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IRVINE WEEKLY

JULY 2, 2021 VOL. 3 • NO. 16

RADIANT IMPRESSIONS

LOCAL EXHIBITION EXTOLLS CALIFORNIA'S LUMINOUS LIGHT THROUGH 20TH-CENTURY PAINTINGS.



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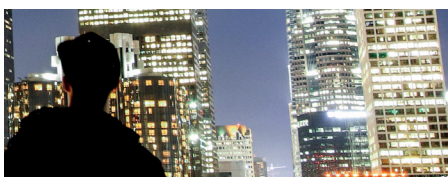
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VETERANS CEMETERY LOCATION STILL IN LIMBO

THE IRVINE CITY COUNCIL FAILED TO AGREE ON A SITE FOR A VETERANS CEMETERY, AND WILL WORK TO HELP MOVE THE PROJECT TO THE GYPSUM CANYON SITE, NEAR ANAHEIM HILLS.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER



The Irvine City Council was unable to agree on a future site for the proposed Southern California veterans cemetery during a City Council meeting on Tuesday, June 22, despite having the results from the dual-site study conducted by the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

In a text message to *Irvine Weekly* on Wednesday, June 23, Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan explained that after listening to dozens of public speakers supporting the ARDA site, she introduced a motion that would include portions of both the Golf Course and ARDA sites.

"After hearing from many of the ARDA supporters about compromising to move the cemetery forward, I tried to make a compromise motion again, taking portions of ARDA and the former golf course site which was not accepted by Councilmember Agran," Khan wrote. "At this time, there is nothing more to do."

Khan added that in Tuesday's meeting she emphasized that the ARDA site lacks the requirements needed to move forward.

"As I stated at the council meeting last night, the ARDA site is already on the Department of Veterans Affairs list and sits at 77 out of 90 sites throughout the nation," she said. "It hasn't moved up the queue because it lacks two of the three requirements, which are community support and full funding."

Prior to Khan's motion, Irvine City Attorney Jeff Melching presented some background information on the next "substances steps," in the process of selecting a site for a veterans cemetery in Irvine.

In his presentation, Melching referenced the federal grant application deadline for a selected site, which is due on July 1. Melching explained that Tuesday's meeting had a direct influence on the federal grant application.

"I think this is well known, that the federal grant application is due on July 1 of this year and that somewhat influences the timing of this meeting," he said. "Cal-Vet is hoping to have a site it can propose in a federal grant application in the next nine or 10 days."

However, while Khan's motion did not receive a second, she said Wednesday that she will work with state legislators to see what the process is for the Anaheim Hills-based site.

"I believe this provides the veterans the option to pursue a site in Anaheim where there seems to be support across the board," Khan said. "I do not believe there will be any submittals this year."

The council spent nearly six hours Tuesday night, June 22, into Wednesday morning, discussing and listening to dozens of public comments for Agenda Item 5.4 – discussion on site selection for the Southern California Veterans Cemetery. The agenda item was added at the request of Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan, and supported by Councilmember Anthony Kuo.

Tuesday's meeting marked the first time Irvine residents were able to attend an Irvine City Council meeting in person since the pandemic started. However, some expressed frustration over Zoom callers being allowed to address the council before in-person attendees, many of whom were there to speak about the cemetery.

Nick Berardino, a Vietnam veteran and president of the Veterans Alliance of Orange County (VALOR), said he arrived at

the meeting at 4:00 p.m., eager to share the voice of the veterans he represents.

In a text message to *Irvine Weekly*, Berardino wrote that he saw a clear division of interests among the City Council members, and called for a time to heal.

"During the hours and hours of public comment it became abundantly clear that the citizens of Irvine are bitterly and solidly divided regarding the appropriate site for a veterans cemetery," he wrote. "It's time for the city to heal and join a regional effort to make a veterans cemetery a reality for the brave men and women who have sacrificed and served this great nation."

The discussion, according to Councilmember Kuo, was placed on the council agenda after he and Khan met with representatives from CalVet to hear more from the veteran's community. Prior to the discussion, Kuo mentioned that he

thought this type of open forum would allow for open discussion and finally put an end to the ongoing saga.

"Hopefully we can get through to what I think is a goal for all of us, to deliver a cemetery for those who served our country," said Kuo.

However, the Irvine City Council was unable to reach an agreement on a site location for the veterans cemetery itself, nor is there an additional meeting scheduled as of yet to do so.

Once Tuesday's meeting reached adjournment, it was nearly 1:00 a.m.

Khan, who shared with *Irvine Weekly* that the veterans cemetery project has been the most challenging aspect of her first 100 days as mayor, said this topic should be about veterans, not scoring political points.

"In seeing the presentations from staff, reading the report from the state and hearing from the community, it is clear that whatever decisions we make today will not make everyone happy. But, I hope that regardless of what side you're on regarding the location of the state-run veterans cemetery, that we all recognize the importance of putting veterans first," she said Tuesday night.

In her motion to the council, Khan suggested the city work with the state to determine what portions of the ARDA and the golf course could work to build the cemetery, seemingly a two-site solution. "As I proposed two years ago, I believe that we must take aspects from both the ARDA site as well as the Golf Course Site – neither location in its entirety will work to honor veterans and protect the quality of life of the surrounding residents," said Khan.

None of Khan's council colleagues supported the motion.

"Don't ever say I didn't try," Khan said after her motion failed to receive a second supporting vote.

When asked about his thoughts regarding the future of the veterans cemetery project in Irvine, Councilmember Mike Carroll said he thinks it makes sense to study a site that is supported by dozens of Orange County-based veterans groups.

