

90272

magazine

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Calendar of Events

Things to do in and around Pacific Palisades this spring.

'A View from the Bridge'

Performances of Arthur Miller's "A View from the Bridge" will take place at Pierson Playhouse, 941 Temescal Canyon Road through April 28 on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., as well as Sundays at 2 p.m.

theatrepalisades.com

Book Sale

Pacific Palisades Library Association will host a parking lot book sale at Palisades Branch Library, 861 Alma Real Drive, on April 13 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

friendsofpalibrary.org

Ceramic Making Family Workshop

Create and decorate a clay vessel using ancient techniques during a free, drop-in workshop on Saturday, April 13, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. designed for all ages at Getty Villa, 17985 Pacific Coast Highway. Other dates include April 27, May 11, and June 1 and 15.

getty.edu

Book Release and Exhibition

Palisadian Lisa McCord will host a book signing for "Rotan Switch" and exhibition at Bruce Lurie Gallery, located at 873 Via De La Paz, on April 18 from 6 to 8 p.m.

luriegallery.com

St. Matthew's Music Guild

The concert season of St. Matthew's Music Guild will continue on April 19 at 8 p.m. with a program that will feature Boris Allakhverdyan at St. Matthew's Church, located at 1031 Bienvenida Avenue.

musicguildonline.org

11th Annual Art Show and Sale

Allied Artists of the Santa Monica Mountains and Seashore will host its 11th annual King Gillette Ranch Visitor Center Art Show and Sale on Sunday, April 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 26876 Mulholland Highway.

allied-artists.com

Piano Night

Chamber Music Palisades will post Piano Night, with a program that features four hands piano duo and woodwind quintet, on April 24 at 8 p.m. at St. Matthew's Church, 1031 Bienvenida Avenue.

cmpalisades.org

Chinese Calligraphy With Emmy Lam

Palisades Branch Library will host LA Made Presents: Chinese Calligraphy With Emmy Lam on Saturday, April 27, beginning at 11 a.m. at 861 Alma Real Drive—a workshop where participants will learn 24 Chinese characters.

lapl.org

90th Birthday Celebration

Pacific Palisades Woman's Club will celebrate the birthdays of residents who are 90 years and older on Saturday, May 4, from 12 to 3 p.m. at 901 Haverford Avenue during a derby-themed luncheon.

theppwc.org

Baby and Toddler Storytime

Babies and toddlers under 36 months old, along with their grown-ups, are invited to a storytime at Palisades Branch Library, 861 Alma Real Drive, on Wednesday, May 1, beginning at 10:15 a.m.

lapl.org

Palisades Symphony

The Brentwood Palisades Chorale will perform with Palisades Symphony on May 5 at 7:30 p.m. at Palisades Lutheran Church, located at 15905 Sunset Boulevard.

palisadessymphony.org

Think Pink for Women's Wellness

The Irene Dunne Guild will host its 18th annual Think Pink for Women's Wellness—which raises funds for Saint John's Health Center—at Bel-Air Bay Club Upper Club, located at 16801 Pacific Coast Highway, on May 8 at 8:30 a.m.

iredunneguild.org



Think Pink PHOTO COURTESY OF IRENE DUNNE GUILD



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AGES 7-19

CHILDREN'S SUMMER
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Travel Tales

Here is a selection of Travel Tales, penned by Palisadian writers who have traveled the globe. This year's winning tale is "The Hills Were Alive in Salzburg," written by Violetta Hargitay. The winner of this year's contest took home a gift certificate for The Gourmandise School.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF
DAVID GRINSFELDER, VIOLETTA HARGITAY,
REZA RONAGHI AND EZIO PIAGGI




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The Hills Were Alive in Salzburg

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIOLETTA HARGITAY

TRAVEL TALES WINNER

BY VIOLETTA HARGITAY

As a child, the first film I saw in a theater was “The Sound of Music.” From the moment I saw those emerald hills and Julie Andrews twirling as she sang, the film cast a spell that would last a lifetime. I have seen it countless times since.

Visiting Salzburg, Austria, had been on my bucket list for as long as I can remember. Fast forward to December 2023 as my long-awaited trip began with a scenic river cruise down the Danube starting in Passau, Germany, and ending in Budapest, Hungary, the country where I was born. Here we celebrated the Christmas holidays with family before embarking on our adventure to Salzburg.

It began with a four-hour train ride from Budapest. I had booked a stay at the Villa Schloss Leopoldskron. I learned years ago that this was the location where scenes representing the gardens and lakefront terrace of the von Trapp villa were filmed. This was where the von Trapp children fall out of the boat into the lake just before meeting the Baroness for the first time.

It was a magical experience to stand at this beautiful location with the snow-capped mountains in the distance and the afternoon glow of the sun washing over the villa. The interiors of the villa are spectacular as well, and it has one of the best breakfast dining rooms you will ever experience.

On the second day, we embarked on a half-day “Sound of Music” tour. It was led by a charismatic, funny and very knowledgeable guide. He filled our ears with anecdotes and trivia about the film’s production. It was great fun to share the experience with a bus full of fans of the film as we all sang along to some of the movie soundtracks during the tour.

Among the notable stops was Mirabell Gardens where the children danced around the fountain while singing “Do Re Mi.” We visited the famous gazebo where “I am Sixteen Going on Seventeen”

was shot. This was originally located at Schloss Leopoldskron. After years of attracting trespassers, it was moved to the Schloss Hellbrunn palace property and now stands in their gardens.

A special stop on the tour was in the town of Mondsee where Maria married Captain Georg Von Trapp at Basilica St. Michael. This late Gothic church was constructed in the 15th century and is apparently visited by over 200,000 people annually because of the famous wedding scene filmed there.

The journey also took us to the Lake District and Saint Gilgen where the views over Lake Wolfgangsee were spectacular. The introductory shots in the movie were filmed in this area but the exact hill is private property and cannot be accessed.

Of course, Salzburg offers many more amazing attractions. We visited the Mozart Museum, enjoyed wonderful Austrian cafes, excellent food and long walks through the bustling and festive Christmas Market.

The city is divided by the Salzach River with the medieval and baroque buildings of Altstadt (Old City) on its left bank, facing the 19th-century Neustadt (New City) on its right.

It was as magical as I had always imagined it would be, and I cannot wait to return.





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Exploring the Marvels of Angkor Wat

BY OREST BODNAR



PHOTOS COURTESY OF OREST BODNAR



As our tour bus bumped along an uneven asphalt road, a large body of water appeared to our right. I thought it was a lake. Our guide dispelled me of that notion. He explained that we were coming alongside a large, man-made moat.

Finally, after traveling 8,000 miles, we had arrived at our destination—the ancient temple complex of Angkor Wat, nestled amid the lush jungles of Cambodia.

