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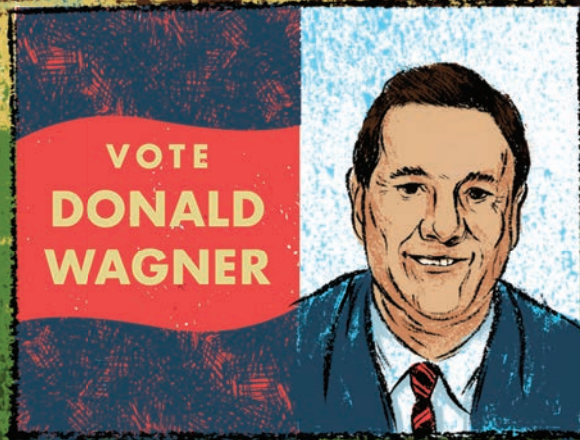
# IRVINE WEEKLY

## THE RACE FOR THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR



A campaign sign for Loretta Sanchez. It features a stylized illustration of her face on the left, set against a background of red and white horizontal stripes. To the right of the illustration, the text reads "LORETTA SANCHEZ" in large, bold, blue letters, with "FOR SUPERVISOR" in smaller, white letters below it.

**LORETTA SANCHEZ**  
FOR SUPERVISOR



A campaign sign for Donald Wagner. It features a stylized illustration of his face on the right, set against a light blue background. To the left of the illustration, the text reads "VOTE DONALD WAGNER" in bold, yellow letters.

VOTE  
**DONALD WAGNER**



A campaign sign for Kris Murray. It features a stylized illustration of her face on the left, set against a blue background with white stars. To the right of the illustration, the text reads "elect KRIS MURRAY" in white letters, with "elect" in a smaller font.

elect **KRIS MURRAY**



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FEBRUARY 20, 2019 · No. 9

## CONTENTS



### NEWS...3

O.C. Election Preview: Third District Supervisor.  
BY BRIAN CALLE

### NEWS...6

Lunar New Year celebration brings together neighbors and community. BY NICK WALKER

### FOOD...7

Brazilian and Latin dishes worth the drive from L.A. to Irvine. BY MICHAEL COOPER

### MUSIC...9

Upcoming festival combines music, tattoos and cars at the O.C. Fairgrounds. BY SCOTT FEINBLATT

### ENTERTAINMENT...15

Irvine Park Railroad is fun for the entire family.  
BY RYAN NAJJAR

### ART...19

Two years after his untimely death, artist continues to inspire. BY EVAN SENN

ON COVER: Illustration by Chris Thornock

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## INSIDE THE POLITICS BEHIND THE RACE FOR THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR



### ANALYSIS: DOES THE BOS RACE PORTEND 2020 ELECTION?

BY: BRIAN CALLE

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE CANDIDATES

**E**lection season isn't yet over for part of Orange County, which, on March 12 will elect a new member to the Orange County Board of Supervisors for the Third District. While the winner of the election will represent portions of Irvine, Mission Viejo and Anaheim Hills as well as Orange, Tustin,

North Tustin, Yorba Linda, Villa Park and some of unincorporated O.C., the stakes and political ramifications are much greater.

The reason this particular race is so consequential is because it is a showdown between the county's most prominent Democrat for the last two decades

— Loretta Sanchez — and the county's GOP, still reeling from its worst-ever performance in an election last November: The OCGOP lost all of four of its seats in Congress and two state representatives; one in the state Assembly and one in the state Senate.

Normally, a county supervisorial race

would not make national headlines, but this one very likely could. To some, it would be a confirmation of the narrative that many on the national media circuit have propagated: Orange County is now a blue (Democrat) county or, at the very least, it is now a purple county. That narrative would be par-

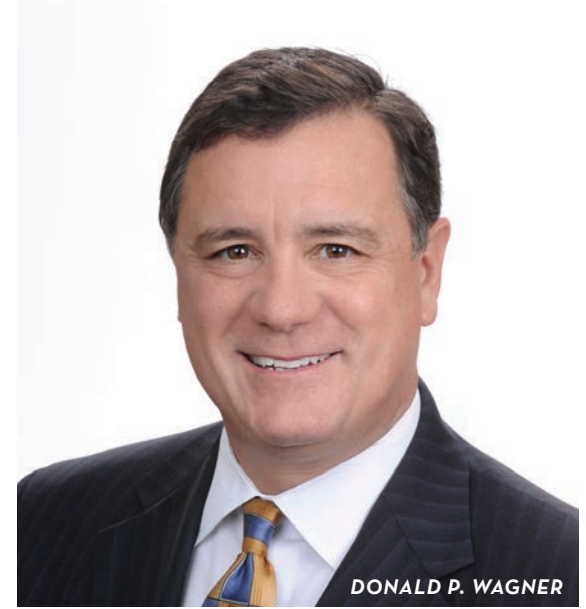




LORETTA SANCHEZ



KRIS MURRAY



DONALD P. WAGNER

ticularly compelling should Sanchez, a former long-serving Democratic congresswoman, win the race.

In many ways, Sanchez is the modern matriarch of O.C. Democrats. At a time when Orange County was overwhelmingly a red county, she broke through to narrowly defeat longtime Republican congressman Bob Dornan in 1996. She held onto the seat for 20 years with consistent formidable challenges from Republican candidates until she retired to run for U.S. Senate in 2016. If Loretta were to win the Third District supervisorial race it would be highly symbolic and cast further doubt on the dominance of the Republican Party in Orange County.

Many political observers believe Sanchez is the frontrunner in the race. That is not simply a byproduct of her name recognition or the momentum Democrats in the community have stemming from November's election victories. It's also because local Democrats were able to coalesce around Loretta and eliminate any other challenges from well-known Orange County Democrats. Most notably, former Irvine Mayor Beth Krom withdrew from the supervisorial race. That leaves one prominent Democrat in the race: Loretta Sanchez.

