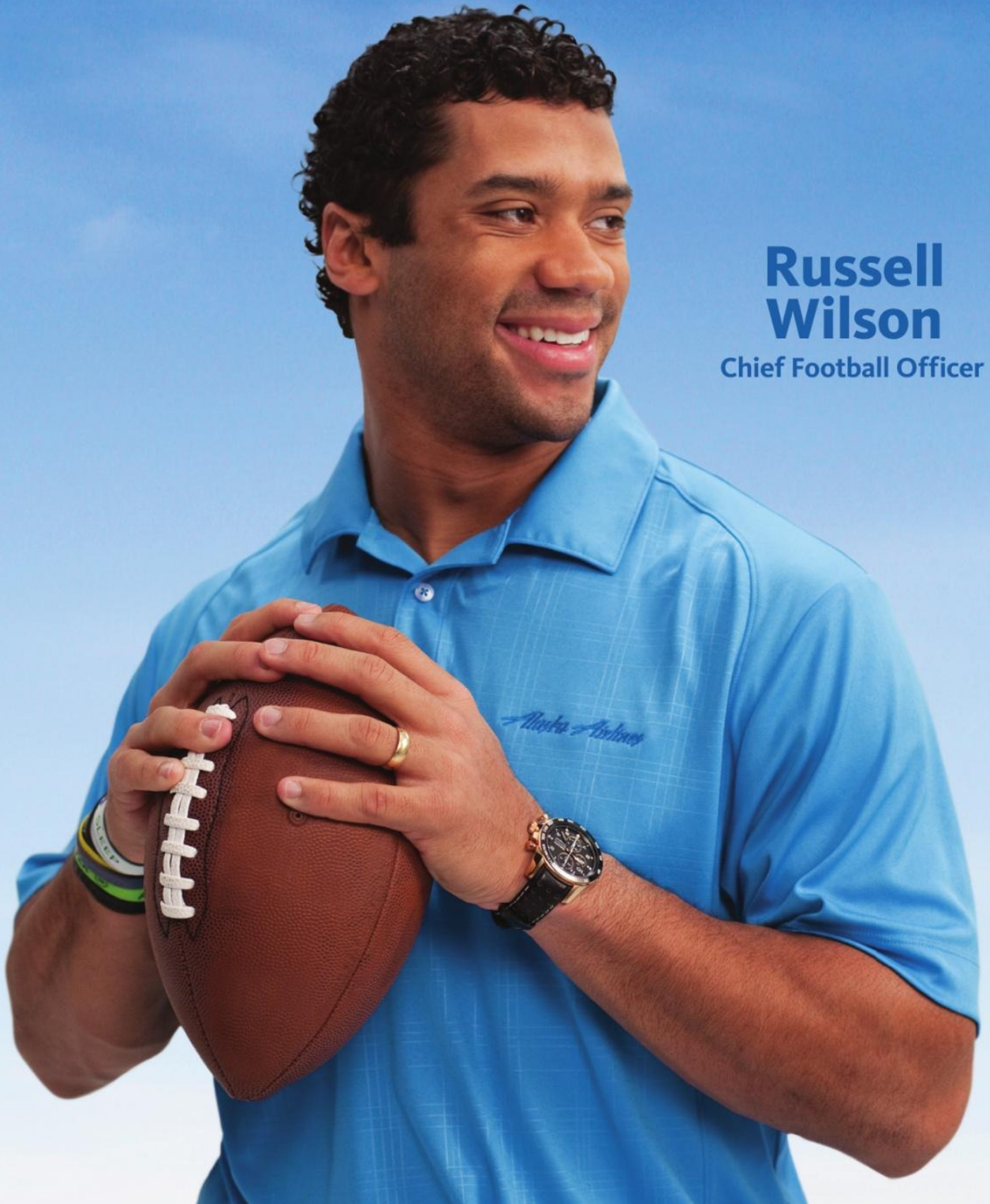


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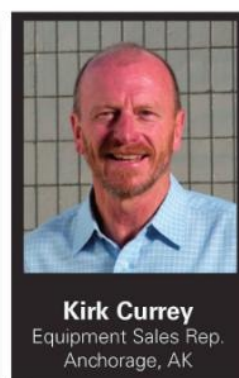
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Spirit of Alaska



Brad Tilden
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WHY NOT US?

It is our honor this month to shine a spotlight on Russell Wilson, Super Bowl star and Alaska's new chief football officer. For those of us who have been Seahawks fans for a while, all we can say is, "What an incredible ride!" Russell just turned 25 and has been with the Hawks for only two years, but this guy is the real deal. And he's making believers out of a city that hasn't seen a professional team crowned king since

the Storm became WNBA champions in 2004 and 2010, and the Sonics won the NBA championship in 1979. So, if you're not a Seahawks fan, I hope you'll indulge the rest of us as we go a little nuts.

I've lived in Seattle and the Northwest for 41 years, and I can definitively say I've never seen our region come together the way it has to support this team and its leader.

This is the Northwest, where we are actually very nice, but also known to "keep to ourselves" at first with folks we don't know. Leading up to the Super Bowl, the typical greeting when I passed strangers on the street was, "Go Hawks!" Amazing.

What about Russell Wilson, the team's leader? The first thing we have to say is that he absolutely performs on the field. During the regular season, he threw 26 touchdowns, with only 9 interceptions, and amassed a quarterback rating of 101.2. He ran for more yards in the regular season than any other quarterback to ever play in the Super Bowl. What I like most about Russell Wilson is the way he adjusts his play to help his team win. It's not about him; it's about winning the game.

And while Russell is a terrific athlete

on the field, he's also a role model off the field. He is wise, disciplined, compassionate and fundamentally a good human being. He gives of himself to Seattle Children's Hospital, to kids in his football

overcame hurdles to excel in their careers.

Russell had a message for the kids. He told them adversity is opportunity. It is what's going to make them stronger. He told them there is nothing more important than surrounding themselves with the right people. He encouraged them to do the basics, like eat well and prepare themselves for school. He told them he sat in the front of the class at school and that he still does so today as he reviews game films. He told the kids about the challenge his father gave him: "Why not you?" He wrapped this up by asking them to pledge to work hard, go to class and graduate from high school.

So, we're pretty proud of our "CFO"—Russell Wilson. I hope you enjoy the story about him in this month's issue—which was written by Art Thiel, former *Seattle P-I* sports columnist and current commentator on KPLU-FM. Art is a Seattle treasure in his own right, having grown up in Tacoma, Washington, where he attended Pacific Lutheran University, and having covered the Seahawks from their humble beginnings to their recent glory.

Russell's inspiring words to his teammates—"Why not us?"—are something we think about here at Alaska as we work hard to be the best airline we can possibly be for our customers. We very much appreciate your loyalty, and I hope we can continue to earn it. Thank you for flying with us today. ▲



Russell Wilson visited Alaska Airlines' maintenance hangar in Seattle in July 2013 to inspire 600 students to graduate from high school and follow their dreams.

camp and to soldiers at our local bases.

At Alaska, we got to know Russell when he led a workshop in our Seattle hangar last summer for more than 600 students from urban high schools and educational programs who accepted the challenge to stay in school, work hard, graduate and pursue their dreams. Russell was relaxed and enjoyed himself with some of our own—including a pilot, flight attendants, an avionics mechanic, a chief dispatcher (who started out loading bags), our director of supply chain and one of our vice presidents, all of whom

El Espíritu de Alaska



Brad Tilden
Jefe Ejecutivo

¿POR QUÉ NO NOSOTROS?

Es un honor para nosotros enfocar en este mes nuestra atención en Russell Wilson, estrella del Super Bowl y nuevo oficial jefe de fútbol americano de Alaska. Para aquellos de nosotros que hemos sido fanáticos de los Seahawks durante un tiempo, todo lo que podemos decir es: “¡Qué aventura tan increíble!”.

Russell acaba de cumplir 25 y ha estado con los Hawks durante solo dos años, pero este joven es

sobresaliente. Él ha vuelto creyente a una ciudad que no había visto a un equipo profesional coronarse campeón desde que los Storm quedaron campeones de la WNBA en 2004 y en 2010, y los Sonics ganaron el campeonato de la NBA en 1979. Así que si usted no es fanático de los Seahawks, espero que pueda dejarse llevar por el resto de nosotros mientras nos enloquecemos un poco.

He vivido en Seattle y en el Noroeste durante 41 años, y puedo decir con certeza que nunca he visto a nuestra región unirse de la forma en que lo ha hecho para apoyar a este equipo y a su líder.

Este es el Noroeste, donde somos realmente muy buenas personas, pero también somos conocidos por ser “reservados” con la gente que no conocemos. Al acercarnos al Super Bowl, el saludo típico cuando yo pasaba al lado de extraños en la calle era “¡Vamos Hawks!”. Increíble.

¿Y qué podemos afirmar de Russell Wilson, el líder del equipo? Lo primero que tenemos que decir es que tiene un muy buen desempeño en el campo. Durante la temporada regular, lanzó 26 pases de anotación contra solo 9 intercepciones y logró un índice de pasador de 101,2. Corrió por más yardas en la temporada regular que cualquier otro mariscal que haya jugado en el Super Bowl. Lo que más me gusta de Russell Wilson es la forma en que ajusta su

forma de juego para ayudar a que su equipo gane. No se trata de él, se trata de ganar el juego.

Y al mismo tiempo que Russell es un atleta increíble dentro del campo de juego, también es un modelo a seguir fuera del mismo. Es sabio, disciplinado, compasivo y fundamentalmente un buen ser humano. Se entrega al Children's Hospital, a los niños que juegan en sus campamentos de fútbol americano y a los soldados en nuestras bases locales.

En Alaska, tuvimos la oportunidad de conocer a Russell el verano pasado cuando lideró un taller en nuestro hangar de Seattle para más de 600 estudiantes de escuelas de secundaria de la ciudad y programas educativos, quienes aceptaron el reto de seguir en la escuela, trabajar duro y perseguir sus sueños. Russell estuvo relajado y se divirtió con algunos de los nuestros —incluyendo un piloto, azafatas, un mecánico de aviación, un despachador jefe (quien comenzó cargando equipajes), nuestro director de la cadena de suministros y uno de nuestros vicepresidentes, quienes todos superaron obstáculos para sobresalir en sus carreras profesionales.

Russell tenía un mensaje para los niños. Les dijo que la adversidad es una oportunidad. Que esta los iba a hacer más fuertes. Les dijo que no hay nada más importante que rodearse de las personas correctas. Los animó a hacer todas las cosas básicas, como comer

bien y prepararse para la escuela. Les dijo que se sentaran al frente de la clase en la escuela y que el aún hace eso cuando estudia los videos de los juegos. Les contó a los niños acerca del reto que le dio su padre, “¿Por qué no tú?”. Finalmente terminó pidiéndoles que se comprometieran con el trabajo arduo, que vayan a clase y que se gradúen de la escuela secundaria.

Por eso, estamos muy orgullosos de nuestro “OJF”, Oficial Jefe de Fútbol Americano, Russell Wilson. Espero que hayan disfrutado de nuestra historia en esta edición mensual —que fue escrita por Art Thiel, antiguo columnista deportivo de Seattle P-I y actual comentarista en KPLU-FM. Art es un tesoro de Seattle por derecho propio; asistió a la Pacific Lutheran University y cubrió a los Seahawks desde sus humildes comienzos hasta su reciente gloria.

Las palabras inspiradoras de Russell a sus compañeros de equipo —“¿Por qué no nosotros?”— es algo en lo que pensamos nosotros acá en Alaska, mientras trabajamos arduamente para ser la mejor aerolínea que podamos ser para nuestros clientes. Apreciamos mucho su lealtad y esperamos poder continuar ganándola. Gracias por volar con nosotros hoy. ▲



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I thought the program would balance out my hormones and help me look a bit better from the neck up. I was delighted to discover that it was actually a full body makeover which started with my hormones and moved into every part of my life.

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My next DEXA scan revealed I was on the right track. I finally began to see the results I was looking for, gaining over five pounds of muscle and losing over two pounds of fat.

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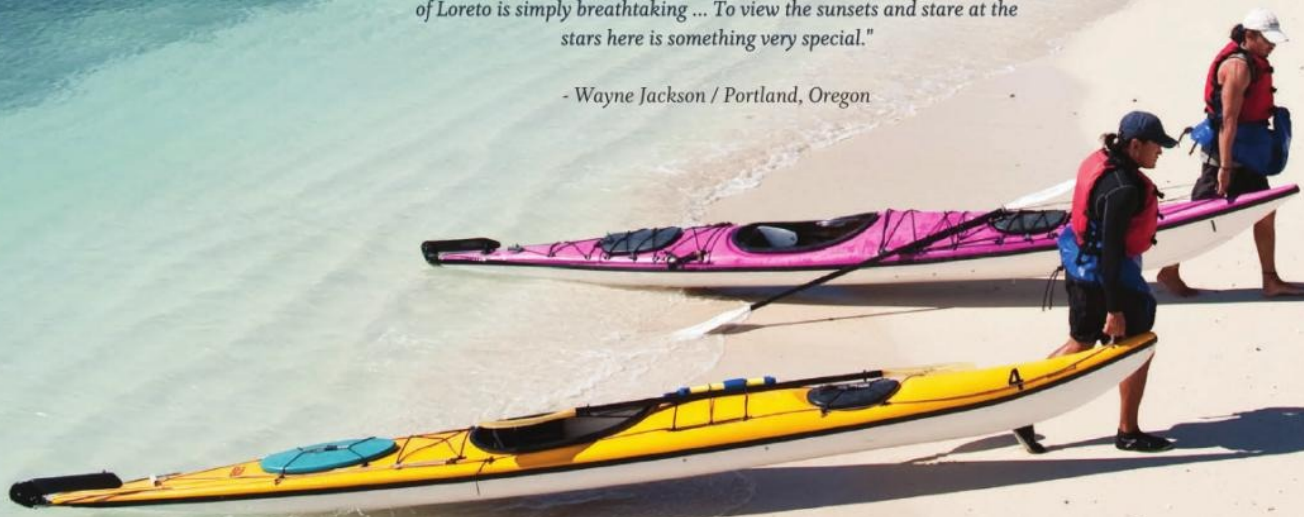

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Alaska Airlines is bringing nonstop daily service from Seattle to New Orleans and Tampa, Florida, starting June 12 and June 20, respectively, and to Detroit starting September 4. Mileage Plan™ members can earn double miles on Seattle–New Orleans and Seattle–Tampa flights, and double elite-qualifying miles for flights between Seattle and Detroit. To qualify, join Mileage Plan and then register at www.alaskaair.com.

EMPLOYEES DEBUT NEW UNIFORMS

Alaska's flight attendants and customer service agents are sporting a new look these days. New uniforms made by Lands' End Business Outfitters debuted last month, with a variety of pieces in different shades of blue and white along with complementary ties and scarves. Let us know what you think!



MORE MEXICO

Alaska Airlines offers Vacations packages to six destinations in Mexico. Ideal for picture-perfect days on soft, sandy beaches, Mexico is also a country with significant archaeological, architectural and cultural attractions that capture the attention of savvy travelers from around the world. Check out our Alaska Airlines Vacations packages—a great way to explore Mexico—at alaskaair.com/vacations.

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Big Gains in Waste Reduction

In 2013, Alaska flight attendants collected 77 percent of all recyclable materials, and Horizon flight attendants collected 93 percent, beating their goals of 70 percent and 90 percent, respectively. The end result: 1,800 fewer tons of waste went to our nation's landfills in 2013 than in 2010. Work continues to increase our recycling collection, find more sustainable replacements for inflight service materials and investigate composting.

AROUND THE SYSTEM

► **Come see us at the Kona Brewers Festival**, March 5–8. Visit konabrewersfestival.com for details.

► **Join us for prize giveaways at the Soccer Fest Fan Zone** prior to the March 15 San Jose Earthquakes vs. Real Salt Lake match at Buck Shaw Stadium, just outside of San Jose.

Green Leader

Each year, Alaska Airlines recognizes a handful of its most celebrated employees as Customer Service Legends—the airline's highest honor. We invite you to learn about one of our Legends, Onboard Food & Beverage Specialist Kathy Simpson Hues.



Kathy Simpson Hues
Alaska Airlines
Legend

Kathy Simpson Hues doesn't mind getting her hands dirty. It's all part of making sure Alaska Airlines is reducing its environmental footprint.

Kathy, an Onboard Food & Beverage Specialist, is one of the founding members of the airline's Green Team, and because of her role in the airline's catering operation, she is very close to the action. In 2007, she was assigned the project of implementing an onboard recycling program—reclaiming as much waste material from aircraft cabins as possible. Prior to that time, recycling efforts were individual; one Anchorage-based flight attendant, for instance, separated recyclables, and took them home and put them in her recycling bin.