We had been encouraged to visit Angkor Wat by friends who had made the trip some 10 years ago. We were also inspired by the special exhibition on the temple complex staged by the California Science Museum in 2022.

To take us there, we booked a cruise traveling from Singapore to Hong Kong. Halfway along, our cruise ship would stop at the Cambodian port city of Sihanoukville, where we would catch a flight to Siem Reap, the city just to the south of Angkor Wat. My wife and I were joined

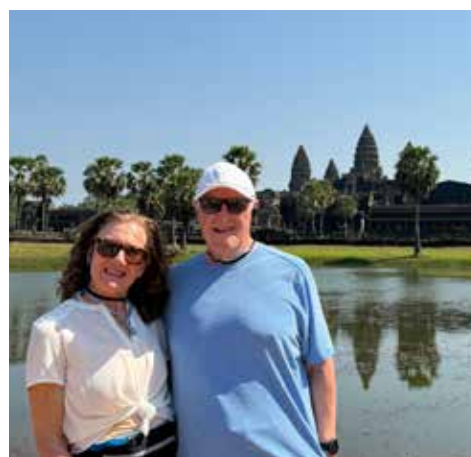
by 32 other fellow travelers from the ship.

Angkor Wat has been in continuous use since it was constructed in the 12th century. Originally dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu, Angkor Wat was later transformed into a Buddhist sanctuary.

At over 400 acres, Angkor Wat is the largest religious site in the world. The sheer scale of the complex was awe-inspiring.

One approaches Angkor Wat from the west. There is a long causeway, called the Rainbow Bridge, that takes you over the moat that we first saw coming up on the bus. Decorated with statues of lions and cobras, I estimate that the causeway was a football field long.

At the end of the causeway, we came upon a long rectangular structure, that is only some 20 feet deep before stepping onto a second causeway, twice as long as the first, taking us over open fields, past two library buildings used by the monks and a large reflecting pond.



Finally, we reached the main temple complex. Entering through a monumental gate, we came into a structure called the “Hall of a Thousand Gods,” which consists of four courtyards, each surrounded by galleries adorned with intricately carved sandstone reliefs. These bas-reliefs narrate epic tales from Hindu mythology and historical events of the Khmer Empire.

Also within this structure is a tall statue of the Buddha, wrapped in a gold shawl,

where we found local Cambodians lighting candles and sitting quietly in prayer. At one point, a monk approached us and gave us a blessing. A reminder for us tourists that Angkor Wat is both a historical monument and an ongoing place of worship.

Moving past the courtyards, we came upon the five towers that are the signature feature of Angkor Wat. Four towers are arranged in a square that then surround a taller central tower.

Called Mount Meru, the central tower, standing over 200 feet high, dominates the complex. Climbing the steep steps of the tower to its upper terrace was an adventure, but worth the effort as we took in the panoramic view and marveled at the grandeur of the sprawling complex below us.

Our expedition to Angkor Wat exceeded our expectations. We came away with the same awe that we felt after visiting the pyramids in Egypt. The scale of the site, its craftsmanship and the vision of its design makes it a true wonder of the world.

In Roma with Nonna

BY DANIEL WINSTON GATTO

It was the last part of our 10-day visit to Italy, and I was very happy and sad at the same time.

I was happy because I was going to be in Rome with my Granny Flo who came all the way from New York to meet us, but I was sad because I knew that the trip would be coming to an end.

When we arrived, we were greeted with hugs by my Granny Flo and my Aunt Lorraine in the hotel lobby. Our first stop was Trevi Fountain, which was made in 1732 and is one of the largest baroque fountains in the world.

People go there and throw coins with their right hands over their left shoulder. They do this because it signifies that they will return to Rome one day. The money collected goes toward subsidizing a supermarket for people who need assistance.

When we got there, there were so many people. We threw in a few coins and decided to get out of that hectic situation. One thing I had noticed about Rome was that it was super crowded.

The next morning, I got a text saying that my grandmother, aunt and dad's fiancée were downstairs partaking in the complimentary breakfast. There was so much! Toast, cereal, pastries, eggs and so many more options.

Aunt Lorraine and Jennifer were having a great time talking and my grandmother was very excited for me to go see the Colosseum. Unfortunately, she wouldn't be coming because it was too much walking for her.

The taxi ride was a bit frightening for all of us but especially for my dad who was sitting up front because the taxi drivers in Italy are very, very aggressive.

We finally arrived, and I marveled at how large the Colosseum was. All around us were modern buildings and skyscrapers, and then there was this almost 2,000-year-old monolith to the past that was the Roman Colosseum.

We were far enough away that the lines of people streaming looked like ants crawling all over a picnic. Our tour was special because we entered through the



“Gladiator’s Gate” just like they did from 105 BC to 404 AD.

We were handed little radio things with an earpiece, and the tour guide spoke through them as we walked around. He told us about the parts of the Colosseum, vendors and how the royals would donate shoes to the poor so they would be loved.

When we got to the main area, I saw that something big had changed. There was a massive hole in the middle of the Colosseum. In every movie about Gladiators you see that there is a big circle surrounded by the viewing area. Someone had decided that part of the floor of the arena should be cut out so people can see the labyrinth beneath where the lions and other predators were held until they were released onto the Colosseum battlefield.

As I stood there, I imagined how the Emperor and 50,000 people cheered over this barbaric, brutal sport. I wondered how a powerful leader such as an emperor could allow this violence to keep going.

The next day, we were ready for the Vatican. As we sat there waiting for our tour guide, we were informed that they would not be joining us. We cursed our luck, and my Granny Flo and Aunt Lorraine stepped up to be our guides, since they speak fluent Italian and have visited Rome many times.

We walked through the Vatican and our makeshift historians

showed us all of the paintings, treasures and architecture around the Vatican. Halfway through we realized that my grandmother would not be able to walk all of the way, so my brother and dad went off to go find a wheelchair.

We waited for a while in one of the very expansive hallways which displayed sculptures, and eventually my dad and brother raced around the corner with my dad in the wheelchair, having the time of their lives.

One thing we learned that day was that a wheelchair allowed us preferred entry, which we gladly accepted. It allowed us to have our own special pathway to the Sistine Chapel where we could view “The Last Judgment” fresco and “The Hand of God.”

This let us see the work of art without being trapped in a crowd of tourists. There were so many people. Large crowds upon large crowds, the room had an aura of chaos.

After a while of looking at it, most of us left, but my dad and Jennifer stayed and looked at it for a while longer. When he came back, he told us how he had taken a photo of it and been reprimanded by a guard.

A short walk around the block was St. Peter’s Basilica, which was a very interesting place. A larger-than-life room filled with mosaics, sculptures, tapestries and all manner of interesting art.

It was our last night and we decided to have a family meal at a very nice Italian restaurant. When we sat down, I asked my aunt, “When in Italy, is an Italian restaurant or is it just called a restaurant?” She could not answer.

