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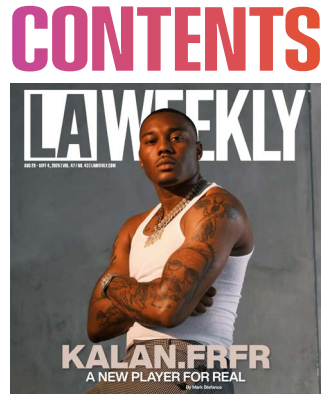
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KALAN.FRFR

A NEW PLAYER FOR REAL

By Mark Stefanos



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EDITOR IN CHIEF: MARK STEFANOS

SENIOR EDITOR: MICHELE STUEVEN

LAWEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

Graphic Designer. Req'd: Bachelor's Degree in Graphic Design, Illustration or related. Wage: \$48,131.00/Year. Mail Resume: Eesome, Inc. 2701 S. Broadway Los Angeles, CA 90007.

Designer II (Multiple Positions) Req'd: B. Arch. & 24 mths exp. in arch. design; or M. Arch. Spec. Req'mnts: proficient in REVIT, Rhino, Enscape, Dynamo, BlueBeam, AutoCAD, SketchUp, & Photoshop. Accepts Spec. Req'mnts thru employment exp. &/or acad. coursework. Supervised by licensed arch't. Arch license not req'd. Arch'l design using CAD. F/T. \$88,712 - \$88,712/yr. CO Architects., L.A., CA 90056. Resume to - L. Short, Dir. of Employee Exper.; Lshort@coarchitects.com

MUSIC

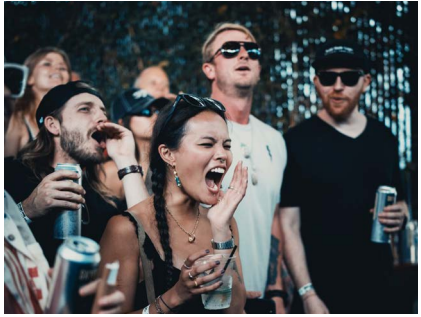
ECHO PARK RISING 2025

BY @K_THE_LENS_

Echo Park Rising 2025 celebrated 15 years of turning the neighborhood into LA's biggest block party on Aug. 16, with music, performances and fans spilling from bars, cafes, and sidewalk stages down Sunset Blvd. and beyond. The festival brought together local talent, rising stars, and thousands of attendees to celebrate LA's indie spirit.

Check out the action captured by @K_the_Lens_





FOOD

WHAT'S UP POPPING UP

Electric Bleu Brings a Michelin Chef to Mar Vista, and It's Trè Magnifique

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

With experience that earned him two Michelin stars at Picholine in New York and a role as executive chef at Le Cirque, former Shirley Brasserie Chef de Cuisine Craig Hopson and his wife, Mai Sakai, have opened the **Electric Bleu** French Bistro in Mar Vista.

The couple has reimagined and brought life into the space on Centinela Ave. near Palms Blvd. that formerly housed the Rustic Kitchen. The dark and dusty corner wine bar that never really understood itself has been replaced by cheerful blue and white bistro decor and an electric energy that hits you the minute you open the door.

It's a very personal project of pride for the French-trained Hopson, who, in addition to creating an approachable seasonal menu, also did everything from sanding the bar counters to painting the walls, making use of every inch of Electric Bleu. While Sakai says not much was done structurally to the space, the restaurant feels twice as big and is punctuated by a playful patio that continues the blue and white theme under umbrellas.

The tight-knit neighborhood of Mar Vista has been starved for more dining options, especially with the influx of many young families. Electric Bleu is a great French companion to the nearby Italian-inspired **Beethoven Market**, just a few blocks away.

The bar counter that wraps around the restaurant is great for a casual glass of wine and small bites like salmon rilette made with smoked and roasted salmon on a blini the size of a pancake. Hopson's Brentwood corn soup served with crab and basil beignets for dipping can only be described as trè magnifique, matched equally by the delicately creamy chicken liver mousse served on crispy caramelized onion crackers instead of chunks



Brentwood corn soup, chicken liver mousse, and salmon rilette

of bread, leaving plenty of room for dinner.