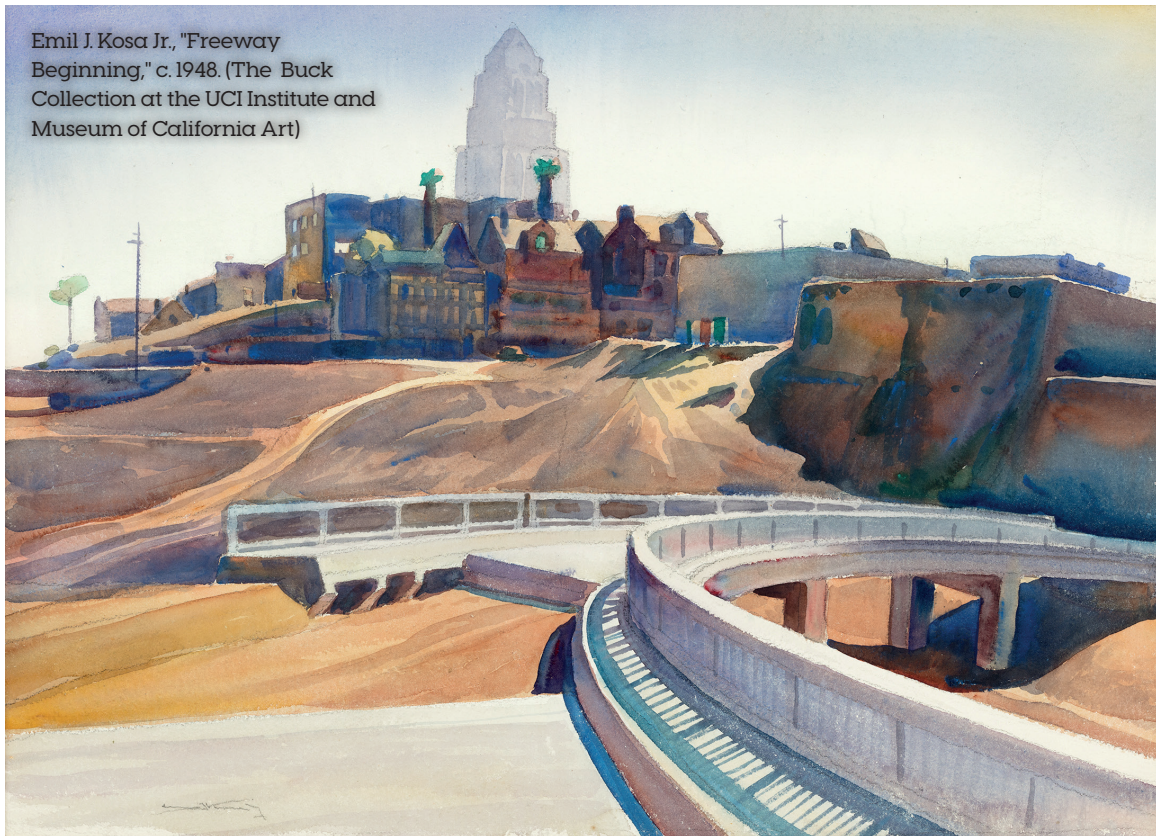
"It was pretty clear that the community is very split, both sides threatened lawsuits, and no one wanted a compromise," Carroll wrote via text message on Wednesday, June 23. "So to me, it makes sense to evaluate the Anaheim site that over 100 actual veterans groups are now supporting. We must provide a final resting place for our men and women who served our nation."

RADIANT IMPRESSIONS

LOCAL EXHIBITION EXTOLLS CALIFORNIA'S LUMINOUS LIGHT THROUGH 20TH-CENTURY PAINTINGS.

BY LIZ GOLDNER

Emil J. Kosa Jr., "Freeway Beginning," c. 1948. (The Buck Collection at the UCI Institute and Museum of California Art)



As UC Irvine's Institute and Museum of California Art (IMCA) prepares for its future opening, the venue is presenting art shows at its interim gallery on Von Karman Avenue – the site of the former Irvine Museum.

Drawing on selections from IMCA's 1,300-piece collection of Impressionist work, which was actually gifted to the venue from the Irvine Museum in 2016, along with loans of several other paintings, "Radiant Impressions" reflects our state's century-plus passion for depicting light, both natural and artificial, in art.

As Jean Stern, exhibition curator and former Irvine Museum Executive Director, explains in the wall text, the artists "have engaged with light not only for its optical qualities but also for its power to infuse ephemeral moments with meaning and emotion. Whether the warm golden tones of the California sun or the intense glow of electric bulbs, light in these paintings communicates a sense of anticipation, celebration, rest, and reflection."

The show recalls previous Irvine Museum exhibitions with its inclusion of early to mid-20th century art, specifically California Impressionism and California Scene Paintings. Yet this newest iteration is enhanced

by IMCA's mission to present "creative output forged by the state's distinct features, history, peoples, and natural environments," according to its website; as the exhibition contains historical portraits, domestic settings, expansive outdoor scenes and images of the magnificent California environment.

Viewing the show from this perspective, along with its emphasis on light, the painting, "The Old Post Office" (1922-23) by Joseph Kleitsch on loan from Laguna Art Museum, reveals bright daylight illuminating an old-fashioned building with a cowboy and dog on its steps, as well as the foliage and canyon in the background.

The contrasting "Laguna Eucalyptus" (1917) by Guy Rose illustrates a grove of windswept trees against a clear blue sky, punctuated by puffy white clouds. The native California artist experimented with innovative methods of using light, color, and brushwork, while studying art in this state, and later in Giverny, France – where was inspired by Impressionist Claude Monet.

Another vibrant painting from this era is "Intramovement" (1918) by Edouard Vysekal, on loan from the Hilbert Collection. The work visually describes the busy interior of the Boos Brothers Cafeteria in downtown



Phil Paradise, "Ice Cream Vendor", 1935. (The Hilbert Collection)



Elsie Palmer Payne, "Bus Stop", 1949 (The Buck Collection at the UCI Institute and Museum of California Art)

Los Angeles, with numerous waiters and customers working and engaging with others. Along with the California Scene Painting theme and expert craftsmanship, the artist infuses ambient SoCal light into the scene through large rear windows and reflects that light onto the restaurant's interior.