Kathy and a small group of flight attendants worked with inflight crews to formalize a process for separating materials onboard, and worked with catering vendors and several major airports to coordinate removal of the recyclables.

It was one thing to start a process, Kathy says, and quite another to measure

its progress. That's where the dirty hands come in. Kathy leads five garbage sorts a year—for nearly 70 flights—in which she assembles a group to evaluate the waste coming off the planes. Refuse and bags of recyclables are dumped onto a large table for the group—which includes volunteers from throughout the company—to sort and weigh the trash, and plug the data into a metric for recycling efficiency. Last year, Alaska flight attendants collected 77 percent of recyclables.

When Kathy started with the Green Team, she had no special recycling background. She was raised on a dairy farm in Upstate New York. Her first aviation job was in accounting for Spokane-based Cascade Airways. When Cascade ceased operations in 1986, Alaska Airlines invited Kathy to apply. She worked for 10 years in cargo accounting until, looking for a change of pace, she switched to catering.

In catering, Kathy maintains the company's 1,000-plus-page catering manual, used to communicate policies and procedures for packing food and beverages on

Alaska's planes. Her primary job, however, is catering the 380-plus charter flights Alaska Airlines books each year. When the airline sent a plane of Seattle Seahawks fans to the Super Bowl, Kathy was at the airport at 5:30 on Saturday morning, packing the plane for a "tailgate party," with extra snacks, beverages and Skittles. Lightweight snacks were stowed in some creative spaces in the cabin, and Kathy said it was the most food she'd ever loaded onto an Alaska jet.

Lisa Luchau, Director of Onboard Food & Beverage, was impressed with how Kathy got everything to fit, and also with how Kathy communicated with each of the flight attendants onboard. Such relationships have been fundamental to Kathy's work. "She's always open to new ideas about what makes a flight attendant's job safer and easier," Luchau says. "If it can be done, she'll do it."

Next up for Kathy is instituting a coffee grounds composting program. "I have no doubt that she'll get that going, too," Luchau says. —Paul Frichtl

VOLUNTEER SPIRIT

The Queen of Prom Princesses

Prom night is memorable at any high school, but even more so for students of Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka, thanks to the efforts of Terri Bogren. Mt. Edgecumbe is a state boarding school for more than 400 students, mostly from small Native villages throughout rural Alaska.

The Prom Princess Program started in 2009 when Terri began collecting dresses from friends and co-workers because she wanted to ensure that all the Mt. Edgecumbe girls who wanted to go to prom had a dress to wear. Today, Terri leads a program that involves hundreds of people from around the airline's route



Terri Bogren.

system who donate used formal wear and accessories. Volunteers provide professional haircuts, updos, makeup, nail care and alterations. Funds from raffles and other fundraisers help pay for supplies and tuxedo rentals. On prom weekend last year, 60 people flew in to help with the event.

Terri, an airline Accounting Specialist who grew up in Yakutat, is a tireless promoter for the event, which takes place March 29. "Most of these kids are a long way from home," she says. "They are the future leaders of Alaska. We're able to reward them for their hard work in school with a special night." —P.F.

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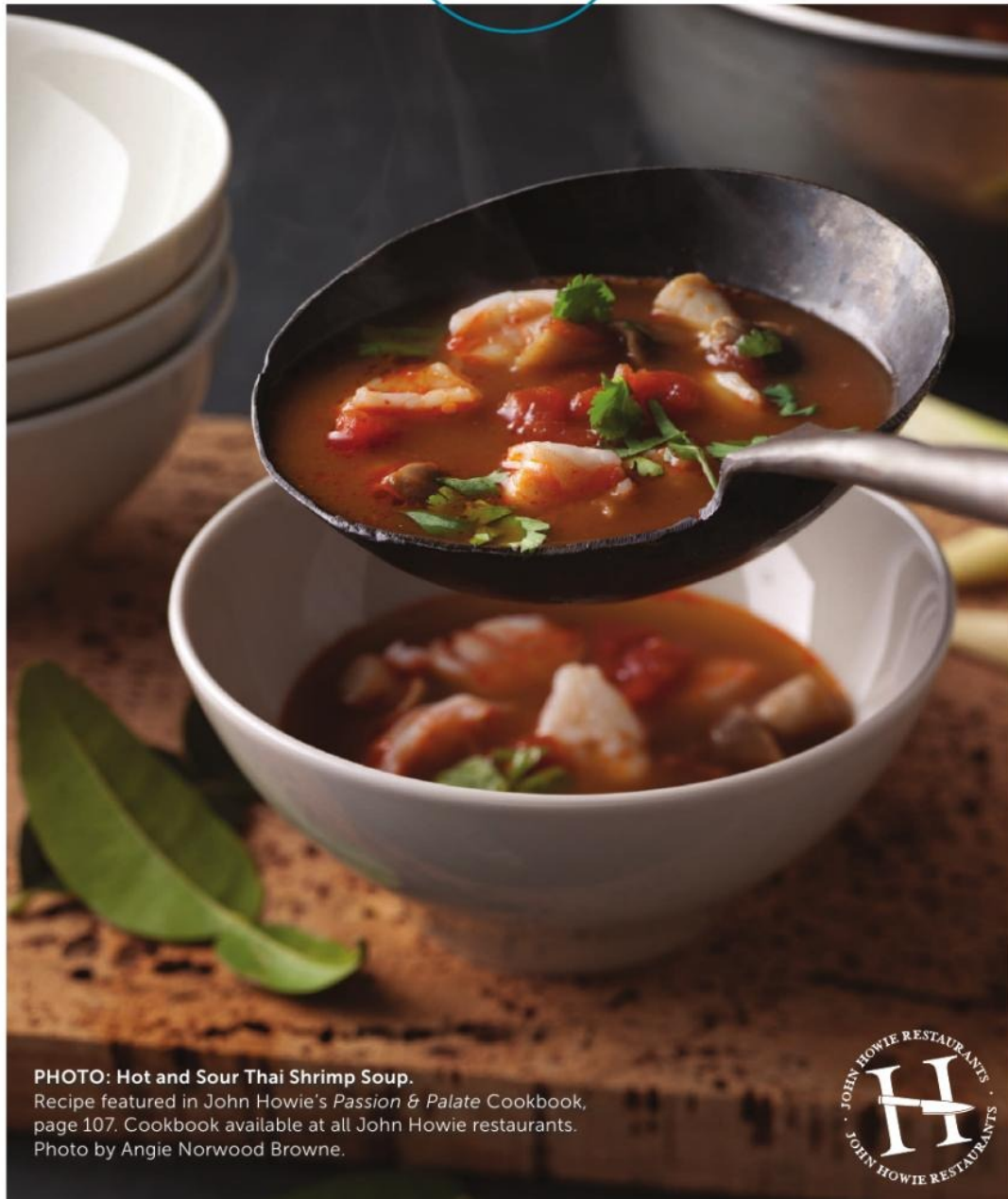


PHOTO: Hot and Sour Thai Shrimp Soup.
 Recipe featured in John Howie's *Passion & Palate* Cookbook, page 107. Cookbook available at all John Howie restaurants.
 Photo by Angie Norwood Browne.



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CHICAGO, IL

Wrigley Field's 100th

Starting on opening day, April 4, **Wrigley Field**, one of baseball's most celebrated venues, will highlight its 100th birthday with a season of special events.

Having hosted thousands of baseball games, as well as many nonbaseball events over the past century, Wrigley Field is the site of historic moments such as Babe Ruth's "called shot" in the 1932 World Series, Ernie Banks' 500th home run in 1970 and Kerry Wood's 20-strikeout game in 1998.

An official birthday game will take place on April 23, with the hometown Cubs playing the Arizona Diamondbacks.

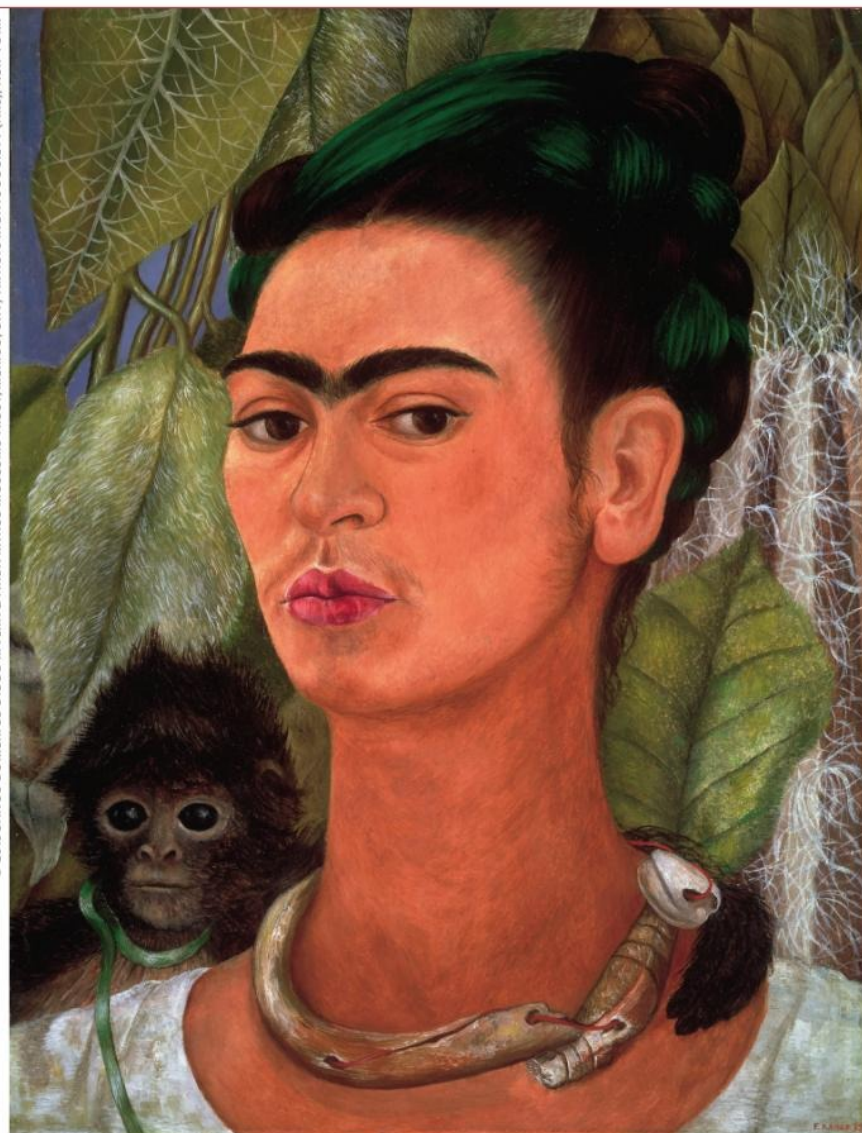
Over the course of this season, each decade of the ballpark's history will be honored with a separate home stand, each one featuring decade-specific uniforms, food, drink and music. Each home stand will also include special events and guests who played significant roles in the history of Wrigley Field. For more information, call 800-843-2827 or visit www.cubs.com.

—Madison Cavell



Wrigley Field is shown here on the Chicago Cubs' Opening Day in 2012.

COLLECTION ALBRIGHT-KNOX ART GALLERY, BUFFALO, NY; BEQUEST OF A. CONGER GOODYEAR, 1966; © 2013 BANCO DE MÉXICO DIEGO RIVERA & FRIDA KAHLO MUSEUMS TRUST, MEXICO, D.F. / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK



Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Monkey* (1938), oil on Masonite.

DENVER, CO

Masterful Works

Pablo Picasso, Vincent van Gogh and Andy Warhol are among more than 40 influential artists whose paintings are on display at The Denver Art Museum in "**Modern Masters: 20th Century Icons from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery**" (March 2–June 8; 720-913-0130; www.denverartmuseum.org). This 70-piece exhibition also features Frida Kahlo's rarely shown *Self-Portrait with Monkey* (1938) and Jackson Pollock's drip painting *Convergence* (1952). A ticket to the exhibition also allows access to "**1959: The Albright-Knox Art Gallery Exhibition Recreated**," at Denver's Clyfford Still Museum (through June 15; 720-354-4880; www.clyffordstillmuseum.org). Both exhibitions are drawn from the fine 20th century art collection of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York. —Heidi Dong

March is Women's History Month in the United States. Many museums and other institutions around the country are hosting events to honor women's contributions to society. For more information, visit www.womenshistorymonth.gov.



This painting of Archangel Michael (tempera on wood, gold leaf) was created in the first half of the 14th century.

LOS ANGELES, CA

Byzantine Art and Culture

In A.D. 330, Emperor Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire to the site of the Greek city of Byzantium, refounding it as Constantinople (today's Istanbul). In doing so, he created what is now referred to as the Byzantine Empire—the Roman Empire centered far to the east of Rome. This empire, which lasted more than a millennium, drew influences from Hellenism and Christianity, and produced an impressive artistic and cultural tradition still treasured today.

This spring and summer, approximately 170 Byzantine-era sculptures, icons, mosaics and other artifacts will be displayed at Los Angeles' Getty Villa in "Heaven and Earth: Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections" (April 9–August 25). The exhibition will showcase religious and secular art on loan from 34 Greek collections. (The exhibition's premiere at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., closes March 2.) As museumgoers view the 14th century *Icon of the Archangel Michael*, an extensive display of Byzantine coins and other items, they will find themselves immersed in the culture that arose at the crossroads of Eastern and Western civilizations. To learn more, call 310-440-7300 or visit www.getty.edu/visit/villa. —Madison Cavell

Also of note ...

"East Meets West: Byzantine Illumination at the Cultural Crossroads," March 25–June 22; a complementary display of Byzantine manuscripts; Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA; 310-440-7300; www.getty.edu/visit/center

WASHINGTON, D.C.

In Full Bloom

Beginning each year on the first day of spring, the **National Cherry Blossom Festival** (March 20–April 13) heralds the arrival of the season. Since 1927 (with a hiatus during World War II), the festival has commemorated the gift of cherry trees from Japan to America in 1912, when the first 3,000 trees arrived in the U.S. capital. Today the festival celebrates friendship between the two countries. Some of the associated festival events taking place this year include the Southwest Waterfront Fireworks Festival, the Blossom Kite Festival at the Washington Monument grounds and the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade. To learn more, call 877-442-5666 or visit www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org. —Heidi Dong



The annual National Cherry Blossom Festival celebrates the arrival of spring, and the friendship between the people of the United States and Japan.

New York's Niagara Falls, Chicago's Millennium Park and San Francisco's City Hall are among the many monuments and attractions worldwide that will be lit green for **St. Patrick's Day**, on March 17, through a campaign involving Tourism Ireland.



Also of note ...