Most of us had pasta with truffle sauce that was extremely tasty. Jennifer had branzino, which she said was the best fish she had ever had in her entire life.

Sadly, we would all be leaving the next morning and then taking different flights back to our homes. This was a very special family trip to learn about my heritage, and I will never forget my visit to Roma with my nonna.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DANIEL WINSTON GATTO



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAVID GRINSFELDER

TRAVEL TALES

Put the Camera Away

BY DAVID GRINSFELDER



As we marched bleary-eyed through the pre-dawn darkness, the behemoth creatures slowly came into view. Laying on their sides from last night's slumber, their hulking frames were a dizzying array of red, blue and yellow, a primary color wheel dwarfing the miniature humans standing beside them and taunting our imaginations.

Suddenly and without warning, the beasts roared to life, their cavernous mouths engulfing the propane flames that fed them. Our chariots of fire slowly rose to attention—five towering sentinels of the savannah dominating the breaking dawn. Although the approaching sunrise began to illuminate incredible vistas all around us, we could not tear our eyes away from these leviathans, which would soon be carrying us on a morning journey over the Mara River.

Immortalized in Jules Verne's "Around the World in 80 Days," hot air balloons are a unique and somewhat unnerving mode of transportation. Once our steeds were in their full, upright position, we hoisted ourselves into the 16-person basket attached below the balloon.

Sergei, our domineering Russian pilot, toggled four levers connected to the propane tanks fueling our journey, sending columns of fire taller than a giraffe into the fully inflated balloon.

The basket dislodged itself from the ground, and within seconds we were rising faster than what seemed natural to 10, 50, then 100 feet into the Kenyan sky. Watching the launch field fall away dramatically below us, it felt like Sergei might have more than a smooth morning cruise in store for us.

As we ascended to cruising altitude—about 400 feet above the ground—daylight broke over the Masai Mara, the early sunlight piercing through any morning chill that remained. We imbibed on the views around us, our fellow passengers began furiously snapping photos with huge DSLR lenses, determined to capture every moment to show friends and family back home.

Without question, there was a lot to see: elephants meandering on the open grasslands in the distance; Masai giraffes grazing the canopies of the trees lining the river, craning their necks to within a few feet of the underside of our basket; dozens of hippos occupying every bend of the river.

Despite these tempting images, I surprised myself when I left my camera stowed at my feet. Mental snapshots from this floating adventure were already assembling themselves as a beautiful mosaic of memories, and I felt that pulling out my camera would detract from the intensity of the moment we were experiencing.

For once, time seemed to stand still. Rather than being preoccupied with problems of the past or fears of the future, it was a relief to enjoy the power of the present moment.

It was a jarring reminder of how frequently our minds become so preoccupied by processing the past, projecting into the future, obsessing over our cameras or handheld devices that we miss the glorious, visceral experience of the present.

Our adventure and my focus on the moment lasted only an hour. We began our descent as Sergei instructed us to sit in landing position in our seats, the walls of our basket cockpit now obscuring the view.

As we fastened our safety harnesses and grabbed the hand-holds, I reflected on the realization I just had. Would I be able to access that wonderful sense of immersion in the present moment without the help of a once-in-a-lifetime hot air balloon ride over the Masai Mara?

My mind flashed upon the words of Sean O'Connell, Sean Penn's vagabond character from "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty": "If I like a moment, for me, personally, I don't like to have the distraction of the camera. I just want to stay in it."

Drifting gently toward our landing site, the morning quiet sporadically punctuated by Sergei's pumping of the propane levers, all I wanted was to stay in that moment forever.

Rafting the Tatshenshini

BY EZIO PIAGGI

The Tatshenshini River—remote and pristine—originates in Canada's Yukon territory and flows mainly south through British Columbia to Dry Bay, Alaska, on the Pacific Ocean. It is a splendidly scenic and unspoiled river, offering the wonder and excitement of a true wilderness rafting experience.

To maintain the wild character of the TAT, access is severely limited and is granted only by government permit. (We had to wait patiently for four years to receive our rafting permit!)

There were nine of us who banded together for the trip. Fortunately for us, our group leader, Tim, was especially adept and willing to take care of all of the necessary detailed planning and logistics.

Two of us drove our four rafts from Ellensburg, Washington, to the put-in site at Dalton Point in the Yukon. The following day, we loaded each raft with about 1,000 pounds of supplies, including a stove, two methane gas tanks, a 10-day supply of food, tents, sleeping bags and assorted camping gear.

Waterproof (or, at the very least, water-resistant) outerwear was a necessity to

keep us reasonably dry in the fast-water river environment. A couple of us were experienced river rafters who were able to instruct the group on emergency procedures, including what to do if anyone fell into the rapids (a very real possibility).

Proper equipment and training were of critical importance to deal with any emergency. We had no way of obtaining outside assistance until we reached the take-out site almost at the Pacific. It is extremely important to keep dry and warm.

The first day of rafting was quite exciting. Rapids washed over the top of my raft, and water also gushed in from a tear in the bottom of the raft. I was bailing furiously while trying to keep from getting thrown out of the raft into the boiling rapids. We had an exhilarating time despite being drenched with very cold water.

As the TAT progresses to the ocean, it merges with the Alsek, a much larger river. At the junction of the rivers, there were some petroglyphs that I am sure dated back a few thousand years.

In the last two days before take-out, we were able to view several Alaskan glaciers from our rafts; these included Walker, Alsek and Grand Plateau glaciers. The numerous, fantastically shaped icebergs in



Alsek Lake at the foot of the Alsek Glacier were shrouded in a mist—a surreal, breathtaking sight. (A sobering observation: We later had occasion to compare our visual experiences with photographs of Alsek Glacier and its icebergs taken several years ago. Even over this short time span, it was readily apparent that the glacier had noticeably receded, and the icebergs were smaller and fewer in number. As climate change continues, these imposing glaciers may be preserved only in photographs.)

We rose early on our last day and worked quickly to leave our Alsek Lake campsite by 6:15 a.m. After substantial rowing, we crossed the lake to rejoin the now slower-flowing river. Our take-out location



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EZIO PIAGGI

was a small, dirt landing strip, which we needed to reach by 1 p.m.

Unbeknownst to us, the side channel route to take-out was totally devoid of water. (This area is called “Dry Bay.” How did we miss this hint?)

We had to strenuously pull the rafts up the channel—an exhausting job indeed! As one of the senior members of the group, I was very nicely exempt from this task.

While searching for the landing strip, one of our party, Rex, encountered “the biggest grizzly in North America” and another bear almost as large. I'm sure Rex broke the world's record for the 100-yard dash!

A couple of hours after we arrived at the take-out site, our plane landed. Unfortunately, we could not get out, since the pass that we had to fly over was clouded in.

