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The Holidays are a Cabaret for
JONATHAN BENNETT

BY MICHELE STUEVEN



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MUSIC

FAVORITE PARTY COLLABS OF 2025: THE DO-OVER TURNS 20 AND IHC AND B&L FIRE RELIEF

BY MARK STEFANOS



The Do-Over 20 Year Anniversary

COURTESY DAVID GALLEGOS @SABABA_MAN

Like your favorite TV crossover events — the Flintstones meet the Jetsons, *Urkel* popping up on “Full House,” *Stephen A. Smith* getting stabbed to death on “*Law & Order*”

— sometimes stars align and your favorite LA party collectives join forces to create mega events. These are the must-see-parties of the season, mixing all the vibes into an even greater Neapolitan delight.

In July, we covered *LoveChild's Block Party*, which brought ten of LA's best collectives to close out summer with a bang. *Hood Rave* threw Rhythm 2 Revolt in September, a “Boycott Room” festival with loads of DJs from different collectives. LA's top raves do this to great effect routinely, and there were many others. Shoutout to all of them.

But two in particular really hit home this year, giving us fuzzies in our chest and skips in our shoes: *LA Gives Back:*

Fire Relief, spearheaded by two LA fixtures, *IHEARTCOMIX* and *Brownies and Lemonade*, and *The Do-Over's 20 Year Anniversary*.

We know that it's not always candy and butterflies between LA party crews, with squabbles ranging from fun competition to real beefs. But as lovers of the cumulative scene, and “together we're better” squishes in our hearts, we applaud all crossover efforts and are rooting for more collabs and mutual love in 2026.

The Do-Over 20 Year Anniversary

A trip down memory lane for most LA millennials will usually encounter a Facebook album featuring their friends in tanks and jerseys piled on top of each other, drinking carafes of sangria and neon cocktails out of a fishbowl, wilin' on the dancefloor in the sun at The Do-Over.

For 20 years, The Do-Over has been

an anchor of summer and embodied the collaborative spirit from its inception. Founded by the visionary trio of Chris Haycock, Jamie Strong, and Aloe Blacc (who also shout out “Azul, Sean O, Danny Carbajal and all of our crew in LA and around the world”), the party kicked off in 2005 as a renegade Sunday reset in Hollywood for LA's nightlife-exhausted souls, serving as a counter to the era's prevailing wisdom with a fresh idea: “No egos, no set times, and often no announced lineups.”

It's a formatless fiesta where rap bleeds into funk and disco dances with house, with a goal to “bring communities together through the power of music” — the approved answer from all your disparate friend groups to that question that became their tagline: “What'cha Wanna Do?”

The local lifeline turned into an



The Do-Over 20 Year Anniversary

COURTESY GLEN HAN @GLENJAMM

international blueprint, with pop-up editions in 50 cities on four continents, and performers ranging from Diplo to Pusha-T. But the real flex is its seismic impact on LA's party ecosystem. The Do-Over proved that true hype blooms from community, and inspired a wave of daytime raves and pop-up collectives, reminding the scene that parties thrive on heart, and fostering a legacy of joyful rebellion that's kept LA's spirit funky, free, and ferociously cooperative. There's a reason why DJ Jazzy Jeff called it the best party on the planet.

For their rip-roaring 20th on November 9 at the lush LA River Center & Gardens, they brought in four of LA's finest party teams for the music curation (plus surprise performances, of course). Let co-founder Chris Haycock tell you all about it and what it meant to him:

LA Weekly: How did the 20th go?

Chris Haycock: It was a smash! We partnered with some of our favorite LA crews — A Club Called Rhonda, Pangea Sound, Link Up and Donovan's Yard. BADBADNOTGOOD did a live session and brought out Sam from Future Islands, as well as a special Aloe Blacc performance. All ticket proceeds went to a trio of non-profits that we felt strongly about supporting. The venue, the crowd and the vibe were immaculate!

What does it mean to you to have been throwing this party for two decades?

I'm still processing it. In American dance music and nightlife culture, only a handful of brands in history have hit that mark. To be included in that book alongside those institutions is an honor beyond



belief. We never planned on this.

What's next for The Do-Over?

In the next couple months ... Miami / Art Basel at Dante's Hi-Fi, New Year's Day in LA and a few other things for those that are EXTRA tuned in.

Follow [The Do-Over @do_over and the-doover.net](#).

LA Gives Back: Fire Relief

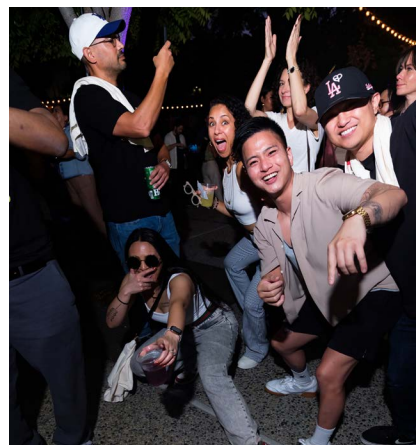
It may be a fading memory for some, but it was the start of this year that LA endured its worst fires in modern history. For those still living with the fallout, it's an ever-present reality.