Also from the Hilbert Collection, "Ice Cream Vendor" (1935) by Phil Paradise reveals influences from the Mexican muralism movement, particularly work by Diego Rivera. The subject matter is a scene from everyday life, of a sombrero-donned vendor, and dark-haired children, while the style includes repetition, simplification and influences from cubism.

The oldest painting in the show, "Mid-Winter, Coronado Beach" (circa 1907) by Louis Betts, depicts a classic early



Edouard Vysekal, Los Angeles Cafeteria, "Intramovement", Boos Brothers Cafeteria, 1918. (The Hilbert Collection)



Guy Rose, "Laguna Eucalyptus", c. 1917. (The Irvine Museum Collection at the University of California, Irvine)



Louis Betts, "Mid-Winter, Coronado Beach", c. 1907. (The Irvine Museum Collection at the University of California, Irvine)

20th-century beach scene, featuring fancily dressed ladies adorned with hats and flowing skirts, while holding parasols, men in semi-revealing swimming attire, and well-dressed children playing on the sand; as the sand, surf and sky gleam brightly from the California sunshine. The contrasting "Bus Stop" (1949) by Elsie Palmer Payne portrays an African American woman waiting for a bus in downtown Los Angeles. While her circumspect

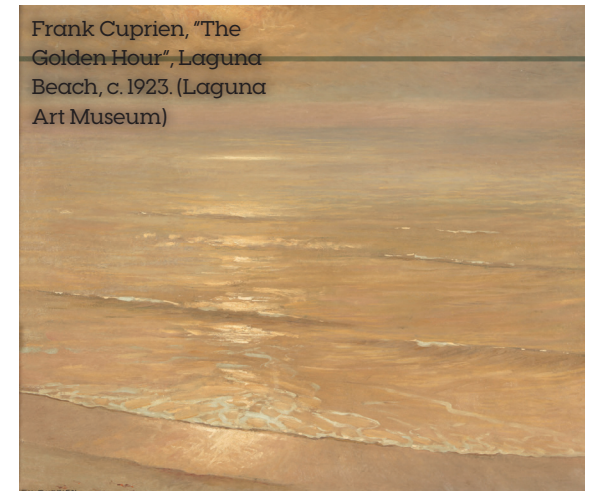
gaze dominates the painting, the background with urban residents and mid-century buildings is infused with California light. Burr Singer's "Touch Up" (1943), also illustrating a young African American woman in 1940s Los Angeles, is a departure in subject matter from most other paintings of that time. Set indoors in a nightclub, the artificial light illuminates the young woman's features.

Another modernist painting in this show is Emil Kosca's "Freeway Beginning" (circa 1948) of an unfinished freeway in Los Angeles. It heralds the beginning of massive urban development following World War II, while overshadowing the Victorian-style Bunker Hill neighborhood in the background. (Those classic buildings were soon after torn down to the dismay of many.) As with several other paintings in this exhibition, the sweep of the land and the massive freeway in progress are bathed in vivid Southern California light.

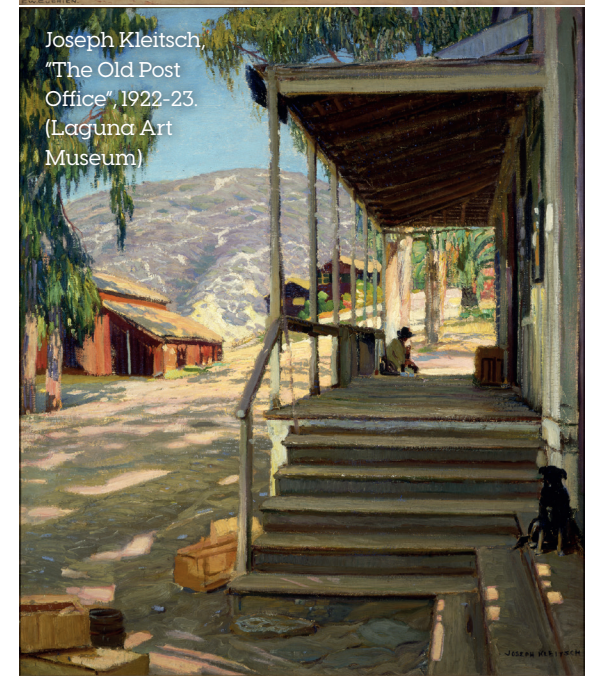
The most luminous painting in this exhibition is Frank Cuprien's "The Golden Hour" (1923), also on loan from Laguna Art Museum, and one of that museum's most beloved artworks. Depicting the ocean's low tide, lit by the afternoon's golden glow, it is the visual equivalent of an Impressionist piece of music. Indeed, the artist was also a musician.

In its overall ambiance, "Radiant Impressions" recalls a time when rapid changes in the world were balanced by enjoyment in life, hope and reflection.

"Radiant Impressions" is on view through August 14. Institute and Museum of California Art, 18881 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 100, Irvine. Tue.-Sat., 10 am-4 pm. 949-476-0294. Free. imca@uci.edu.



Frank Cuprien, "The Golden Hour", Laguna Beach, c. 1923. (Laguna Art Museum)



Joseph Kleitsch, "The Old Post Office", 1922-23. (Laguna Art Museum)

San Gorgonio Search and Rescue Team



RESCUE ON SAN GORGONIO

IRVINE HIKER FOUND AFTER THREE DAYS ON THE MOUNTAIN THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS FOR SURVIVAL.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

On Tuesday, June 15, a hiker from Irvine was found alive by members of the San Gorgonio Search and Rescue Team, after being lost in the wilderness for three days and two nights, while summiting San Gorgonio Mountain near the city of Yucaipa.

In an emotional interview with *Irvine Weekly*, Peggy Faulk, 64, expressed an insurmountable amount of gratitude and appreciation for the experience, and credited her survival to the

hundreds of volunteers, from more than half a dozen counties in Southern California, that helped locate her.

