

LAW WEEKLY

MAY 29 - JUNE 4, 2026 | VOL. 48 / NO. 30 | LAWEEKLY.COM

“YOU CALL
THIS.
*slowing
down?*”

Bryan Cranston's RELENTLESS NEXT CHAPTER

By Michele Stueven

CONTENTS



ON THE COVER:

Photo: Courtesy of Dos Hombres
 Design: Mark Stefanos

MUSIC..... 2-4

PawPaw Rod is on a mission to prove he exists with his new album "Picture Day."

BY MARK STEFANOS

CULTURE..... 5-7

Bryan Cranston says he wants to slow down. His calendar says otherwise.

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

FOOD 8

On the road to Gott's - here's what's popping up.

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

CLASSIFIEDS..... 7

LAWEEKLY

EDITOR IN CHIEF: MARK STEFANOS
 SENIOR EDITOR: MICHELE STUEVEN



MUSIC

PAWPAW ROD LEAVES HIS MARK WITH HIS DEBUT ALBUM 'PICTURE DAY'

BY MARK STEFANOS

When PawPaw Rod was 17, just some no-name kid from who knows where, he made his way to South by Southwest, pushed his way to the front of the stage where DâM-FunK and Peanut Butter Wolf were performing, and demanded the mic from DâM-FunK. "I kept looking at him like, 'Yo, let me get the mic, bro,'" he recalls. "I wouldn't stop."

By his sheer force of will, DâM-FunK relents and hands it over. Rod starts rapping something from his mixtape as the crowd goes wild.

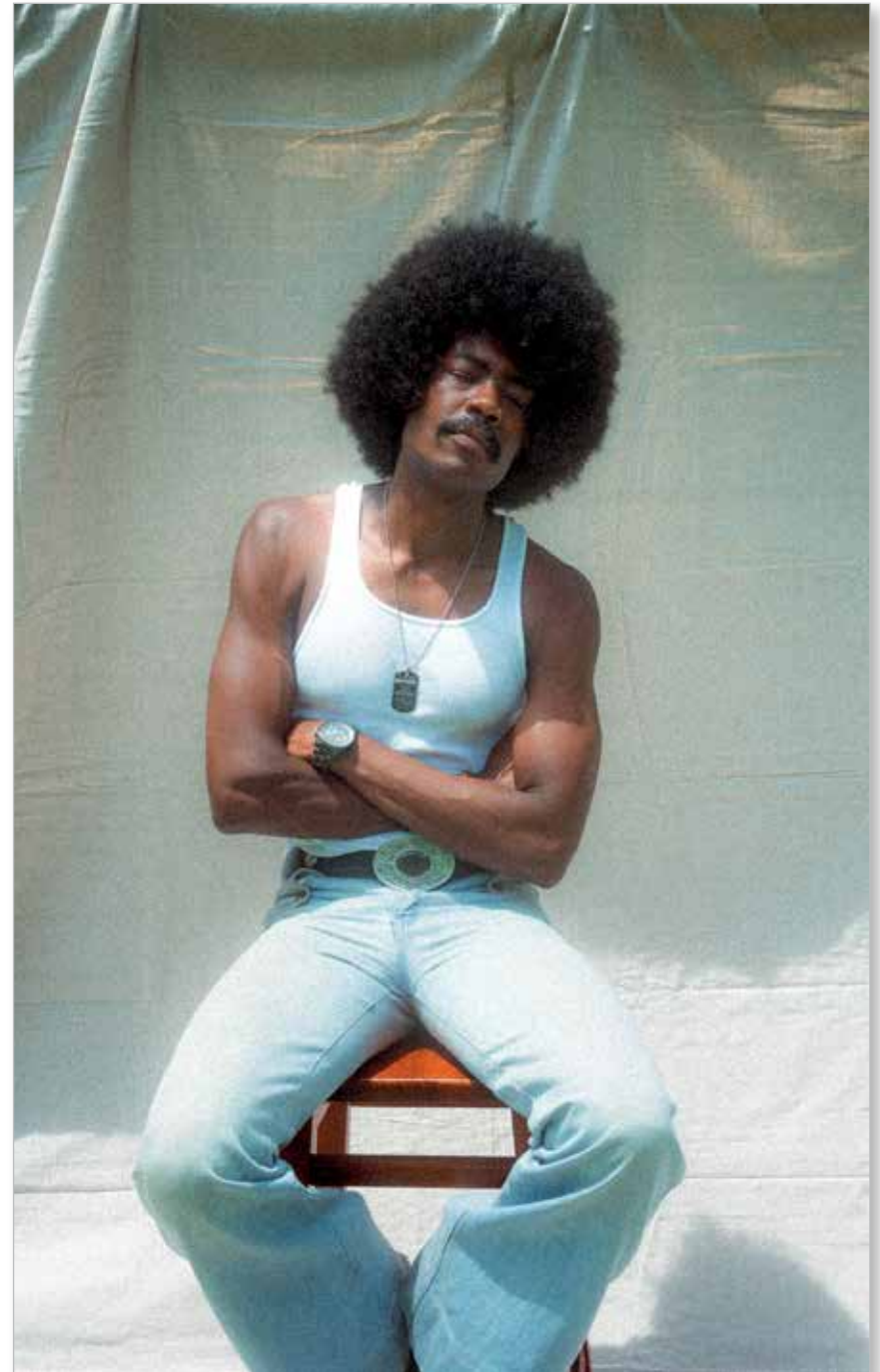
It is indeed a wild scene to picture. His friends were still in the back of the crowd and had no idea where he went, let alone that he basically made it onto the bill. He runs back to them, hyped out of his mind. "YEAH, I'M THAT N-----!"

