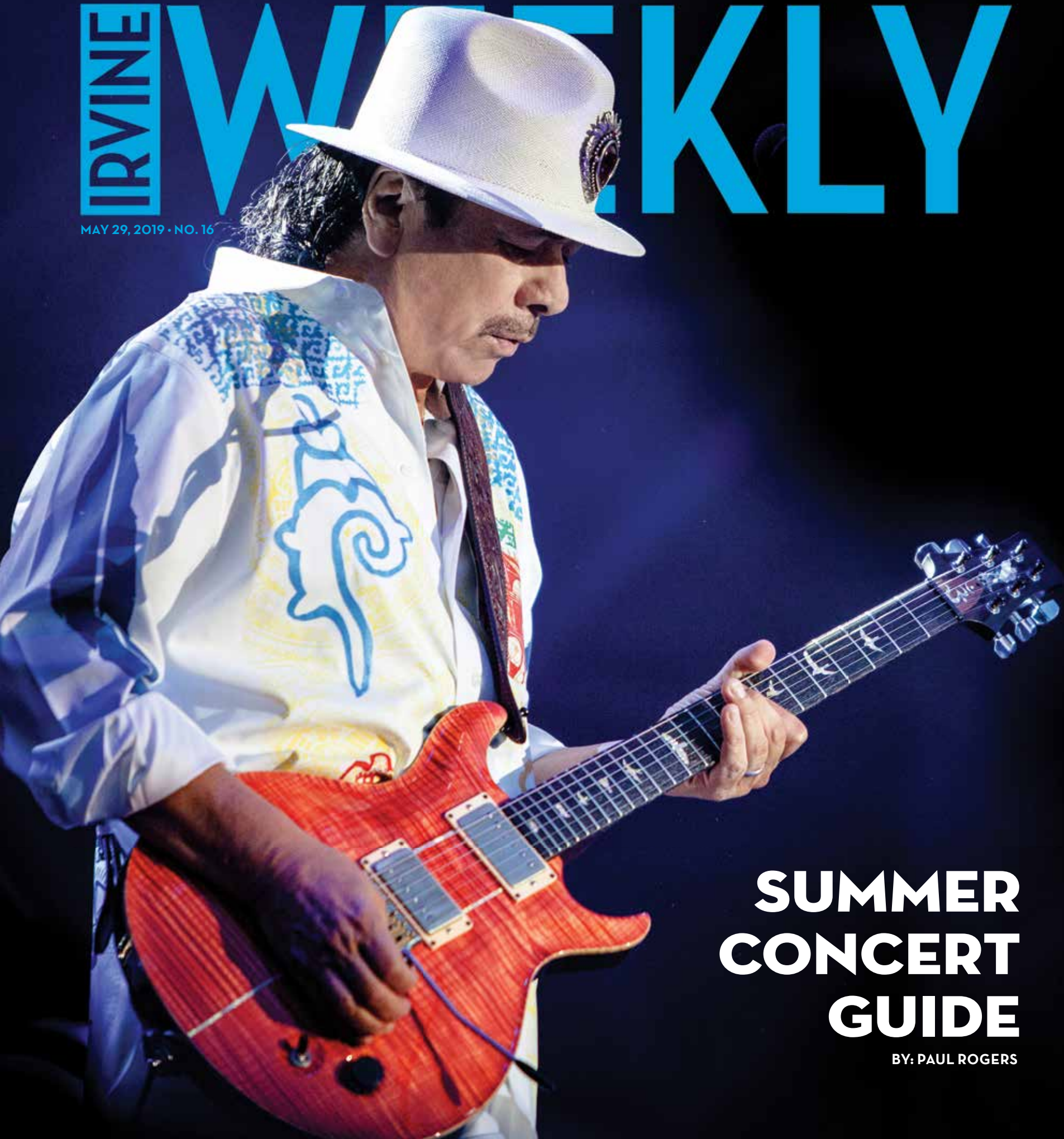


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IRVINE

WEEKLY

MAY 29, 2019 • NO. 16



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BY: PAUL ROGERS

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IRVINE WEEKLY

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URBAN KITCHEN GROUP

DISHES WORTH THE DRIVE

FROM THE COMPARATIVELY DELICATE BEETS & CITRUS SALAD TO A MONSTROUS 2 1/2-LB. STEAK.