"In my heart, I think this was meant to be, that I was meant to go through this," she said. "If you don't believe in God or humanity or good in the world you need to go to one SAR Team meeting – these people do this out of love and unselfishness, and many times it ends badly."

On Sunday, June 13, Faulk, a resident of Irvine, set out to hike the summit of San

Gorgonio Mountain, starting at the Vivian Creek trailhead. Faulk, who is an avid marathon runner, said she was using the All Trails application to navigate, but accidentally wandered off-path while descending the summit.

"I had no idea if anybody would even look for me – I thought maybe they would say this is wilderness, you're on your own," she said.

"I didn't fight it"

In her account, Faulk explained that

she and her hiking partner had agreed to head back down from the summit separately, admitting it was not the right course of action.

"I was probably being too kind and she was commenting that going too slow was hurting her body, and we just agreed she could summit, and then if I hadn't caught up enough that, I'd turn around and go back," she said. "Amazingly I'd pretty much caught up, and we were pretty much at the summit, but she wanted to go ahead and go

down slowly.”

In hindsight, Faulk said there should have been an agreement at the beginning that there should have been zero separation between the two hikers.

“It wasn’t my idea, but I didn’t fight it,” she said. “It wasn’t all her, and it wasn’t all me.”

Still, upon departing the summit of San Gorgonio, Faulk said she was unable to identify the correct trailhead, and ended up south of the trail.

“A lot of trails are coming and going, and if you’re looking at a trail map you’ll see this – but when you’re physically there it’s kind of wide and spread out,” she explained. “I was using All Trails – I was using the map using that for navigation, and was south of the trail.”

As Faulk continued for miles, she unknowingly walked toward a dead-end portion of the canyon, primarily used for water drainage.

Commander Patricia Sheatsley, of the San Gorgonio Search and Rescue Team, said the weekend Faulk went missing, her team was assisting in a series of back-to-back rescues in the San Gorgonio Wilderness. In terms of volume, Sheatsley said it was abnormal to receive back-to-back calls, one of which involved another hiker descending from the same summit as Faulk.

“The commonalities that they have, it was their first time being on this trail, they were traveling by themselves, for the most part,” she explained. “We are currently working with the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association to examine the area where we believe people have lost the trail.”

In terms of the mileage Faulk crossed, Sheatsley, who has been the commander of the San Gorgonio SAR for two years, said it would be impossible to determine exactly how many miles Faulk covered.

“She made it to the summit, and that is about 7.5 miles to the top. After that, it’s kind of hard to figure out – we think that she diverted and probably added another 10 miles to how much she traveled,” she said. “She was actually found at East Fork Cabin.”

Topographically, East Fork Cabin is somewhere in the middle point between Snow Peak and San Gorgonio Mountain.

Faulk said she kept her phone in a hip-holster and remembers checking the time around 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 13. However, she noticed her phone was gone shortly after being separated.

“I put my phone back in my holster and kept going, trying to get on the trail. I think maybe the effects of altitude were occurring, and I wanted to check my phone – and my phone was gone.”

After realizing she was without a phone, a map or a compass, Faulk described the feeling of panic, and confusion, adding to the difficulty to think rationally. Faulk said her plan was to head south, following the creek bed, and hopefully find the Vivian Creek Trailhead.

Unfortunately, that direction only took the 64-year-old hiker from Irvine deeper into the wilderness, where she would be forced to spend the night.

Night One

“I went down that way – not knowing what was ahead. You start to see the canyon walls are very steep, and the creek reached a point where it becomes a waterfall – a big one,” Faulk said. “I crossed over the waterfall to get to the East side of Silverfall Waterfall.”

After crossing the waterfall, Faulk said she continued to follow the path toward houses near a ridgeline, but the distance was extremely deceptive, giving her the impression that it was much closer than it actually was.

“I started getting dark, I knew I did not want to be maneuvering across that in the dark,” she said. “I found a large rock to block some of the wind and that’s where I slept that night. And then I prayed and prayed, ‘What should I do the next day?’” she said.

Faulk said she spent the first night shivering, fearing bears, and waiting for the first sign of light. While she said there were no encounters with animals, Faulk said she came across a dozen bear dens, and “lot’s of bear paws.”

“I was worried about bears, because I had food in my backpack, and I used my backpack as a pillow, which was horrible, but I didn’t have a bear canister,” Faulk said. “One of the bear dens was huge, I don’t know if it was for a mother or a big male bear, but it was a huge den – it clearly was a bear den – the big round depression in the ground.”

On Monday, June 14, Faulk’s first full-day missing, she decided to backtrack the way she came the day before, to re-cross the waterfall she had crossed the day prior.

“I went down this mountain, steep-walled canyon drop-off, to look for the waterfall. But, it had to have been a



PHOTO BY TREVOR SMITH

different waterfall – all that it did was dead-end into this really steep incline – I ended up summiting another mountain, it just kept going and going. It took me half the day, at least.”

By this time, Faulk said she was hallucinating. She had not seen or spoken to anyone for more than two days.

“About five or six times, I would see people in the distance – the closer you get you realize they weren’t there,” she said.

A Steep Incline, But No Bears

Nearing the end of Monday, June 14, Faulk found herself in what she called a chute, a steep incline where the rocks fall into the water. Originally she had the idea to slide down and follow the creek out.

So, she said she listened to how long it took for the rocks to hit the water, and estimated it was a 300-foot drop-off. It was not worth the risk. However, she was exhausted and couldn’t pull herself up the steep incline.

As it started getting dark on her second day missing, Faulk said she leveled some dirt near the chute, and slept there that night. The following morning, Faulk said she began praying for a sign of what to do and which direction to go.