You'd never guess that that person is the same chill dude in the aisle next to you at Erewhon in Studio City or sitting in front of you at Sonoratown in Mid City, as he was when we talked last week. He's just about the most amiable and polite gentleman in person. During conversation, he talks about how he gets emotional from coffee shops remembering his order.

And you'd probably be surprised to hear what his music sounds like now. In his young career, PawPaw Rod has already built a significant body of work and gained a well-earned following for his songs that are at once dancey, lyrical, complex, light and deeply introspective, a catalog that has surpassed 200 million streams. After releasing four EPs, his debut album *Picture Day* came out last week.

Still, underneath the calm demeanor is the same obsessive drive that once compelled a teenager to hijack a festival set because he believed, with irrational certainty, that he was supposed to be onstage.

The discipline, and his politeness, can probably be chalked up to his upbringing as a military brat. Born in Hawaii to military parents, Rod spent his childhood bouncing between Texas, Germany, Washington, South Carolina and Oklahoma. Life on Army bases came



PawPaw Rod

with structure, routines and a strange collective order. Every family knew each other and every parent knew each other's kids. "You were taught to carry yourself a certain way," he says. The civilian kids off the base were wild in comparison.

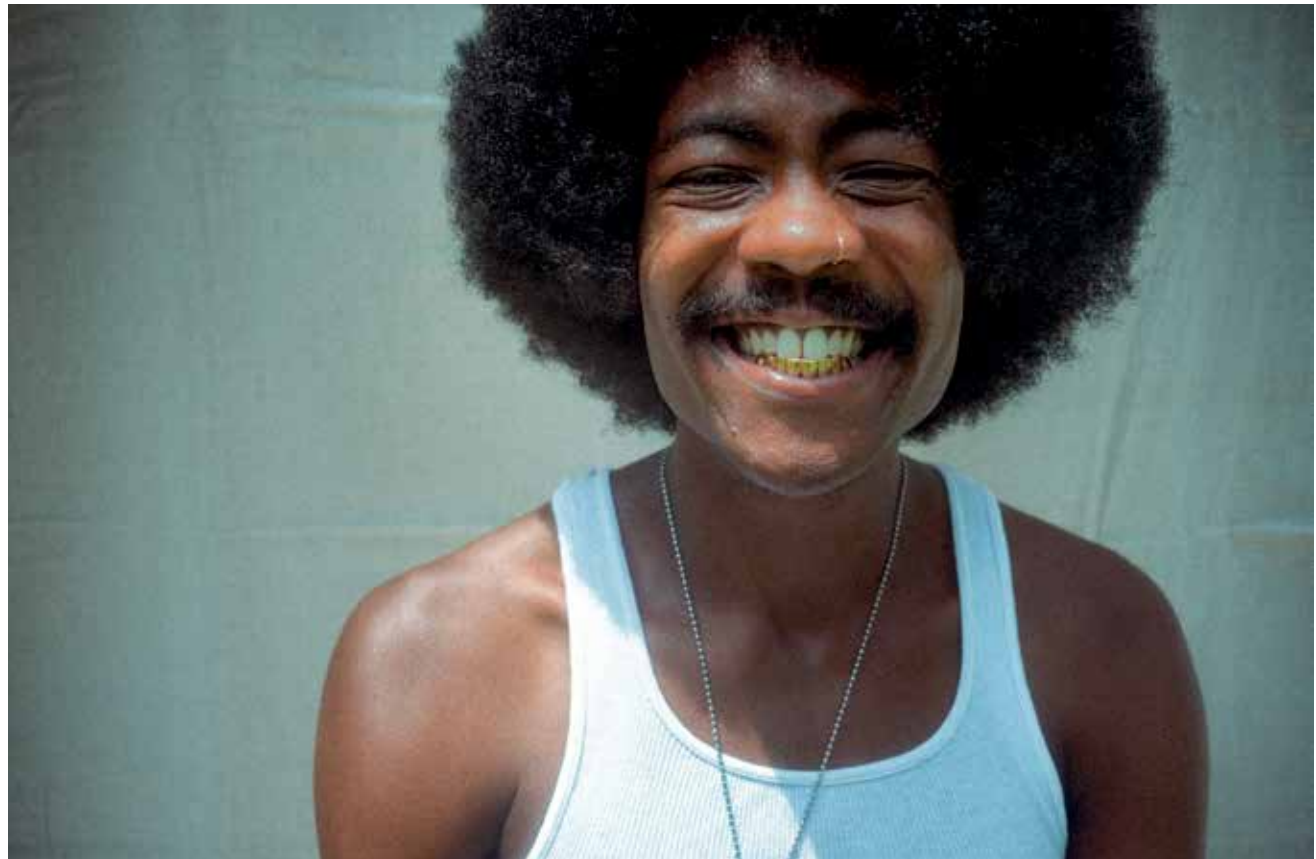
At the same time, the constant moves left him desperate to prove he existed somewhere. He still has a ritual: in a new place he'll pinch off a piece of hair and toss it as a small act of leaving his DNA to mark the territory. "Okay, I was here in this place." The uprooting left him on unstable ground, to the point where he felt constantly detached. "When I'd go walk my dog, I'd feel like I was always on the outside looking in," he recalls. He remembers psyching himself up in mirrors before the first day at new schools, approaching each move like a TV show reboot. "I'd think, 'This is a new season, new characters,'" he says.

Those experiences became the emotional foundation of *Picture Day*, which serves as a permanent record of his existence that will outlast all the moves. His wide-ranging abilities as a singer and rapper coupled with great production and upbeat vibe make the album immediately enjoyable. But it's the kind of record that gets even better and better as you peel back its layer, and will be at home in your permanent rotation.