But in that cloud of ash we saw the best of LA as folks of all walks *came together* to pitch in and lift each other up. That included a long list of fundraising music events from small teams to heavy-hitters alike. They all deserve massive kudos, of which we noted several [here](#) (although one massive one has since received some



LA Gives Back Fire Relief

COURTESY OF @MIKEB_5550



side-eyeing, you can be the judge).

One felt particularly emblematic of LA for all the right reasons, and that was LA Gives Back: Fire Relief, presented by the LA party pioneer turned creative agency IHEARTCOMIX, kick-ass crew Brownies & Lemonade, Another Planet Entertainment and Teragram, held January 29 at the beautiful Bellwether downtown.

The event featured a host of party who's whos: Rhonda, Emo Nite, Pangea, Electric Feels, Heav3n, Ninja Tune, Lights Down Low, Shrek Rave, Production Club, and all sorts of other guests and performers — some almost comically different in vibe, but all united for a great cause. Going room to room, getting a little taste of each, felt like a festival of LA, with the kind of diversity we haven't seen altogether in one place since FYF.

Throwing a benefit came naturally to IHC — it was their seventh "LA Gives Back" since 2015, which "normally

benefits the nonprofits My Friends Place and Downtown Women's Center. The 2025 iteration gave 100% of its proceeds to The California Fire Fund, the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, MusiCares and the Pasadena Humane Society.

We asked IHC's founder [Franki Chan](#) how it all came together:

LA Weekly: What made you decide to throw a fire benefit?

Franki Chan: It just felt like the right thing to do. We'd already built this charity brand with the LA promoter community over many years to address the unhoused problem. Once the destruction of the fires was clear and many of our friends suddenly found themselves facing the same, very real issue, we knew we had to use what we can to help the problem and LA Gives Back was our tool.

How easy was it to pull it together with all the party collectives on short notice?

The city was motivated and everyone answered the call on three weeks notice. LA Gives Back: Fire Relief was a 100% volunteer-run and donated event. EVERYTHING. So many people dedicated their time, talents and resources to bring it together. It was incredible to witness and be a part of.

How'd the event go?

Very successful! The event was sold out and we raised \$67,000 for four charities. The LA community showed up in full force.

Follow [@IHEARTCOMIX](#) and [iheart-comix.com](#) and [@BrowniesandLemonade](#) and [browniesandlemonade.com](#). 📍

THE HOLIDAYS ARE A CABARET FOR JONATHAN BENNETT

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

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Jonathan Bennett, the heartthrob who co-starred in *Mean Girls* more than 20 years ago as Aaron Samuels, the love interest of Lindsay Lohan's character, is all grown up.

He went on to realize his lifelong dream of starring on Broadway in Monty Python's *Spamalot* musical comedy, and the trajectory has just gone straight up since then.

When not hosting Food Network's top-rated *Halloween Wars*, he continues to add to his Hallmark credits, inclusive of his trio of GLAAD Media Award-winning *The Groomsmen* film trilogy and the channel's first-ever unscripted competition series, *Finding Mr. Christmas*, streaming now, which he hosts, produces, and created, as well as their upcoming *Holiday Break* telefilm.

Finding Mr. Christmas follows a group of men competing in various Christmas-themed challenges to win the title of Mr. Christmas, as well as a role in a Hallmark Christmas movie.

The contestants in the series are men from various backgrounds who are all aspiring actors. In each episode, they face two rounds of challenges. First, there's the Festive Face Off, where contestants showcase their holiday spirit. The winner of the face-off earns an advantage in the Star Quality challenge, where contestants have to learn a script and act out a scene from a Hallmark Christmas movie.

The self-proclaimed Gay King of Christmas took time out from hosting the Hallmark Christmas Cruise from Miami to Cozumel, Mexico, alongside other Hallmark stars to give us his tips on holiday decorating. He describes the new season's house on *Finding Mr. Christmas* as an elevated cabin Christmas, sort of Hallmark mountain lodge meets Ralph Lauren winter retreat.

Choose a theme and color palette

"Our *Finding Mr. Christmas* Production Designer, Bill McMillan, really makes our rustic lodge-inspired theme pop by leaning into the warm wood tones that already exist in the house. Adding in a traditional holiday color palette with reds, greens, and golds, but nothing is overly bright or metallic. The tones are warm and muted, which keeps the house feeling inviting and cozy."

Add textures

"We have cozy, layered theme textiles.



King of Christmas Throne

COURTESY OF WES & ALEX



The Cast of "Finding Mr. Christmas"

COURTESY OF HALLMARK



Bow Down to King of Christmas

COURTESY OF WES & ALEX



Throws, pillows, and layered patterned rugs make the room very comfy. Fabrics are chunky knits, plaid, and wool blends, enhancing the warm lodge vibe."

Embrace greenery

"We have big statement Balsam Hill trees in each room, like our 15-foot Frosted Yukon Spruce in the living room, and then we also incorporate lush garlands with white lights, ribbon, decorations, and natural elements on the windows, stair rails, and throughout the house."