BY: MICHAEL COOPER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: FEATURED RESTAURANT

For this month's dishes worth the drive from L.A. to Irvine, we decided to spotlight a delicious Italian restaurant and a scintillating steakhouse.

CUCINA enoteca

Our first stop for this week's dishes is Italian restaurant CUCINA enoteca, part of the Urban Kitchen Group (UKG). "Urban Kitchen Group was founded by Tracy Borkum in 1995, one of Southern California's most influential restaurateurs. [She's] a highly regarded trailblazer and strong female voice in a predominantly male-driven industry," says Cesar Sarmiento, chef de cuisine of CUCINA enoteca in Newport Beach and Irvine. "Her dynamic collective is credited with helping to blaze a trail for the emerging hospitality progression in San Diego and Orange County. Today, UKG's multi-faceted full-service restaurants double as all-in-one wine shops and retail destinations, where everything from curated design items to award-winning wine selections are available for sale."

The Irvine location is a spin-off of UKG's flagship restaurant, CUCINA urbana, the San Diego location that opened in 2009. The Irvine location opened its doors in 2011, followed by Del Mar in 2013 and Newport Beach in 2014. "CUCINA enoteca's core values craft the perfect dining 'trifecta' to offer guests exceptional food and superior service in imaginatively designed environments," says Sarmiento. Sarmiento described CUCINA enoteca, the Irvine location, as "a modern kitchen, which is focused on creating dishes that bring together the seasonal bounty of Southern California while serving up new interpretations of Italian fare. At CUCINA enoteca, we're inspired by the cultures around us, from Middle Eastern to Asian and Spanish, and we infuse a bit of those flavors into our Italian cuisine."

In terms of which dishes we're recommending specifically, the first is the Beet & Citrus, which consists of grapefruit, pickled kumquat, mâche, chili granola and labneh. "[The] O.C. is really a melting pot of cultural influences, and our menu is inspired by that. In the Beet & Citrus you'll find eclectic ingredients used such as a Middle Eastern cheese called labneh and a chili nut crunch influenced by Hawaii and commonly used in poke, mixed with local area citrus such as grapefruit and kumquats. Our goal is to take these regional influences and create inspired dishes that take on a familiar Italian form," says

FOOD

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Sarmiento. The mixture of these flavors together really makes this dish worth the drive from Los Angeles.

The second dish is the Squid Ink Linguini, which consists of muscles, clams, shrimp, fennel soffritto and arrabbiata. "Squid Ink Linguini showcases the fantastic abundance of seafood we have in our own backyard, tied in with a bit of Spanish influence with the aromatic fennel soffritto," says Sarmiento. "Each week, our team visits the farmers market in Santa Monica to source as many ingredients as possible from regional area producers."

As someone who's not a huge seafood eater, this squid pasta makes me rethink my food preferences because of how delicious all of this seafood is when put together. "Beet & Citrus Salad and the Squid Ink Linguini are two dishes that... perfectly define the versatility of CUCINA's menu," says Sarmiento.

We couldn't agree more.

ARC Food & Libations

From Italy we move onto a steakhouse with a twist. ARC Food & Libations has delicious meat and a great atmosphere that definitely makes it worth the drive

from L.A. Arc is a "wood-burning American steakhouse and craft cocktail bar with on point ambiance and service," says co-owner Marin von Blöm (Marin's husband is the co-owner and chef, Noah von Blöm). "The restaurant is dark and sultry, with scintillating fire at every turn. The perfect first date spot, we evoke dirty, sexy happiness."

ARC Food & Libations first opened in February 2013. Since then, Chef Noah has received many awards, including best chef and best pastry chef in Orange County from the Orange County Register. The two dishes we're recommending are definitely great examples of the quality that has won Chef Noah these awards.

The first is the Arc Burger. Sure, there are many places to get burgers in L.A., but what makes this burger worth the drive over you ask? "The Arc Burger is a 16-ounce patty that is ground sirloin, whipped duck fat and bacon lardon," says Marin. "The patty is seasoned with garlic and herbs. [The burger contains a] house-made potato cornmeal crusted roll, topped with red oak tossed in roasted garlic vinaigrette,



MARIN VON BLÖM



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pickled Fresno chilies, shaved red onion, heirloom tomato and a choice of Roquefort bleu cheese or Hook's 10-year aged cheddar. It is a massive burger!" Aside from the sheer size of the burger, the combination of these ingredients together really tantalizes the taste buds and makes this burger worth the drive from L.A.