• **Dallas Blooms**, through April 6; more than 500,000 spring-blossoming bulbs; Dallas Arboretum, Dallas, TX; dallasarboretum.org

• **PHS Philadelphia Flower Show**, March 1–9; the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's 185th Philadelphia Flower Show honors famed artists; Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA; theflowershow.com

• **Atlanta Blooms!**, March 1–April 30; 250,000 bulbs; Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta, GA; atlantabotanicalgarden.org

• **Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival**, March 5–May 18; miniature floating gardens and more than 100 topiaries; Epcot, Walt Disney World Resort, Orlando, FL; disneyworld.disney.go.com/events-tours/epcot

• **The Boston Flower and Garden Show**, March 12–16; Seaport World Trade Center, Boston, MA; bostonflowershow.com

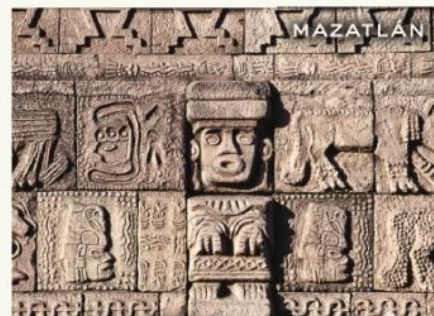
• **San Francisco Flower & Garden Show**, March 19–23; San Mateo Event Center, San Mateo, CA; sfgardenshow.com

• **Tulip Fest**, March 28–May 4; Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm, Woodburn, OR; woodenshoe.com/tulip-fest

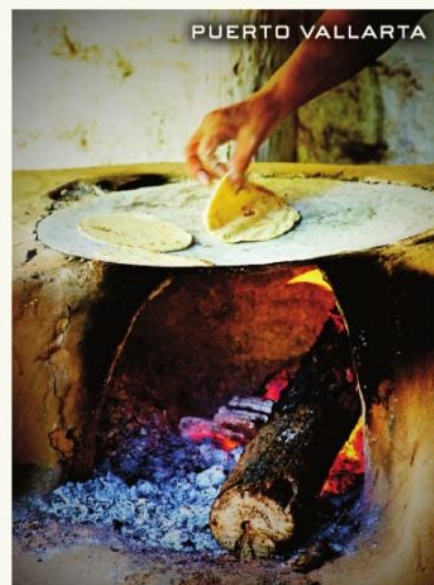
• **Skagit Valley Tulip Festival**, April 1–30; Skagit Valley, WA; tulipfestival.org

• **Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival**, April 3–28; Vancouver, B.C.; vcbf.ca

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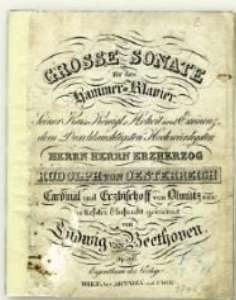
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SANTA ANA, CA

Beethoven's Late Greatness

The Bowers Museum, in partnership with the Philharmonic Society of Orange County and The Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies at San Jose State University, is presenting the exhibition **"Beethoven: The Late Great"** through May 18. This exhibition focuses on the last 10



The original 1819 title page of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* (Piano Sonata No. 29) is on display in Santa Ana.

years of the composer's life (after he lost his hearing). The exhibition features 60 artifacts, including three manuscripts from the Library of Congress never shown on the West Coast, and items such as a life mask made of Beethoven's face in 1812. To learn more, call 714-567-3600 or visit www.bowers.org. This exhibition is part of the Philharmonic Society's broader "Beethoven: The Late Great" celebration, which includes concerts, exhibits, lectures and films. The celebration culminates May 15 with the **"Beethoven: The Late Great—The Finale"** concert, featuring Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. To learn more, call 949-553-2422 or visit www.philharmonicsociety.org. —Heidi Dong

KAUA'I, HI

A Princely Festival

In Hawai'i, Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole Pi'ikoi (1871–1922) is celebrated with a state holiday on March 26 for his role in preserving Hawaiian culture. On his home island of Kaua'i, the prince is also honored with the **Prince Kūhiō Celebration Kaua'i** (March 15–29), a festival of varied events. Festival guests can learn about traditional Hawaiian culture or browse traditional Hawaiian crafts alongside modern photography and art at the **Garden Isle Artisan Fair** at Poipu Beach Park (March 15). Other festival events include the **Prince Kūhiō Rodeo** at CJM Stables (March 16), live music and cultural demonstrations at the **Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa** (March 21–23), and a **Special Prince Kūhiō Birthday Celebration Lu'au** at Smith's Tropical Paradise (March 28). Two new tours coinciding with the celebration are also being featured this year: The Royal Order of Kamehameha is offering free tours of Prince Kūhiō Park, the birthplace and childhood home of the prince (March 24); and the Makauwahi Cave Reserve is running tours (on March 20) of its nearly 17-acre "living museum" that includes a natural limestone cave with fossils from Hawai'i's ancient past. For more information, call 808-240-6369 or visit www.princekuhio.net. —Joshua Stollenmaier



Lu'au performances are among the numerous festival events planned for the Prince Kūhiō Celebration on Kaua'i.



MARK NADELL, WWW.MACBETHGRAPHICS.COM

ANCHORAGE, AK

Skiing Finals

Thousands of skiing enthusiasts will head to Anchorage's Kincaid Park this month to see the **2014 ConocoPhillips U.S. Cross Country Championships and SuperTour Finals** (March 22–28).

Race participants, including hometown star Kikkan Randall and fellow 2014 U.S. Ski Team Olympians Holly Brooks, and Sadie and Erik Bjornsen, will compete in events ranging from sprints and relays to 50K distance races. The overall men's and women's winners of

Four-time Olympian Kikkan Randall, leading here in the women's 30K finals of the 2013 USSA SuperTour in Lake Tahoe, will race this month in Anchorage.

the 2014 SuperTour will be determined at this month's finals. These winners will earn entry spots in the 2014/15 FIS Cross-Country World Cup.

The cross-country ski races this month are part of the Anchorage Centennial celebration, a series of events that will continue into 2015. To learn more, call 541-419-6547 or visit www.anchorage2014.com. —Joshua Stollenmaier

I THOUGHT I WAS ON TOP OF THE WORLD

By Pat O'Day

My career had been spent in radio and rock and roll. I ran the No. 1 radio station in Seattle and on the air when I also started the world's largest rock-and-roll concert company. On this day I was broadcasting my show from the top of Seattle's new skyscraper, the Columbia Tower. I mean, what could be wrong? Well, several things.

I'd been drinking to excess for years. Being on the road with our rock acts, from Hendrix to Zeppelin, The Beach Boys to Bad Company, cocaine and other things also entered the picture. Oh sure, I thought I was just fine, but several acquaintances saw it differently. There was an unwelcome intervention where a little group of friends cornered me and demanded that I get treatment. "Are you kidding?" I thought. I'm no weak, simpering alcoholic or addict. I just like to drink.

The group demanded I go to Schick Shadel Hospital in Seattle, which has a unique ten-day medical treatment that halts addictions. "OK, fine," I said, "Ten days, these guys will get off my back and I can drink again, socially of course."

Ten days later I walked out of Schick Shadel Hospital to never, ever, have another drink or any bad substance. My habit, the urges, the desire and the mixed-up rationale had simply gone, vanished; I was sober, happy and healed. **So, may I tell you the rest of the story?**

Mr. Charles Shadel of Seattle once said, "Something just isn't right. People are addicted to alcohol. It's wrecking lives. They know they should quit, and they want to, but they can't. Churches, rehab centers, counselors all try to help, but the craving seems impossible to extinguish. Soon, they're right back into drinking or the drugs. Shadel said, "We must be doing something wrong!"



Photo of Pat O'Day, Seattle radio personality, celebrating the completion of Seattle's Columbia Tower with a broadcast in 1984. (Photo courtesy of Dennis Law)

He joined with Doctors Lemere and Voeghtlin in search of a solution. It was clear from their studies that the conscious portion of the brain, the portion you're using as you read this, once addicted, lacks the power to erase overpowering urges of dependency. Those latent cravings simply become overwhelming. So they concluded, "To truly halt the habit, we must employ a more powerful portion of the brain, the subconscious." **And they did!** Their stunning achievement created a medical treatment that is proven to be very successful. **Logically, you're asking, "What is it they do?"** The answer is two powerful but painless medical innovations were combined to erase patients' habits.

First, they developed a powerful "Counter Conditioning" method that brings the patient to hate the sight, smell, taste and thoughts of using the addictive substance, be it alcohol or drugs. Further medication isn't required to maintain this protective shield.

Second, the doctors introduced medically administered deep sleep therapy. The cleansing of the patient's low self-esteem, guilt, regrets and other emotional burdens are critical to long-term mental health.

Understand that Schick Shadel's approach contends these habits are not the fault of the patient. We live in a world of intoxicants and many people are genetically unprotected from their addictive impact. Such vulnerability is passed from parents to kids, generation to generation.

Following these two treatments, patients can leave the hospital after just 10 days, free from cravings, guilt and destructive habits. The original wonderful individual returns. This success is enjoyed by many thousands of former patients including myself. It's now been 27 sober, happy, healthy years for me. It took no willpower; they simply erased my addictions.

So may I say to you, "Your life on this earth is so very short. You needn't let intoxicants control or wreck it, when eliminating the problem is so quick and easy at world-famous Schick Shadel Hospital."

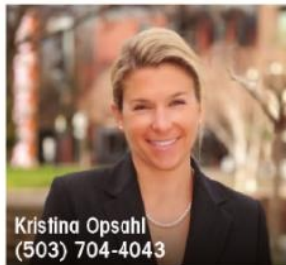
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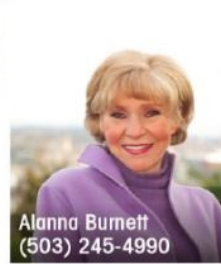
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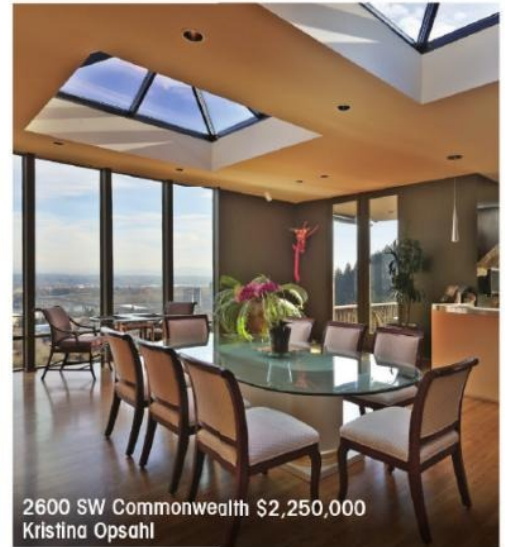
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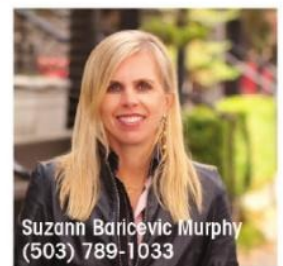
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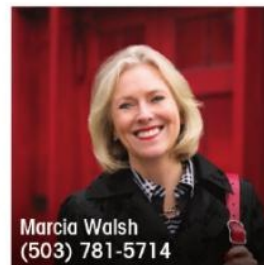
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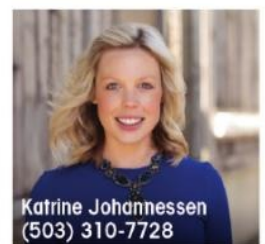
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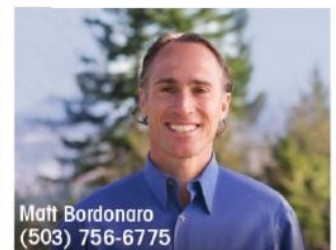
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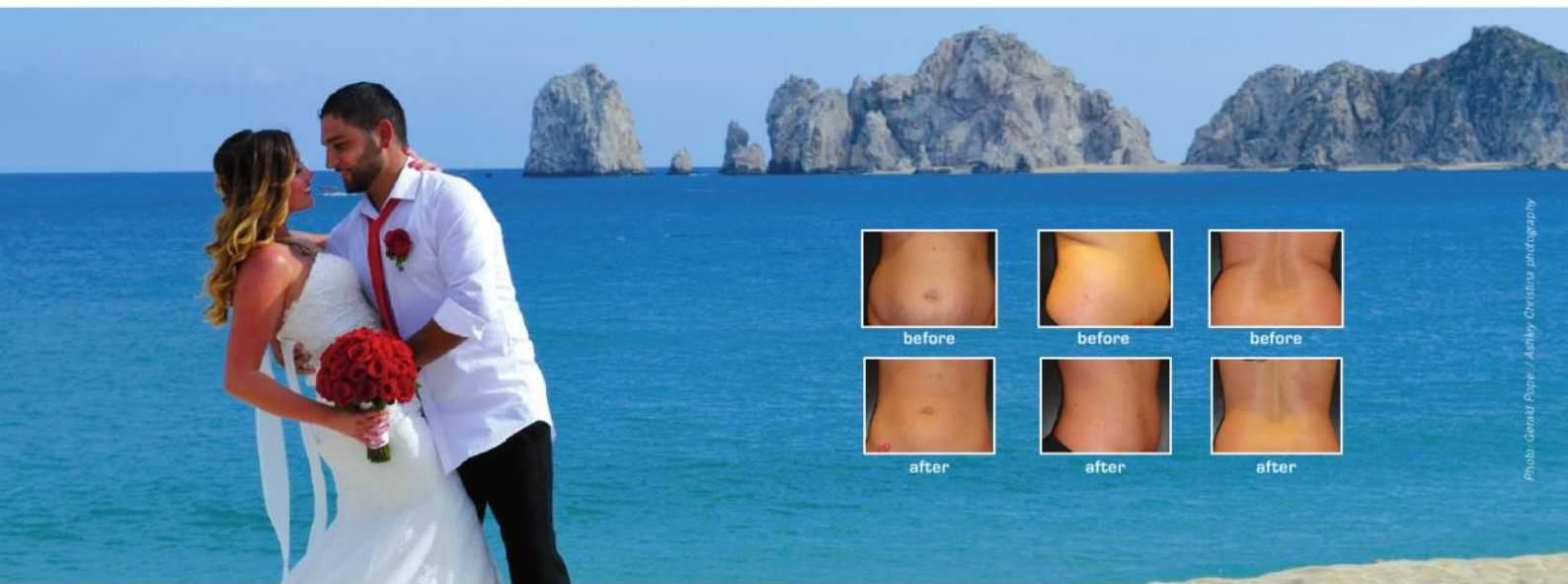


Photo: Gerald Pope / Ashley Cristina photography

Picture Perfect



I have to admit that I've always been hesitant about cosmetic procedures, but I was self-conscious about my belly. In spite of always being very thin, I had always carried some extra weight around my stomach which seemed to increase after having two children. When I became ill and had to go on bed rest, I was unable to exercise as usual and gained even more weight. I was getting married that fall in a destination wedding.

I had seen the results of other friends who'd had SmartSculpt and it seemed like the perfect solution. I knew that I could eventually lose the excess weight by exercising, but I wanted more. I hoped the results would take me beyond what I could achieve through exercise alone.

I got even better results than I expected!

The process didn't just remove the excess fat. It sculpted my body. My curves looked more defined than they would have just by exercise alone, and so quickly. I went from being round to hippy. Dr. Levy was like an artist sculpting my body with precision and care. Prior to my procedure, my husband had visited him to have a cyst removed. Dr. Levy was very patient, gentle and kind, the same way he



was during my SmartSculpt procedure. I felt completely at ease.

I have a low tolerance for pain and was very comfortable throughout. When the dressings came off, I was instantly happy. Even with the swelling, my figure already appeared better than I'd ever anticipated. My stretch marks also improved. Now, they're barely noticeable.

I still continue to meet with a trainer and watch my diet. I believe the secret is the combination of everything you do to take care of yourself. SmartSculpt gave me a jumpstart. Now it's just maintenance.

This was seven months before the wedding. It was a picture perfect day – and it continues to get even better!

So Long Saddlebags.
Farewell Flabby Arms.
Bye, Bye Baby Belly.
Hello, Dr. Levy.

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Dr. Daniel Levy has 10 years of experience providing cosmetic and aesthetic medical services. With experience at the country's top-tier institutions, Daniel brings with him a cutting-edge approach to cosmetic dermatology, as well as an enthusiasm for wellness.



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Georges Braque, *Barques de pêche* (Fishing Boats, 1909), oil on canvas.

Also at MFAH ...

- **"Made for Magazines: Iconic 20th-Century Photographs,"** through May 4; celebrates magazine culture of the 1920s to the 1980s in images from the museum's collection
- **"Beyond Craft: Decorative Arts from the Leatrice S. and Melvin B. Eagle Collection,"** through May 26; 85 objects that survey studio craft from the mid-1960s to the 2000s

ST. LOUIS, MO

Fashion Fit for a Queen

In chess, the queen is considered the most powerful and unpredictable piece. And fashions are combining with the classic strategy board-game figure in unexpected ways in the exhibition **"A Queen Within: Adorned Archetypes, Fashion and Chess,"** showing through April 18 at the World Chess Hall of Fame. This exhibition interprets different familiar representations and archetypes of a queen—as a mother figure, an enchantress and an authoritative ruler, for example—through displays of high-end fashion. Featured items include a diamond glove by Shaun Leane and Daphne Guinness, and a sparkling "bubble dress" by Hussein Chalayan. The works of other renowned designers, such as Alexander McQueen and Jean Paul Gaultier, are also represented. To learn more, call 314-367-9243 or visit www.worldchesshof.org/exhibitions/exhibit/a-queen-within. —Heidi Dong

HOUSTON, TX

Celebrating a Cubism Pioneer

Marking the 50th anniversary of French painter Georges Braque's death, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), is presenting **"Georges Braque: A Retrospective"** through May 11. Despite being one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, Braque is less recognized than his contemporary and Cubism collaborator Pablo Picasso. The two artists pioneered Cubism—the art movement that emphasizes geometric forms and rejects the notion of art imitating nature—but the introverted Braque tended to be overshadowed by his more outgoing colleague. The exhibition, which is making its only U.S. appearance at MFAH, showcases Braque's individual achievements and offers visitors a look at 78 of his defining paintings, ranging from early bold Fauvist work to later paintings that he created over several years. To learn more, call 713-639-7300 or visit www.mfah.org. —Ayan Sheikh



The Coral Dress, from the Cutting Edge Couture Collection of Dutch fashion house Viktor & Rolf (2010).