“I said I’ve got to get the strength to get up over that rock, got up and went to the top of the chute,” she said. “And this was the scariest part of all – the only way I could really see out is that I had to climb out on a ledge, that was 8 to 12 inches wide, that dropped 100 feet down, and I had to use rock climbing to

get out of there – I had to do it, I had to get out of there. I hadn’t seen anybody since Sunday around 1:00 p.m. – so I had to get the courage to climb up that – and I did it. I wanted to live, and I prayed that when I got to the top, it wouldn’t be treacherous, and thank god it was doable.”

Faulk then made her way back the way she came, down the mountain, past the bear dens she passed days prior. While Faulk said she was able to drink water from the creek the entire time, she finished a supply of Nutrisystem bars on Monday night.

“Are you Peggy?”

Early Tuesday, June 16, Faulk found herself near the diverter dam, which was the first man-made structure she had seen since Sunday. After finding a road, Faulk said she followed the road hoping to find civilization.

“I found footprints, and I thought that’s a gift from God, I’m going to follow these footprints. I saw four people in orange shirts walking towards me, and I thought these hallucinations are getting really, really crazy, and one of the of persons said, ‘Are you Peggy?’ – I wanted to cry but I didn’t,” she said. “And that was Team 23 of the San Gorgonio Search and Rescue.”

In terms of corresponding agencies for Faulk’s rescue, Sheatsley there were more than 100 rescuers searching for Faulk, along with more than nearly a dozen corresponding SAR teams from agencies spanning from Orange County, to the Sierra Madre to Victor Valley.

TRAVEL

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ROAD TRIP: BOBBY FLAY OPENS THE ELEGANT AMALFI IN LAS VEGAS

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

Gambling, the biggest names in music, shopping and discreet misbehavior are some of the many reasons we escape to the Mojave desert oasis that is Vegas. Fish and seafood markets, admittedly, have never been among them – until now.

Celebrity chef and restaurant owner Bobby Flay has completely redesigned his former Mesa Grill space at Caesars Palace into an homage to one of his favorite oases on earth, the craggy cliffs of the Amalfi coast in southern Italy. His Vegas flagship restaurant shuttered after 16 years during the pandemic and via Zoom meetings has been redesigned and transformed into a more intimate space that is elegant and casual at the same time. Most of the original wait and kitchen staff from Mesa Grill has returned and been retrained.

Flay worked with designer Olivia Jane to create four spaces, a 30-seat bar and 40-seat lounge area framed by a limestone mosaic floor and teak wood beams. The main dining room is surrounded by textured limestone walls and antique brass with views of the open kitchen.

Calabrian chilis have replaced jalapeños, and the focal point of Amalfi is a fresh fish and seafood display staffed by

a fishmonger from which you can pick your own catch, a concept inspired by the Italian coastal markets. Fish are offered whole by the pound and prepared to order either whole or filleted, grilled over charcoal or roasted al forno and served with the choices of Meyer lemon and capers, red pepper and Calabrian chile pesto or salsa verde. Selections include golden and red snappers, black bass, branzino, Carabinero shrimp and other seasonal choices.

The delicate shellfish fritto misto antipasti with Meyer lemon aioli and pistachio pesto or salmon carpaccio with pistachio bread crumbs are a good start followed by a primi selection from the diverse pasta menu. Scialatielli with a scampi sauce and basil and the orecchiette with eggplant bolognese and ricotta are excellent good choices.

While the seafood-centric menu is casual and accessible, Flay's true personality shines through for dessert in Bobby's Pistachio Sundae made with pistachio gelato, dark chocolate sauce, dotted



Chef Bobby Flay back in the kitchen at Amalfi

with Amarena cherries, vanilla cream and chopped pistachios. The blueberry panna cotta topped with cherries is a delight as well.

"I've been pretty obsessed with Italy for the last 20 years and hope to move there someday," Flay, who is hands-on as he glides through the kitchen inspecting every dish to greet guests in the dining

room like a branzino in the Mediterranean Sea, tells *Irvine Weekly*. "I love the healthful Mediterranean diet with lots of vegetables and olive oil and the thing I love the most about Italian food is that it has guts to it and is full-flavored, but it's also casual."

So the obvious question is how much advice did he get from friend and fellow

Bobby and Giada in Italy Food Network star Giada De Laurenti is on the project?

"Nope, she didn't say a thing," Flay says. "She's from Rome and a true Italian and loves the fact that I'm so in love with Italy. She's accused me of being more Italian than her. The only thing she's always after me is my pronunciation. She always corrects my pronunciation, which is fine with me because I really want to learn



how to say things correctly."

While the celebrity chef is most comfortable in the kitchen, his passion for competition shows is undying. The new season of *BBQ Brawl!* that he hosts with Michael Symon and Eddie Jackson on Food Network & Discovery+ was shot in March and April of this year in Austin, Texas and premiered last week.

"It was really nice to get back to work after not working for a year," says Flay. "It was all shot outdoors, so that was helpful. It was great to get back to competition cooking. And as for Vegas, people are coming out in droves and I wouldn't be surprised if it was the busiest summer Las Vegas has ever seen."



SMALL BATCH DOUGHNUTS

WITH FRENCH CUISINE AS HER MUSE, CHEF VANESSA MANALANSAN CREATED O.C.'S MOST EXOTICALLY FLAVORED DOUGHNUT DELIVERY.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SMALL BATCH DOUGHNUTS

While the COVID-19 pandemic created insurmountable hardships for the restaurant industry, Vanessa Manalansan, owner of Orange County-based Small Batch Doughnuts, a delivery-only doughnut variety box, is a great example of how some local culinary creators have seized the opportunity to build their own brands during the pandemic.

As a professional pastry chef, Manalansan said Small Batch Doughnuts came to fruition as a means for survival for both herself and her customers in the early days of the pandemic. Having worked at the Laguna Beach-based Montage Resort, along with Disneyland, Manalansan said her pastries are heavily influenced by the melting-pot of cultures she serves in Orange County.