The following day, to conclude our rafting adventure, a lucky break in the weather allowed us to fly safely back to Haines. From there, seven of us took a very relaxing four-day ferry ride to Bellingham, Washington.



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The Magic of the Northern Lights

BY REZA RONAGHI



PHOTOS COURTESY OF REZA RONAGHI

The aurora borealis, also known as the northern lights, has always been on our bucket list, and we decided 2023 we would knock it off our list.

Ski bags packed, winter gear in hand, we headed toward Los Angeles International Airport on our way to see the northern lights. We checked into our flight, and 10 hours later, landed in Helsinki, the capital of Finland, on our way to the Finnish Lapland.

A two-hour flight later we landed in Kittilä, a small town in northern Finland. We got off the plane and awaited our bags.

Of the two bags, one made it and the other was still stuck back in Los Angeles. Our bag filled with winter clothes was stuck in our home town.

We went outside and it was -10 degrees Fahrenheit. We got into our rental car, and we started driving toward our hotel.

Our hotel was about 45 minutes north of the airport. In an already small town, there was nothing but trees and an empty two-lane road ahead of us.

It was around 8:45 p.m. and we were exhausted from our long journey. About 25 minutes into our drive, my fiancé turned to me, pointed to the sky and said, "I think that is the northern lights."

Upset at our lost bag, tired from the long journey, I didn't take but a two-second look and said, "That isn't the northern lights, it's a haze in the sky."

I quickly did a double take, stopped the car in the middle of the empty road, rolled down my window and peaked into the sky to see one of the most magical, beautiful sights ever ... a light green hue across the sky in a wavy pattern.

Both of our jaws dropped to the floor, and it made the entire journey and our

lost luggage situation seem obsolete as we looked at the most magical moment ever ... we were finally here.

We checked into our igloo hotel surrounded by glass in the middle of the jungle. All night we stayed up, looked out the surrounding windows of our igloo, and saw the northern lights come and go in different patterns and bright colors. We did not want to fall asleep.

The following morning, we started our day renting snowmobiles and exploring the over 1,000 miles of tracks they have in the wilderness. We ended our afternoon skiing in the small resort in the town in fresh powder with a beautiful sunset as our backdrop. The northern lights blessed us again the following night.

What trip to Lapland would be complete without swimming in the frigid waters? The following day, we hired a tour company to take us to a nearby lake where we get to swim in the cold waters and enjoy the northern lights.

After about a 30-minute off-road drive by the tour operator in packed snow, we arrived to a small lake in the middle of the woods. We packed into our dry suits and slowly made our way into the water. The dry suit really kept the body warm, as we watched the northern lights bless us once again.

After about 30 minutes in the water, we came out of the lake to dry up and warm up in one of the million saunas they have in the country. (Interesting fact: Finland has the most saunas per capita in the world.)

Our seven-day journey to the Finnish Lapland was the most magical trip we have taken. Beautiful nature, beautiful scenery, amazing people and altogether an experience we could never forget or replicate.

Exploring Brazil and Argentina

BY CASEY SCADUTO



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CASEY SCADUTO

During the winter of 2023, I took a trip with my family to South America. We traveled to two countries, first stopping in Brazil and then Argentina.

I had been really wanting to go to both Brazil and Argentina for a long time before we planned the trip. In the weeks leading up to the flight there, I grew more and more excited with each day.

I kept picturing the feeling of the Brazilian sun on my skin and the Argentinian cobblestone streets under my feet, while I sat in class bouncing my leg underneath the stiff metal desk wanting to escape the brisk and dreary weather that had settled over Los Angeles and seemed like it would be there to stay for most of winter.

In the late afternoon when we got to Rio de Janeiro, we walked down streets shaded by lush, green canopies made of overhanging plants and trees whose branches extended out like arms. Brazilian locals were all around, walking to restaurants, bars and coffee shops dressed in colorful bikinis and boardshorts, and, of course, a Brazilian staple, Havaianas flip flops.

The street we walked along ran perpendicular to Ipanema Beach, which was teeming with people. It seemed like there wasn't a single open patch of sand that hadn't been claimed by beachgoers who

were kicked back under vibrant umbrellas and stretched out on towels or playing soccer on the sand, chasing after the ball as it got pulled out by the waves.

When we got to Argentina, we first made our way to Iguazu Falls, which we learned is a UNESCO World Heritage site. We took a short bus ride up to the trail we were going to hike.

As the bus bounced along the road that was surrounded by towering forest and signs with notices of local wildlife, a voice spoke through the speakers in Spanish about the trail and animals often seen around the waterfalls that were called cuadris.

As we hiked the trail, it wound around a sprawling park of thunderous falls that seemed to continue out infinitely into the distance. The trail concluded with an observation deck that hikers could walk out on and be sprayed with the cool mist that flew off the sides of the falls. It was beautiful.

Other highlights of our trip included seeing the Christ the Redeemer statue, visiting the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, and eating at a Brazilian steakhouse and trying Argentinian dulce de leche.

I had a great time in both Brazil and Argentina, and hope to one day go back and explore even more.

Taking Pride

Longtime local organization Palisades P.R.I.D.E. wins Pacific Palisades Community Council award for helping beautify public spaces.

BY SARAH SHMERLING

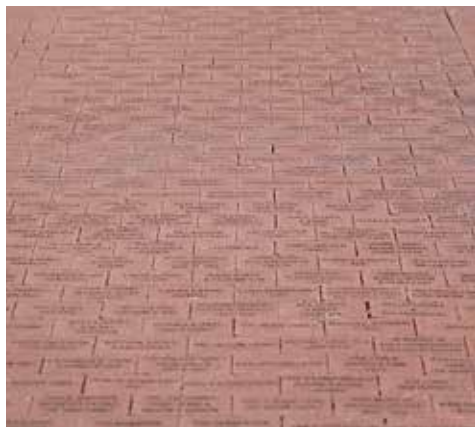


PHOTO BY RICH SCHMITT

If you've ever stopped to admire the bricks along Sunset Boulevard near Palisades Village, noticed landscaping instead of concrete in center medians or visited the new clock tower in the center of town, then you are already familiar with the work of Palisades P.R.I.D.E.

"Established in 1992, our 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization's aim was—and still is today—to improve and enhance the visual appeal of the Palisades, specifically, the environment of the business community," Palisades P.R.I.D.E. President John Padden said to *90272 Magazine*. "The current P.R.I.D.E. board is simply following through with its founders' visions and aspirations."

Palisades P.R.I.D.E.—which stands for Protect and Renew our Identity and Environment—was the recipient of the Pacific Palisades Community Council's Pride of the Palisades award, bestowed during its annual gala in December 2023. The organization was recognized by PPCC for "many years of volunteer work to beautify the Palisades' commercial areas," including planting medians, eliminating "ugly" signs and creating a "Walk of PRIDE," composed of donor bricks on Sunset Boulevard.

