown concurrently, but it's a brilliant happenstance that they have. In both Bey’s and Biggers' works, viewers see compelling uses of rugged textile as an expressive medium – one capable of evoking the past, present and future all at the same time.

With almost 50 works in wall-hanging, sculpture, video and collage, Biggers introduces a language of modern abstraction, popular culture, sacred geometry, personal narrative, politics, gender and the experiences of Black people in America since 1619. With the initial inspiration coming from the anecdotal stories of quilts being used as signposts along the Underground Railroad routes, Biggers began a still-ongoing project of collecting, reworking and augmenting antique quilts. In the intervening years, the collection and the practice has continued to expand, and its meaning to deepen. Many pieces reference time he spent in Japan (where the Kimono tradition also views textiles and both narrative and sculptural occasions) and were others inspired by his time working in the Bronx, the formal traditions of modernist abstraction and the kaleidoscopic optics of reflectiveness.

The resulting pieces are eclectic in style, emotion, texture and palette. They do all the things that painting, sculpture and collage do – creating layers, patterns, key images and mysterious motifs, color stories, angular spaces, delightful trompe l’oeil and illuminated memories. But they further possess an elusive yet inescapable aura, the energy traces of the hands that made the quilts more than a century ago and all the bodies they have cradled since, not to mention whatever private personal recollection is sparked in each new viewer. Both centuries old and tactilely functional. As both family heirlooms and historical objects, it's this foundation expressing the past as being very much also the present on which Biggers constructs these embodied works – what he calls “transgenerational palimpsests.”

Across the museum, Bey treats an enhanced version the future as an alternative present, an Afrofuturist fantasy of a planet with a queer, feminist, digital and delectable civilization. Atlantica – the home planet of the artist, who has been sent to Earth on a reconnaissance mission. Her installation includes plants, photography, audio and video, but the centerpieces are a series of monumental textiles, woven tapestries whose grand scale and material physicality call to mind the decor of castles and their great halls. In fact the characters and scenes depicted in these hyperchromatic, digital-culture pieces of Atlantican mythology and earthbound shenanigans do have a rather regal presence. They beckon forth, perform for, dismiss and tower over the viewer. They radiate superlative confidence, self-possession and a kind of beauty that would once have seemed exotic to American eyes.

On the planet Atlantica, a culture of excellence, comfort, creativity, joy, self-care, ecology, equality, queerness and abundance prevails. The attraction of this story has its roots in the fantastical storytelling of Bey’s Bahamian childhood, but also a darker dimension of escapism from the traumatic situation experienced by Black people in America. In that way, it’s a major work of Afrofuturism, an update to that tradition which takes on not only the broader geopolitical considerations, but the culture wars and pragmatic struggles being waged closer to home, in individual lives, as the promise of a peaceful world continues to be challenged by the violence of the one we currently inhabit.

Both exhibitions are on view at CAAM in Exposition Park through January 2022; admission is always free; caamuseum.org.
JIMI DEVINE’S BIRTHDAY HEAT LIST

I picked out a selection of the heat of the moment as L.A. Weekly’s Culture & Entertainment Editor Lina Lecaro and I both prepare to celebrate laps around the sun on Friday.

BY JIMI DEVINE

Being a conduit of the hype, my birthday is in fact a de facto celebration of the heat and we’ve got all the strains you’ll need to celebrate along with the Transbay Challenge 2 next week. While my birthday party looks like it will be one of the greatest hash parties since the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, that doesn’t mean there won’t be a copious amount of elite flowers in the mix too. While I love smoking for every tax bracket year-round, for this lineup we’re going a bit extra exotic. I’m looking at it as self-care. Also, a fun fact, I share a birthday with the award-winning Lina Lecaro! She said she likes sativas. Can’t get more L.A. than that!

As for the strains, this list features the newest offerings from some killers, the results of great pheno hunts, and a fantastic new rendition of a big name cut from elite cultivators.

**Alien Labs – Atomic Chronic**

We were among the first outside of the Alien Labs team to see the results of their recent pheno hunt as they search for cuts on par with their wider body of work over the years. Their newest offering, Atomic Chronic, will absolutely slide right into the catalog without a problem. While they narrowed down the pack, they haven’t picked a winner for the Atomic Apple x Kryptochronic pairing. The ones we saw were absolute heat, but Alien Labs founder Ted Lidie assured me the pheno was going by Highlander rules and in the end, there could only be one. We asked him to save the second best one for a rapper because it’s definitely still going to be heat.

**CAM – Kush Mints**

Kush Mints had a ton of our favorite strains from over the years in it and is one of the biggest hitters to come out Seed Junky Genetics in recent years. While we’ve seen many versions, few come close to the Kush Mints being grown in Sacramento. We have their rendition of it tied with Green Dragon for our favorite version of the strain ever. CAM’s version is so soaked with trichomes the surface of the nugs almost has a gooey look to it.

**Green Dragon – Secret Gelato**

The High Times SoCal hybrid flower winner has brought the heat again with their new Secret Gelato. They entered it in the NorCal rendition of the Cannabis Cup too. Judges have a couple more weeks to get their scores in, but we certainly had it penciled in for a podium slot. Despite being a Gelato, and the fact there is mad Gelato pairings in the world right now, this was probably the second
most unique flavor on the list after the Atomic Chronic. It had those very San Francisco dessert flavors that made Cookies and Gelato famous. But it’s not the first place there are a lot more going on too.