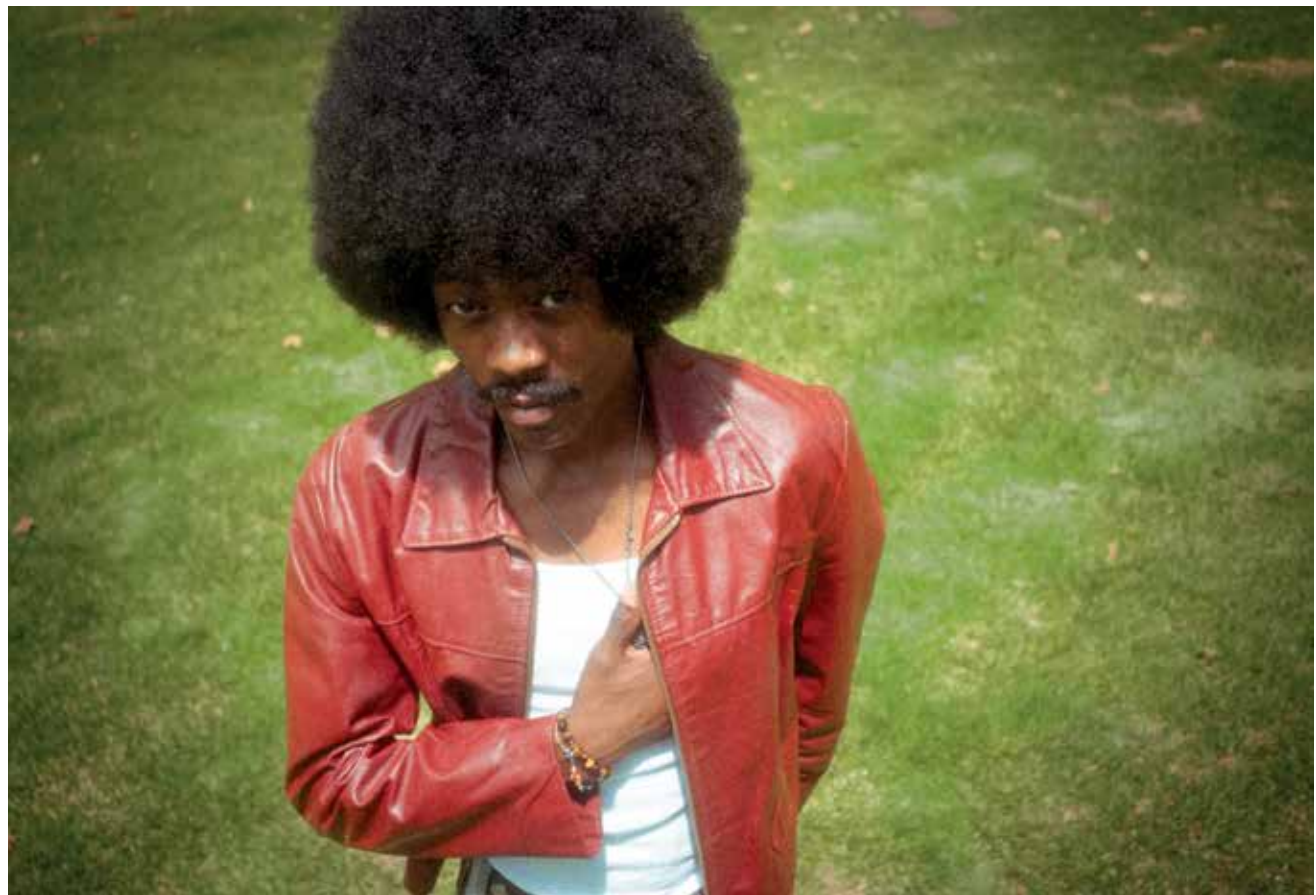
Picture Day is built around the metaphor of school picture day and the family photo albums he studied at his Meemaw and Pawpaw's house (his name PawPaw started as a joke from friends who said he acted like an old man at parties before taking on deeper meaning as an homage to his grandpa). "If my great-grandkids are curious about who their pawpaw was one day, they can go listen to some songs and hear how I felt about just hyping yourself up, or when you're sad about some shit, or just that you were here," he says.

The album opens with "Shades of Blue," a song Rod describes as optimism in the middle of emotional chaos. He wrote parts of the record while processing the death of his childhood best friend, the passing of his aunt and the emotional fallout of a breakup, all while touring for the first time as a headliner. Faced with grief and disaster, he lands on optimism: "Hang on to what's real, hold tight. The rest will blow away... We gon make it through different shades of blue."

"I Wish" captures emotional exhaustion and survivor's guilt. Rod wrote it while in Toronto during the Los Angeles wildfires, struggling with the surreal feeling of celebrating career milestones while people around him were losing homes and loved ones. "Sometimes you wish you could snap your fingers and make everybody's pain go away," he says.



ARIS CHATMAN



ARIS CHATMAN



ARIS CHATMAN

“Betting on Me” follows, wiping tears away and diving back into purpose. Rod references Russell Westbrook repeatedly throughout conversation, admiring the basketball star’s refusal to half-step. “He only plays one way,” Rod says. “That’s how I feel about performing.” Westbrook’s clothing line, Honor the Gift, directly inspired the track.

That same mentality explains why he connected so deeply to last year’s hit Marty Supreme. Rod says he saw himself in Timothée Chalamet’s overeager dreamer protagonist — someone whose ambition occasionally borders on delusion. “I was that kid,” he says. “Sweet kid, but stubborn as hell about music.”