The second dish is the Butcher's Love Steak. Again, there are many places that offer delicious steaks around L.A., but Arc's steak is fairly unique. "The Butcher's Love is a 2 1/2 pound trussed 'butcher's cut' with zero fat, just perfect marbling," says Marin. "It is the outside loin of the ribeye, trussed and filled with herbed butter. We hard sear the outside of the steak to get the perfect crunchy crust and then the interior of the steak is butter-poached. It is served on a huge redwood burl board with our duck fat potatoes, wild mushrooms and seasonal

veggies." I'm a huge fan of steak, especially ribeye cuts, and the zero fat and perfect marbling of this steak makes it incredibly tender and definitely worth the drive from L.A.

Stay tuned next month for four new dishes that are so good they're worth the fight in traffic from L.A. to Irvine!

CUCINA enoteca

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Arc Food & Libations

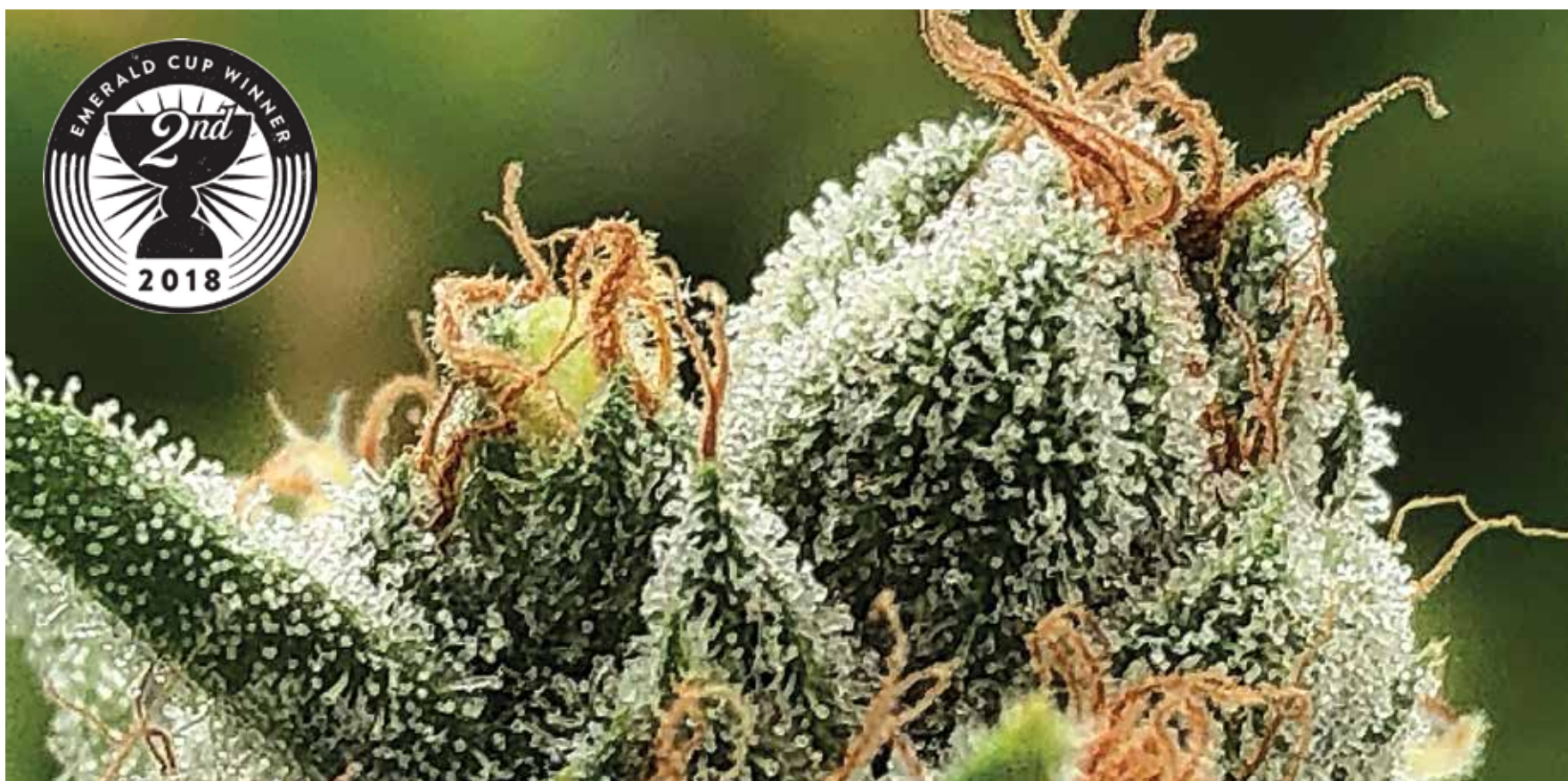
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BRIT FLOYD • BY DAVID MUNN