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TOP SHELF

The Taste of America

By Colman Andrews; Phaidon Press
Award-winning food writer Andrews describes 250 iconic American foods, with interesting details about each one—for example, that marshmallows were intended as medicine for decongestion. Each page features a different food, including regional specialties such as Copper River salmon. Stylish color illustrations accompany the stories of how the foods came to be what they are today. —Heidi Dong



Alaska's Dog Heroes

By Shelley Gill; Illustrated by Robin James; Sasquatch Books
Gill, a past Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race participant and the author of best-selling children's books about Alaska and the Pacific Northwest, introduces young children to heroic tales of 19 courageous Alaska canines. Accompanied by James' captivating illustrations, the stories of how dogs in Alaska have accomplished feats such as warding off bears and finding lost children will thrill young readers. —Ayan Sheikh



The Warbler Guide

By Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle; Princeton University Press
With the arrival of spring, migrating songbirds are reappearing all over North America. Featuring more than a thousand full-color photographs—taken from multiple angles to aid identification—plus range maps and sound diagrams for all 56 species of warbler, Stephenson and Whittle's book is one of the most comprehensive and birder-friendly warbler guides available today.



—Joshua Stollenmaier

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PORTLAND, OR

The Science of Extreme Sports

A radical museum-science exhibition is now open in Portland.

"Tony Hawk | Rad Science" is an interactive gallery of experiences that show how skateboarding and other extreme sports are ruled by physical principles involving gravity, velocity, acceleration, inertia and balance. From the interactive display Bodacious Board Balance, which tests participants' balance with stationary skateboards, to Momentum Machine, a demonstration of angular momentum, the exhibition's activities and presentations make physics entertaining and exciting. Open through May 4 at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), **"Tony Hawk | Rad Science"** helps viewers of all ages understand how science relates to popular, high-energy activities. To learn more, call 800-955-6674 or visit www.oms.edu. —Madison Cavell

The interactive exhibition **"Tony Hawk | Rad Science"** allows visitors to explore the physics of extreme sports.

Other fun science exhibits ...

- **"The Science of Ripley's Believe It or Not,"** through May 4; the science behind this popular brand of curiosities; Arizona Science Center, Phoenix, AZ; 602-716-2000; azscience.org
- **"Lego Travel Adventure,"** through May 6; an interactive and engaging Lego exhibit; Science World at Telus World of Science, Vancouver, B.C.; 604-443-7440; scienceworld.ca

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

"BioBlitzing" in the Bay Area

Visitors to the Bay Area can become explorers for a day and join hundreds of scientists and naturalists, along with thousands of students, participating in the **Golden Gate National Parks BioBlitz and Biodiversity Festival**, March 28 and 29. Participants in the BioBlitz will help document wildlife in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Volunteers can enjoy learning about nature in the area by signing up to take inventory of different types of plants and animals. The BioBlitz offers volunteers the opportunity to work closely with experts in different branches of biology while gaining insight into the importance of preserving biodiversity. For visitors more interested in celebrations, the Biodiversity Festival, a concurrent two-day event, will offer myriad activities including musical performances, live animal demonstrations, hands-on exhibitor booths, art shows and local food. This large urban celebration at San Francisco's East Beach is free and open to all ages. Advance registration for BioBlitz is required to secure a spot on an inventory team. For more information, call 202-775-6186 or visit www.nationalgeographic.com/bioblitz.

—Ayan Sheikh

A volunteer with the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory searches for birds from Hawk Hill in the Marin Headlands.



JESSICA WEINBERG

CALENDAR

Through April 6 "Gene Kloss:

In Light and Shadow," paintings and prints; Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ; 602-257-1222 or phxart.org/exhibition/lightandshadow

Through April 6 "Secrets of the Sun: Stephen H. Willard

Photographs of the West," Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA; 760-322-4800 or psmuseum.org

Through April 27 "Robert

Smithson in Texas," drawings, photographs and sculptures related to Smithson's Texas projects; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; 214-922-1200 or dallasmuseumofart.org

March 14–16 9th Annual Jazz in

the Gardens, top musical performers; Sun Life Stadium, Miami Gardens, FL; 800-745-3000 or jazzinthegardens.com

March 20–23 Treefort Music

Fest, an art and music celebration; multiple locations, Boise, ID; treefortmusicfest.com

March 29–30 Taste Washington,

a wine and food event with more than 200 Washington state wineries and about 65 restaurants; CenturyLink Field Event Center, Seattle, WA; tastewashington.org

April 7–13 40th-annual Alaska

Folk Festival, music, dance and participatory events; multiple locations, Juneau, AK; 907-463-3316 or akfolkfest.org

April 10–27 Fiesta San Antonio,

history, music, parades and more; multiple locations, San Antonio, TX; 877-723-4378 or fiesta-sa.org

April 11–13 La Jolla Concours

d'Elegance and the La Jolla Motor Car Classic at the Concours, classic automobiles; La Jolla, CA; 619-233-5008 or lajollaconcours.com

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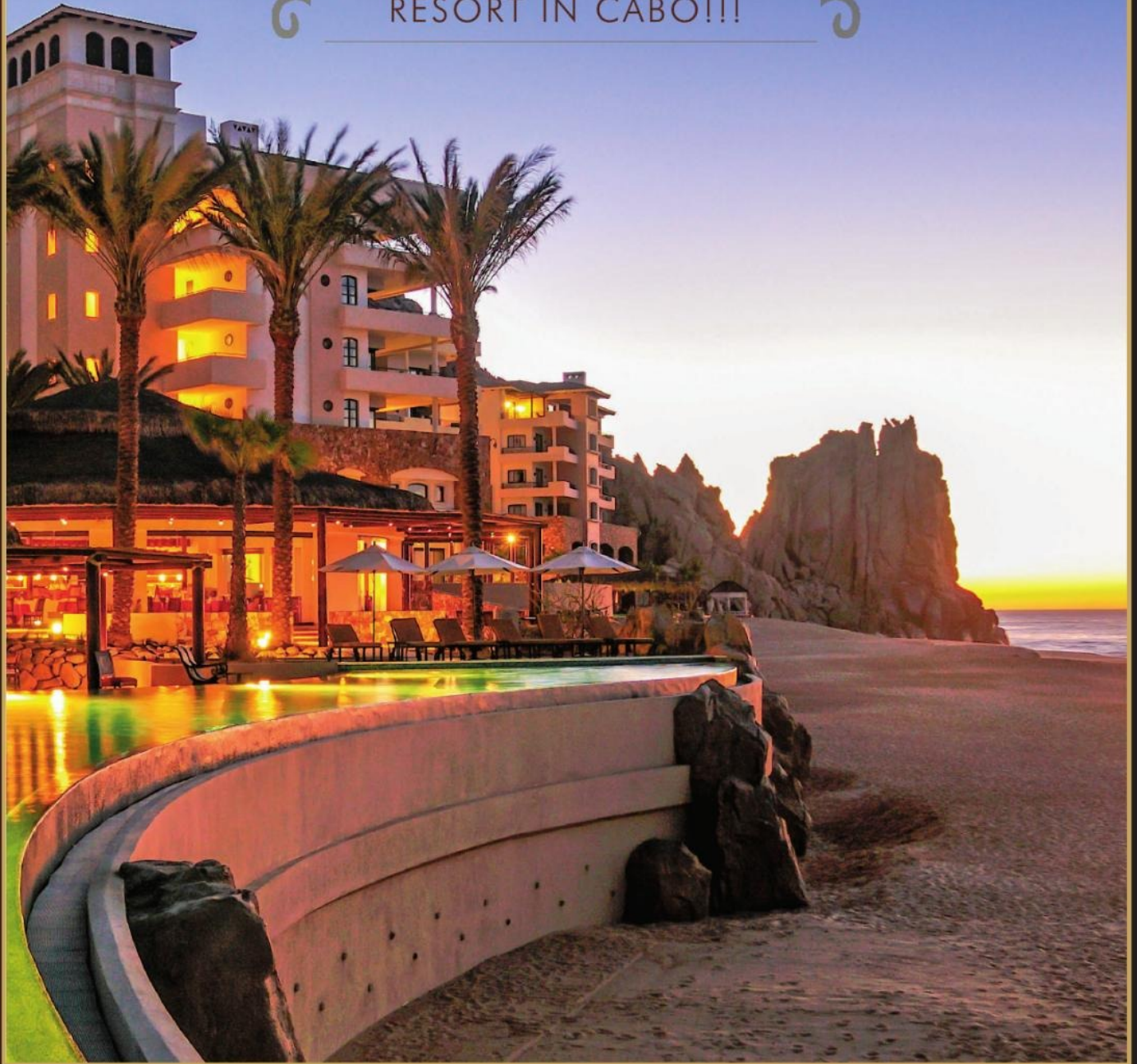
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Camille Patha, *Self-Portrait at Midnight* (2013), oil on canvas.

TACOMA, WA

Art with Punch

Named for the vibrant hues that characterize contemporary artist Camille Patha's work, **"A Punch of Color: Fifty Years of Painting by Camille Patha"** is a retrospective exhibition featuring paintings from the regionally renowned artist's distinguished career.

The 28-piece exhibition will be displayed at the Tacoma Art Museum through May 25. Various stages of Patha's career are represented, from the early complex composition of *Big Red* (1964) to one of her most recent abstract pieces, *Punch* (2013).

Patha's paintings reflect her personality and experiences, and the result is vibrantly colorful art. To learn more, call 253-272-4258 or visit www.tacomaartmuseum.org.

—Madison Cavell

Also at Tacoma Art Museum ...
"Optic Nerve: The Art of Perception,"
through April 20; artists engage viewers' perceptions using color, light and patterns



The first Girl Scout meeting took place on March 12, 1912, when 18 girls from Savannah, Georgia, gathered in the home of Juliette "Daisy" Gordon Low. Today there are more than 3.2 million members of the Girl Scouts of the USA. To learn more, visit www.girlscouts.org.

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Brian O. Goertz M.D.
Founder of Hair Transplant Seattle

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**SEATTLE SEAHAWKS' SUPER
BOWL CHAMPION QUARTERBACK
RELIES ON FAITH, FAMILY AND
NATURAL TALENT**

BY ART THIEL

Russell Wilson celebrates
the Seahawks' Super
Bowl championship in
New Jersey's MetLife
Stadium.

After seeing his team capture the most prestigious trophy in American sports in the media capital of the world, Seattle Seahawks General Manager John Schneider ran across the confetti-strewn MetLife Stadium stage in New Jersey and playfully grabbed quarterback Russell Wilson.

"Us short guys," said the 5-foot-7 Schneider to the 5-11 Wilson, "can do it, too!"

Indeed, they can. As can tall cornerbacks. And 330-pound defensive ends. And seventh-round draft choices. And guys no teams wanted at all. And twice-fired coaches.

The Seahawks weren't all mutts. But together, they became purebred champions, 43-8 winners over the Denver Broncos in one of the most dominating displays in the XLVIII-year history of the Super Bowl. Central to the first NFL championship in Seattle's history was Wilson, who shattered the Broncos as well as the NFL bias against short quarterbacks with a masterful performance—his QB rating was the ninth-best in Super Bowl annals—in front of the largest audience in U.S. television history.

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"I thought it was just an exquisite effort by the quarterback," said coach Pete Carroll. "His play was perfectly fitted to our football team and the plan that we needed to win. It couldn't have been more obvious than it was in the Super Bowl."

Astonished as the sports world was at the breadth and depth of the beatdown, Wilson was not. Throughout his sports career, from high school in Virginia to colleges in North Carolina and Wisconsin, to the NFL in Seattle, Wilson with his deeds has defied conventional wisdom and skewered skeptics. Even after his rookie year ended in defeat—when he helped bring back the Seahawks from a 20-0 half-time deficit in Atlanta to a 28-27 lead, only to lose the playoff game in the final 30 seconds—he was certain success was near.

"Ever since we lost against Atlanta in the playoffs, I remember having that good feeling, like, 'Man, we are going to go to the Super Bowl,'" he told the world that evening after defeating Denver. "It all started with the championship offseason that we had, and just going into training camp and having that mentality of a championship, day after day. Tonight was just unbelievable. The thing that you want to do at the end of the season is play your best football. That's what we did tonight."

But as often as Wilson cites the word "championship," it is not an end, merely a benchmark.

"As an individual, you want to grow," he said in a quiet conversation in Seattle after the excitement over the city's first major pro championship in 35 years had turned



Harrison Wilson, upper left, was Russell's role model and inspiration. His father frequently challenged Russell to excel in whatever he chose to do, including playing quarterback for the University of Wisconsin, or second base and quarterback for Richmond, Virginia's Collegiate School.



sublime. "That's my mind-set. I want to be consistently progressing, from week one of my rookie year. Every game, I want to improve, to where I have total command of the game and all situations. To be clutch, to be dominant, when I need to be.

"That's a great way to measure success," Wilson said.

Sports championships are always subject to the vagaries of money, health and luck. Wilson understands that trophies are

emblems of success, not the ultimate validation of a player's worthiness.

Nor does he believe that football success determines the value of the individual.

"A lot of people think football is my life, what defines me," he said. "It's not. For me, faith is No. 1, then football, then helping people where I can. I play better when I can enjoy the people around me, and in the community. It makes a difference when you're helping others."

Not long after Wilson was drafted from the University of Wisconsin in April 2012—it seems as if "former third-round draft pick" has become part of his name—he and his wife, Ashton, moved across the country to the NFL's most remote outpost, where the couple had no connections. Wilson quickly made one—Seattle Children's Hospital, a world-renowned pediatric care facility with 250 beds. Wilson began visiting quietly on Tuesdays, typically the off day for players during the season.

For patient and visitor, hospitals are difficult places. They can be particularly so for some professional athletes, usually the



In the Seahawks' 43-8 Super Bowl win over Denver, Russell Wilson demonstrated the same calm presence that characterized his 2013 regular season: a 63.1 percent completion rate on 407 attempts, for 3,357 yards and 26 touchdowns. He also ran for 539 yards.

paradigms of good health who can become uncomfortable with scenes of vulnerability. But not Wilson.

While at North Carolina State, he had become accustomed to hospitals, he said, because his father, Harrison Wilson III, was a diabetic whose complications required increasing hospitalizations.

"I've been in hospitals a lot," he said. "My dad was extremely sick at the time, so [the environment] was comfortable for me. I knew that [in coming to Seattle] I could try to find a way to affect people's lives, but also let them affect my life, and be a positive change."

Harrison Wilson was Russell's idol—a two-sport athlete at Dartmouth College who earned a law degree from the University of Virginia and tried out, at 28, for the San Diego Chargers. He conveyed to his son the importance of "the three P's"—purpose, perseverance and perspective—that have become Russell's handrails through the intense whirlwind of pro sports.