Back in Oklahoma, Rod fronted a high school band he jokingly describes as “The Strokes if they had a rapper.” He wore eyeliner and skinny jeans in conservative spaces, openly declared he

would leave town someday, and spent most of his adolescence convinced his real life existed somewhere else. His relationship with Oklahoma remains complicated. It was the first place where he experienced continuity after years on military bases, but also where he first encountered racism and cultural isolation.

Still, Oklahoma sits at the emotional center of *Picture Day*. Tracks like “The Get Back” and “Tornado Alley” function like letters home. “Tornadoes prepared me to deal with anything,” he says. He uses tornadoes as a metaphor: looming disaster followed by clarity, the instinct to call family and check who survived. “When that tornado siren goes off, literally or figuratively, you remember what matters,” he says.

Song after song, *Picture Day* walks you through emotions as they progress, moving from isolation toward

acceptance and from dissociation toward presence.

“White Chocolate Chips,” the album closer, resolves the tension introduced in “Shades of Blue.” — “We gon make it through different shades of blue” becomes “The blues went bliss.” The song centers on surrendering to love and community, showing up to the metaphorical family reunion afraid of judgment and realizing instead that you’re accepted exactly as you are.

The song mirrors where Rod literally finds himself today. After moving to Los Angeles nearly a decade ago, surviving retail jobs, warehouse shifts, modeling gigs and Uber Eats deliveries, he says he’s finally stopped fantasizing about being somewhere else. Recently, his family visited him in LA for the first time and saw the life he’d spent years describing over the phone: the apartments, old jobs,

neighborhoods and venues that shaped him, causing him to snap out of that feeling of detachment. “It made everything feel real,” he says.

These days, Rod still carries traces of the kid who imagined himself into existence. He still listens to Jay-Z’s “Dead Presidents” on rainy days the same way he did sitting in his Buick as a teenager, and talks to himself while walking alone. He still feels startled by ordinary routines — neighbors saying hello, baristas remembering his coffee order or returning to the same apartment every night. For most of his life, movement demanded his constant reinvention and threw his existence into question.

“I have this fixation on proving that I was here,” he says. With *Picture Day*, he leaves no doubts.

Follow PawPaw Rod on Instagram @ [pawpawrodny](#). 📷

'YOU CALL THIS SLOWING DOWN?' BRYAN CRANSTON'S RELENTLESS NEXT CHAPTER

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

After a Hollywood career spanning decades, award-winning actor Bryan Cranston, who captivated us as Walter White in *Breaking Bad*, turned to his wife, actress Robin Dearden recently and said, "I want to start slowing down."

Since then he has just come off of a 10-day night shoot in the Hollywood Hills with Madonna for the next season of his Emmy Award-winning role in *The Studio*, returned from London starring on stage in *All My Sons* just in time to promote the reboot of the long-running hit TV show *Malcolm in the Middle* alongside Frankie Muniz and Jane Kaczmarek.