The Weiser Farms melon, espelette, basil, and ricotta salata appetizer is a cool summer favorite, prepared with loving precision by Sakai in rapid succession. French classics for dinner include steak au poivre with green peppercorn cognac sauce and duck breast with roasted grapes and purslane. There's also king salmon with cucumber and green olive relish, and ling cod steamed over lemon verbena and smoked tomatoes. And Mais oui, there's warm chocolate mousse with toasted almond cream for dessert.

Electric Bleu serves beer and wine, with an extensive selection of champagne, sparkling wines, and chilled rosé as well as a well-curated variety of French reds and sake.

Electric Bleu, 3523 S Centinela Ave, Mar Vista. Reservations: resy.com



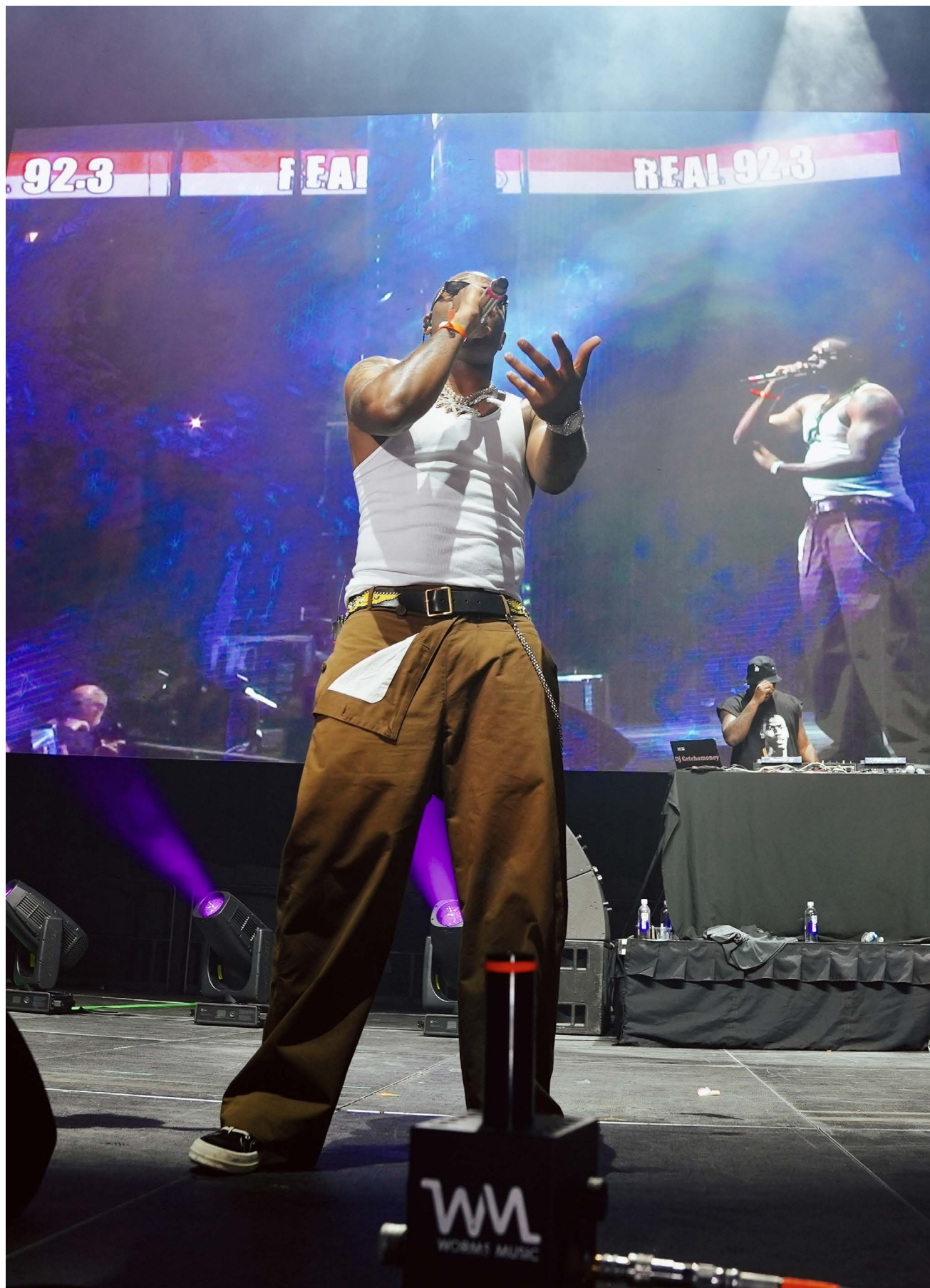
Electric Bleu Salmon Rilette
COURTESY MICHELE STUEVEN