LoKey Farms – Heavy Fog #4

One of the big winners at Greenwolf’s Zalypmix last month, Heavy Fog #4 bumped the Chronic. It had those very San Francisco dessert flavors and was a pairing of Biscotti x Bloodline crossed to Input shipments data, timeliness of orders, shipping line company and partners, recipients, shippers, overseas (Compton, CA) Inc., 3959 Wilshire Blvd.

We had Heavy Fog #4 as the gassiest smelling sphere as they looked around the podium and lympix last month, Heavy Fog #4 bumped the Chronic. It had those very San Francisco dessert One of the big winners at Greenwolf’s Za-Secret Galato flavor. They argued the flavor was similar to are a pairing of Biscotti x Bloodline crossed to Input shipments data, timeliness of orders, shipping line company and partners, recipients, shippers, overseas (Compton, CA) Inc., 3959 Wilshire Blvd.

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Calix – Biscoff

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Notices:

**LEGAL NOTICES**

Notification by Trustee (Probate Code Section 16017) To: Denise Ann Downing, Dennis Brian ANDY, Karen Ann Downing, Karen Ann Pettion G. ANDY and Lilly L. Downing Family Trust, dated May 25, 1985 in their capacities as grantor/ settlor and amended it on October 21, 1987 and December 3, 2002 Hereinafter referred to as the “Trust”. The Trust has never further amended. 1. The name, mailing address and telephone number of each Trustee of the Trust is: Donald Bruce Dinsmore, 904 Eucalyptus Drive, El Segundo, CA 90245, (101)629-8121; Vaughan James Dinsmore, 16243 Hayden Crest Court, Cypress, CA 90630, (818)504-8411; Robert Galistence Dinsmore, 1021 Harbor Blvd #15, Santa Monica, CA 90403, (310)456-1892. 2. The address of the principal place of administration of the Trust pursuant to Probate Code 70017 is: Bergman APC, 880 Apollo Street, Suite 534, El Segundo, CA 90245. 3. The terms of the Trust require disclosure of the following: Trust is now irrevocable. Due to the death of the grantor/ settlor: Lilly L. Downing died on February 19, 2021; Roy G. Downing predeceased Lilly on May 3, 2000. 4. You are entitled to receive from the Trustee a true and complete copy of the terms of the Trust by requesting a copy from the Trustee listed above. 5. You MAY NOT BRING AN ACTION TO CONTEST THE TRUST MORE THAN 120 DAYS FROM THE DATE THIS NOTIFICATION BY THE TRUSTEE IS SERVED UPON YOU OR 60 DAYS FROM THE DATE ON WHICH A COPY OF THE TERMS OF THE TRUST IS MAILED OR PERSONALLY DELIVERED TO YOU IN RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST DURING THAT 120 DAY PERIOD, WHICHEVER IS LATER. 6. If you would like a true and correct copy of the terms of the Roy G. Downing and Lilly L. Downing Family Trust dated May 25, 1985, and all amendments thereto, as defined in Probate Code Section 16605.5, you may request the same from Penelope Bergman, Esq., Bergman APC, 880 Apollo St, Ste 334, El Segundo, CA 90245, by Certified Mail, return receipt requested. ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME IN NO. 215MSCP100163 PETITION OF Jobo Hayden FOR CHANGE OF NAME To All Interested Persons: 1. Petitioner: Jubo Hayden filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present name: Jubo Hayden to proposed name: Jabul Kantal 2. The Court finds that all persons interested in this matter appeared before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant without a hearing. NOTICE OF HEARING Date: June 18th 2021 Time: 8:30am Dept: K The address of the court is: SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, Santa Monica Courthouse, 1725 Main St. Room 102, Santa Monica, CA 90401 MAILING ADDRESS: SAME. 3. A copy of this Order To Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four consecutive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspapers of general circulation: In this county: LA Weekly, on October 19, 2020. The Complaint alleges in substance: 1) Plaintiff Hilda Orellana De Paz, is the biological mother of Josef Luis Hernandez Orellana born on March 5, 2003 in Honduras (“Minor Child”). 2) Jose Luis Hernandez Martinez is the Minor Child’s biological father (“Defendant”). 3) Defendant and Plaintiff separated when Minor Child was one year old. 4) Since then, Defendant has not visited or provided financial support for Minor Child. 5) Minor Child has only had two conversations with Defendant by telephone but has had no other contact with him. 6) It is in the best interest of the Minor Child to be placed in the sole custody of Plaintiff and not to be returned to Honduras. Plaintiff seeks sole legal and physical custody of the Minor Child, and also seeks factual findings that would enable the Minor Child to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. It is this 30th day of June, 2021, ORDERED, that the Plaintiff file a copy of this Notice to be published at least once a week for three consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation published in Los Angeles, California, publication to be completed by 07/15/21. Defendant must file a response on or before 07/01/21. Defendant is warned that failure to file a response within the time allowed may result in a default judgment and the granting of the relief sought. KAREN A. BUSHELL Clerk of the Circuit Court Montgomery County, Maryland

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