When the elder Wilson died June 9, 2010, at 55—the day after Wilson was

**"This guy was
wired differently.
He already had a
professional
athlete's mentality;
he was also a
professional
human being."**

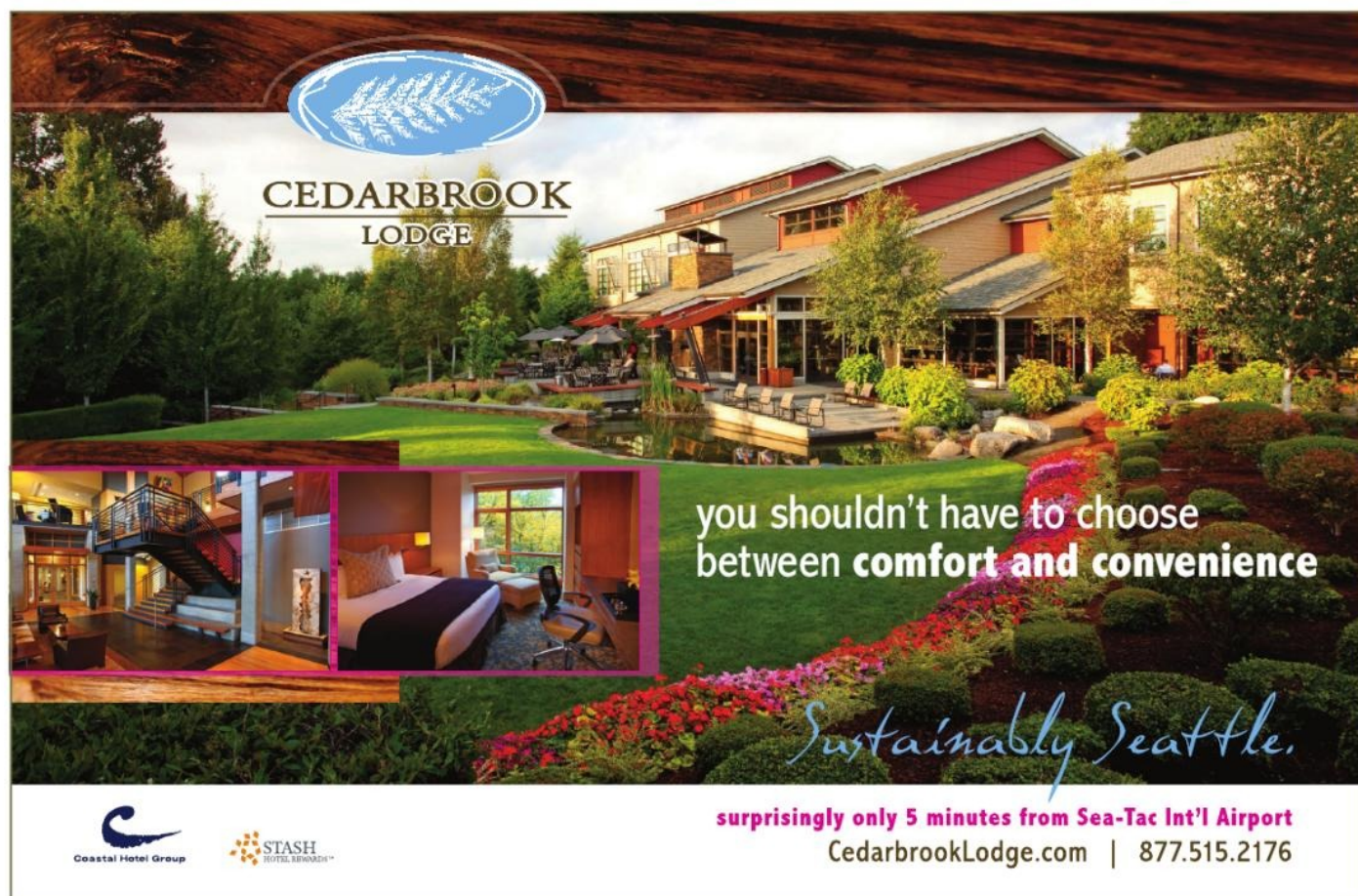
drafted in the fourth round by Major League Baseball's Colorado Rockies—the shock was profound. But deploying the three P's grounded Russell. His experiences at Seattle Children's enlightened him.

"This is my home," he said of Seattle. "I want to feel like I'm part of it, to help in any way possible. If I can communicate with kids at the hospital—spend 15 minutes with one kid, and share my story with

them and hear theirs—they don't realize how much that helps me. It gives me a sense of relief, and puts a smile on my face being around them. Week in and week out, they take burdens off my shoulders."

Wilson also quickly made connections with the local business community, including Seattle's hometown airline, which playfully appointed him its "other" CFO—Chief Football Officer. Last July, Wilson joined Alaska Airlines at its Seattle maintenance hangar to encourage 600 high school kids to study hard and graduate, and to inspire them to follow their dreams.

Wilson's uncommon maturity and energy were evident before his ascent in Seattle. He graduated in three years with a degree in communications from North Carolina State University, where he wanted to pursue a pro baseball career while maintaining his amateur status for college football. Under NCAA rules, he was allowed to hire an "adviser," not an agent. He received a referral from his college baseball coach for Mark Rodgers, a Florida-based attorney experienced in athlete representation.



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"He calls me; I don't call him," Rodgers recalled. "I thought that was unusual, and refreshing. I drive to meet him at the school's baseball facility to go to lunch. He's in a suit—he looks like the junior senator from the state of North Carolina.

"Then we go to lunch, and he asks the waitress, 'May we please have separate checks?' He knows the NCAA rules. That had never happened to me."

After lunch, Wilson and Rodgers reached a deal. Rodgers reached a conclusion. "This guy was wired differently,"

he said. "He already had a professional athlete's mentality; he was also a professional human being."

Rodgers also bore witness to a rare Wilson setback. The football coach at NC State, Tom O'Brien, wanted Wilson to play spring football in advance of his senior season of 2011. But Wilson, who already had one summer of Class A pro baseball, wanted a second. If that were the case, O'Brien said, that meant that the Wolfpack, despite Wilson's three years of accomplishments, would go in another direction for a

starting quarterback—backup Mike Glennon. Each man stood his ground.

"I don't think anyone begrudged the decision, but it was hurtful," Rodgers said. "There was a sense of rejection. But he's always believed that 10 percent of life is what happens to you, and 90 percent is how you deal with it.

"He's the kind of guy who, when it rains, doesn't get wet."

Because Wilson graduated, NCAA rules allowed him to transfer for his senior year without the mandatory one-year sit-out. After his baseball career continued slowly—a second baseman, he hit .228 in 61 games for the Class A Asheville (N.C.) Tourists—Wilson decided to switch back to college football.

His college transfer choice came down to Wisconsin over Auburn. He left baseball June 27 and by the end of July had absorbed the Badgers playbook and was voted team captain. By early December, the Badgers were 10–2; Wilson was the All-Big Ten Conference QB and set the single-season Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) record for passing efficiency (191.8). Wisconsin won the inaugural Big Ten championship game 42–39 over Michigan State, and lost the Rose Bowl 45–38 to the Oregon Ducks.

Wilson's trail of success was followed closely by Schneider, who prior to the April 2012 draft signed the Seahawks' purported quarterback of the future, Matt Flynn, to a veteran free agent contract. But Schneider became enamored of Wilson's leadership and skills, despite knowing how few quarterbacks 6 feet and under succeeded long-term in the NFL, where rules forbid footstools in the pocket.

Wilson's college feats were by no means a secret in the NFL. Every team with needs at quarterback was intrigued. It was a question of which team had the guts to take a chance above a seventh-round pick. Even Carroll was skeptical.

"John convinced me on Russell," Carroll told si.com. "He was on him early, then he came back from seeing him late in his season at Wisconsin, and he was so enthused about him. I watched a lot of tape, and John was right on. Then he got here, and he was everything John said he was."

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Blackout Dates: Discount prices are not valid for the following hotels during the dates specified. The Benson Portland: January 17 - 18, February 14 - 15, March 1 and 24 - 28, April 9 - 10 and 25 - 30, 2014. West Beach Inn Santa Barbara: March 24 - 31, 2014. The Roosevelt Seattle: January 17 - 18 and 26 - 31, February 17 - 21 and 26 - 28; March 1 and 28 - 29; April 17 - 19, 2014. Coast Wenatchee Center Hotel: February 28 - March 3, 2014.

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What Wilson was, was more successful in his first two years (24 regular-season wins) than any QB in NFL history. Then the Seahawks in the playoffs this year beat New Orleans, San Francisco and Denver, arguably the next three best teams. Such success was astounding, even to the co-founder of Microsoft, Paul Allen, who knows a little about making something from nothing.

The owner of the Seahawks also had to be persuaded to expend a third-round pick on such an atypical player.

"All the credit goes to John," Allen said after the Super Bowl. "He said, 'There's a quarterback who I really like, and I think he's going to be there.' He explained [Wilson's height] but said he had everything else you would look for in a quarterback. And now he's a Super Bowl champion.

"I'm just so happy for Russell. To be able to do it in his second year is a testament not only to his skill, but all the study of the game's minutiae that he put in to get over the top."

It would have been no surprise to Harrison Wilson.

"My dad always told me, 'Russ, why not you?'" the quarterback said. "That meant to believe in yourself, believe in the talent God has given you, even though you are 5-foot-11. You can go a long way.

"That's why I decided to play football. I wanted to go against the odds a little bit."

Now the odds grow steeper still—a repeat title. Hasn't been done in a decade. But the Seahawks were the youngest team to win a Super Bowl (average age 26.1 years), and know that Wilson is fully capable of getting better.

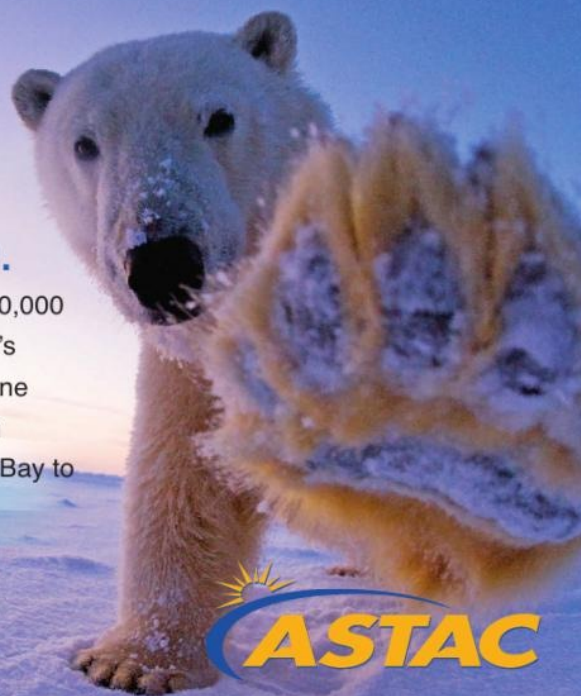
"We go into this next offseason, and my hopes are that he's really going to take another big step forward and continue to get better," Carroll said. "He doesn't give [opponents] the football. He already understands that. His production, his use of the players and the system, will grow. It will allow us to do some really cool things."

As Schneider said, the little guys can do it—again. ▲

Art Thiel, a longtime Seattle sportswriter, is a columnist for SportspressNW.com.

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BIRDS in PARADISE

Avian wonders of the Hawaiian Islands

✧ By Catherine E. Toth



A red-footed booby rests near the O'ahu coastline. Birds of this oceangoing species breed on tropical islands and soar great distances using their powerful wings.



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J oan Yoshioka, who lives on Hawai'i Island, remembers seeing her first 'apapane sitting in an 'ōhi'a tree in the village of Volcano. "It was this little, tiny red bird with black wings and a white rump," she says fondly. "It was love at first sight."

Lance Tanino was a zoology major back in 1995 when he encountered a nesting pair of 'alalā (Hawaiian crows) while he was camping on the slopes of Mauna Loa on Hawai'i Island. "I'll never forget the morning I was still in my tent and sleeping bag, trying to keep warm and listening to the 'alalā calling to each other before sunrise," he says. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime wake-up call."

And Jean Campbell recalls seeing what she identified as a Canada goose while she ran through the Enchanted Lake area on the windward side of O'ahu after a rainstorm one day. The Canada goose is similar in appearance to Hawai'i's state bird, the nēnē (Hawaiian goose), and may be the nēnē's ancestor. But seeing a Canada goose in Hawai'i is very uncommon. "The fact that this bird was actually out there is amazing to me," she says.

There is something each of these three avid birders know: The state of Hawai'i is an incredible place for bird-watching (or "birding," as some enthusiasts prefer to call it)—primarily for its collection of rare native birds that are found nowhere else in the world, but also for its impressive ocean wanderers and for many other common yet intriguing species people see every day. Whether it's in lush tropical areas or on dry volcanic slopes, along wave-washed coastlines or in gardens near urban areas, birding in Hawai'i leads to remarkable experiences observing colorful species and enjoying richly diverse Hawaiian habitats.

Interest in Hawai'i birding is on the rise—and is part of a broader trend. "Worldwide, people are getting more interested in birds," says H. Douglas Pratt, an ornithologist, field-guide author and leading authority on the birds of Hawai'i and the Pacific Islands. "I think people are just missing seeing nature. ... People want to see the natural world, and birds are part of that."

According to a survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, nearly a quarter of the U.S. population enjoyed wildlife-watching in 2011. (Wildlife-watching is defined to include closely watching, feeding and photographing wildlife;



A) The beautiful red, black and white 'apapane, a variety of honeycreeper, is one of the more common native birds in Hawai'i. This bird was photographed at the Kēalia Pond National Wildlife Refuge on Maui.

B) The 'ākohekohe (crested honeycreeper) is endemic to Maui. It can be found foraging for nectar in the high-elevation rain forest on Haleakalā volcano.

C) The kōlea, or Pacific golden plover, is an impressively wide-ranging migratory bird that winters in Hawai'i.

D) With its long legs and beak, the ae'o (Hawaiian stilt) is well-suited to wading in Hawaiian wetland areas on all of the major islands except Lāna'i and Kaho'olawe.

TOP TO BOTTOM: (A) DOUGLAS PEEBLES PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY; (B) DOUGLAS PEEBLES PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY; (C) STUBBLEFIELD PHOTOGRAPHY / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM; (D) JOHN DE MELLO / ALAMY



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visiting public parks because of wildlife; and maintaining plantings and natural areas around the home for the benefit of wildlife.)

Birds were the biggest attraction, according to the survey, with 46.7 million people either watching birds at their homes or traveling somewhere to see birds in their natural habitats. Overall, more than 22 million Americans took trips away from their homes to watch wildlife in 2011.

While birders have many options for places in the world they can see avian species, Hawai'i remains a compelling choice for the variety and sheer uniqueness of its birds. Increasingly, people are heading to Hawaiian slopes, forests and shorelines—equipped with binoculars and determination to spot something from their bird books and pocket field guides. Some people venture out on their own; others seek guidance from one of several experienced guide services. Sometimes, people find their birding experiences so inspiring that they join efforts to conserve and maintain the habitats that are so crucial to Hawai'i's treasured species.

Whatever form the interaction takes, there are ample opportunities for people to engage with the beautiful birds and habitats the Aloha State has to offer.

HAWAI'I BIRDS, NEAR AND FAR

You don't need to venture great distances in Hawai'i to find amazing birds, even on the most populated and developed island—O'ahu.

For example, you can walk up the paved trail to Makapu'u Point Lighthouse on O'ahu's southeast coastline and see impressive oceangoing fliers

such as frigate birds, boobies and shearwaters. Or you can drive along Kiuke'e Place in the Enchanted Lake subdivision in Kailua—adjacent to Ka'elepulu Wetland bird preserve—to spot waterbirds such as the dark-gray 'alae ke'oke'o (Hawaiian coot) or the ae'o (Hawaiian stilt), a slender wading bird. Or you can visit the 124-acre Lyon Arboretum and Botanical Garden in lushly vegetated Mānoa to see a variety of birds, including the O'ahu 'amakihi, a small yellow-green honeycreeper found only on this island; the kōlea (Pacific golden plover), which is among the world's greatest long-distance fliers; and the rose-ringed parakeet, an introduced species with beautiful green plumage on both males and females, with a reddish-pink neck-ring on the males.

During winter, in the Kahuku area on O'ahu, you might be able to see a bristle-thighed curlew—a rare shorebird with a long, downcurved bill that migrates to Hawai'i from western Alaska. These intriguing shorebirds breed on Alaska's inland tundra, but they prefer Hawaiian shores (along with other South Pacific places) for their wintering grounds.

Seeking out birds in Hawai'i often means visiting scenic island parks; but some great birding sites

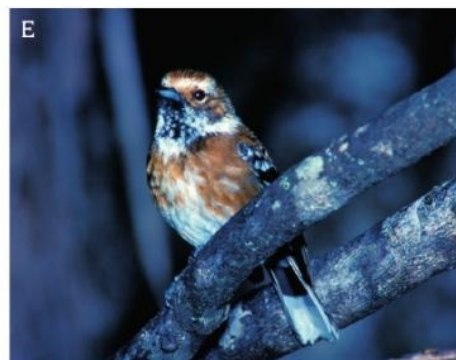
A) Hawai'i's state bird, the *nēnē* (Hawaiian goose), is found in the wild on Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island, partly due to reintroduction work.


B) Hawai'i has many elegant introduced species, such as the cattle egrets shown here at Wailea Beach on Maui.

C) Common mynahs are prevalent in populated areas of O'ahu and the other Hawaiian Islands.

D) Bristle-thighed curlews migrate from Alaska to Hawai'i wintering grounds.

E) The 'elepaio is a native flycatcher found on Hawai'i, Kaua'i and O'ahu.





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are far more modest. There's even terrific birding adjacent to an industrial plant near O'ahu's North Shore.

And oftentimes, Hawai'i residents find birds closer to home.

For instance, Jean Campbell, an O'ahu-based attorney who has seen 103 bird species in the Islands, once decided to participate in Big Year Hawai'i, a local informal competition among birders to see who can see or hear the largest number of species of birds within a single calendar year.