Prior to her work in Orange County, Manalansan said she was inspired by a move to Las Vegas, where she took a job at the Wynn Las Vegas, after graduating from culinary school. There, as a California transplant in Nevada, Manalansan gained an ap-

preciation for Orange County through her travel.

"I'm obsessed with Orange County I think when I left California, you appreciate how much diversity there is in Orange County – it's just a melting pot of everything," she said. "I even created a doughnut that represents [Orange County] – it's my Citrus Dream doughnut – it's my orange jam-filled and it's shaped just like an orange. I don't know why, I just love Orange County."

Starting with just a few hundred dollars in her pocket, Manalansan's Small Batch Doughnuts delivers specialized variety boxes of two-inch mini doughnuts. Each order is placed 48-hours in advance.

"I'm a long-time pastry chef, just like everybody else in the restaurant industry, trying to think of ways to survive," she said in an interview with *Irvine Weekly*. "And I thought, what better way to do that than get food delivered to people, just to keep everybody safe – staying indoors."

However, these are not your typical doughnuts. With more than 120 flavors on Manalansan's doughnut

roster, Small Batch Doughnuts is all about variety, as Manalansan has a knack for creating exotic flavor combinations like Pink Lemonade, Citrus Mimosa and Mango Lassi.

"I just launched a mango lassi doughnut – I try to do that – I try to incorporate flavors into doughnuts that are just what I like to eat. Savory stuff, things like that – things that you won't find common," she explained. "I like to look at a meal and try to figure out how I could turn that into a doughnut."

Currently working out of the Hood Kitchen Space, Manalansan said her new endeavor is doing well, but more so, explained that Small Batch Doughnuts gives her the opportunity to

merge local flavors with the concept of elegant French-style treats. While her doughnuts are bite-sized, Manalansan suggests that eating smaller portions gives way for more variety.

"I like to do things fancy. I like french stuff – very petite – and when I eat, I like to eat bite-sized," she said. "Our mini doughnuts are meant to be gifted like a box of chocolates – where you kind of don't know what you're getting. But, each box comes with a flavor card and I have yet to hear anyone say, 'I hated this!' I'm working 100 hours per week, but it doesn't feel like work at all. I'm so happy."

Now preparing for summer season, Manalansan said she's excited about the debut of her Tropical Doughnuts Box, which includes Pina Colada, Pink Lemonade and Ube.

"Everything is fresh. The Pink Lemonade is made with the zest from pink lemons – that's how I flavor the glaze, I squeeze the actual juice out of it. I use nothing, as far as imitation flavoring – I don't use any of that. It is literally milk, heavy cream, powdered sugar, zest of the pink lemons, pink lemon juice – that's it."



ENTERTAINMENT

IRVINE WEEKLY MOVIE REVIEWS

THE LATEST FILM IN THE FAST AND FURIOUS FRANCHISE AND THE HITMAN'S WIFE'S BODYGUARD.

BY IRVINE WEEKLY FILM CRITICS



F9 - Universal Pictures

F9

The films in the *Fast and Furious* franchise – somehow on its ninth installment – are nearly impossible to dislike. They may not always be good, but they are guaranteed to be exciting.

The often silly and outrageous, exceedingly entertaining movies about muscle cars and muscular heroes continually find new ways to top each other. You thought Vin Diesel driving off a cliff was cool? Wait till you see Vin Diesel driving off a cliff while a train explodes in the background. That not good enough for you? How about Vin Diesel driving off a cliff in the middle of Thailand, while a fighter jet soars above him and a pack of

sharks swim below? Now we're talking.

Diesel returns as Dominic Toretto, who has risen from the Los Angeles street racing scene to become an international driver specializing in the extraction, transportation and delivery of highly classified materials. He's living off the grid with his wife, Letty (Michelle Rodriguez), when a message sends them on another mission. They team up with Roman (Tyrese Gibson), Tej (Chris "Ludacris" Bridges), Ramsey (Nathalie Emmanuel) and Mia (Jordanana Brewster), then go up against their scowling nemesis, Jakob (John Cena of WWE fame).

At first, it seems Lin might be ground-

ing things in a more dramatic world this time – he doesn't open with sky-diving cars, but rather, on an exposition dump that introduces Dom and Jakob as brothers. It's a gut-wrenching moment, a run-down on their sibling rivalry. But then all drama is left in the dust. The next scene involves a high-speed chase in Thailand, featuring tanks, fighter jets, Ferraris, machine guns, vast expanses of jungle and electric blue water, along with the aforementioned cliff jump.

The rest of the film centers on Jakob's end-of-the-world operation, and the final hour is essentially one big stand-off between Dom and his team and Jakob and his team, including Thue Ersted Rasmussen and Charlize Theron (who shows why action movies are becom-

ing her forte of late, fleshing out her femme fatale with steely glances and muscular stunts). She's the latest in a long line of empowered female warriors in the franchise, a counterbalance to Rodriguez's good-girl, badass heroine.

Dom stands out among these jocular characters, and "unfazed" doesn't begin to describe his ability to stay cool, calm and collected in the face of danger. Diesel has cornered the market on performances that are stoic and reserved, and that's all Lin asks of him in *F9*, surrounding him with a murderer's row of quick-witted, fast-driving eccentrics. Lin packs the frame with over-the-top characters, over-the-top explosions and over-the-top sets, that way Diesel can be the calming eye of the storm.

Title cards like "London" and "Edinburgh" lend a sense of playfulness to Lin's globe-trotting adventure, executed with a brawny, bombasticchutzpah. The plot is basically an excuse to jump from one place to the next, so to delve into the details would be a waste of time, and the film is far more engaging when all semblance of narrative is thrown out the window.

Besides, action movies don't need storylines, so long as they wow us. The best moments in *F9* are the ones where Diesel is driving off a cliff or Cena is zipping through traffic in London, followed by what seems like half the city's police squad. The next installment, *Fast 10: Your Seat Belts* (or whatever they're going to call it), is going to have a hard time topping this ballet of bombast.