Orange County Republicans, on the other hand, tried to clear the field and coalesce around one candidate but were unsuccessful. Two prominent Republicans are running for the Board of Supervisors against Sanchez: Irvine Mayor Don Wagner and former Anaheim city councilwoman Kris Murray.

Wagner ought to be the frontrunner in this election given that Irvine voters make up 33 percent of the district's elec-

torate; he has substantial name recognition as a former state assemblyman for the area; he was once a candidate for state Senate; and is a former elected member of the South Orange County Community College board. Yet the question remains, will he and Murray split the Republican vote, paving the way for an easier victory for Sanchez and Democrats.

Local GOP leaders were able to successfully convince other prominent Republicans to get out of the race. But the presence of just two on the ballot may be enough to tilt the scales. Some GOP leaders have actively encouraged Murray to leave the race to no avail. The efforts have caused some rancor and infighting between various Republicans.

One of the areas of contention is a website launched to criticize Murray for her time on the Anaheim City Council. The website, EnoughMurray.com, was funded by Howard Ahmanson. In a terse email exchange between some local Republican donors, the former Anaheim councilwoman fired back,

stating the efforts will further "divide and marginalize" the local GOP. "We don't have a fighting chance until we stop attacking each other and start working together to rebuild the party," Murray wrote. "It's time to reach out in good faith to those who've abandoned the OCGOP in large part, due to the bully tactics witnessed in this effort to force a lifelong Republican out of the race."

The difference between the Democrat and Republican efforts to clear the field and unite behind one candidate was that the Democrats were able to successfully achieve their goal while Republicans were not – and the Democrats were able to do so quietly without the spat pouring into public view.

Further complicating matters was that many influential local right-leaning politic groups opted to endorse and support candidates without an interview process, or even the appearance of one, causing more resentment and conflict.

The inability of the local GOP to clear the field of prominent Republicans perhaps foreshadows challenges the party will face in 2020 when they seek to retake the congressional and state

legislative seats they lost last year. If Orange County Republicans cannot unite for a special election for the county board of supervisors, can they unite for the bigger elections in 2020? We will have to wait and see.

In the meantime, voters in the Third District have three very viable candidates to choose from all of whom offer different assets for the county board:

Don Wagner has been a steady hand as the mayor of Irvine, navigating difficult policy terrain and coming up with solutions that have benefited the community. His experience in Irvine will be useful in addressing some of the coming challenges facing the county, including the development of county-owned land adjacent to the Great Park.

Kris Murray has deep policy chops and strong ties to the business community. She has also spent significant energy dealing with issues around Orange County's homeless population, an issue that should be front of mind to whom-ever is elected to the third district post.

Loretta Sanchez has strong ties to the Democratic congressional delegation currently representing Orange County in Congress. Those relationships, coupled with her own time spent in Congress, mean she has a direct line to the government body that appropriates federal funds to local governments and agencies which could mean significant investment for the county.

The special election for Third District Supervisor will take place on March 12. More info on where to vote, these candidates and other candidates can be found at [OCVote.com](http://OCVote.com).







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## WELCOMING THE YEAR OF THE PIG

### LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION BRINGS TOGETHER NEIGHBORS AND COMMUNITY

BY: NICK WALKER

PHOTOS BY: TSUTSUMIDA PICTURES

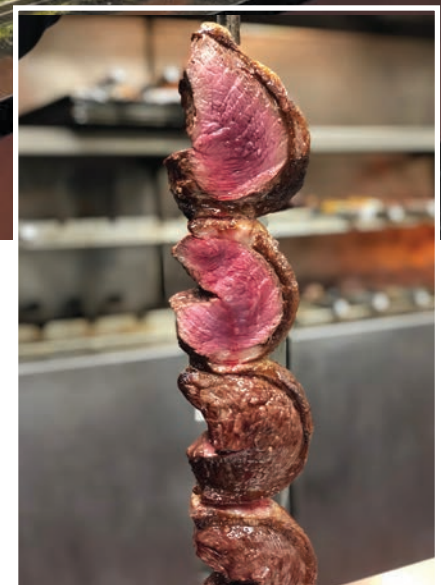
Rainy weather wasn't enough to put a damper on the recent Lunar New Year celebration event held at Irvine's Cadence Park. Despite waking up to gloomy skies, hundreds still showed up to welcome in the Year of the Pig, and they were not disappointed.

"They really went all out for this event," said one community resident, enjoying the celebration with her family. Indeed, guests were presented with a wide variety of activities to commemorate the occasion. With craft stations to make Lunar New Year ornaments and dragon puppets, story time on the lawn, zither musicians playing a broad mix of traditional music and covers of modern hits, and a rather impressive acrobatic lion dance performance, there was fun to be had for people of all ages. The event

team even passed out traditional red envelopes to guests in true Lunar New Year fashion.

Of course, the most important element of the event was how successful it was at bringing people from all across the community and city together. Families from a wide variety of backgrounds were in attendance. For some, the Lunar New Year was a familiar celebration, but for many others, the event served as a wonderful and educational introduction to the holiday. For individuals and families from all backgrounds, the park provided the perfect site to bring together neighbors to get to know each other and become more involved in their community. For those who missed it, this annual event is a marvelous celebration to look forward to next year.





AGORA CHURRASCARIA

## DISHES WORTH THE DRIVE

### RECOMMENDATIONS RANGE FROM BRAZILIAN STEAKHOUSE TO LATIN KITCHEN

BY: MICHAEL COOPER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: FEATURED RESTAURANT

**W**ith the holidays past and 2019 in full swing, most people are trying to eat a little healthier now. In that spirit, we decided to go very protein-heavy in the dishes we picked to spotlight for this month's "dishes worth the drive from Los Angeles to Irvine."