On the morning of January 1, she took her breakfast bowl of cereal out to her front porch in Kailua and jotted down what she saw: a Java sparrow, a common mynah, a spotted dove, a red-whiskered bulbul, a couple of cattle egrets and an 'iwa (great frigate bird) flying overhead. She also recorded on her list George, a white-rumped shama (a bird with white tailfeathers that looks like a robin-magpie hybrid). She saw him so often in her backyard, she had given him a name.

All that in about a half-hour.

Although Campbell can see quite a few birds near her house, she also enjoys expeditions that take her to other parts of the Islands, and even to different parts of the world. Part of the thrill for her is the search.

"What I love about birding is that it gives me an excuse to get outside and go places I wouldn't otherwise go," she says. "It's about just getting out and doing stuff."

BIRDING AS AN EXPERIENCE

It's worth remembering that bird-watching in Hawai'i and other places is sometimes more about the experience than about the ultimate success of finding a rare bird you set out to see. After all, the challenge of searching for an elusive species can be part of the fun. And more often than not in the Islands, you will be in some environment—a forest, a beach, the slope of a volcano—worthy of appreciation on its own merits. If you are intent on seeing birds, it is usually

GUIDED TOURS

HAWAII ISLAND

🌀 **Hawaii Forest & Trail** (800-464-1993 or 808-331-8505; hawaii-forest.com) in Kailua-Kona offers two small-group guided birding tours:

Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge

Adventure: This guided tour takes visitors into the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge, where you may see the orange 'ākepa (nonmigratory), an 'i'iwi and, maybe, a pueo.

Rainforest and Dryforest Birding Adventure

On this tour, visitors spend time in two very different habitats. At Pu'u La'au, you'll venture into the subalpine dryland forest on the west side of Mauna Kea and see *palila* and 'elepaio. In the cloud forest habitat, Pu'u O'o, you're likely to see the endangered 'akiapōlā'au, 'ōma'o, 'i'iwi and 'apapane.

O'AHU

🌀 **O'ahu Nature Tours** (808-924-2473; oahunaturetours.com) offers private birding

tours—up to only three guests—led by bird scientists who have conducted Hawai'i forest bird surveys and written books and magazine articles about the Islands' native bird species. You'll visit spots around the island, seeking out native, introduced and migratory birds.

MAUI

🌀 **Hike Maui** (866-324-6284 or 808-879-5270; hikemaui.com) offers a private, guided bird-watching hike through a variety of habitats, including those in Haleakalā National Park. Visitors to this area may search for species such as the 'i'iwi and the 'apapane.

KAUA'I

🌀 **Hawaiian Wildlife Tours** (808-639-2968; hawaiianwildlifetours.com) was founded in 1996 by Carl J. Berg, a lifelong naturalist and bird-watcher, as well as a former university professor who specialized in animal behavior and ecology. Berg offers customized tours focusing on bird-watching and other ways of appreciating Hawai'i's ecosystems. His tours



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emphasize endemic waterfowl and indigenous oceanic species. One possible tour, offered seasonally, involves viewing Laysan albatross chicks in their nests. Another takes tour participants to Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge, where one can view birds such as the *nēnē* (Hawaiian goose). Reservations should be made far in advance.



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I’m listening to the
birds. ... It’s just a
constant thing.”**

*—Joan Yoshioka, botanist and
statewide coordinator for the
Hawai’i Plant Extinction
Prevention Program*



Java sparrows (also called Java finches) feed mostly on seeds. They are natives of Indonesia but are actually more abundant in Hawai’i.

CHUCK BABBITT / PHOTOCOURCEHAWAII.COM

best to plan ahead by researching prime birding locations, seasons and viewing times—or by joining a guided tour. Otherwise, you may wish to take a more laid-back approach to the experience.

One challenge virtually all birders face in Hawai’i and in many other places is that finding birds, especially rare ones, isn’t always easy. You need the right equipment; you need to know where to look; and, in a lot of cases, you need good luck.

“In a way, it’s like fishing,” says Lance Tanino, who now works as an environmental engineer and sits on the board of the Hawai’i Audubon Society. “Sometimes, it’s a good day. Sometimes, it’s not. It’s all good. Just being outdoors and appreciating everything else you encounter—plants, insects—is always worth the effort.”

Of course, it’s also exciting to see one of Hawai’i’s elusive native species—such as the ‘ākohekohe (a crested honeycreeper) or the critically endangered Maui parrotbill—or even to see a more common seabird species, such as the distinctive ‘ua’u kani (wedge-tailed shearwater).



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*Some restrictions and black-out dates apply.

To increase the chances of finding particular birds, and finding them efficiently, many people seek help.

GETTING GUIDANCE

One of the best ways to see native birds in the Hawaiian Islands is to go on a guided tour with an expert.

Hawaii Forest & Trail, a 20-year-old eco-tour outfitter in Kailua-Kona on Hawai'i Island, offers two bird-watching tours led by experienced guides. One tour passes through Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge; the other passes through

"Birding is one of the best ways to tell the story about Hawai'i. It just encapsulates everything about Hawai'i for me, from natural history to culture. And getting people immersed in nature is what we're all about."

—Rob Pacheco,
Hawaii Forest & Trail

two different kinds of forest environments. All three sites on the tours are home to various native birds such as 'ākepa (small, orange-red honeycreepers), palila, 'elepaio (native flycatchers), 'apapane and pueo.

"Birding really gets you deep into the forest, and the stories in those places start to unveil themselves," says Rob Pacheco, the owner of Hawaii Forest & Trail, and a naturalist and avid birder himself. "Birding is one of the best ways to tell the story about Hawai'i. It just encapsulates everything about Hawai'i for me, from natural

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history to culture. And getting people immersed in nature is what we're all about."

When Michael Walther started O'ahu Nature Tours in 1998, bird-watching was just part of his general nature tours. Eight years later, he started offering birding-specific tours, private and customized for very small groups. He says that tour participants can expect to see up to 30 bird species in about five hours—all on O'ahu. And there are species such as the O'ahu 'elepaio and the O'ahu 'amakihi that are found only on this island.

"While bird-watching, people can learn about the ecology of the islands, the plants, the birds and the animals," Walther says. "They can learn about the geology of Hawai'i and the arrival of life to



DOUGLAS PEBBLES PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY

The *palila* is a finch-billed species of honeycreeper that lives on the slopes of Mauna Kea on Hawai'i Island. There is now a portion of this native bird's habitat fenced off for its protection.

the most remote archipelago on Earth. People say if Darwin had visited Hawai'i and had been able to see the 50-plus species of honeycreepers that evolved from a single ancestor, he might have been able to develop his evolution idea much faster than he did by observing the Galapagos finches."

HELPING HAWAII'S BIRDS

Sometimes, learning about Hawai'i's unique bird species can inspire action. And considering the unique attributes and limited numbers of Hawai'i's native species—as well as the challenges they face—it is fortunate that individuals and organizations are seeking to protect the birds through conservation projects and

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RESOURCES

BOOKS:

A Field Guide to the Birds of Hawai'i and the Tropical Pacific

by H. Douglas Pratt, Phillip L. Bruner and Delwyn G. Berrett (Princeton University Press, 1987)

A Pocket Guide to Hawai'i's Birds

by H. Douglas Pratt and Jack Jeffrey (Mutual Publishing, 2nd ed.; 2013)

The Birdwatcher's Guide to Hawai'i

by Rick Soehren (University of Hawai'i Press, 1996)

Hawai'i's Birds

(Hawai'i Audubon Society, 5th ed., 1997)

WEBSITES:

American Bird Conservancy:
abcbirds.org

American Birding Association:
aba.org

Hawai'i Audubon Society:
hawaiiiaudubon.org

Hawai'i Wildlife Center:
hawaiiwildlifecenter.org

Kaua'i Forest Bird Recovery Project:
kauaiforestbirds.org

Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project:
mauiforestbirds.org

National Audubon Society:
audubon.org

The Nature Conservancy:
nature.org

TRACK YOUR BIRDS:

eBird.org has a real-time, online checklist to help birders record and keep track of their bird lists, share sightings and explore dynamic graphs and maps. It was launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.

the establishment of sanctuaries.

The creation of Hawai'i Island's Haka-lau Forest National Wildlife Refuge, on the windward slope of Mauna Kea, is one



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example of an effort to protect Hawaiian birds and habitats. Established in 1985, this 32,733-acre area boasts a diversity of native birds and plants unlike anywhere else on the island. The refuge's ongoing reforestation program—which has added more than 400,000 koa, 'ōhi'a and other native trees and plants to the landscape—has improved the population of such birds as the 'akiapōlā'au, a yellow-green honeycreeper found only on the Big Island.

"Lots can be done, particularly on the Big Island," says Thane Pratt (no relation

**"When I'm out
there birding, I feel
like I'm a part of
something bigger
than me."**

—Joan Yoshioka,
*Hawai'i Plant Extinction
Prevention Program*

to H. Douglas Pratt), an affiliate wildlife biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center. "In places where pastures are reforested with 'ōhi'a and koa, birds will move in. We're seeing that already."

The fact is that many Hawaiian birds face challenges. Since the arrival of Europeans in the Islands, many native bird species have become extinct. The remaining species face diverse threats, ranging from habitat loss to disease to competition and predation by invasive species. Which is why it's so important that conservation efforts are under way to protect the rare species.

One of the birds people are working to save is the golden-headed palila, a finch-billed species of Hawaiian honeycreeper that lives on the upper slopes of Mauna Kea on Hawai'i Island. To help preserve the palila's preferred habitat—dry forest of māmane and naio trees—the State of Hawai'i has fenced an area of māmane and

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naio on Mauna Kea to protect this habitat from sheep that wander through that area.

Many of the sanctuaries, refuges, preserves and national parks around the state allow birders to see native birds in their natural habitats. For instance, the Upper Maulua Unit of the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge is open to the public for bird-watching and hiking on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

The Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge on the North Shore of Kaua'i attracts more than 500,000 visitors every year to its breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean, a historic lighthouse and one of the largest populations of nesting seabirds in the Hawaiian Islands. Each year, thousands of migratory seabirds nest, forage and rest here, including mō'ī (Laysan albatross), red-footed boobies, red- and white-tailed tropicbirds and great frigate birds. There's even a wild population of nēnē (Hawaiian goose)—Hawai'i's state bird, which is carefully protected as an endangered species.

One of the most accessible places to see native birds in a protected natural environment is the 333,000-acre Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Here visitors can see 'amakihi, 'akiapōlā'au, 'elepaio and, if they're lucky, pueo (Hawaiian short-eared owls). The park boasts 150 miles of hiking trails near volcanic craters, over desert landscapes and through rain forests. If you explore park trails, you might see nēnē, 'ua'u (Hawaiian petrels) or 'io (Hawaiian hawks).

Joan Yoshioka lives so close to the national park, she encounters native birds on her daily walks. Yoshioka is a botanist and statewide coordinator for the Hawai'i Plant Extinction Prevention Program, and thus one of those people working to protect birds' habitats even as she enjoys the birds' company.

Searching for birds is an everyday activity for Yoshioka, who was born and raised in Hilo and got into birding in the mid-1980s after graduating from college. "I spend more time with my head high than walking straight," she says. "I'm listening to the birds. There could be an

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'elepaio on my right, two 'apapane just ahead of me, an 'amakihi flying by. It's just a constant thing."

EXOTIC ENCOUNTERS

In addition to the intriguing resident birds found regularly in the Islands, there are occasionally wanderers—which experienced birders, guides and local organizations track with excitement. For example, as of mid-February, there was a bird on O'ahu that every birder wanted to see: a tiny migratory wading bird called a Terek sandpiper, named for the Terek River that flows through Georgia and Russia into the Caspian Sea. The sandpiper was spotted this year in Kahuku. Just one. The first recorded Terek sandpiper in Hawai'i.

People flew in from around the country to see it. Tanino flew from Hawai'i Island to O'ahu just to view this bird. Ornithologist H. Douglas Pratt, who lives in North Carolina, changed his plans to come a day early on a trip to Hawai'i to see if he could spot the little bird with the long, upcurved bill. Happily, he succeeded.

UNUSUAL APPEARANCES such as these are the kinds of things that get birders especially excited. But the fact is that bird-watching in Hawai'i is always exciting—in whatever type of habitat you choose and whether you find an exotic species or not.

"When I'm out there birding, I feel like I'm a part of something bigger than me," says Joan Yoshioka. "Learning about plants and birds, hearing birds' calls ... I think as humans we are naturally drawn to the natural world.

"You're learning about the birds in a way that only being out with them allows." ▲

Catherine E. Toth is a writer in Honolulu.

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FRONT RUNNERS

Aliy Zirkle races top Iditarod teams
to Nome | by Joe Runyan





Aliy Zirkle and her team
cross the Bering Sea ice
on their way to Nome.



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Seeing Aliy Zirkle standing on her sled runners at the start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Anchorage is a sight most race fans don't soon forget. Amid a throng of ardent supporters yelling "Go, Aliy!" she stands 6 feet tall, flashing a smile recognized across the state. For many Iditarod followers, Zirkle's time has come. The veteran musher from Two Rivers, Alaska, leads a prime-time list of men and women competitors, and has the potential to put together a magical run that will carry her and her team into Nome as this year's champion.

The New Hampshire native first visited

Alaska in 1990 as a 20-year-old biology student doing a research internship, and she was immediately taken by the Alaska wilderness. After completing her degree at the University of Pennsylvania, while also competing on the university's track and field and volleyball teams, she moved to Alaska to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service out of the remote village of Bettles, north of Fairbanks. That's where Zirkle discovered the incomparable Alaskan husky sled dog. She acquired a small team and spent a winter mushing and camping in the Gates of the Arctic wilderness. By April she was ready to enter the

spring carnival races in Allakaket, a village along the Koyukuk

River. She was hooked. She gave her kennel—which she now operates with her husband, musher Allen Moore—the name Skunk's Place, after Skunk, the female leader of her first team of six dogs.

Known for exquisite dog care and attention to detail in her race planning, Zirkle earned her first big racing credential in 2000 when she won the Yukon Quest, a 1,000-mile wilderness sled dog race on the old Klondike trails between Whitehorse, Canada, and Fairbanks, Alaska. The early February race is noted for extreme winter weather and tough trails, and winning the Yukon Quest is considered a serious accomplishment in the mushing community. The Alaska press wondered if Zirkle might be the next Susan Butcher, an extraordinary champion who won the Iditarod in 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1990, and was the last woman to win the race.

Aliy Zirkle arrives in Nome with a smile and thumbs up for fans in 2012 after finishing in second place.

IDITAROD TRAIL SLED DOG RACE

NICKNAME: The Last Great Race

WHEN: Begins March 1, 2014

FIRST IDITAROD: 1973

FASTEST TIME: 8 days 18 hours 46 minutes 39 seconds; John Baker, 2011

MOST WINS: Rick Swenson, five; 1977, '79, '81, '82, '91; five mushers have won four times

NUMBER OF DOGS: Maximum of 16 at start; minimum of six at finish

ROUTE: Following the ceremonial start in downtown Anchorage, the historic trail leads north and west from the restart at Willow, up and over the Alaska Range and across the wide Yukon Basin. The route then follows a 100-mile portage to the Bering Sea Coast and finishes on Main Street, Nome.

ACTUAL DISTANCE: About 975 miles, depending on actual trail placement each year.



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Libby Riddles was the first woman to win the Iditarod, in 1985, and with Butcher's domination of the race over subsequent years, the pair not only demonstrated that the Iditarod is an extreme event that is open to *all* competitors, they also made a significant statement for all women in sports. And whether Zirkle wanted it or not, she was handed a difficult challenge. Along with DeeDee Jonrowe (second in 1993 and 1998) and Jessie Royer (a frequent top-20 finisher), Zirkle was included in a group of notable women mushers expected to battle to the front.

She entered her first Iditarod in 2001 and placed 33rd. It was a commendable finish, but not the competitive effort many expected from a proven long-distance champ. Over the next 10 years, she faded from the list of top Iditarod contenders into comfortable anonymity, only occasionally finishing in the top 20.

Finally, hard work, patience and acquired knowledge of the trail paid off. In 2012, she broke into the top 10, finishing second behind first-time champ Dallas Seavey. Zirkle had surged to the front early



in the race and led through much of the Interior. Ultimately, 25-year-old Seavey, an internationally competitive wrestler who once trained with the U.S. Olympic team, eased his dogs to the front along the Bering Sea coast. Despite painfully blistered feet, he lightened the load for his team by running every snow-covered hill in lightweight hiking shoes, and won by an hour—the youngest musher ever to win the Iditarod.