– By Asher Luberto

THE HITMAN'S WIFE'S BODYGUARD

The first thought that might run through your aching head as you slog through the insipid action/comedy sequel to *The Hitman's Bodyguard* is that Hollywood has reached a new low. The original was mindless, but at least there was a sliver of humor and an interesting chemistry between its stars. Not this time. Oh boy. The original was like *Citizen Kane* compared to its successor.

The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard's (sigh, the title alone) is not only dreadful, but deeply depressing. If this is the trajectory that Hollywood continues to take, we're in for a long road of shallow characterization, racial stereotyping, nauseating action sequences and

ENTERTAINMENT



The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard -
Lionsgate Films

flat jokes that make your drunk uncle look like a comedian. This is the movie we'd be forced to watch if the robots in *The Terminator* won the war against humanity.

Ryan Reynolds is back as softie bodyguard, Michael Bryce (you see, he's undergone therapy and is taking a sabbatical from killing – ho ho ho, hilarious). He's hired to protect Samuel L. Jackson's Darius Kincaid, but he's also protecting Darius' wife, Sonia, played by Salma Hayek in full screech mode. Bryce accompanies his cohorts on a mission to take down a Greek billionaire (Antonio Banderas) who plans to utilize a deep-sea drill with a computer virus that will destroy Europe's internet. Or something like that. If the filmmakers don't care about the story, why should we?

Jackson looks like he's falling asleep and collecting a paycheck at the same time, while Reynolds can't stop mugging and chipping away at his inner goofball as if he's sculpting the dumbest character in movie history. Hayek looks fantastic, but she exhibits the nuance of an MMA fighter. The action scenes are cartoonish to the point of futility. In fact, this movie is so noisy, you wonder what grates more, the continuous gunshots and explosions or paper-thin characters yelling at each other about absolutely nothing. Take the scene where Michael and Darius walk down a hall arguing about something, only to be interrupted by assassins who they shoot in the head with a shrugging ease before continuing to bicker. It's like the high school bully's version of clever.

The filmmakers behind this debacle are obvious disciples to the Michael

Bay school of storytelling, a doctrine that believes you shouldn't spend any time formulating characters in fear that your audience will get bored, so you lob grenades of frenetic action scenes and tedious jokes at them until they're numb and stupefied, or just plain stupid. Traditionally, there have been plenty of good action comedies with empathetic, full-blooded protagonists. Why has that become a lost art?

What director Patrick Hughes (returning from the first *Hitman*) doesn't understand is that action sequences, taken on their own merit, are incredibly dull, unless you care about the players involved. And in this case, we don't care at all. In fact, you hope they get caught in the crossfire so you can go home and stream something substantial. Sadly, *this is why* Netflix and Amazon Prime are winning the war in entertainment.

When it comes to blatantly dumb, Adderall-induced garbage like this, you can only hide behind words like "escapism" and "entertainment" for so long (if two words ever defined relativism, these would suffice). *The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard* isn't just plain bad, it's inherently cruel. These so-called "heroes" shoot people with such passivity and lack of soul, you wonder where the heroism exists. After watching God knows how many millions of dollars invested in a movie about vapid assassins and hundreds of people getting shot in the head with their brains splattered on the wall, you wonder if Hollywood should stop speaking out against the NRA and just take a cold, hard look in the mirror.

– By Chad Byrnes

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MUSIC

AMAI MAGIC

SINGER/SONGWRITER WILLA AMAI TAKES GREAT STRIDES TOWARDS SUCCESS.

BY BRETT CALLWOOD



PHOTO BY AMANDA DEMME

At just 17 years old, SoCal singer and songwriter Willa Amai is making great strides towards bonafide stardom.

Both musically and in conversation, she displays a maturity that utterly belies her tender years – raw and open qualities that are at once relatable and impressive. Credit is due to herself, her family, and mentor Linda Perry.

“I met Linda through a mutual friend,” Amai says. “She set up this meeting with Linda, and all it was supposed to be was that Linda would give me a pat on the back and say, ‘It’s a hard business but you’ll be fine.’ Then we would go our separate ways. But I played a song for her, and after sitting very silently for a while she finally told me to come back in two months with five songs. I came back in two months with six songs, and I played them for her at her studio. She came out of the booth and she was crying.”

Perry was impressed, and wanted to record the tunes. So two weeks later, when Amai hit spring break, she returned with seven more songs and they recorded the 13 song album.

“She let me be me,” Amai says. “If I wanted any other instruments on it I had to learn the parts. She sent me home with a bass once so I could teach myself a bass part for one of the songs. That’s where it all began.”

It’s just reward for a young musician who has been singing for as long as she can remember. Describing herself as a “late walker but an early talker,” Amai says that she was penning rudimentary songs in preschool.

“During recess, I would walk around the perimeter of the playground and sing made-up songs,” she says. “But I started playing piano when I was four. My teacher, even though I was taught classically, was also so encouraging of creativity. She simultaneously taught me how to read music and play classical music, and also how to figure out the chords to the songs I would write. So then the songs I was writing became real songs in third grade-ish, when I would learn about poetry in school. That’s when they became recognizable as songs.”

The desire to create continued through elementary school, but it was that meet-

ing with Perry when she was just 12 that changed everything. That’s when music started to feel like a real career. Now, the world’s her oyster and her current and future successes all stem from painfully honest lyrics.

“I love so many different genres and I really like to open myself up to them,” she says. “But I think the common thread is that I want to be as honest emotionally as possible. I think that the best music is the most relatable, not because we’ve all been in the same situations because we haven’t, it’s because we all have the same emotions effectively. When you strip away the facts, the evidence and the specifics of the situation, it’s sadness, grief, jealousy or spite. So I think the more honest I can be with myself when I write, even if it’s difficult, and oftentimes it is, I think that’s what makes the best music.”

So that’s what she does, and those are the themes that run through her album, *I Can Go to Bed Whenever*.