Our first culinary stop is for all the carnivores out there: Brazilian steakhouse Agora Churrascaria. Churrascaria is a Portuguese word for a place where meat is cooked churrasco style, also

known as the "Rodizio" style, which is the specific way the meat is grilled. At the restaurant, the meat is cooked on an open fire and carved tableside by traditionally dressed Gauchos – ranchers from the South of Brazil. Agora Churrascaria is right next to John Wayne Airport and first opened in May 2005 by Choon Cho and Dan Kim, who owned a fashion company in Seoul, South Korea.

"[They] spent many years in Brazil where they developed a love for its people, its lifestyle and its cuisine," says

Front of House Manager Alex Coimbra, who is from South Brazil himself. "For many years the family owned and operated restaurants in San Paulo, Brazil. Those experiences inspired them to bring churrascaria-style to Southern California." Coimbra describes the restaurant as having a "dramatic interior" and says it's "very rustic with the river-rock lined walls."

Agora Churrascaria serves 14 different kinds of meats for dinner and 11 for lunch. With so many options, we've

helped you narrow down which two are truly worth the drive to Irvine. First is the Picanha, which is a top sirloin-cap. This is a prime cut that the restaurant specially orders. While Picanha is a traditional Brazilian dish that is served at many Brazilian steakhouses, Agora Churrascaria's Picanha stands out because of the quality of the meat. "It's served medium rare. It's pretty tender [and] has a cap of fat around it so when it cooks, the fat melts in and it delivers to the meat a really nice and moist flavor,"



# FOOD

8 | FEBRUARY 20, 2019 | IRVINEWEEKLY.COM



AGORA CHURRASCARIA

says Coimbra. Indeed, the tenderness of the meat really makes Agora Churrascaria's Picanha a dish worth the drive to Irvine, no matter how many Brazilian restaurants may be serving the dish in Los Angeles.

The other Agora Churrascaria dish worth the drive is a more unique dish that a lot of Brazilian restaurants don't serve: chicken heart. While the dish is common throughout Brazil, many Brazilian restaurants in the U.S. don't serve it. "I know that we're probably one of the only [Brazilian] steakhouses in California that has chicken hearts," says Coimbra. "It's a marinated chicken heart and it's grilled over our 100 percent mesquite wood charcoal and served right after [it's] cooked." While chicken heart may sound a bit exotic to an American palette, we assure you that the dish is so delicious that it's worth the commute from Los Angeles to Irvine. All meat is available at a fixed price that includes the hot food as well as an extensive salad bar. Adult lunches are \$32 and adult dinners are \$54 (children 6-10 are half price).

Our culinary tour switches languages from Portuguese to Spanish for our second restaurant this month, Cha Cha's Latin Kitchen. The first location opened in Brea in 2009 followed by the Irvine location in July 2017. "We started off as tacos and tequila and have since, over the years, evolved into the Latin kitchen because we have expanded a little bit more on the Latin cuisine, not just Mexican, but a little bit of Spanish and a little bit of South American," says co-owner Peter Serantoni. "Everything is

made in house, everything is made from scratch [and] everything is made from fresh, seasonal stuff. Everything is made to order, nothing is prepared. That goes for both the bar as well as the food. It's a high labor type of concept because it takes a lot of people to pull that off on a daily basis, but we think it's worth it and so far we have been blessed with a really strong, supportive guest base that keeps coming back and we're very grateful for that."

Knowing that everything on the menu is equally fresh and made from scratch, what dishes should you go with? The first is for seafood lovers: the Fresh Seafood Caldo, which is fresh fish, shrimp, clams, squid, saffron-tomato broth, herbs and toasted angel hair. "Our Seafood Caldo is sort of a very hardy, rustic seafood stew, a stew only in the sense that there's a lot of different types of seafood," says Serantoni. "And it's served on a bed of toasted angel hair, which is basically angel hair pasta that we bake in the oven raw so it gets a darker color and then we cook the pasta so it has a unique toasted flavor. And then we finish it off with fresh thyme and olive oil. It's a very flavorful dish that looks good, tastes good and has a lot of variety within. You take a little squid with the pasta, you're getting a little tomato with the clams and then you've got some nice seasoning and garlic shrimp in there. So there's a lot going on and we serve it in a traditional Spanish clay dish so it keeps the temperature." This kind of seafood dish is so full of flavor and not a common staple at most Latin restaurants, definitely making it worth



CHA CHA'S LATIN KITCHEN

the drive to Irvine.

The other dish worth the drive is pretty common at other Latin restaurants, but not in the way that Cha Cha's Latin Kitchen does it: the Carne Asada. The dish is a grilled, marinated skirt steak with roasted potatoes, poblano peppers and fresh chimichurri. "We select our skirt steak, which we butcher, clean and trim ourselves everyday so it's a very flavorful meat to start with. And then we put that in a marinade for 48 hours or so and let it really get a deep, rich flavor [before] we grill it," says Serantoni. "For us, it's all about the flavors and it's highly flavorful. You've got the warm, creamy potatoes and you've got the fresh herbs and the oils and a little bit of a spice from the chimichurri. And then the steak itself is really highly flavorful

as well. So it's a focus on flavors." Indeed, many Latin restaurants throughout L.A. have carne asada, but the way in which Cha Cha's Latin Kitchen marinates the steak and pairs it with the spices and sides really makes it stand out and worth the drive to Irvine.

Hopefully one of these four dishes we spotlighted will hit the spot for you. And if they do, come back next month for four new dishes at different restaurants.

**Agora Churrascaria:** 1830 Main Street, Irvine, CA 92614, <http://www.agora-churrascaria.com>

**Cha Cha's Latin Kitchen:** 13126 Jamboree Rd, Irvine, CA 92602, [www.chachaslatinkitchen.com](http://www.chachaslatinkitchen.com)



CHA CHA'S LATIN KITCHEN





## MUSINK FEST CELEBRATES ITS 12<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

### ANNUAL EVENT COMBINES MUSIC, TATTOOS AND CARS AT THE O.C. FAIRGROUNDS

BY: SCOTT FEINBLATT

**T**he Musink festival, which combines a music fest with a tattoo exposition and car show, will hold its 12th annual event from March 8 to March 10, at the O.C. Fairgrounds. In 2008, the festival started out as a project of Bill Hardy and Kat Von D, but it has since undergone a couple changes in its organization department. Specifically, it is now run by Hardy, Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker and John Reese, the owner of SGE (Synergy Global Entertainment).