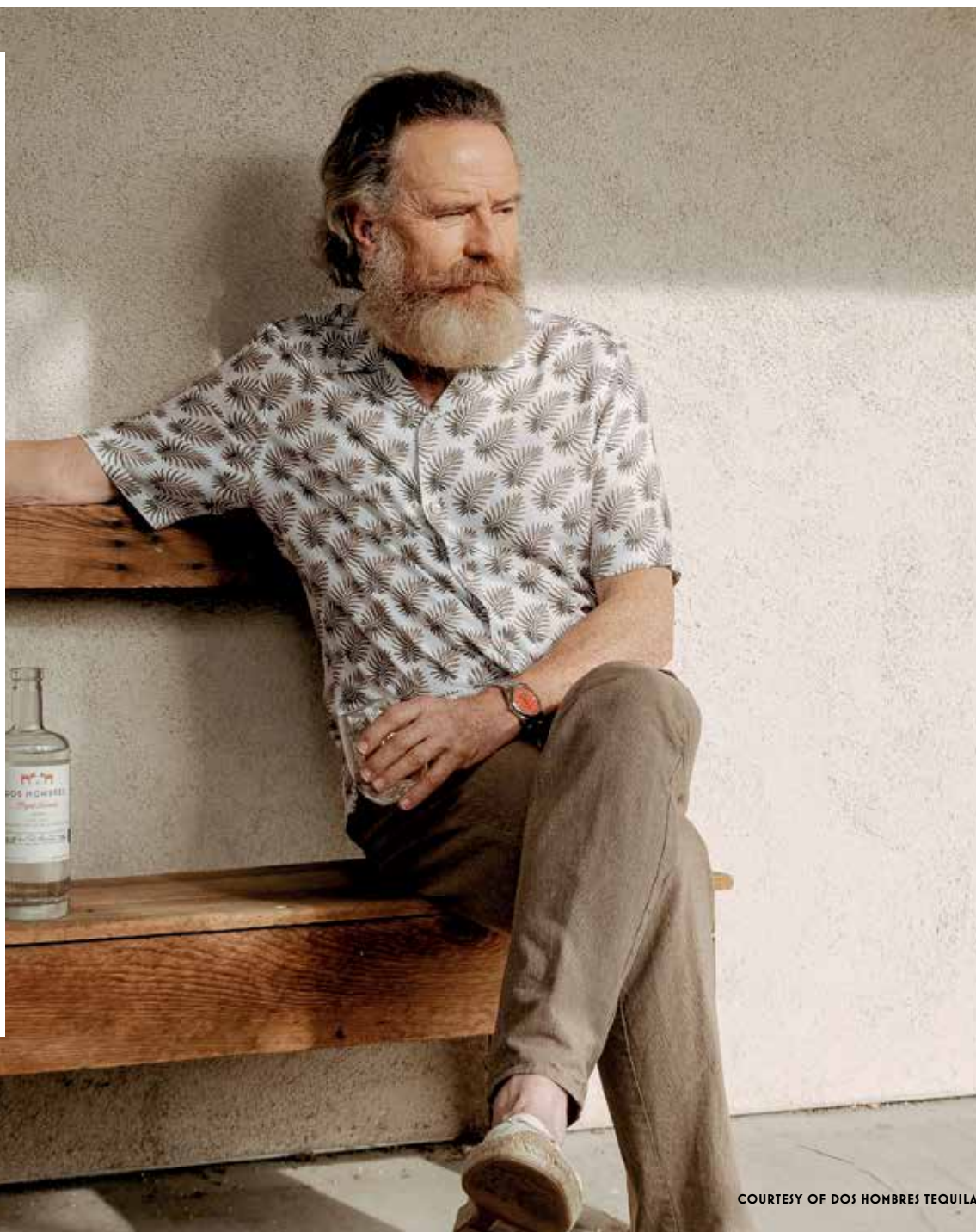
"You call this slowing down?" Dearden asked him.

"I've been doing this for a very long time. The only way, really, to slow me down is to literally take a knife to my body," Cranston, who is scheduled for shoulder surgery, tells *LA Weekly* over lunch.

The break has also given the Canoga Park native a chance to celebrate 10 years of Dos Hombres, the premium agave spirits brand he launched with *Breaking Bad* co-star Aaron Paul, expanding the brand beyond its mezcal roots, introducing Blanco and Reposado expressions this month.

"In the three years after *Breaking Bad*, Aaron and I hadn't seen each other a lot," says Cranston, who won four Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama series Emmys for his work in *Breaking Bad*.

"We went from seven years of intense working together and becoming the best of friends to not seeing each other at all," he says. "It's like when you leave college, and tell each other, 'oh we'll see you soon,' and then life steps in and everyone goes separate ways. One night we were on the phone and realized we were both in New York. That night we made it a point to have dinner. We were sitting at a sushi bar telling each other how much we missed each other and Aaron said, 'You know what we ought to do? Start a mezcal and tequila company together.'"



COURTESY OF DOS HOMBRES TEQUILA



COURTESY OF DOS HOMBRES TEQUILA



Stills from 'The Studio'

COURTESY OF APPLE TV



Stills from 'The Studio'

COURTESY OF APPLE TV



COURTESY OF DOS HOMBRES TEQUILA

As with any other project Cranston gets attached to, he threw himself into learning about the subject with the same energy and passion that he devoted to perfecting his Tony award-winning role as President Lyndon B. Johnson in *All The Way*.