"P.R.I.D.E. was honored to receive the 2023 Pride of the Palisades award," Padden said. "For us, many of our projects may seem subtle, so we are pleased that the community has recognized our ongoing efforts."

The Walk of PRIDE Donor Brick program is ongoing, Padden explained. The organization—with support from Caruso—replaced more than 1,500 donor tiles that were originally on Swarthmore between Sunset and Monument.

"Each of the old donor tiles have since been replaced by new donor bricks that are now in the ground on north side Sunset between Swarthmore and Monument, more specifically, between Ere-



whon and Pearl Dragon," Padden said. "P.R.I.D.E., for a short window of time each year, offers the community the ability to purchase new donor bricks."

Bricks can be designed with the names of current and past family members, or have a personal message or nice saying. P.R.I.D.E. has the new bricks sourced, etched and installed in the first quarter of each year.

The most recently completed P.R.I.D.E. project was a four-sided town clock, located at the corner of Swarthmore and Sunset, which was celebrated during a dedication ceremony on January 28.

"My 15-year obsession with installing a town clock in the Palisades Village was worth the wait," said Palisades P.R.I.D.E. board member Sam Rubin, a local real estate developer and Palisadian since 1987. "I've seen many town clocks across the United States and Europe, and I thought that's what our town needs and how fortunate we are to have it on this corner in the heart of the Village."

The clock is dedicated to Robert Lindrathen McBain Wilson (1898-1994), Richard Otto Wahlgren (1933-2020) and

Arnie Wishnick (1942-2019)—"prominent business members for this community whose good works touched the lives of many," the plaque read.

"This clock is a gathering place for the families and businesses of Pacific Palisades," the inscription on the plaque continued. "So until we meet again!"

Other historical projects, dating back to the founding of Palisades P.R.I.D.E., include: a "complete facelift of the west-side of Monument" (stretching from Swarthmore to Bashford); renovation of Sunset from Monument to Gelson's; the installation of a new kitchen at Los Angeles Fire Department Station 69; and a \$500,000 Swarthmore renovation between Monument and Sunset.

"Many of these projects included substantial landscaping plans, the adding and/or replacing trees, the replacement of buckled sidewalks, installing benches and trash receptacles, and the installation of lampposts with hanging flower baskets," Padden added.

Looking to the future, Palisades P.R.I.D.E. is focused on existing assets and completed projects, as well as implementing a "very large 10-phase 'Village



PHOTOS BY STEVE GALLUZZO

VISION' project."

"We are constantly monitoring, maintaining and upgrading all of the street medians that we oversee and are stewards for," Padden explained. "We have been able to accomplish the planning of, planting and maintaining of these medians over time via the LA City 'Adopt - A - Median Program' for multiple medians."

This includes three medians near Sunset at Chautauqua, a triangle median on Monument at Sunset, Marquez at Sunset triangle median, a median on Sunset east of Temescal, and more.

"Other assets we monitor and maintain are multiple brown iron benches and a few stone benches throughout town," Padden continued. "We replace them if they rust out. We just recently replaced the inserts of three large stone benches with new iron seat inserts. We also have multiple brown iron trash receptacles throughout town that we maintain (replace if they rust out) but also pay to have emptied on a weekly basis."

The 10-phase "Village VISION" project, which has been in the works since 2018, Padden explained, is focused on updating the public domain—including streets, curbs, crosswalks, sidewalks, tree wells, lampposts and street furniture—within the Palisades Business District.

"It will require a large fundraising effort from various LA City entities and from our own community," Padden explained. "Our initial goal is to implement just Phase 1 as a test trial for the other phases and go from there."

In addition to Padden and Rubin, Palisades P.R.I.D.E. board members include Vice President David Peterson, Treasurer Wally Hastings, Secretary Bruce Schwartz and Geoff Shelden.

For additional information, or to make a donation to support Palisades P.R.I.D.E.'s ongoing efforts, visit palisadespride.com.

Educational Institutions

BY LILY TINOCO

From ancient art to tours of Will Rogers' ranch house, Pacific Palisades offers a diverse array of educational programming throughout the year.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GETTY



PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS MANN HOUSE



PHOTO COURTESY OF WILL ROGERS STATE HISTORIC PARK

Four-thousand years of ancient art—from the Stone Age to the Roman Empire. The former home of a Nobel Prize-winning novelist. Tours of Will Rogers' ranch house.

All of this is available for the community to visit, right here in Pacific Palisades, from Castellammare to The Riviera. Here's a look at various local offerings, oftentimes available free of charge.

Getty Villa

Described as a “one-of-a-kind destination,” complete with ancient Greek and Roman art, gardens, and the ocean breeze, Getty Villa celebrated its 50th anniversary this year.

Today, the gallery holds 4,000 years of ancient art—from the Stone Age to the last days of the Roman Empire—as well as changing exhibitions

Getty Villa's current exhibition, “Sculpted Portraits from Ancient Egypt,” features art from ancient Egypt. It includes sculptures from “a time of artistic revival and renewal,” in the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (664-526 BCE), also known as the Saite Dynasty.

“Egyptian artists of this period made striking portrait statues of officials as-

sociated with the court and priesthood, sculpted reliefs, figurines and sarcophagi,” according to Getty Villa. “Depictions of individuals made for temples allowed subjects to eternally worship the gods and receive blessings, while others were placed in tombs, functioning as vessels that could temporarily house the deceased's spirit.”

The art in this exhibition is on special loan from the British Museum in London, and it will run through January 25, 2027.

Getty Villa will host a series of Ceramic Making Family Workshops led by artist Patricia Yossen, which begin on April 13 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Other dates are April 27, May 11, and June 1 and 15.

“Create and decorate your own clay vessel using ancient techniques,” read an event description. “Explore the art of storytelling inspired by images and designs from Greek, Maya and Moche pottery in this free, drop-in workshop for all ages.”

Getty Villa is located at 17985 Pacific Coast Highway. Admission to the museum, as well as performances and workshops, is free, but requires a timed-entry reservation, and, in some cases, a ticket.

getty.edu

Thomas Mann House

Nestled in The Riviera sits a treasured historic landmark: the former home of Nobel Prize-winning German novelist Thomas Mann, which hosts programming for the community throughout the year.

Some of Mann's best-known works were written in the study of the home, located at 1550 San Remo Drive, including “Dr. Faustus” and “Joseph the Provider.”

Mann's expatriation allowed him to become a significant transatlantic figure; a leading voice against fascism and dictatorship. Now he is widely recognized as one of Germany's most influential authors.