SoCal festival aficionados should be very familiar with the hybrid music / cultural festivals that SGE has produced over the years. Some recent events include: The Big Adventure festival of music, comedy, cosplay, gaming, sci-fi,

fantasy and comic books; the Driftwood festival of country music, craft beer, wine and barbeque; and the Sabroso festival of craft beer, tacos, lucha libre and, of course, music.

In advance of this year's Musink, Irvine Weekly spoke with Reese about the history of the festival, how the event's programming is determined and what music, tattoo and custom car fans can look forward to at this year's show.

John Reese and Travis Barker joined the crew about halfway through the festival's lifespan. Reese says, "Travis has been involved, I believe, for five or six years now with music and Bill Hardy brought my company, SGE, in six years ago to take over the production of music."

Though the festival started as a music and tattoo hybrid, the event evolved with the addition of the new organizers. Reese points out some of the developments that have taken place since he and Barker joined. He says, "We do a massive car show. Last year we probably had \$7 million worth of custom cars. We [also] do a number of different contests; we've upped the VIP programs; we've tried to get the best tattoo artists in the world." He goes on to explain the scope of the festival. "It's become, in 12 years, probably the most immersive music and tattoo event in the world."

Given the diverse programming of the festival, we asked the extent to which the production duties are segmented into department heads for the music,

tattoo exposition and car show, respectively. However, it seems much of the programming is decided upon collectively. Reese points out, "It's definitely a triumvirate if you will. The three of us, we collaborate on what artists to bring. We collaborate on what attractions to bring." He goes on to point out some of the distinctions in the roles of the three. "SGE is a production company, so we build a website; we book the talent; we put everything on sale. Travis is the brains behind what we want to do and how it's put together, and then we bounce off ideas with Bill Hardy and come up with what talent we want, what tattoo artists we want, what the right attractions involved in the event are. So, it's a combination of kind { 14 »



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## ARTS HIGHLIGHTED AT OCBC'S ANNUAL BUSINESS DINNER



*The Art* of Business.  
The Business *of Art.*

**B**usiness and the arts were in perfect alignment on Thursday, February 7, at Hotel Irvine as local musicians, performers, and visionary leaders celebrated "The Art of Business. The Business of Art." with almost 700 business executives, academic leaders, and elected officials at Orange County Business Council's Annual Dinner and Installation of the organization's 2019 Board of Directors. Robbin Narike Preciado, Managing Director and Regional President of Union Bank, was sworn in as Chair of OCBC's Board of Directors.

Carl St. Clair, Music Director of Pacific Symphony, led the first address of the evening, kicking off the 2019 theme with a tribute to Orange County's vibrant arts community and arts organizations. "It is our job as artists to give back," said Maestro St. Clair. "Before [my dear friend and mentor] Leonard Bernstein died,

he said, 'Carl, give back. You've got to give back. You've got to fly the flag!'...As your Pacific Symphony Orchestra for the last 40 years, that's exactly what

**"BEFORE [MY DEAR FRIEND AND MENTOR] LEONARD BERNSTEIN DIED, HE SAID, 'CARL, GIVE BACK. YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE BACK. YOU'VE GOT TO FLY THE FLAG!'"**

**-CARL ST. CLAIR**

we've done... because we know what we're sharing is powerful. It can lift your spirits. It can touch hearts. It can change lives."

The evening also featured a panel discussion among



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four leaders highlighting Orange County's high arts "IQ" as a competitive advantage for businesses, which should not be taken for granted, but rather nurtured and supported. Moderated by Dr. Jim Doti, Professor and President Emeritus of Chapman University, philanthropic panelists included Joann Leatherby, President of Leatherby Family Foundation; Emile Haddad, Chairman, CEO and President of FivePoint Holdings,

**"FOR ME THE ARTS ARE A BIG PART OF WHAT MAKES A COMPLETE COMMUNITY."**

**-EMILE HADDAD**

LLC; S. Paul Musco, Founder and Chairman of Gemini Industries, and leading donor for Orange County artistic venues including Chapman University's Marybelle and Sebastian P. Musco Center for the Arts; and Lucy Dunn, President and CEO of Orange County Business Council.

"For me the arts are a big part of what makes a complete community," said Haddad. "Orange County has everything going for it – but there is not a great city or metropolitan area that does not have an arts and lifestyle component, which is what we need to think about... Art is the best way to connect humans in a pure emotional way. And if we're going to start building the society of tomorrow, we need to start thinking about that and incorporating the arts as a beating heart of our community."

In recognition of its 2019 theme: 'The Art of Business. The Business of Art', OCBC highlighted Orange County's history which has taken advantage of the alignment of art and business to great success, including: Madame Helena Modjeska, considered the greatest Shakespearean actress of her time, who emigrated to Anaheim in 1868 bringing artists and actors from all over the world to visit Orange County; Roy Ropp, who founded the annual Pageant of the Masters festival in 1933 to attract visitors to the nascent arts community in Laguna Beach; Walt Disney, who purchased 160 acres of land in Anaheim in 1955 to construct Disneyland as a place for fans to visit, developing into a global media and entertainment phenomenon; and Henry Segerstrom, who built the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in 1986, establishing a new level of culture in Orange County with a privately funded arts center, today an internationally-renowned complex home to world-class performing artists.