Zirkle, who as a former college athlete knew how to train, was no slouch on the sled either, ski-poling like a windmill behind her team of relatively small huskies, pressuring Seavey all along the treeless coast to Nome. If she was disappointed in her finish, nobody would have known. Playing the poker face on Nome's Main Street, she asked Seavey, "Hey, youngster,

how's your toe?"

The following year, race pundits gave Zirkle a top ranking for the 2013 Iditarod—she had earned it. But some race

veterans and insiders had reservations about a repeat performance. For one, her dogs are noticeably small by sled dog standards. Most mushers consider a 55- to 65-pound husky ideal for distance mushing. Notwithstanding the popular images of powerful 100-pound malamutes, bigger dogs are not well adapted to, or even capable of, 100 miles a day on the trail, much less maintaining that pace for 1,000 miles.

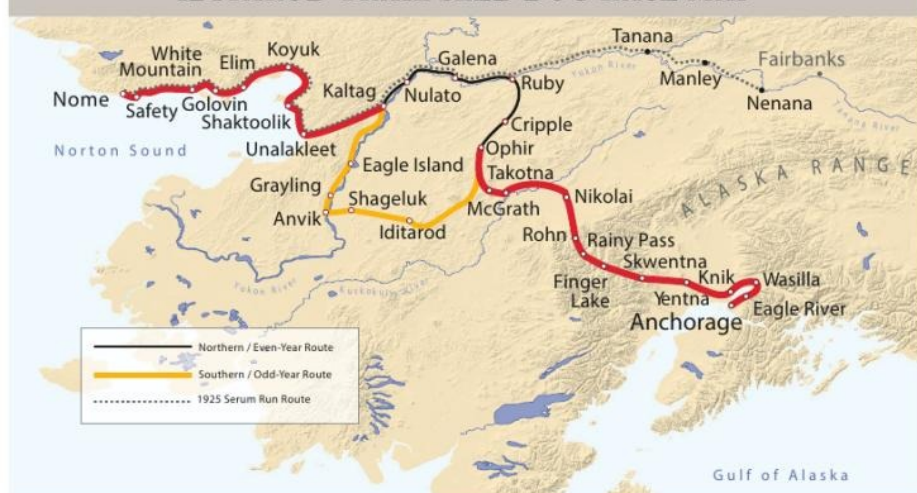
Just a few weeks ago, Zirkle was in Dawson City, in Canada's Yukon Territory, watching her husband battle to the front of the Yukon Quest. Including the 13 dogs in Moore's team, she said she had 24 dogs in training, from which she'd pick 16 for her 2014 Iditarod team. Of these, two males weigh just 51 pounds, and the remainder weigh in at a diminutive 36 to 44 pounds.

Conventional wisdom is that smaller dogs are a liability when raw power is

Above: Tending to dogs along the trail is a priority. Aliy Zirkle has twice won the Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian Award, given to the musher who race veterinarians believe took best care of his or her dogs. Left: Zirkle congratulates Mitch Seavey, in Nome, on winning the 2013 Iditarod.



IDITAROD TRAIL SLED DOG RACE MAP



needed to muscle the sled up hills and through deep snow. Still, smaller dogs like Zirkle's seem indefatigable, impervious to injury and supremely athletic, able to deftly navigate difficult trails. In particular, Zirkle calls out her "little gray dogs," a trio of leaders named Nacho, Quito and Chica that are the dynamos of her team. The product of targeted training and keen attention to nutritional strategies, Zirkle's team is the real deal.

In what has to be billed as one of the best races in the 41-year history of the Iditarod, four-time champion Martin Buser owned the first half of the 2013 race. Gradually, however, Zirkle and a group of followers reeled in the leader, closing the gap by the time the race hit the Yukon River, about midway through the route. In the meantime, temperatures had risen to above freezing and, inconceivably, it began to rain. The trail snow turned to the consistency of mashed potatoes, and mushers measured progress step by step. Conditions were miserable, even for spectators, but mushers, some of them using plastic gar-

bage sacks as rain gear, steeled themselves and pushed on.

Zirkle led the race for a while, as she had in 2012, but she was challenged constantly, by Aaron Burmeister; Ray Redington Jr., grandson of Iditarod founder Joe Redington Sr.; Joar Leifseth Ulsom, a Norwegian racer; Nicolas Petit; four-time champion Jeff King; Dallas Seavey; and Mitch Seavey, the 53-year-old father of Dallas and 2004 Iditarod champ.

Dramatic twists and turns, thrusts and parries, and bold moves by King characterized the last third of the race. The teams traveled in the dark night on excruciatingly soft and indiscernible trail across sea ice and treeless tundra. Mitch Seavey arrived first in White Mountain, a small village checkpoint just 77 miles from the finish—totally exhausted but race leader. He later confided that he was so tired, he had fallen

off the sled twice in the dark and his only focus had been to get off the sea ice and find shelter from the incessant wind.

Somehow, in the late hours of the night, amid the blowing winds of the Bering Sea coast, Zirkle and her team of scrappy huskies, led by her indomitable little gray leaders, churned up the soft, wind-blown trail, and arrived at the White

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Aliy Zirkle and Allen Moore pose with Ranger. On February 10, Moore won his second consecutive Yukon Quest.

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Mountain checkpoint just 13 minutes behind the elder Seavey.

Mushdom was on the edge of its collective seat; social media hummed; Internet service on the Alaska coast choked on the volume of race-fan traffic; and Zirkle's fans wondered, "Has momentum shifted?" Inside the White Mountain community hall, Zirkle took off her wet boots and cold-weather gear, and hung them to dry near an oil heater. She remained unflappable, courteous and pleasant, but one could nevertheless see the lines of fatigue on her face as she found a place on the floor for a nap.

Ironically, while Zirkle's dogs were smaller than those on other teams, she was the tallest of the top-five mushers—an advantage if a volleyball match were to break out in that community hall, but not for mushing, where a light load and low profile are advantages.

At the end of her mandatory eight-hour break in White Mountain, Zirkle was predictably animated and cheerful. Her dogs howled, to the amusement of spectators, when she pulled up her ice hook to take off, 13 minutes behind Seavey. She noted that she was glad she had worked hard all winter and was as trim as she could possibly be on the sled.

The final 77 miles to the finish were hard fought. At one point, Zirkle and team closed on Seavey, but she was never able to gain the lead. After 1,000 miles and nine days of racing, she was a mere 24 minutes from making history. Again, she and her team placed second. She smiled for the cameras, heaped praise on her huskies and acknowledged Mitch Seavey.

"She congratulated me at the finish, and has made a point of congratulating me since. She's a great competitor," Seavey said earlier this year.

So, what will it take for Zirkle to win the race? My good friend Dean Osmar, the 1984 Iditarod champ, has a photographic memory of Iditarod facts, and he told me, "For Aliy to win, it's one-third dogs, one-third musher and one-third luck."

I called Zirkle in December for a team



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update, and she reported that she and her husband had 39 dogs in training, ranging in age from 2 to 8 years old. Their goal was to put together three teams during the winter season, with the final pre-race selection of elites going to Zirkle's 16-dog Iditarod team.

"Really, it's the three gray dogs at the front of the team that are behind our success," she said. "Their desire to pull and perform is entirely self-motivated. It's our job to bring out their full potential by providing all the necessary nutritional and training elements. We hope we may have developed a complete plan for racing."

Additionally, Zirkle's SP Kennel has worked with Michael Davis, a professor of veterinary sciences at Oklahoma State University, on research projects, including nutritional investigations that may specifically help military bomb-search dogs.

"We use our working dogs to look very closely at nutrition and electrolytes," Zirkle said. "We have treadmills and specialized equipment at the kennel to gather data. In the process of analyzing data, we have learned to apply that research to our own dogs. We also have our own insights about the physiology of sled dogs and how to prepare for the Iditarod."

Zirkle has undoubtedly spent many hours at the kitchen table this winter analyzing her strategy for the upcoming 1,000-mile trail. She noted that this will be the third year of racing for this particular group of dogs. "They have emerged as a very durable team, and I have great expectations for the 2014 race," she said. "We don't use necklines, which mean that each dog must be individually motivated. Taking my own experience as an athlete, I have been very carefully developing the team mentally and physically."

Zirkle's racing style is also a bit different than that of most mushers. For instance, she'll often blow through checkpoints, stopping only long enough for the formalities, and then camp somewhere along the race trail. While many mushers can hardly pass up the opportunity to dry out clothes and grab a warm nap by a blazing wood stove at any of the 19 village checkpoints, Zirkle prefers to stick to her schedule of

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regular eight- to 10-hour runs that bump her 70 miles up the trail. If she doesn't land at a checkpoint at the end of a run, she'll camp with her dogs and suffer the inconvenience of resting in a sleeping bag on the snow.

"Of course, we want to average over 100 miles a day," she said. "A travel speed of 9 mph at the start of the race and 7 mph at the end of the race would be ideal. Some of my dogs can travel eight hours, then rest two hours, and go again, but I modify the schedule for the members of the team who might need more rest."

Like other front-runners, her dogs average about eight hours of rest per day.

Aliy Zirkle and another 70 mushers have paid their \$3,000 entry fee for Iditarod 2014. Among her mushing contemporaries, there are a few who may stand in the way of her Iditarod victory.

Dallas and Mitch Seavey train independently and run their own kennels, but they exchange ideas almost daily and critique each other unmercifully. They both are former wrestlers, come from a family with a competitive ethic, and leave no doubt that they want to protect their crowns.

Jeff King (age 58 and a veteran of 23 Iditarods) and Martin Buser (age 55 and 30 Iditarods) seem to have been pictured in every promotional poster over nearly the entire history of the race. With so many years of experience, they know an opportunity when they see one and are always prepared to leverage an opponent's misstep. Each has won an incredible four Iditarods, and no one I know discounts their ability to do it again.

There is also a group of talented young mushers to consider: Burmeister, Redington, Ulsom, Petit, Jake Berkowitz and Peter Kaiser.

And there's one more development that will influence this year's Iditarod. Norway is the home of a mushing community very similar to Alaska's, with its own circuit of long-distance races. Perhaps their success is attributable to their culture of elite cross-country skiing and history of legendary polar explorers. *CONTINUED ON PAGE 197*

"I wanted to make a change – not just for a few months – but for a lifetime."



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for a couple of months – but for a lifetime.

Fortunately, because I fly for business, I kept seeing ads in Alaska Airlines Magazine which featured women who obtained incredible results with The My Best 10 program. At first I thought, "There's no way these women did that," but as I read more of these stories, it started to sink in. This wasn't just one success story – it was the norm for women who committed themselves to 10 weeks with the goal of losing 10 pounds. I couldn't wait to get started. I knew it would be hard work, but I didn't expect all the fun that went along with it. It was everything I wanted and more.

My husband became the most encouraging and complimentary person in my corner, making sure I could fit the appointments into my schedule. And guess what? I not only met my goals, I ended up losing 18 pounds of fat and gained six pounds of muscle. I had sculpted muscles I didn't even know existed. My nine-year-old pointed to my arm one day and asked, "What's that on your arm?" I looked down and realized he was referring to one of my muscles. When I told him what it was, he said, "Boy, that's pretty good, especially for a girl!" I laughed, but inside I was thrilled!

Frankly, I was thrilled with everything at My Best 10. I was welcomed, encouraged, and treated like a queen. I have received so many compliments! I now have a new body, the best new hair cut, and glowing skin. Toward the end of the program, nothing in my closet would fit. So, on my birthday, my husband took me shopping for an entire new wardrobe. Thank you, My Best 10!



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HANDY HARDWARE

Great new devices boost
mobile work and leisure

By Skip Ferderber

As electronic miracles go, this one is tiny. The words you're reading are being written on a digital device shorter and thinner than a Butterfinger candy bar.

Why on earth would I use this tiny item—an Apple iPod Touch (an iPhone without the “phone” part)—as my main electronic device, instead of a laptop? Apple originally created iPods as music players. Imagine trying to write a business plan, legal brief, trip itinerary or even, yes, this article on a keyboard roughly the size of four postage stamps.

But you can indeed accomplish those tasks, and much more, on this delightful device—and that's what I'm doing right now. The iPod Touch has all the essentials of a “real” computer: a powerful processor, easy-to-read screen, fast Internet connection. It's light as a feather and can be safely stashed in your jacket pocket. Add in a pen-like stylus and a wireless keyboard paired with your iPod and it becomes a credible word processor or sketch pad. There are even attachable macro and wide-angle lenses that turn its already good camera into a terrific one.

Granted, its tiny screen and limited keyboard aren't suited for extensive keyboarding, but it's a good example of how today's amazingly sophisticated mobile gear is good enough that we really do have significant choices in the size, weight and capabilities of our mobile productivity devices.

If you still lug around an 8-pound, 17-inch laptop with a power charger the size of a brick, you may do well to look at today's new crop of mini-laptops, tablets, smartphones and “phablets” (phones large enough they might be used as hors d'oeuvre platters). They're changing the landscape of business—particularly for travelers.

Here are some recent benchmarks in the new mobile working world:

- ▶ **Tablets in their many forms** are chipping away at the once-impregnable world of desktop and laptop computing.
- ▶ **There is no more “one size fits all”** computer solution. Choices in size, weight, capabilities and price are numerous.
- ▶ **While the technology differences** among Apple, Google and Microsoft—the three major operating systems—remain significant, you can do most routine work on virtually any system, and have it understood by anyone on any other system.
- ▶ **Microsoft Office**, still the “gold standard” of office-work software suites, remains a major factor for tablet and laptop purchases, but competitors continue to take aim at it.

Mobile work technology has changed since the introduction of the iPad in April 2010. “People can do [on a tablet] about 80 percent of what they once could do only with a PC,” says Tim Bajarin, a leading



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-Larry Campbell, Suhr Guitars
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analyst and futurist with Creative Strategies Inc. "Tablets are clearly affecting PC sales.

"[These devices] handle browsing, email, music, videos, word processing and more. Until the tablets came out, our only vehicle was the computer. When Apple introduced the iPad, they really shook up the market."

So what does this mean to the average worker? If you can afford it, and you want to take advantage of the true benefits of this technology, a two-gadget solution is eminently viable: a desktop or a laptop computer at home or office, and a tablet or tablet-like device good for meetings, classes, and while you're out and about. Sound expensive? It need not be. The cost of a new-generation laptop and a tablet together can be less expensive than yesterday's laptop alone—\$1,500 for both, with careful shopping.

In addition, because tablets are smaller and less expensive than but almost as capable as laptops, people are buying them as replacements, and their existing laptops become their use-at-home computers. Bjarin notes that the life of a laptop used to be three years before replacement; now it's five years.

For road-savvy business people, the older heavy-metal laptop once de rigueur for company work is slowly yielding to what corporate America calls BYOD—"bring your own device"—as workers substitute their own personal technology for company gear.

How significant are tablet sales? A report by the NPD Group in *eWeek* magazine indicated that tablet sales in 2013 increased 49 percent from 2012, with Apple's iPads taking the lion's share at 59 percent. But the competition is on, and hungry: Sales of tablets based on Google's Android system grew more than 160 percent in 2013.

The report also shows something even more surprising: A new entry in the arena, a laptop with an operating system from Google called the Chromebook, is bucking the trend of tablets replacing laptops. The NPD report indicates that Chromebooks accounted for more than 20 percent of all notebook computer sales in 2013. Chromebooks are meant to be used specifically where people have Internet connections—most of the devices' abilities are in "the cloud" rather than on the hard drive. While that might at first



iPod Touch

Even this tiny item can be turned into a mobile office using auxiliary devices.

seem really limiting, today's reality is that the Internet already IS almost everywhere. Chromebooks are also inexpensive: you can buy one starting at \$200. Add that to a \$500 home desktop or laptop machine, and you've got your two-device system for less than \$1,000.

Now being manufactured by Samsung, HP, Acer, Toshiba, Lenovo and others, Chromebooks are lightweight, start instantly, and have enough functionality to do most everyday tasks such as email and browsing. Be aware, however, that Chromebook users can only use the apps provided by Google in its Chrome app store. For many users that's enough; for others who need non-Google programs or a greater variety of apps, it may not suffice.

Chromebooks are just the latest development in a movement that's reshaping the way we use our gadgets, and that's the shift to storing digital material—documents, music, videos, software and more—in "the cloud": the name for a vast global network of computer servers enabling people to remotely store and utilize all their digital material on the Internet. Apple iCloud, Dropbox, Box, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive (formerly SkyDrive) and many other free and paid cloud servers comprise an increasingly large part of today's technology. Cloud storage is possible for almost any device, from the tiniest smartphone to the biggest desktop computer.