SUMMER CONCERT GUIDE

WHEN AND WHERE TO HEAR EVERYTHING FROM JOURNEY TO A PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE IN IRVINE.

BY: PAUL ROGERS

Sat 6/1
FISHFEST
w/TOBYMAC,
ZACH WILLIAMS,
JORDAN FELIZ,
GENESSIS & NIKKI,
KIM WALKER-SMITH
AND MORE

A longtime fixture at Irvine Meadows, 95.9 The Fish's annual multi-act Fishfest bash moved to that venue's de

facto (albeit temporary) replacement, FivePoint Amphitheatre, after the Meadows' 2016 demise. Headlined by genre-straddling former DC Talk man TobyMac, this year's Fishfest lineup once again represents a broad cross section of contemporary Christian music, including inspirational Arkansas singer/songwriter Zach Williams, retro rock/R&B phenom Jordan Feliz, bilingual SoCal worship leaders Gennessis & Nikki, and the Jesus Culture

band's Kim Walker-Smith. But, as ever, FishFest offers more than just music, with opportunities for worship, games, prizes, and to actually meet some of the performing artists.

FivePoint Amphitheatre,
14800 Chinon, Irvine.

Sat 6/8
BRAD PAISLEY

One of country music's most consistent

stars – all eleven of his studio albums to date have been certified Gold or better, plus an incredible 32 singles making the Top 10 of the BillboardCountry Airplay chart – Brad Paisley offers few surprises on his most recent album, 2017's *Love and War*. A classic case of "if it ain't broke", the record hits all his usual marks: small-town sentimentalism, beer-swillin' celebration, diverse collaboration (this time including Mick Jagger and Timbaland) and, yes, some

filler. But what's always set Paisley apart is his agile guitar playing and sheer savvy professionalism, which buff even his occasional duds into arena-ready sing-alongs.

**FivePoint Amphitheatre,
14800 Chinon, Irvine.**

**Sat 6/15 & Sun 6/16
IRISH FAIR AND
MUSIC FESTIVAL feat.
YOUNG DUBLINERS**

Characteristically for one America's hardest-working bands, L.A.'s Young Dubliners will play a brace of shows on each of this Emerald Isle-themed fest's two days. While the Dubs' original members, vocalist/guitarist Keith Roberts and bassist Brendan Holmes, are indeed from Dublin (and friends since their mid teens), the other three are American. Their take on Celtic rock melds the fireside nostalgia of Irish folk and shanties with the rabble-raising optimism of robust, punk-tinged rock, recalling The Pogues and Waterboys as much as any traditional pub session. All this makes the Young Dubs feel more accessible and less exclusive than purist folk, which may explain their three decades of international popularity. Orange County **Great Park,
8000 Great Park Blvd., Irvine.**

**Sun 6/16
TRAIN, GOO GOO DOLLS**

Apt co-headliners Train and the Goo

Dolls both enjoyed commercial heydays at the turn of the millennium, when their earnest, singable rock sold millions. Both have also endured, regardless of fashion, even shunning the apparently obligatory hiatuses common to veteran acts (Train formed in 1993, Goo Goo Dolls in '86). A classic rock band at heart, Train were never the stuff of bedroom-wall posters, but their very "adulthood" has served them well, aging nicely while more faddy peers disappeared. While the Goo Goo Dolls transitioned from early punkiness into radio-friendly alt-poppers, their live shows have always flashed back to their more sonically reckless beginnings.