"Why did OCBC choose 'The Art of Business. The Business of Art' as its theme for 2019? Because it is the



Madame Helena Modjeska



Pageant of the Masters



Walt Disney



Segerstrom Center for the Arts



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(Left to Right) Jim Doti, Chapman University; Joanne Leatherby, Leatherby Family Foundation; Emile Haddad, FivePoint Holdings, LLC; S. Paul Musco, Gemini Industries; Lucy Dunn, Orange County Business Council

essence of our success in Orange County,” said Lucy Dunn, President and CEO of Orange County Business Council. “Since its earliest days, Orange County has inspired artists, actors, musicians – the creative class – from the world over. For decades, artists and entrepreneurs alike have been drawn to this county for its potential.”

The night was also punctuated by mega-watt performances celebrating “The Business of Art,” including: soprano Chelsea Chaves, Pacific Chorale member and graduate of Chapman University; the Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings, Orange County’s premiere youth string orchestra, recognized both regionally and nationally; and a closing act by MONTAGE! Orange County School of the Arts Celebrated Performance Ambassadors, comprised of talented student artists, praised for their high-energy, unforgettable singing and dancing.

Newly installed board chair Robbin Narike Preciado heralded Orange County as a “thriving region not only because of all the businesses – big and small – that create jobs in the area, but also because of the rich arts scene that we help cultivate. As leaders, Orange County is our canvas and we can continue to create beauty and harmony for our region as long as our heart is in it.”





# MUSIC

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ANTI-FLAG • PHOTO BY: JAKE STARK



ALL HAIL THE YETI • PHOTO BY: NEIL ZLOZOWER

» 9 } of like a fully curated a partnership with Travis, SGE and Bill Hardy." Reese goes on to emphasize Barker's roles in Musink. "His whole body is a canvas, and he's been engaged in the tattoo culture and punk rock for many, many years," he says. "He curates all the artists; he makes decisions on how the whole vibe is. He's intimately involved in the event from every aspect." As far as the car show, Reese points out that he and Barker are collectors, who know what to look for in curating a car show. He reveals, "Travis has a pretty expansive car collection. I've got an expansive car collection. We're into cars, [so] we picked cars that are really special and custom, that you don't see everyday. It's got to be extremely custom and extremely special [to make it into the show]."

As far as the music is concerned, the triumvirate keeps in mind which musical acts are likely to appeal to the fans of other areas of the event. Reese says, "We choose bands that we feel are going to resonate with the tattoo culture." He adds, "And then tattoo artists – we try to find the best tattoo artists in the world to come and attend and do what they do." The festival's history of music has more or less kept to the realm of heavy rock genres like punk, metal and psychobilly. Over the past few years, though, more hip hop elements have been brought in. Reese explains the growing trend in their programming. "There's a lot of hip hop artists that have tattoos. A few years ago, [in 2016], we had Snoop Dogg,

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and that was actually the first year," he says. "Last year we did a full hip hop night, and it has mixed results. This year, we decided to go more with a metal night, and then the Limp Bizkit night, and then a punk rock night. We've got the core Orange County punk rockers and TSOL and Fear and The Vandals on Sunday, and then Friday night, Suicidal Tendencies, who are legendary in L.A. – and we put a really good line-up around them – and then, obviously, Limp Bizkit, who don't play very often and haven't played Orange County in a long time." He adds, "We felt like that would resonate with the audience that comes to Musink."

Last year, the event reported that 23,000 people showed up for the three day event. Reese expects around the same attendance for this year's show. When asked if there was anything else fans and potential attendees might like to know about the festival, Reese again stresses Barker's involvement. He says, "Travis Barker cares about the product that he puts out, you know? He's very intent on putting out a product that is special, and so we spend a lot of time, energy and effort making sure that there's an event that people enjoy and want to come back to year after year and check out."

Musink will take place at the O.C. Fairgrounds, March 8-10. Tickets range from \$29.50 - \$199.50. For more information on the festival and to buy tickets, visit their website: [www.musinkfest.com](http://www.musinkfest.com)





## 23 YEARS OF IRVINE PARK RAILROAD

**COME CELEBRATE AND ENJOY FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY**

BY: RYAN NAJJAR

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: IRVINE PARK RAILROAD



**H**ave you been looking for a day of family fun in Orange County that won't break the bank or leave you in an hour-long line? All aboard the Irvine Park Railroad! People from all around Southern California have been discovering the magic of the Railroad for years, and it'll be celebrating 23 years of fun on February 23 and 24. They're

ringing in their birthday with a bang, and they want you to join in on the good times!

In case you're unfamiliar, the Irvine Park Railroad has been a celebrated family destination in the area for years. Located in the foothills of Orange, it hosts a one-third scale CP Huntington train that takes people on a tour of Irvine Regional Park, giving a special

look at the historical sites in the area. As long as weather permits, the Railroad is open seven days a week, with the exception of certain holidays.

For their Anniversary Celebration, they'll be discounting tickets to their original price of \$2, along with bringing a wide range of games, activities and entertainment for kids and parents alike. Families can enjoy carnival games,

face painting, hayrides and bouncy houses, along with a special booth where kids get the chance to pan for gold. Visitors can also look forward to a live performance from the Five Star Band, who'll be bringing old school tunes to the Anniversary Celebration for their third year in a row. There'll also be a raffle, where anyone who purchases an activity ticket can enter to