Today, Germany is helping his voice and legacy live on: The German government purchased the 5,266-square-foot house, designed by architect J.R. Davidson, in 2016 in hopes of developing a cultural center that promotes intellectual debate.

As a part of this initiative, Thomas Mann House reopened in 2018 and implemented a series of programs and events that allude to Mann himself.

Thomas Mann House participated in a transatlantic series on “Opera & Democracy,” hosted alongside 1014 - Space for Ideas, Austrian Cultural Forum New York,

Goethe-Institut New York and the Leo Baeck Institute - New York | Berlin. Described as “four exciting days of concerts and talks,” the series, which took place in Cologne and New York, was led by musicologist and 2023 Thomas Mann Fellow Kai Hinrich Müller.

“This series commemorates the centenary of the reopening of Berlin's legendary Krolloper in 1924, one of the leading opera houses of the interwar period and today a symbol of both the renewal of opera in the 20th century and the struggle for democratic values in times of crisis,” read a synopsis. “To honor this anniversary, panel discussions with international scholars and artists will explore the multifaceted history of this important institution and delve into the complex relationship between opera and democracy today.”

For additional events, including in The Riviera, there is an updated calendar via the Thomas Mann House website.

vatmh.org

Will Rogers State Historic Park

Enveloped in nature and deep-rooted in history, Will Rogers State Historic Park serves as a local landmark.

Marquez Knolls resident Bill Hamm updated *90272 Magazine* on the park's roots in March 2023, after being named the park's interpreter, charged with running the ranch house, docent program and more.

By the 1930s, Rogers became known as one of Hollywood's most popular and highest paid actors, and "America's most beloved citizen," according to the California Department of Parks and Recreation website.

"From his start in vaudeville theater with a trick roping act, he rose to world-wide fame as a columnist, 'cowboy philosopher,' aviation enthusiast, philanthropist, radio personality and movie star," according to the website. "During the 1920s, he bought land in Santa Monica, where he developed a ranch. Eventually, Will Rogers owned about 359 acres overlooking the Pacific Ocean, in what is now known as ... Pacific Palisades."

The ranch became a space for Rogers, his family and friends to enjoy. His 31-room ranch house still holds his memorabilia and things he owned up until his death in 1935. His wife, Betty Rogers, donated the ranch to California State Parks in 1944, and it became a state historic park.

Common activities to enjoy at the park include guided tours of the ranch house, perusing the hiking trails, horse riding lessons and trail rides, polo games, movies in the park, and more.

A celebration of the 80th anniversary of the park's dedication is in the works for Saturday, June 8, with an event for the whole family.

"It will feature a 1940's dance band, a reenactment of the signing of the deed and children's pe-

riod games, including horseshoes and sack races," Hamm told *90272 Magazine*.

Polo season at the park will open the first week of May, with games every Saturday at 2 p.m. and Sunday at 11 a.m., except for holiday weekends.

Public tours of Will Rogers' ranch house take place every hour on the hour on Thursdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is no charge for the tour, but pre-registration is necessary.

The park now honors the California State Parks Adventure Pass, available for families with a fourth-grade student that includes free parking. Fourth-graders and their families can receive their pass by visiting reservecalifornia.com or calling 800-444-7275.

For those looking to delve deeper into nature, the park has a number of hiking trails.

"Hikers can enjoy a moderate two-mile loop to and from Inspiration Point," according to the park's website. "The Rivas Canyon Trail also provides a moderate 2.1-mile hike to Temescal Gateway Park."

Free trail maps are available near the visitor's center and in the park office.

parks.ca.gov/?page_id=626

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A Summer to Remember

Camps and programming scheduled to take place this summer offer everything from ballet to outdoor exploration. Here is an array of options for Palisadian families.

SUMMER CAMPS

Groza Summer Camp

Unlocking your child's potential: The joy and value of summer learning camps.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GROZA LEARNING CENTER

BY TATYANA YUKHTMAN

As summer approaches, I'm here to share a delightful secret with you: A summer camp that combines fun, engagement and education can be a transformative experience for your child. These months are not just a break from school; they're a golden opportunity for growth, learning and joy.

Why a Summer Camp Focused on Learning?

Imagine a place where your child can explore new interests, close any academic gaps from the previous school year and step into the new academic year brimming with confidence. That's the magic of a well-designed summer camp. It's not just about outdoor activities; it's also about nurturing young minds in a relaxed, fun-filled environment.

A Time for Academic Advancement

Summer is the perfect time to prepare for critical tests like the ISEE, SAT, ACT and HSPT. These aren't just exams; they're stepping stones to your child's future. Additionally, it's an ideal period for engaging in college entrance essay writing.

Closing Academic Gaps

Did the previous year pose challenges? Summer time is a fantastic setting to address these areas. In an environment free from regular school pressures, children can revisit difficult topics, strengthen their understanding and start the new school year on a much stronger footing.

Supporting High School Students

For high schoolers, summer can also be a time for credit recovery. This is crucial for

those who need to catch up and stay on track with their graduation goals. It's about providing them with the support and resources they need to succeed, in a setting that's less formal and more conducive to personalized learning.

Groza Learning Center: A Partner in Education

In Pacific Palisades, there's a place that embodies these ideals: Groza Learning Center.

Groza isn't just about achieving impressive outcomes, although Groza has a notable 95% success rate in helping students get into their top-choice schools. It's more about the approach to education—personalized, nurturing and holistic.

Comprehensive Educational Support

Groza offers a range of services, from an award-winning test prep program to building academic confidence, to credit recovery for high school students. Groza instructors understand that education isn't one-size-fits-all and tailor their approach to meet each student's unique needs.

If you're curious about how Groza Learning Center can support your child's educational journey, consider reaching out. A simple call at 310-454-3731 for a free consultation could provide insights into how Groza can help your child use the summer months to grow, learn and thrive.

Remember, parents, summer is a canvas, and your child holds the paintbrush. With the right guidance and opportunities, they can create a masterpiece of learning and joy.

Here's to a summer of fun, learning and growth.

310-454-3731;
grozalearningcenter.com

Engineering Design Camp: Forge Makerspace



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FORGE MAKERSPACE

Are you tired of your child staring at a screen all day and want them to be doing hands-on projects in 3D printing, renewable energy, motors, batteries and more? Then Forge Makerspace—the Palisades' engineering workshop for young adults—is offering a one-of-a-kind summer camp just for you.

Emphasizing project-based learning and hands-on engineering, each week campers will be introduced to a new engineering topic such as woodworking or electronics. Campers will then work in small groups to complete daily and weekly guided projects requiring the use of high-level tools such as 3D printers, laser cutters, power tools and more.

Founder of Forge Makerspace Jeran Bruce explained how important hands-on projects are when it comes to learning new concepts.