"Aaron and I as actors are used to not knowing things we're going into," he says. "I'm playing Lyndon Johnson and don't know any more than when I was a kid. So now I have to dive in and learn everything I can about this man. That's the same approach we took with the tequila. Let's dive in and learn how it's made, why it's made and the history of it. We learned that the tequila makers and mezcaleros are like fine chefs. We normally steam 70% and the rest is cooked in a brick oven for flavor and combine the two. Our tequila maker Julio just knows the recipe and when it's right. Every batch that he

cooks sits for a month. He says it needs time to rest before we bottle it. It needs a chance to calm down and breathe the air. We try to go down at least once a year. The hardest part is pinning down a time in our schedules when we can both go to Jalisco or Oaxaca for the mezcal together."

The hearts of the agave plants, piñas, are cooked in pits in the ground, similar to how barbacoa is made, giving Dos Hombres its signature smoky finish. Dos Hombres is the product of multiple generations of Mezcal producers from the small village of San Luis del Rio, in a remote section of Oaxaca. Gregorio Velasco, a third-generation mezcalero is a key maestro and partner of the brand. The new tequila can be found at BevMo as well as Javier's, Beverly Hills Hotel, Beverly Wilshire Hotel, Escuela Taqueria, Lincoln Fine Wine and Rancho Park

Wine & Spirits.

"It's hard to believe that we have already been working on Dos Hombres for a decade now," Paul told LA Weekly in an email. "Building this brand from the ground up has been exciting but has also come with a fair amount of challenges that we as a team were focused to overcome. From the very start of this company we had a clear vision. To bring something out into the world that was pure and rooted in deep Mexican heritage.

We're not interested in adding anything to our Mezcal and now our Tequila that was never meant to be there. Natural spring water and 100% pure agave, that's it. No reason to hide the flavor of something so beautiful and pure."

As one of the hardest working actors in Hollywood, it's been a long time since Cranston has taken the time to relax and breathe in the air since his childhood days growing up in the San Fernando Valley, annual Mexico visits notwithstanding.




Jane Kaczmarek, Bryan Cranston and Frankie Muniz attend Hulu's "Malcolm in the Middle: Life's Still Unfair" premiere on April 7, 2026.

ANGELA WEISS / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Born in Hollywood and raised in Canoga Park, Cranston went to Sunny Brae Avenue Elementary, Christopher Columbus Jr. High and Canoga Park High School, followed by LA Valley College in Van Nuys.

"You went to the school that was the closest to your house," says Cranston, who admits to having his first margarita at age 15. "I remember the valley in the 60's when you'd hop on your bike and ride around the orange and walnut groves. It was just miles and miles of nothing but ditches, trees to climb and old abandoned houses to investigate. In those days your parents didn't know where you were all day. You just kinda knew when you had to be home. My mom would use her broken Spanish and yell 'aquí!, aquí!' from the back porch at dusk. That was her signal that it was time for dinner. There was tremendous freedom in those days. You played with friends who were in your neighborhood. Driving kids to play dates was completely unheard of, you just rode your Schwinn bike everywhere."

As for the next generation, his daughter Taylor Dearden Cranston carries on the family tradition as an actor and director, known for her role as Dr. Melissa "Mel" King on the HBO Max hit show *The Pitt*. In addition to inheriting her father's sense of humor and sarcasm as well as his mighty eyebrows, she also shares his take on responsible drinking.

"Aaron and I refuse to take shots," says the elder Cranston. "I want to taste the spirit. Taking a shot is to try and get drunk quickly. I don't want either. I don't want to do it quickly and I don't want to get drunk. I want to savor the taste. What I'm proud of in my daughter's generation is the ride-sharing. If Taylor goes out and knows she's going to be drinking anything she'll always take an Uber or Lyft." 



Aaron Paul, Bryan Cranston, and Bob Odenkirk at the 66th Annual Primetime Emmy Awards on August 25, 2014.

KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/NBC/NBCUNIVERSAL VIA GETTY IMAGES

LA WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

Financial Manager - Req: Master's in Finance, Accounting or Rel. Wage: F/T \$82,763/Year Mail Resume: Umgee USA Inc. 1565 E 23rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90011.