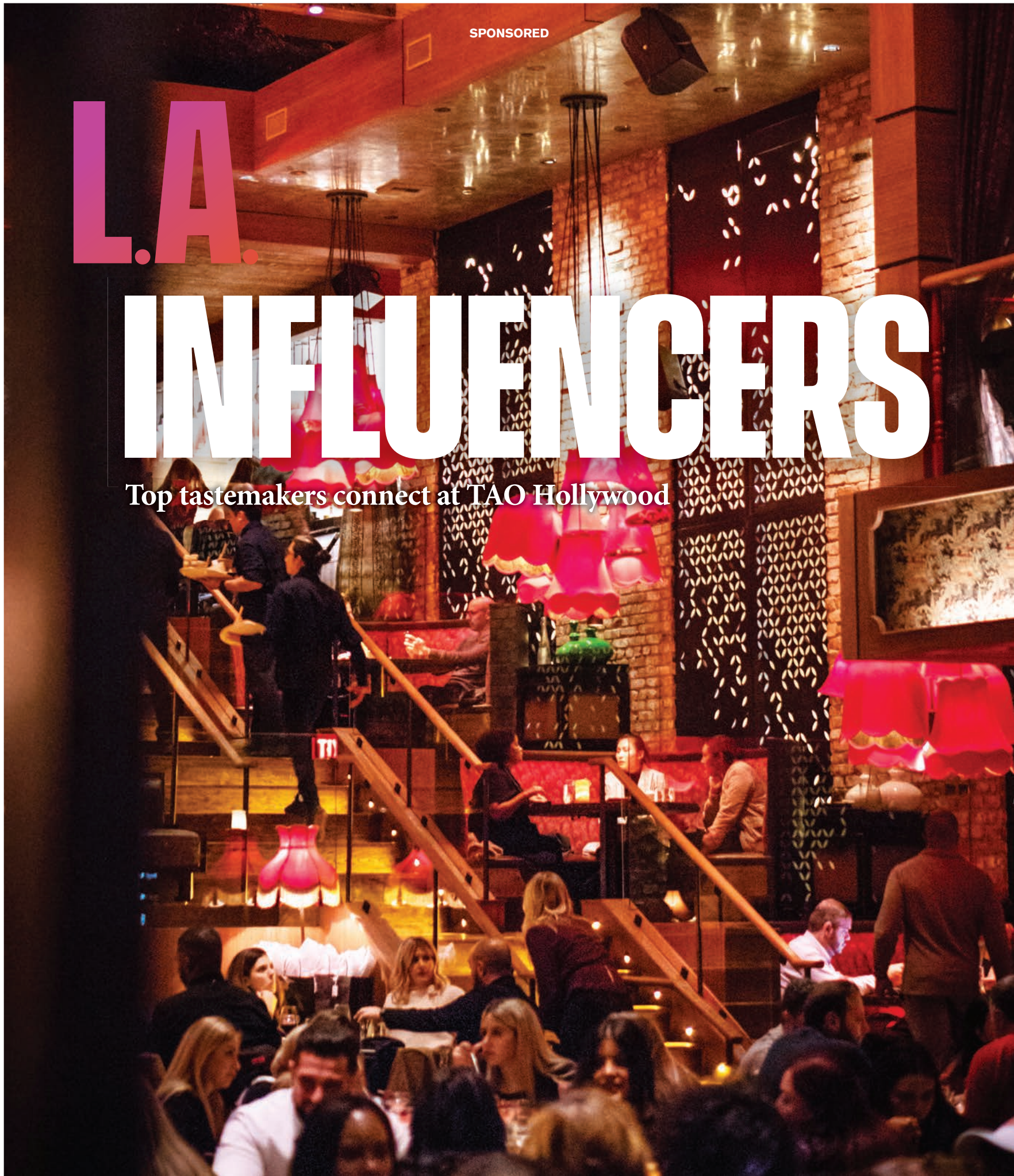


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L.A.

# INFLUENCERS

Top tastemakers connect at TAO Hollywood





Los Angeles is home to the biggest and brightest tastemakers in the world and thanks to Shipt, L.A. Weekly convened some of the most interesting influencers in the City of Angels at TAO Hollywood. It was a fun-filled evening of community, conversation ... and awesome eats.

Shipt, an innovative membership-based grocery marketplace app, is partnering up with next level connectors and influencers to create a community of tastemakers that are culturally relevant to Los Angeles.

"My goal with the L.A. Weekly dinner series is to bring people together that make L.A. so unique, and allow creators, entertainers, tastemakers, influencers, artists, chefs, foodies and more the ability to interact with each other with L.A. Weekly as the platform hosting these conversations," explained Bear D'Egidio, the Weekly's head of digital.

It's also an opportunity for thought-leaders and tastemakers to connect with brands relevant to them and their communities.

"In 2019, you have to be part of the communities in which you serve. That means consistently building meaningful relationships with people in our communities," said Riley Cronin, the manager of influencer marketing for Shipt. "What makes Shipt special is our whole approach is about personal connections to our customers and our communities."



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# ENTERTAINMENT

18 | FEBRUARY 20, 2019 | IRVINEWEEKLY.COM



» 15 } win exciting prizes.

I was fortunate enough to speak with Katie Falcon, the director of operations, to learn more about the Railroad. She's been working there for about 20 years, so she's been with them almost as long as they've been around. She started off at the snack bar in high school and continued to work there through college. She began diving more into the marketing and advertising realm, and eventually entered her current role. Her deep-rooted history with the Railroad isn't too far out of the ordinary, either. According to her, there are quite a few that have stuck with it for the long run, and she notes it's been the opportunity to see the company grow that's kept her around for this long.

One of her favorite changes that the Railroad's made since it started is the addition of special events that take place throughout the year. After the Anniversary Celebration, there's the Easter Extravaganza that goes from March 30 through April 20, where kids can hunt for eggs, take pictures with the Easter Bunny, and enjoy a variety of activities.

When the leaves start changing colors, from September 14 to October 31, you can catch the annual Pumpkin Patch, which Katie says is their biggest event of the year. Guests can get lost in the hay maze, get spooked (but not too spooked) by the haunted house, and see some massive pumpkins at the Great Pumpkin Weigh-Off on the September 21, hosted by Henri DiCarlo of KTLA Channel 5.

Wrapping up the year, the Christmas Train arrives at the station from November 29 to December 23. Families will



get to ride the decorated train through the beautifully lit park up to the North Pole, where they can take pictures with Santa and enjoy snacks before hopping on the train to Santa's Village. At the Village, kids can decorate cookies, listen to stories from Mrs. Clause, jump around in the Santa Bounce House, and play carnival games.

If you want to get in on the fun, make sure to get your tickets, sold online only, starting November 4. Katie mentioned that the tickets sell out within a day or two, so make sure you get yours sooner rather than later.