**FivePoint Amphitheatre,
14800 Chinon, Irvine.**

**Thu 6/20
SANTANA,
DOOBIE BROTHERS**

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Santana's storied Woodstock performance, and 20 years since comeback album *Supernatural* put the band (essentially a vehicle for guitarist Carlos Santana) back atop charts. While Santana's classic lineup, including subsequent Journey men Neal Schon and Gregg Rolie, reunited as a studio outfit in 2013, the live band is mostly come-latelies, including Carlos' wife Cindy on drums. As band that peaked at the turn of the 1970s and again on the cusp of the millennium, Santana

prevails as a multi-generational crowd puller. Still boasting two original members, Santana's harmony-heavy NorCal peers the Doobie Brothers infuse this bill with yet more history and nostalgia.

**FivePoint Amphitheatre,
14800 Chinon, Irvine.**

**Sun 6/23
HOOTIE & THE BLOWFISH,
BARENAKED LADIES**

Two of the most feel-good bands of the 1990s are well-matched on this Hootie & the Blowfish reunion tour, following a decade-long hiatus during which frontman Darius Rucker established himself as a legit country music star. Formed at the University of South Carolina in 1986, Hootie went on to almost define (alongside the likes of Blues Traveler and the Dave Matthews Band) the strummy, jam band-adjacent blues-rock that saturated Americas airwaves in the mid to late '90s. Meanwhile, Canada's Barenaked Ladies offered a more lighthearted take on that subgenre, with smartypants lyrics and live shows that, to this day,

feel more three-dimensional thanks to comedic between-songs banter.

**FivePoint Amphitheatre,
14800 Chinon, Irvine.**

**Sun 6/30
BRIT FLOYD**

While the lately all-powerful "tribute band" trend has spawned acts of wildly varying ambition and ability, Brit Floyd are surely the zenith of this phenomenon to date. Featuring a number of former members of the long-running Australian Pink Floyd Show, this 19-strong, England-based ensemble recreates not only Pink Floyd's epic soundscapes, but also endeavors to at least honor that band's famously elaborate stage productions. Though only formed in 2011, Brit Floyd have for some years been capable of headlining venues the size of the 12,000-capacity FivePoint, thanks to both their own tireless perfectionism and passion, and, of course, the enduring resonance of the real Floyd's songcraft.

**FivePoint Amphitheatre,
14800 Chinon, Irvine.**



BRAD PAISLEY • BY JEFF LIPSKY

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TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL JORDAN • BY MARK SMITH

KEVIN STANIEC: ARTISTIC RENAISSANCE MAN

AFTER NEARLY FOUR DECADES IN ORANGE COUNTY, CURATOR BRINGS HIS DREAM OF A SPORTS-THEMED ART SHOW TO FRUITION.

BY: LIZ GOLDNER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: FEATURED ARTIST

On a recent tour of “The Art of Competition” exhibition, illustrating the breadth and depth of professional sports by world-famous artists, Irvine Great Park Gallery director Kevin Staniec talked enthusiastically about the artwork in that show. Along the way,

he reminisced about his own nurturing childhood – he grew up with strong encouragement to pursue both the arts and sports – which mirrored the sports-themed art show.

“My family moved from Chicago to Orange County when I was 3,” he explains. “During that drive, my parents

made a pact that they would provide and support equal opportunities for my brother and me to engage in the arts and athletics. Between writing and basketball, soccer and painting, I learned how to balance the creative and the collaborative.”

Staniec describes his childhood

education in the O.C., which included daily instruction in the visual arts and music, along with immersion in sports. “I learned to play musical instruments in elementary school, and performed in plays, some of which were written by my classmates’ parents.”

He took classes in painting and

illustration, and even had a chalk charcoal drawing included in a children's exhibition at Laguna Art Museum. "My family drove to the museum one afternoon to see my work," he says. "When we got near the museum, there were artists painting and musicians performing outside. I thought to myself, 'this is cool.' I decided then that I wanted to be in the arts when I grew up."

Staniec studied film and media arts at Chapman University, with a minor in creative writing. "Chapman provided a unique opportunity to engage in all of the schools on campus, including performing arts, visual arts and literary arts," he says. He graduated from Chapman in 2001 with a B.F.A. from the School of Film and Television.