Paralegal Manager (Full Time) - Buda Law Group - Ardacia, CA. Prepare Immigration Related Forms and Letters. Have knowledge and experience for employment and family immigration cases. Speak in Chinese to immigration clients and prospective immigration clients from China. Prepare affidavits or other documents, such as legal correspondence, and organize and maintain documents in paper or electronic filing system. Prepare legal documents, including briefs, pleadings, appeals, application forms, and contracts. Prepare cases for submission to the USCIS by performing tasks such as printing and organizing exhibits. Investigate facts and law of cases and search pertinent sources, such as public records and internet sources, to determine causes of action and to prepare cases. Meet with clients and other professionals to discuss details of case. Manage 1-2 other subordinate Paralegals. Job Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Business Administration Email: john.buda@budalawgroup.net.

FOOD

ON THE ROAD TO GOTT'S — HERE'S WHAT'S POPPING UP

BY MICHELE STUEVEN



Gott's

MICHELE STUEVEN



Vietnamese chicken salad

MICHELE STUEVEN



Artichokes two ways

MICHELE STUEVEN

As National Burger Day was Thursday, May 28, I decided to pack up my faded Pink Floyd t-shirt that I reserve for messy occasions and headed out for a road trip to the new [Gott's Roadside](#) in Beverly Grove.

While they have a list of 10 different choices, with everything from the basic cheeseburger to a kimchi burger and the California burger made with a fried egg, gruyere cheese, bacon, arugula, caramelized onions on a toasted sesame brioche bun, what I didn't expect was a full menu of other items representing every neighborhood in Los Angeles.

Opening its doors in 1999 in St. Helena, in the heart of Napa Valley, [Gott's Roadside](#) is a Northern California cult favorite that brothers Joel and Duncan Gott transformed from a little roadside food stand dating back to 1949.

It recently opened its first flagship LA location at the [Original Farmers Market](#) in a completely redesigned space that used to house Gary Twinn's Market Tavern and is a perfect fit for the historic market. It's located directly next to another slice of



Gott's Roadside

MICHELE STUEVEN

Americana, [Du-Par's](#). Another outpost will open in Santa Monica in the fall.

While Northern and Southern California have long had sports and cultural rivalries, Gott's has positioned itself as a newcomer with a sensitive approach that aims to connect with the neighborhood, which is reflected in the menu. An emphasis on family-friendliness, there's something for everybody. Casual, no full service, order at the counter or the bar.

Great sides for your burgers include

chili-dusted sweet potato fries and beer-battered onion rings that retain their integrity, as well as cheese fries and artichokes two ways when in season.

There's a great salad line that includes a colorful Vietnamese chicken salad with kale, shredded cabbage, mung bean sprouts, peanuts tossed in a cilantro, mint, and peanut-lime dressing, topped with pickled Fresno chiles.

Sandwiches include a chicken schnitzel and seasonal options like a warm toasted

cubano. Lighter fare includes Hawaiian-style ahi poke crispy tacos topped generously with fresh avocado slices and filled with a slightly spiced cabbage and cilantro slaw.

In addition to a dedicated soft-serve window serving Strauss organic vanilla, chocolate, and swirl along with old-fashioned toppings and dips, Gott's beverages include fountain soda, house-made lemonades, and hand-spun organic shakes, freezes, and floats.

The California-centric wine list offers a wide range of Napa Valley vintners by the glass and by the bottle, from Joel Gott Wines to Rombauer, Turley, Caymus, and Opus One. Rotating draft beer includes Tarantula Hill, Beachwood, Golden Road, and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer by the bottle for old timers who just want beer and a hot dog.

Plus:

The World Cup is coming to America, and [MagnoliaBakery.com](#) is celebrating with a limited-time lineup of sweets that includes a Kickoff Sampler made up of one dozen soccer-themed cupcakes and a DIY Banana Pudding Bar, a 12 mini soccer cupcakes package, and a 6" soccer vanilla layer cake with buttercream that serves eight.

Barnsdall Fridays Wine Nights at Barnsdall Park returns for its 17th season, running now through Sept. 11, set atop Olive Hill and the West Lawn of Hollyhock House, LA's only UNESCO World Heritage Site designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. General admission is priced at \$55, which includes four glasses of wine from Silverlake Wine, along with a rotating lineup of local food trucks and DJ performances throughout the series. The popular and longstanding series also serves as a fundraiser supporting arts programming and preservation efforts amid proposed budget and staffing cuts to the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. For tickets, go to [www.barnsdall.org](#) 📄