Speaking about the Christmas Train, she says, "It's a tradition that becomes

a family staple. We have some families that still bring their kids in college to come visit Santa. The park's all lit up with Christmas lights, you take a night ride, and it's really amazing."

With the 23rd anniversary approaching, now would also be a good opportunity to learn about the beginnings of the famed attraction. It began with two childhood friends from South Orange County named John Ford and Steve Horn. They spent their adolescent summers, starting at age 13, working at the snack bar and rental kiosks at Doheny State Beach. In 1986, with college acceptance letters in hand, they took a chance and opened

their own concession stand in Irvine Regional Park. Their gamble began to pay off as they expanded their business, eventually adding paddle-boat rentals to their repertoire. After some time and hard work, with the help of family and friends, 1988 saw the beginning of their own catering business, Company Picnic Specialists.

As time went on, the park saw even more visitors come in on a regular basis. John and Steve's main goal, as always, was to provide them with even more attractions and activities. It was out of that desire that the Irvine Park Railroad came to open in 1996. This February, they'll celebrate the 23rd anniversary of the culmination of those efforts.

Speaking of the anniversary, Katie wants to remind you: "Be sure to arrive [to the Anniversary Celebration] early if you want to avoid crowds, but bring the whole family and plan on spending the day. It's a lot of fun, and it breaks up the day-to-day when you get to spend your day in the park."

Outside of the Railroad, Irvine Regional Park is a history-rich destination that has a lot to offer the people of Irvine and Southern California. Along with the train, the park also hosts the Orange County Zoo, where you can see bears, mountain lions, eagles, foxes and many other majestic creatures. In addition, the park offers bike rentals, paddleboat rentals on a beautiful lake and pony rides for the kids.

Find out more about the railroad on their website, [www.irvineparkrailroad.com](http://www.irvineparkrailroad.com), and be sure to keep up with the Irvine Weekly to stay updated on events in the area.





## STAY WHIMSICAL: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ARLYN PILLAY

**TWO YEARS AFTER HIS UNTIMELY DEATH, ARTIST CONTINUES TO INSPIRE**

BY: EVAN SENN

PHOTOS BY: ARLYN PILLAY

It's shocking to realize it's been two years since local Irvine-based artist and friend to many, Arlyn Pillay, died by gunshot, on January 31, 2017. The Irvine resident was a beloved artist, art gallery director, mentor and a breath of fresh creativity in a hum-

drum art world. Pillay's gallery, the Arlyn Pillay Art Gallery, was a home for creatives, artists, musicians, comedians, designers, art aficionados and disenchanted youth looking for something better. Pillay offered that something better. He created a space that was a

central hub – the only one of its kind in Orange County – for young people to gather, to create, to discuss, to perform and show their talents, and to feel like they belonged. He inspired them to play, to dream and create whatever and however they wanted to – and to work

hard at it. Since Pillay's death, his friends and followers continue to show his work in his loving memory, but nothing has come even close to replacing what Pillay offered this community.

The Arlyn Pillay Art Gallery was a magical and warm place – if you had the opportunity to go there while it was open from 2015-2017, you know this place was special; and, so was its leader. Offering accessible hours for drawing and painting lessons for every level of artist, as well as inspiring exhibitions that were always open to everyone to submit, this place also held events. Weekly drawing workshops with live models, musical performances with local bands, an always rotating shop full of art, apparel and art-related goods – they even sold snacks and beverages (and no alcohol) to all ages at all times of day or night. The events and exhibitions at the Arlyn Pillay Gallery were standing-room only, often curated with a salon-style aesthetic.

Pillay wanted to have this space be a haven for artists and art lovers. He was a talented artist in his own right, attending California State University, Fullerton and then Art Center College of Design on a full scholarship, from which he graduated with an emphasis in illustration. After Art Center, Pillay sold his creations at a variety of shops, stores, fairs, art walks and small galleries. But he saw the art world's flaws and decided there should be a place (or many places) where aspiring artists could show their work, where people



# ARTS

20 | FEBRUARY 20, 2019 | IRVINEWEEKLY.COM



could come and learn about art, buy affordable artworks and commune with like-minded people.

Pillay's personal art practice was versatile and complex. The walls of his gallery were covered in art or art-related goods. Some sections of the gallery were like mini galleries where artists could rent out a small (very small) area to show their work and products. The main wall in the gallery, however, was dominated by art created by Pillay himself. With such a vast array of styles and concepts, Pillay's talent was seemingly endless. He painted gorgeous photorealistic portraits and hung them next to his anime style illustrations, which were next to his embellished clothing items for sale and a case full of his favorite art supplies for sale. His eclectic art style mirrored his image and his personality – approachable,

products, but he made flair – stickers, bookmarks, buttons, vests, hats and pins – all with his signature style, logo or signature, and often with his own image imbedded.

When his gallery's website was still up-and-running, he included a quote on the site from a 2010 interview with Thirteen Minutes magazine that feels more relevant now than it did when he first said it: "My [art] is a little bit of me living on," Pillay said. "[Being] an artist and creating art is my way to communicate with people in the future about my character ... when I'm gone and I'm not here to tell you the fine details of my work. That's the challenge – to make that apparent, and have people discover that on their own."

The confidence and strength that can be seen in his paraphernalia, artwork, words and products were never



unafraid, attractive, varied and just a bit quirky.

Pillay's gallery on Newport Avenue in Tustin flourished for two years until his untimely death. His mother, Gloria "Lulu" Pillay was also killed at the same time in Pillay's home in Irvine, where he lived with his brother and father, both of whom survived. Lulu was also an artist, and owned her own gallery and boutique in Palm Springs. Lulu and Pillay helped each other out frequently in their artistic ventures and pursuits, and were solid supporters of one another, and of many other creatives in Southern California. Pillay was not just a talented artist and passionate friend, he was a showman. His image was fluid and always changing while his marketing talents were on-point. Pillay not only created many, if not all, of his own

misconstrued as vanity. Pillay was a beacon of hope, talent and inspiration. He was an avid supporter and benefactor to struggling artists who wanted Orange County to be a thriving cultural center full of possibilities, away from the high-brow elitism of L.A. Originally from Durban, South Africa, Pillay immigrated to the United States at nine years old with his family. After his shocking death, his fans, friends and followers kept his gallery afloat for four additional months, but had to close the doors for good in May 2017.