Utilize all your senses

"One of the things we do on *Finding Mr. Christmas* is not only to make sure the house looks great, but also to make sure it sounds, smells, feels, and, of course, tastes like Christmas at the hot chocolate bar."

Incorporate DIY

"It makes the space uniquely yours. In the *Finding Mr. Christmas* house, we utilize a lot of creativity. A great example of this is the entry arch to the house, where the garland is full of everything from vintage snow skis and sleds to deer antlers and oars." [E]



Jonathan Bennett as Aaron Samuels in "Mean Girls"

CBS VIA GETTY IMAGES



Rachel McAdams as Regina George and Jonathan Bennett as Aaron Samuels in "Mean Girls"

CBS VIA GETTY IMAGES



The "Finding Mr. Christmas" House

COURTESY HALLMARK MEDIA



FOOD

WHAT'S UP POPPING UP

Go Go Bird Riverside Exterior
COURTESY GO GO BIRD

Chef and restaurateur Brandon Kida has relocated his *Go Go Bird* to the *Farm House Collective* in Riverside. His signature items, including marinated chicken tenders, fried and finished with a Szechuan-style chili oil, are on the menu as well as French fries. New menu additions include the house-made macaroni salad, cole slaw, and a variety of dipping sauces. Exclusive UC Riverside student and faculty discounts will be available.

Housed in a transformed 1953 motel and designated historic landmark, The Farm House Collective is an eclectic food hall concept with an emphasis on community gathering and programming aimed at creating a social hub for the Riverside community and visitors.

M Café, the macrobiotic, plant-forward café, has opened a new pop-up location on La Brea Ave., taking over the Café Midi space at 148 S. La Brea Ave. The new

Go Go Bird Goes Riverside And Slime Covers LA

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

location is open for dine-in and takeout daily from 11 a.m. to p.m. Known for its bowls, bentos, sandwiches, seasonal specials, and mindful comfort food, signature favorites will be on the menu, like the macro bowl and golden rockfish sandwich, yuzu miso saba, and bento boxes. Plus, they are taking Thanksgiving orders now.

On Sunday, Dec. 7, Suzanne Goin and Caroline Styne will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the publication of Suzanne's James Beard award-winning cookbook, *Sunday Suppers at Lucques*, with a

memorable evening at *A.O.C.*

Two decades ago, the cookbook brought Suzanne Goin's unique personal vision for farmers' market-driven three-course menus to a nationwide audience. What began as a simple, season-driven prix fixe menu became an LA tradition. Every Sunday, Goin translated the week's best market finds into meals, which championed local farmers long before they became household names.

The five-course menu includes pancetta-wrapped trout with crushed grapes and fennel gratin, grilled squab with

farro, kabocha squash and pomegranate salsa, Portuguese-style pork and clams with chorizo and fried potatoes, and Meyer lemon tart for dessert.

Reservations may be secured via [OpenTable Experience](#). The cookbook will be available for purchasing and signing, great for holiday shopping. Guests are invited to bring their own copy for Suzanne to sign at the dinner.

MGA Entertainment is bringing its newest sensory brand, *Slime Life*, to LA, teaming up with *Sloomoo Institute* for a new pop-up this holiday season. *Slime Life* is a collection of DIY slime kits inspired by classic foods, from burgers to donuts, that can be assembled and smashed. Now through Wednesday, Dec. 21, December 21, guests can immerse themselves in The Slime Life Cafe, an interactive DIY cafe built in the middle of Sloomoo's DIY bar.

Highlights include:

- **The Slimey Gallery:** An experience of 30 vats of slime, featuring different colors, textures (like cloud, jelly, and icee), and scents.
- **Sloomoo Sling Shot:** Launch slime across the room at your friends and family. Don't worry, they'll be behind a protective glass shield.
- **Sloomoo Falls:** The ultimate slime experience where guests get completely COVERED in slime! Ponchos provided.
- **Lake Sloomoo:** A lagoon of hundreds of gallons of cloud slime
- **FrooFroo's Feels:** A sensory wall to explore by feeling (with a Sloomoo blindfold so it's all about heightening touch)
- **The DIY Bar:** Design the dream slime by choosing a texture, scent, color, and charms from hundreds of options.

- **The Slime Life Cafe:** Present your Slime Life Café ticket in exchange for a Slime Life tray, which includes a slime donut, pink icing, and a cup of sprinkles. Snap a picture with the slime creation before smashing and stretching it on camera.

From Wednesday, Dec. 3 through Wednesday, Jan. 7, cookie and slime enthusiasts can get special offers at [Levain Bakery](#). Sloomoo will take over at Levain Grove for an afternoon of slime play, and the first 50 guests at both Levain LA and Sloomoo will score a full-size, limited-edition Levain Sloomoo slime. All Sloomoo LA experience guests will get a BOGO offer for cookies at Levain. The limited-time cookie, Inspired Installations at Sloomoo Institute LA, smells like a cookie, looks gooey like a cookie, but is actually slime, inspired by the bakery's decadent cookies. 🍪



Jessica's Lemon Tart

COURTESY A.O.C.



Slimey cheeseburger

COURTESY SLIME LIFE



Slime Life ice cream cone

COURTESY OF SLIME LIFE