“The album came out of, I was so anxious about growing up,” she says. “I’m in-between childhood and adulthood, and I didn’t feel like I knew where I was supposed to go. I didn’t know how I was

supposed to act. Who I was supposed to be. I wanted to be an adult. I wanted to have the maturity of an adult, but at the same time I wasn’t prepared to let go of my childhood and all the things that entails. I was really grappling with it. Out of that anxiety came jealousy, anger and fear but also love and joy, connections with other people. You can hear all of that in the album. It all documents the emotions that I went through, in that difficult time.”

Amai was diagnosed with an anxiety disorder at an early age, and music has proven to be a healthy outlet over the years.

“Especially because a lot of my anxiety is rooted in my fear of the unknown,” she says. “Not understanding my emotions is really difficult for me, and writing music helps me understand the way that I feel. So it’s always been an outlet. It’s been a way for me to understand who I am. This album did exactly that for me. I’m in such a healthier place now mentally than I was when I wrote that music, and I think that the album itself is a huge reason for that.”

She was fortunate in that her album was effectively recorded prior to the pandemic stopping the world for a year, leaving her to just deal with the mixing, mastering and marketing during lockdown. She says that she feels she was in a luxurious position as a result, despite being able to perform live in front of a crowd and properly promote the album.

“I was really lucky to be able to do a lot of virtual shows, but it’s not the same,” she says. “You don’t get to connect with the audience in the way that you do in person. So it did present its challenges, but I’m definitely really lucky for the situation that I have been in.”

Fortunately, the world is starting to open up and touring is a real possibility again. That presents its own challenges though, as Amai balances her career in music with school.

“I go to a pretty intense high school,” she says. “I actually love school and I’m good at school. I’ve always loved to learn. So I’m going to high school and taking SATs, ACTs and AP exams simultaneously while releasing this album. Music has to coexist with school because school creates a lot of stress that music can alleviate. But also, school has to coexist with music because school provides a structure and stability that music will never have.”

That’s how level Willa Amai’s head is. *Amai’s album I Can Go to Bed Whenever is out now.*

Be the first to review the City of Tustin's Updated Draft Housing Element!

The City of Tustin's Draft Housing Element (2021 - 2029) will be available for public review and comment from June 30, 2021 to July 30, 2021.

Tustin



**2021-2029
Housing Element**

Questions please call
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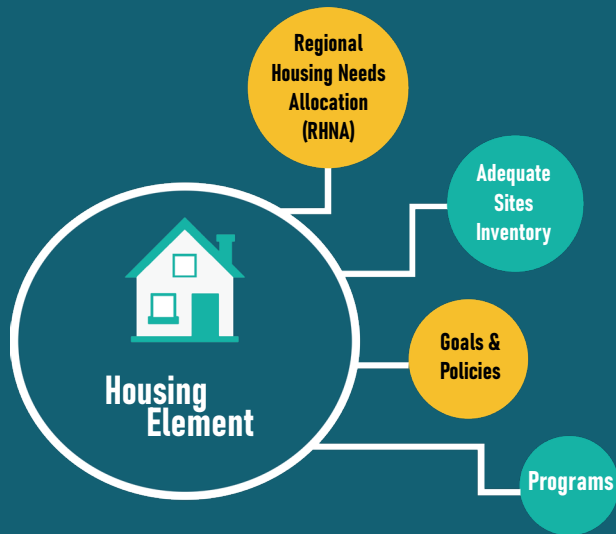
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Click or scan to review
the Draft Housing
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[www.tustinca.org/
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The updated housing element provides a summary of the City's Housing goals, policies and programs to ensure Tustin is prepared to meet future housing needs.



The State of California requires Tustin to update its Housing Element every eight years and demonstrate that the housing needs of all community members can be met regardless of income.

A Draft Housing Element Update document will be available for public review and comment from June 30, 2021 to July 30, 2021. Comments must be submitted, in writing, before 5:00 p.m. on July 30, 2021, to Erica Demkowicz via email: edemkowicz@tustinca.org.

¡Sea el primero en revisar el borrador de la actualización del elemento de vivienda!

El borrador preliminar de la actualización del elemento de vivienda (2021-2029) estará disponible para revisión y comentario público del 30 de junio al 30 de julio, 2021.

Tustin



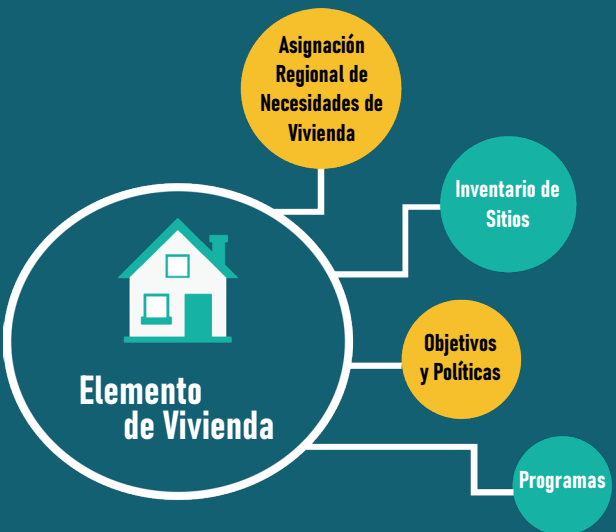
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El elemento de vivienda actualizado proporciona un resumen de los programas, objetivos, y las políticas para proveer oportunidades para viviendas en Tustin.



El estado de California requiere que la ciudad actualice el elemento de vivienda cada ocho años y que demuestre que puede satisfacer las necesidades de vivienda de todos los miembros de la comunidad independientemente del ingreso familiar.

El elemento estará disponible para comentario público del 30 de junio al 30 de julio, 2021. Los comentarios deben ser entregados de manera escrita a Erica Demkowicz antes de las 5:00 PM el día 30 de julio, 2021 a su correo electrónico: edemkowicz@tustinca.org.

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