"Students are much more engaged when they get to build a tangible product," Bruce said. "They are not only learning lifelong practical skills but are allowed to be creative, innovative and do real problem-solving, and the real-world applications of complex engineering principles become clear through their projects. The best part is, at the end of each week, they get to take home their inventions to show

off to family and friends"

Bruce revealed one of the projects students will be doing: "Renewable Energy Week is going to be very cool. Each day campers will learn about a new type of renewable energy and build a functioning model of it: hydroelectric generators, solar farms and more. By the end of the week, all campers will build a functioning solar-powered phone charger, which will pull on knowledge of batteries, electronics, etc. from previous weeks. By making these projects interdisciplinary, students end up with a much more holistic understanding of these concepts."

The camp is located conveniently in the Palisades at 869 Via De La Paz and is for campers ages 8 to 13. It runs from June 10 to August 23, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with early drop-off and late pick-up available.

Scheduling is flexible and parents can book week by week rather than committing to a set number of weeks. Students will have two 90-minute project work blocks each day with a break for lunch and outdoor activities at Palisades Recreation Center. Parents can expect a 5:1 camper-to-teacher ratio.

forgemakerspace.com; 424-610-6312

Summer at Crossroads

What are your kids doing this summer? Summer at Crossroads is open to the public, providing an immersive experience for students to continue to explore their academic studies, explore other enrichment opportunities and have fun.

At Crossroads, we value community and create an environment that supports strong bonds between current Crossroads students and students from our greater community, as well as strong student and teacher connections. We provide a welcoming and inclusive environment that approaches summer with curiosity and creativity.

Our aquatics program is highly regarded as one of the best places in town to learn to swim. All students entering grades one to five learn to swim. Our aquatics team provides a wonderful safe space for our youngest students in the pool.

Summer at Crossroads offers limited financial assistance to students from other schools. Application information is available on our website.

Online enrollment is ongoing and available until courses are sold out or canceled. Courses that do not reach minimum enrollment may be canceled on May 20. We always suggest enrolling early to get the classes of interest.

Summer at Crossroads runs Mon-



day, June 17, to Friday, August 2. For complete course details, class schedules, dates, days and times, check out all of the details on our website.

We hope to see you this Summer at Crossroads.

summer.xrds.org



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CROSSROADS

Fitness by the Sea

Celebrating 25 years of summer camp, Fitness by the Sea takes pride in being the “SAFEST BEACH CAMP” in the Los Angeles area for the past 25 years, Founder Eric Colton explained to *90272 Magazine*.

“At Fitness by the Sea, children can spend the day at the beach participating in activities like surfing, swimming, arts and crafts, soccer, gymnastics, baseball, hip-hop dance, martial arts ... over 200 activities, giving campers the power to choose which activities they want to participate in and customize their camp experience to suit their tastes,” Colton explained.

Colton added that his staff understands kids, especially younger kids, and encourages campers to try something they might not have considered participating in before attending Fitness by the Sea.

“Because all the activities are age-appropriate and our camp counselors are patient and caring, FBS provides maximum individual attention for each child every step of the way,” Colton added, explaining that the staff has an average age

of 23, with a camper to staff ratio of 6:1.

Fitness by the Sea also offers flexible scheduling options for busy families.

“You can register your child for any number of weeks and are not locked into to signing up for a minimum number of weeks—you pick the days that work for your schedule,” Colton shared. “We understand as parents with three kids of our own that a summer schedule is unpredictable; you can even change your dates for no additional charge.”

Colton also touched on the topic of safety: “Our approach to safety is three-tiered: safety in the water, safety from the sun and safety from others. We make sure that our safety procedures are all-inclusive because a child’s protection is what we care about most.”

Fitness by the Sea, designed for campers ages 4.5 to 14, will be in session from June 10 to August 23, with hours from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Will Rogers State Beach, Tower 14. Extended care is available from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

fitnessbythesea.com



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FITNESS BY THE SEA

Westside School of Ballet

Summer Ballet Intensives & Workshops (7-19)
and Weekly Themed Dance Camps (4-6)



Westside Ballet offers Summer Camp plus unique Summer Intensive programs to fulfill the demand for both introductory and exceptional ballet in the greater SoCal community. Summer programs for serious ballet students may assist in transitioning from a recreational hobby to a potential career path. PHOTO BY ANNE SLATTERY

Join Westside School of Ballet for an unforgettable summer filled with elite training for dancers of all levels.

For young dancers aged 4 to 6, weekly themed camps are inspired by beloved tales like Frozen, Moana, and Aladdin and Jasmine. Daily activities encompass dance classes, creative projects like designing miniature backdrops and costumes, and exciting music explorations.

For aspiring dancers aged 7 to 19,

Intensives & Workshops offer a comprehensive curriculum tailored to each level (beginner/intermediate/advanced). Exceptional resident faculty and esteemed guest instructors refine technique, nurture artistry and broaden horizons in various dance styles, including ballet, jazz, modern and more.

Advanced Workshops for the serious ballet students are led by renowned guest teachers Darla Hoover, Indiana Woodward and Zippora Karz, providing

unique insights and inspiration.

For over five decades, Westside Ballet has been changing lives through the art of ballet. Dancers often grow with the program from young ages to high school graduation. Their approach to life is shaped through the discipline of their lessons and the meaningful relationships they form with their instructors and peers.

The legacy training school also offers daily ballet classes and Summer Inten-

sives for adults, as well as a Teen Intensive for students newer to the art form.

Founded in 1967 by NYCB principal ballerina Yvonne Mounsey and co-founder Royal Ballet First Soloist Rosemary Valaire, Westside School of Ballet distinguishes itself as a non-audition academy where all are welcome to study ballet and train to the most refined pre-professional level.

westsideballet.com/summer



Camp Wildcraft

At Camp Wildcraft we grow creative, curious, confident and caring kids who feel at home in nature. With locations at the Sycamore School in Malibu and the MUSE Global School in Calabasas, our small, adventurous art and nature camp empowers kids to unplug and explore, create and play.

During weekly sessions, campers ages 5 to 14 work on big art projects: sculpted animal masks, wooden wonder

boxes, paintings and more. On their first day, campers sew a pouch to carry their handmade nature journals, which they take on daily hikes.

Together, kids build forts from branches, go on scavenger hunts, play games in the field with counselors and friends. In the afternoons, campers choose from a changing menu of creative and fun activities, including theater, games on our sports field, clay, baking, drawing, fiber arts and more.

Our Middle School Junior Guide Leadership Program creates a pathway for our older campers to bring their strengths and interests to camp and lead activities for younger campers, while building a cohort of peers.

Our happy families return year after year, knowing that their children will thrive. Our parents say it best: "Friends who enrolled their kids thanked us later for introducing them to this incredible camp. My husband and I joke that we are

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAMP WILDCRAFT

jealous because we want to go to Camp Wildcraft! I love that different ages spend time together so my kids, who are three years apart, have bonding time there. This summer my daughter will be a Middle School Junior Guide and she is so excited. Thank you Camp Wildcraft. Your camp is so important to our family."

campwildcraft.com;
hello@campwildcraft.com;
call/text 818-489-3862

Mr. Palisades. Violinist. Businessman.