His early career included working in marketing at the Orange County Museum of Art, the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles, and the Muckenthaler Cultural Center in Fullerton. He also produced a variety of cultural programs and community art exhibitions at several institutions, including Bergamot Station Arts Center, Grand Central Arts Center, Laguna Art Museum, Long Beach Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, and the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

After excelling in various positions and volunteer projects, Staniec interviewed in 2011 for the program specialist position at the Great Park's Palm Court Arts Complex. "During my interviews, I suggested an exhibition combining art with sports," he says. He finally got to mount his "Art of Competition" show this spring, eight years after that interview.

"My first day working here was in the summer of 2011, during the grand opening of the Arts Complex," he explains. "Our team here programs the Artist Studios, Gallery, and Hangar 244 [all part of the Arts Complex]. Our exhibitions feature professional artists from all over the globe, as well as emerging artists from Irvine and Orange County. We regularly collaborate with academic institutions, community groups and nonprofit organizations."

"One of my favorite exhibitions here was "Walt and the Flying Bull," featuring the Disney designed 'Flying Bull' logo for the Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, along with other designs that supported the World War II effort. Another favorite



ANGEL STADIUM LOS ANGELES ANGELS • BY S. PRESTON



18TH ANNUAL ARTS OC AWARDS • PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN STANIEC

"MY WIFE AND I MET AFTER A BOOK RELEASE PARTY. WE HAVE STARTED PUBLISHING COMPANIES TOGETHER AND CO-FOUNDED A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION IN OUR COMMUNITY. WE ARE BOTH VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT SUPPORTING CREATIVE AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ORANGE COUNTY."

-KEVIN STANIEC

exhibition was 'Painting in the Abstract: Women Inspired by the Masters.' In collaboration with curator/artist Suzanne Walsh, this show explored the impact and diversity of women in the Southern California art scene, while showcasing how they challenge the medium and echo the legacies of the

mid-century female masters."

In 2015, Staniec opened his "1888 Center" in Old Towne Orange, promoting the literary arts and culture. With the mission of, "Building community, one story at a time," the nonprofit publishes novellas, broadcasts podcasts and hosts educational events.

As a longtime Orange Countian, whose education in the arts began here nearly four decades ago, Staniec – also a published author of fiction – exudes an uncommon enthusiasm for the arts in the OC. Through his lifetime, he has seen this area's art scene grow and flourish dramatically, he explains.

For his many successes on behalf of the arts, and for his mission and vision for the future of creativity in the OC, Staniec has won several awards. In October 2017, he won the Arts Leader Award at Arts Orange County. "Orange County is full of creativity and sometimes all it takes is a little collaboration to inspire the community," he remarks.

He has been recognized as one of Orange County's most influential and innovative entrepreneurs in Modern Luxury Magazine, OC Weekly, and the Orange County Register in 2015 and 2017.

Completing Staniec's life is his family, his wife Janet and two very small children. "My wife and I met after a book release party," he says. "We have started publishing companies together and co-founded a nonprofit organization in our community. We are both very passionate about supporting creative and cultural opportunities in Orange County."

Kevin Staniec looks forward to many more years promoting and curating the visual and literary arts. He expresses appreciation for the visionary artists who have come before him, who have mentored and inspired him. He in turn plans to pass the mantle of creativity on to younger artists. He talks about a conversation he had with local art activist Mark Chamberlain (whose work has been exhibited at the Palm Court) a year before he passed away in April 2018. "I asked Mark how he continues to promote and work for the arts after so many decades. He responded, 'I used to think that promoting the arts was a sprint. Then I figured that it was a marathon. Now I realize that promoting the arts is a relay.'"

On June 2, the exhibition, "A Brief History of the El Toro Air Show: 1950-1997," will open at the Great Park Palm Court Art Complex. The show will include artwork by Cynthia Castaneda, Paul Gavin, Kimberleigh Gavin, Bethany Girod and George Katzenberger, and collaborative art by The Draculas.
www.cityofirvine.org/orange-county-great-park/arts-exhibitions



HONORING THE FALLEN

HOW ONE MAN'S MISSION TO REMEMBER FALLEN SOLDIERS BECAME A UNIQUE MEMORIAL.

BY: NICK WALKER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: CITY OF IRVINE

The city of Irvine has long held a connection with the U.S. military, dating all the way back to World War II, before

Irvine was even incorporated as a city, when the US Navy opened a blimp port and the USMC Air Station El Toro, right on the edge of what would soon become the community we know today.