Electric Bleu bar



Mai Sakai and Chef Craig Hopson



COURTESY SEBASTIAN BELTRAN

MUSIC

KALAN. FRFR: A NEW PLAYER FOR REAL

BY MARK STEFANOS

Kalan.FrFr, the Compton and Carson-bred rapper, is on a mission to define *the player* for a new era. In a recent interview with *LA Weekly*, the 30-year-old artist laid out his vision: a player is someone who embodies sensitivity, honesty, strength and confidence — someone who “stands on business.”

“People often say the status of being a player is having a lot of women, and it’s just so much more than that,” Kalan explained.

The word “player” has deep roots, evolving across decades and cultures. Back in old Hollywood, it conjured images of suave deal-makers like studio execs who ruled Tinseltown with charm and power. Fast forward to the 90s, and Ice Cube’s *The Players Club* gave it a grittier lens, portraying predatory men exploiting strippers in an Atlanta club. Then, of course, there’s UGK ft. OutKast’s 2007 classic, “International Players Anthem,” that narrows it to relationships with women, spinning conflicting narratives of pimping and monogamy, all wrapped



COURTESY SEBASTIAN BELTRAN

in a smooth, Southern swagger.

Kalan builds on this legacy while stripping away some of its brashness, updating the “player” archetype for 2025. “I’m trying to transform it a little bit,” he says, emphasizing a player as “a well-rounded adult, for sure, but in a sexy way” — a blend of romantic charm, cultured taste, and masculine drive.

That balance of sensitive but strong, confident but respectful, is front and center in *California Player*, the new album he just dropped. The project features 15 brisk tracks split into two parts, and weaves a narrative of Kalan’s life out West.

The first half dives into women-driven anthems, like the lead single “Hadju,” where he shows that he knows how to court a woman, crooning in auto-tune, “If I had you, you will be the only one,” with visuals showing him with a big bouquet of flowers. Elsewhere on Disc 1, voicemail snippets that bookend tracks

paint a picture of the various interactions he’s having with women, from longing, to more visceral examples that illustrate his single life “running around LA.”

The second half shifts to introspection, with tracks like “Man N the Mirror” and “If I Died Tonight” revealing a deeper story. Disc 2 “gets more into the more heartfelt songs ... you start to get my perspective towards the end of the project,” Kalan shared. This duality reflects his player ethos: a man who thrives socially but checks himself in the mirror, contending with life in LA, where he says, “we got Crips and Bloods and all the robberies. It’s like every day is a struggle to get home ... The only thing you should be scared of is yourself. You got to keep it going.”

It also has his “Players Anthem,” which takes the Lil Wayne and Drake/Trey Songz line “the money, the hoes, the cars, the clothes” to which Kalan’s adds:



“through the mud, through the snow, through the rain, ten toes” — a declaration of staying committed through the grind.

I press him on the real-life dating stories behind the project. “Man, dating in California is a dangerous game,” he wisely reflects, to the nods of all of us who have been in these trenches. “I’m not gonna be one of them dudes crashing out,” he says. “That’s really what I break on, the way me and my homies carry ourselves is an example of what we feel is a modern-day player.”

“You can’t let the world run you, you gotta run the world.”

Kalan’s journey to this point is a classic LA hustle story. Growing up splitting time between Carson and Compton, he attended Lakewood and Dominguez high schools before earning a football scholarship to San Diego State, where he played D1 until injuries sidelined him.

Instead of moving back home after graduation, Kalan took a risk and relocated to the South. “I didn’t want to be in LA with nothing going on,” he says. “So I went to Atlanta, worked on music, tried to figure something out. And just within that time, God willing, it took off.”