Technology for You! Owner Ramis Sadrieh explains how he is a “product of the Palisades.”

When Ramis Sadrieh graduated from Palisades High School in 1992, he didn't know what kind of career he wanted to pursue. Now the owner of Los Angeles-based electronics and computer business Technology for You! Sadrieh is pleased his entrepreneurial drive brought him back to his Pacific Palisades hometown.

“I'm a product of the Palisades,” said Sadrieh, who attended Marquez Elementary and Paul Revere schools.

After graduating from Pali High, he studied mathematics and computer science at UCLA while working at the Palisades' Bank of America branch as a senior teller.

Sadrieh worked for four years, first as a computer technician and then as manager at several companies before earning his MBA from Pepperdine in 2003. He spent six months developing the idea for Technology for You! which was his final project in business school.

The company provides concierge consultation in homes and offices, dealing with computer and consumer electronics, including Ring cameras, as well as complete home theater design.

“A lot of people buy the latest technology and don't know the functionalities [of what they buy],” Sadrieh said, citing smartphones as an example. “I provide training on how to use these technologies.”

He can also advise clients on which computers and



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAMIS SADRIEH

electronics to purchase.

In 1993, Sadrieh played the violin for his talent segment of the Palisades Youth Pageant, earning the title of Mr. Palisades alongside Miss Palisades Allegra Piaggi. A violinist for 20 years, he played with the Palisades Symphony Orchestra for 10 years.

Sadrieh first joined the Chamber of Commerce as a member and soon thereafter served on the board. He was president in 2009 and also served as president of the Palisades Americanism Parade Association, which puts on the 4th of July parade. Sadrieh is still serving

on both boards, wanting the best for his hometown community.

Most of Sadrieh's clients reside in the Palisades, but he also helps clients in surrounding communities. Every January, Sadrieh attends the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, discovering and keeping up with the latest and greatest in tech.

Sadrieh is a firm believer in delaying children and teenagers from being exposed to social media, which is why he has set up parental controls for both his own children as well as for his clients' children.

Sadrieh offered *Palisadian-Post/90272 Magazine* readers some advice on how to avoid being scammed: He warned that scammers are hoping you call them so they can trick you into paying for service you do not need. He advised never to respond to an email that thanks you for purchasing an anti-virus or other service.

Also, Sadrieh explained if your computer screen is hijacked with a warning to call to clean up a virus, ignore the message, and simply turn off the computer by holding down the power button for 10 seconds and turning the computer back on normally.

Sadrieh has two teenage daughters, Layla and Aria, with his wife, Sara. His parents still reside in the Palisades and are retired.

Contact Ramis Sadrieh at 310-597-5984
or ramis@technologyforyou.com.



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Pizza in the Palisades

A review after sampling cheese pizza at five different Palisades eateries.



Casa Nostra Trattoria



Flour Cafe & Pizzeria



Beech Street Cafe



Spruzzo Restaurant & Bar



Vittorio Ristorante & Pizzeria

BY AVERY ZEMLAK

As a daughter of East Coast parents, we take pizza seriously in our family, as every Friday is pizza night at our house. Whether you fold your slice, use a fork and knife, or are known to leave the crust on your plate, there's no wrong way to eat pizza. For *90272 Magazine*, I have compiled a list of my top five favorite places in the Palisades.

The criteria for this review was: crust (thin/thick), sauce (sweet/savory) and cheese pull (long or none). I ordered a classic cheese pizza from each restaurant to keep it on an even playing field (or eating/tasting field).

The good news is that I found that there is no bad pizza in the 90272—only different styles.

Beech Street Cafe

Located in the Village area on Swarthmore Avenue, Beech Street Cafe is home to one of my favorite cheese pizzas in the area.

At first glance, I could see Beech Street Cafe's thin crust pizza's sauce to cheese ratio was perfect. The pie was

coated in a savory sauce, topped with a generous layer of cheese, and the crust had a nice chewiness to it.

In my excitement to start scarfing down this delicious pie, I nearly forgot to photograph it. The first bite didn't disappoint, and the slice didn't last long.

This pie definitely reminds you of one you would find on the East Coast, and that's hard to do in LA.

Flour Cafe & Pizzeria

A semi-recent addition to the Palisades, Flour Cafe & Pizzeria, located on Via De La Paz near Palisades Charter Elementary School, is a must-try for any East Coast transplants.

Contrary to other pies I tested, when I first bit into this slice, the crust was the crispiest of them all, like a true slice of New York pizza. The sauce is sweet but the hints of acidity from the tomatoes shine through.

Finally, if you prefer a thinner layer of cheese on your pizza (meaning less cheese pull) this is the place for you. Another notable feature I appreciated was how both the sauce and cheese filled the whole pizza, not leaving much bare crust at the

pie's edge.

Definitely a new go-to place for my family.

Casa Nostra Trattoria

A neighborhood staple, Casa Nostra Trattoria serves a pie with one of the thinner crusts, and instead of a crispy crust, it has some chew to it.

The sauce was very flavorful—less sweet than others—with hints of acidity from the tomatoes, as well as notes of basil and other seasonings. The mozzarella had a nice bite to it, making it distinguishable against the rest as well.

The pie wasn't your classic East Coast size, but more of a trattoria size, which meant it required more than one pie to feed my pizza-loving family.

Spruzzo Restaurant & Bar

A convenient Italian eatery for those in The Highlands, Spruzzo Restaurant & Bar features a sprawling menu that includes a variety of pizzas—but I went straight for the cheese.

The dough was soft and chewy, and the sauce was savory, almost salty, but in a good way. The cheese pull was not as

accentuated as I like, but once I took a bite, all was forgiven.

Overall, this was a delicious pizza thanks to its perfect ratio of sauce to cheese to crust. I can't wait to try some of the other pizzas they offer.

Vittorio Ristorante & Pizzeria

This family-owned pizzeria has a cozy East Coast vibe. This pizza dough is thick with a nice crunch from the inside out.

It was piping hot when I opened the box, so I had to use a fork and knife to dive in. The sauce was sweet and delicious, and there was a copious amount of melted mozzarella, which led to a great cheese pull.

This was definitely one of the thicker slices of pizza on my roster, so if you like your pizza extra cheesy and doughy, this is your go-to for pizza night.

Whether you like your pizza crust thin or doughy, your sauce sweet or savory, and your cheese pull-y or not, I hope I've helped you find your favorite pizza in the Palisades. Added bonus for me: This turned into a fun family project, taste-testing our favorite food around town.

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