Although Pillay's death was sudden and heart-breaking, his legacy is stronger than ever. He inspired thousands of people with his art and life, encouraging hundreds to live more fully, to create courageously, and to – as he would say time and time again – stay whimsical.



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**P**uffy Delivery is the new online delivery website for cannabis with a lofty goal: to reshape the culture of the digital cannabis delivery service. Based out of Irvine, the company is launching itself across the entirety of California, and with its unique branding and corporate structure, it is doing things that no one else in the cannabis space is currently attempting.

High Times Magazine recently referred to the company as “the Amazon of weed,” and their description could not be more valid. Puffy Delivery is about to totally change the game for cannabis on demand.

Two years ago, Puffy co-founders Michael Ng and Patrick Martin, who had already been in the storefront cannabis business for some time, saw a need for a professional, reliable cannabis delivery service in Orange County. The two viewed

cannabis as a retail product, just like anything else we shop for online, and they felt it should be treated as such. Not only that, but with the only dispensaries in Orange County being located in Santa Ana, purchasing cannabis was a hassle for many outside of that general area. Getting yourself to a dispensary was something that could eat into hours of a person’s valuable time. So, they set out to do something about it, and Puffy Delivery was formed. Of course, there are other delivery services currently in the market, but the size, scope and synergy of Puffy sets it apart from anyone trying to compete.

Currently, no delivery company holds the proper licensing to be able to sell cannabis across all of California. Most are smaller, local companies with smaller service areas and often, a smaller menu of available items. Puffy Delivery, however,

has secured licenses to not only sell cannabis in Orange County, but also in San Diego, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco and a few other hotspots ranging from north to south. This licensing drastically increases their ability to deliver to consumers anywhere in the state, while still keeping their delivery time to a minimum (Puffy currently averages about 47 minutes per delivery, one of the fastest delivery times on the market). Having these hotspots also allows Puffy to maintain a consistent, uniformed product line in all of their hubs. That means that no matter where you are located, everyone visiting Puffy’s site will have the same access to the same products, and nothing is limited based on where you are. The company is already in the process of expanding to states like Oregon and Nevada, but for now, their focus is on California.

Puffy is also currently the largest service provider for cannabis media giant Weedmaps (Weedmaps.com), providing its customers with the most expansive online marketplace currently available in the digital cannabis world. “We pride ourselves on working with the largest brands in the cannabis space,” says the company’s co-founders. And it’s true, the site features a wide variety of high-end brand names, like Ignite (powered by Dan Bilzarian) and VVS (championed by Ben Baller). Puffy also just signed an exclusive deal with Berner’s Cookies line, making them the first company to distribute the product. All of the products sold by Puffy have been lab tested and pass all regulations set by the Bureau of Cannabis Control.

The company’s website is super easy to navigate, with multiple ways in which a user is able to



## Puffy Delivery is reshaping the culture of the digital cannabis delivery service in O.C.

sort through the site’s products. Customers can search for what they want by strain name, THC level, even intensity of high. In many ways, the site also serves as a center of information on cannabis, because of the details so readily available to consumers on every product listed, making the site a great resource for both newcomers to the world of cannabis and experienced connoisseurs alike.

Probably what sets Puffy apart from its competitors the most is the company’s unique marketing approach and strategy. Not only is Puffy a delivery service for brands that have already been established in the cannabis community, it is also a launchpad for those looking to put out their own brands, without having to deal with dispensaries, allowing creators the ability to reach out to an audience directly. Puffy is currently the only online delivery service that has the capability of creating

brands for people. Individuals, companies and social and creative influencers all have the ability to jumpstart their own cannabis brands with the help of Puffy. This unique function may be the cannabis equivalent of when Netflix started creating its own original content, and could be what sends Puffy into an entirely different category from anyone else in the game.

The site is utilizing creative influencers from a variety of fields to not only promote their own brands but to promote awareness for cannabis as a whole. Puffy’s mission goes beyond finding success for themselves. Its co-founders want to promote wellness in the communities they reach by first and foremost removing the taboo that still shrouds marijuana in many areas. With their professional, large-scale corporate structure, and the help of these creative influencers forming

their own brands or promoting others, Puffy hopes to further educate and inform communities of the benefits of cannabis and remove much of the negative stigma that the plant still faces today.

When Puffy was searching for a place to serve as its headquarters, its co-founders were immediately drawn to Irvine. “Irvine is the tech capital of Orange County – you can find the best talent here,” says co-founder Patrick Martin. And it’s true. Thanks to a variety of factors, especially the high level of talented graduates from the University of California, Irvine in fields like computer science and computer engineering, much of Southern California tech has been drawn into the city. Being the Silicon Valley of SoCal, plus Irvine’s increasing positive attitude toward cannabis, the city has also become a hub specifically for cannabis tech for the entire country. Some of the largest

companies currently in cannabis are based out of Irvine. So, for Michael and Patrick, the decision to make Irvine their home was an easy one. Puffy currently employs over 200 people, including 10 developers in their Irvine headquarters, making the company not only a positive impact on cannabis, but on the community as a whole.

Puffy Delivery is about to become the go-to spot for all your cannabis needs. With its wide array of safe and quality products, its easy to navigate platform, and its wide geographic reach and speedy delivery times, the need to drag yourself to the nearest dispensary has disappeared. For more information or to place your first order, check out their website at [puffydelivery.com](https://puffydelivery.com). You can also follow them on Instagram [@puffydelivery](https://www.instagram.com/puffydelivery).



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