With the longstanding spirit of respect for the military found within residents of Orange County and the city of Irvine, it should be no surprise, then, that Irvine is home to one of the most important and unique war memorials in the

country. In honor of Memorial Day, we remember the importance and history of the Northwood Gratitude and Honor Memorial.

The Northwood Gratitude and Honor Memorial can be found on the corner of Bryan Avenue and Yale Avenue, connected to Northwood Community Park in the center of the community of Northwood Village on the northeast side of Irvine. What is now a permanent fixture of the city, however, was once a temporary passion project of a few dedicated Irvine community members. The origins of the Northwood

Memorial stem back to 2003, shortly after the war in Iraq had begun, and American casualties were beginning to be reported. One man, Northwood resident Asher Milgrom, felt something needed to be done to recognize the American troops dying in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. So, Milgrom bought some lumber and built wooden crosses out of his garage. He built one cross for every service member that had been killed within a week of the war's initial invasion. He and his family brought the crosses to Northwood Community Park and drove them into

the ground, with no guarantee the city wouldn't notice and remove them.

The city did not touch the makeshift memorial. In fact, it quickly grew in popularity, with members of the community joining in, bringing yellow ribbons and flowers to decorate the groupings of crosses. The temporary display would become an annual tradition. Every year, the crosses were erected in the park around Memorial Day, and stood standing through the Fourth of July. Volunteers built and added more and more crosses as the war waged on and American



casualties grew.

Despite some initial pushback from the city, it was clear this community-led memorial tradition was not going away, with residents from all across Southern California joining it year after year. Within a few years, memorial volunteers began the push to have a more permanent memorial be installed at the Northwood Community Park.

As the proposal for the memorial moved higher up the ladder, more and more opinions arose. Some city leaders wanted to move the memorial to Colonel Bill Barber Marine Corps Memorial Park, while others wanted to reduce the memorial in size to a single, generalized plaque. But the memorial's volunteers and champions pushed back to ensure that every individual sole got the recognition they deserved, not in some generic or reduced way.

In 2009, the city and the citizens of Irvine finally came to a consensus, and the city approved the plans for the memorial we see now. Five sentinels, with four panels each, carrying the engraved names of the fallen, along with another monument dedicated to the hard work of the community that came together to make the memorial happen. Near the towering blocks of stone, a flagpole, with the words sacrifice, honor, courage and valor inscribed at its base.

The memorial was built and officially dedicated on November 14, 2010. To this day, as far as can be seen, it is the only memorial in the country dedicated to honoring, by name, the American Fallen Heroes, exclusively from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Over 6,800 names appear on the walls of the memorial's sentinels.

Poem by Steve Wolford inscribed on one of the monuments

At Bryan and Yale where the marigolds grow, wooden signs at attention, row after row, stand guard in the park bearing thousands of faces, and here and there in the twilight amid silent embraces, the faithful appear to give voice to these brave and to honor the fallen who yet speak from the grave.

As I stroll through the rows I'm overcome by this loss, and overwhelmed by the numbers I am tempted to gloss over each name and the words that explain, date, rank and cause of the loss and the pain. These too-few-words on a mother's heart weigh, I need to read slowly at this sacrificial display.

'Extraordinary heroism' and 'uncommon valor' are here, 'Ultimate selfless act of bravery', I read on with a tear. 'Redeployed to heaven', 'in total disregard for his own life', 'Mom and Dad don't forget me', the words cut like a knife. You are not forgotten, Jake, so much loss is my gain, and I want to say Thank You, you've not died in vain.

Overwhelmed by my selfishness amid flicker of flames, I'm not worthy tonight to call out these names: Daily, Martinez, Probst, Taylor, Santee. These are our heroes; they gave all for me, And as I lifted my head the flags danced in the breeze. I felt convicted inside – how I walk away with such ease.

I am the reason you paid the ultimate price, and as I stand with my freedom, words hardly suffice.

Thank you sons and daughters, and fathers and mothers. Thank you families all, and you sisters and brothers. You give us your all, you give us your best, I want to say thank you, because of you we are blessed.

We stand with our freedom here at Bryan and Yale, 6,829 heroes; oh, may we not fail to give thanks for the price each one of them paid, and to celebrate their lives and the sacrifice made. And as bugle horn penetrates our free evening sky, as we stand in these rows, this we know...God is night.

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