His track “Fine Ass” was born during that 2018 period. It blew up, alongside his debut album *TwoFr*, and set the stage for his Roc Nation signing in 2021. Since then, he’s dropped projects like *TwoFr 2* and *Make the West Great Again*, earning fans and praise from critics who see him as a leader in the new wave of LA rap and R&B.

The name Kalan.FrFr itself came from his college days. “I came up with a bunch of sorry ass rap names before,” he laughs. “Then I was just like, ‘Man, I’m a just be myself. And the best way to be myself — we used to always say ‘for real, for real’ — like be real. So I put ‘FrFr’ at the end of



COURTESY SEBASTIAN BELTRAN



it, and it ended up being a trend. All my teammates did it, all my homies, and they kind of flooded the city of San Diego with it.”

California Player, which he worked on for a year and a half and re-tooled from an earlier title, *No Hard Feelings*, showcases his growth. “Throughout the process working on it, I got a little frustrated with myself and didn’t feel like I was going in the right direction,” Kalan recalls. “So I called everybody up like, ‘Hey, I’m about to scrap the album and start over from scratch.’”

He landed on *California Player* as “it was more of me. It spoke to me a lot better.” The result is an upbeat West Coast listen that feels genuine, covers a lot of ground, and itches for replays.

Although Kalan has collaborated with a you-name-it of LA artists, *California Player* notably has no features. “I feel like a lot of the people that like my music, just like *me*,” he says. “They show up for me every time ... they love to hear the music that I do by myself.”

Beyond the mic, Kalan’s a player in multiple lanes. His fashion game is a standout, blending street roots with high-end, leading to collabs with big-name brands. He gets excited talking about clothes — “Oh, man, you got to put that shit on! That’s simple and plain, man. I grew up in an era where if you weren’t fly, you weren’t it.” He’s a silent partner in a new streetwear line he started with a buddy called Internet Ruins Things that he’s getting off the ground now.



COURTESY BANDCAMP

“I’m just really fascinated with clothes,” he said, citing Pharrell Williams as an influence. And like the Louis Vuitton men’s creative director, he can tailor his fits to whatever vibe. “I dress per occasion ... you should be able to go to any event or be in any room and still stand out.”

Kalan’s player status shines brightest in his community work. Last Sunday, Aug. 24, he hosted his **sixth annual TwoFr Day at Compton College**, a free back-to-school drive with food, games, school supplies like backpacks and shoes, and more, and headlined with a performance by Kalan.FrFr himself.

While some artists wait until they’re in the twilight of their careers to give back, Kalan started pretty much as soon as his name got on the map. “It started off as a block party. My community was supporting me, so I wanted to do something to give back,” he explained. What began as a barbecue has grown into a major event, costing him \$60,000 last year for security and insurance, and that now has the support of James Harden, Russell Westbrook and brands like J.P. Morgan Chase and True Religion.

“Without the support, you really nothing. You gotta find some way to show a little appreciation,” he said. Growing up in Carson’s “middle class in the ghetto” and Compton’s tougher streets, where he’s “seen people die in front of me,” Kalan uses TwoFr Day to inspire kids.

“From being in the streets, getting in trouble and going to jail, to going to college and getting my degree — I feel like a median, an in-between, to show kids you can do whatever you want to do,” Kalan reflects. “You don’t got to be scared to embrace who you are. You don’t have to think that your success is limited because you’re the product of your environment.”

For his efforts, the City of Compton honored Kalan and the team with a plaque at this year’s event.

As his star continues to rise, Kalan seems to keep finding new ways to defy expectations. “I stand out. I feel like I’m distinctively different from a lot of people, even from the way I make music, to the way I dress, my interests, my hobbies — like, I paint! I don’t know too many LA artists that paint, especially that make the type of music that I make.

“So I just feel like the stuff that I be on is hella player. And it feels good. The ladies enjoy it, and at the same time, the fellas gonna give me props for it,” Kalan says.

Between his musical prowess, range of influence, and standout character, he’s the role model for keeping it player.

“I’m pretty much like a Renaissance man, you know?”

Kalan.FrFr’s album California Player is available now. He will be performing at the YouTube Theater on Oct. 16. For more information, visit kalanfrfr.com, or follow him on Instagram @kalan.frfr.



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