Another tech development, extremely small storage cards (SD cards), some capable of holding 256 gigabytes, offer more storage than most of yesterday's "big" hard drives. Consumer electronics manufacturers have taken advantage of these

Laptops and Chromebooks

MacBook Air

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Acer C720P Chromebook

The newest entry in the laptop universe is this cloud-based laptop.

Tablets & 'Phablets'

Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 Lite and Note 10.1



Apple iPad Air and iPad Mini



Samsung Galaxy Note 3



Nokia Lumia 1520



Sony Xperia Z Ultra



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Microsoft Surface 2 and Surface Pro 2





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and other developments—such as powerful, mostly heat-free processors, the “brains” of all our computer devices—to make today’s tablets smaller, lighter and almost as powerful as laptops.

If you’re thinking of making the leap into the tablet revolution, here are a few things to consider.

► **Tablets still are not laptops.** If you need to do intensive work such as writing a script or business plan, designing a building, or retouching a glamour shot of your spouse, a desktop or laptop computer is likely still a better bet because of the larger screens, full-size keyboards and work habits you’ve developed using these venerable systems.

► **Screen size does matter.** Although larger tablets are coming this year—12-inch screens may be available soon—most tablets now range between 7 and 10 inches. Some people can work with these screen sizes; some can’t. There’s no right or wrong; it’s what you’re comfortable with.

► **Typing on a tablet is not the same experience as typing on a “real” keyboard.** If you’re venturing beyond texting or answering emails, you may want to buy a wireless keyboard to use with your tablet. Some keyboards are built into a “folio,” a carrying case that holds your tablet. These are readily available whether you’re buying an iPad from Apple, an Android tablet from Samsung and others, or a Windows Surface tablet.

► **If you’re accustomed to a mouse for work, you won’t be able to use one with any iPad.** While Apple currently doesn’t enable it—Android and Microsoft tablets all do, by the way—Bajarin believes iPads are entering the workplace in such great numbers that Apple may soon add mouse function to these devices.

The first Apple iPads had little real competition when they arrived in 2010. The digital creative worlds—publishing, film editing, music, books, gaming—happily embraced this new platform. Today, there are roughly 475,000 iPad-specific apps.

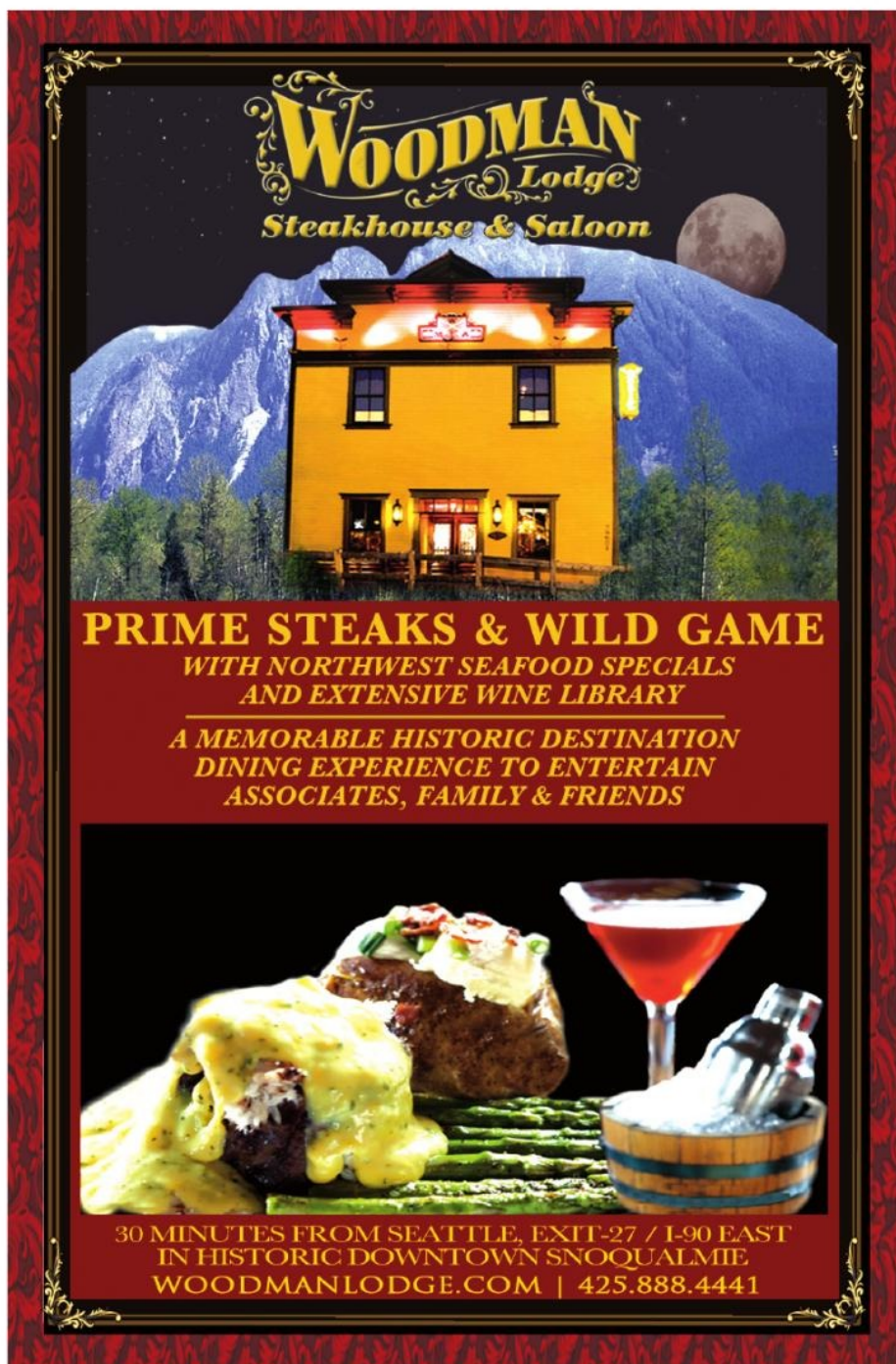
Apple's success provoked intense competition, most notably from Google. While iPads still are the best-sellers—third-quarter 2013 results showed Apple with a 30 percent market share, Samsung with 20 percent—several analyses suggest that Android devices will be the best-selling tablets in 2014. At the same time, the line is rapidly blurring between work devices and the gadgets you use at home.

Microsoft was barely represented in the tablet world for the better part of three years. In 2013, however, the Seattle tech giant re-entered the field with its line of Surface tablets running its new and much-discussed Windows 8 operating system. End-of-year studies indicate that retail giant Best Buy sold out its entire Surface 2 inventory during the last Christmas season: evidence, perhaps, that Microsoft's oft-shown ability to rejuvenate its business may be at hand once more.

When it comes to tablet apps, Apple seems to be the champ both in sheer numbers and design innovation. But when it comes to software for tablets—word processing, spreadsheets, drawing programs, book readers, photo editing and more—Apple, Google Android and Microsoft are in a virtual three-way tie. The good news is that whether someone chooses an Apple, an Android or a Microsoft tablet, programs crucial to both desktop and mobile computing—word processing and similar apps, Dropbox, Google Drive, Windows OneDrive, Netflix, TuneIn Radio, Pandora, Wikipedia and more—are generally available on all systems.

And even though much of Microsoft's software is still designed for desktop and laptop PCs, those programs will work on all Windows 8 tablets based on Intel processors entering the consumer market this year from most major PC manufacturers: Dell, HP, Asus, Acer, Lenovo, etc.

For Microsoft tablet owners, the processor issue is vitally important. If the Windows tablet you buy is built on an Intel chip, your tablet can run virtually any Windows software. If the tablet is built around a non-Intel chip, there are fewer Microsoft tablet-compatible apps available, and your choice of programs is limited to



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the Windows app store. This may not be a deal-breaker, however. Even the Microsoft tablets using so-called ARM-based processors now have plenty of app choices, and more are being made available.

Apple's iPad Air, introduced last year, remains the industry's leading tablet, followed by the iPad Mini with its retina screen. The Android-based Samsung Galaxy Tab line comes in third, and Asus, manufacturer of the popular Google tablet, is in fourth.

Last year's "phablet" sales surge took most people by surprise. This cross between a phone and a tablet just looks strange when people hold something the size of a shoe to their ear for a phone call. Strange looking or not, these larger-than-they-should-be devices have become the latest craze in mobile technology. With the success two years ago of Samsung's original Galaxy Note, the first to market with a 5-inch screen, a built-in stylus and stylus-centered software, competing smartphone manufacturers were forced to come up with their own larger screens. Even Apple, which currently has no phablet, is rumored to be developing a larger iPhone.

It's not just the size that appeals to buyers, however; it's the ability of these systems to do the work of a full-size tablet or even a laptop—plus access to the full libraries of Android and Windows apps. Most of these also feature 4G-LTE, the fastest cellphone connection available in the United States, giving users an Internet connection as fast as many have at home.

How likely is it that the Samsung Galaxy Note (5-inch screen), Nokia 1520 (6-inch), Huawei Ascend Mate (6.1-inch) or Sony Xperia Z Ultra (6.4-inch) smartphone could become your mobile productivity mainstay?

If you could have all the services you need for work and personal activities, including phone, available in a gadget that fits in your pocket—despite the reality that you would need to adjust to a much smaller screen—would you make that switch?

Whichever device you choose, tablet or phablet, the issue remains what basic software you will use for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations and email. And

here's where it gets tricky.

To most people, that basic software package translates to Microsoft Office. While it's still the gold standard of computing software, it has more than its share of competitors offering software that is "Office-like." Depending on your needs, Office-like may be good enough. Loosely translated, that means that documents you create in whatever Office-like software you're using have to be compatible with Microsoft Office. That's the standard on which global business still runs.

But if you could get Microsoft Office on whatever device you choose, would you not rather have it?

Microsoft is counting on that loyalty as it continues rolling out its Windows 8 operating system: a radical and still controversial change from Windows 7 and all other generations of Windows. To sweeten the deal, most new Windows 8 tablets of any size from any manufacturer include some form of genuine Office software. Here's where you need to read the fine print when buying a new Windows tablet. Some will carry the big four Office apps—Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. Some exclude Outlook. Some have no Office programs at all.

Even Microsoft's own line of Surface tablets offers two different approaches when it comes to Office. The Surface 2 RT, built on a non-Intel processor (and therefore limiting the available apps to those in its own app store), has all four major Office apps as part of its \$499 package. The Surface 2 Pro, built on an Intel chip and therefore ready for all Windows-compatible apps, doesn't come with a built-in Office suite. And that tablet sells for \$899.

The solution Microsoft is hoping many will adopt is an annual subscription version of Office called Office 365 starting at \$80 a year for individuals. All four major Office apps are available plus One Note, Publisher and Access. It's compatible right now with Windows and Macintosh computers, and Intel-based Windows 8 tablets.

What about Office 365 for iPads? It's here. Packages for Android tablets or the Chromebook? Yep—brand new.

All this suggests that Microsoft Office is

still the most important software in computing. But Google has taken the fight to Microsoft in a powerful way. According to some recent figures from Gartner, Google claims that 5 million businesses and institutions are using Google Apps, a suite that includes Google Docs and others. Then again, in another report, Microsoft reports it has sold 2 million Office 365 home subscriptions, and that 60 percent of Fortune 500 businesses have purchased the business version of Office 365.

With continuing pressure from Google, the future of this vital part of mobile computing is far from settled. Development of other free or nearly free cross-platform suites continues—Documents to Go, MobiSystems OfficeSuite Pro, SoftMaker Office and Google's Quickoffice. Add in Apple's recent policy change that provides Apple users a free version of iWorks, their suite of office apps, and the battle remains fierce.

While complicated, this diversity exemplifies the pleasures of this new era of mobile productivity: the vast number and broad diversity of really good products on the market.

As for me, while I can write something on an iPod Touch, that was experimental. I use a Windows Surface 2 RT tablet for serious writing. I like the tablet's 10.6-inch size and the full Microsoft Office suite included in the purchase price. Microsoft's cool backlit attachable keyboard is great, and I use a wireless mouse with it. For relaxation uses, I bring my Google Android Nexus 7 tablet. And my phone is a "phablet": the Samsung Galaxy Note 3. I keep a foldable Bluetooth keyboard and a Bluetooth mouse with me for taking notes during meetings and interviews, and the phone lets me take usable photos and record interviews.

Yes, I suppose I do look strange holding this huge phone to my ear. But it wasn't all that long ago that, if I wanted to "compute" something, it required a 20-pound desk-bound machine. Today's range of gadgets represents a technological abundance I'm happy to enjoy. ▲

Skip Ferderber is a technology writer based in Mukilteo, Washington.

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Cover: A stunning barrel cactus blooms in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park south of Coachella Valley. Photo by Ron Niebrugge/wildnatureimages.com.

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BY THE BEAUTIFUL BAY

Attractions abound in the San Francisco area

| By Chaney Kwak

San Francisco is known for many things, including being a high-tech hub, one of the world's most beautiful cities and home to some of the finest restaurants anywhere.

You can add to that impressive profile that the City by the Bay is considered one of the nation's healthiest metropolitan areas. It is easy to see why. San Francisco's numerous hills—between 40 and 50, depending on who you ask—certainly help keep residents in shape as they pursue various forms of exercise. In-line skaters glide on promenades, surfers brave the cold ocean



San Francisco's iconic Golden Gate Bridge, which connects the city to Marin County, was first opened in 1937 and has been named one of the top 10 construction achievements of the 20th century.

MARIUSZBLACH / ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

surf and cyclists ride among the gardens in the majestic Golden Gate Park. In addition, the Bay Area is known as being a hotbed for healthy eating. The result is plenty of fit residents.

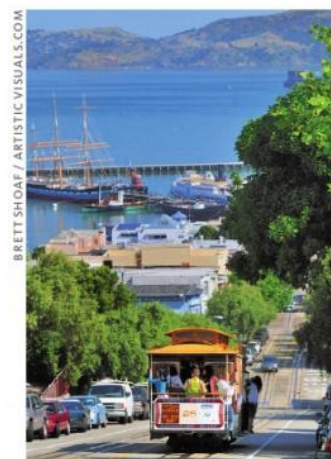
Whether you want to sightsee, watch a favorite sports team or explore the natural surroundings, San Francisco and the Bay Area, in general, offer a multitude of ways to stay active while enjoying the sights.

One method for getting to know San Francisco is by walking the city's many famous neighborhoods. From the Mission District to the Presidio, South Beach to Golden Gate Park, San Francisco is made up of a fascinating collection of neighborhoods that offer distinct personalities. Many of the neighborhoods are known for steep roadways that often require stairways to climb, offering a good workout and stunning views. For most of these routes, cable cars or other modes of public transportation are available for those who would rather ride than walk.

A favorite walk is the Filbert Street Steps. Located on the eastern side of the city's Telegraph Hill, the Filbert Steps wind through neighborhoods lined with amazing 19th century homes and fragrant gardens. The steps also go to Pioneer Park, home of the Coit Tower, which affords one of the finest views of the city and the Bay Area. Those walking this route may want to bring water, though—the Filbert Steps are steep.

Less than a mile west of Coit Tower is the block-long stretch of Lombard Street that is widely known for its series of tight hairpin turns. Sidewalk steps allow pedestrians to better navigate the street. Another series of steps worth experiencing can be found southwest of Lombard Street, on the eastern edge of the Presidio.

The Lyon Street Steps at Broadway wind down to the beautiful park



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Above: Cable cars are a fun and easy way to get around this famously hilly city. Below: People gather to enjoy the shops, restaurants and attractions at Pier 39, part of the popular Fisherman's Wharf area on San Francisco's waterfront.



BRETT SHOAF / ARTISTIC VISUALS.COM

surrounding the Palace of Fine Arts. For a good overview of the scenic stairways in San Francisco, visit sisterbetty.org/stairways.

A short walk to the south of Coit Tower will bring you to San Francisco's Chinatown, famous for its restaurants and shops. You can still see the ancient and graceful martial art of tai chi being practiced by both young and old in the early morning at the neighborhood's Portsmouth Square.

Those looking for a little quicker pace will be interested in the running events throughout the year, including the quintessentially San Francisco experience, the Bay to Breakers footrace (baytobreakers.com) on May 18 of this year. Large crowds create a celebratory atmosphere for this event as participants, often wearing outrageous costumes, run a seven-mile course through downtown San Francisco.

Also very popular are the annual Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon (runrocknroll.com) on April 6; and the San Francisco Marathon (thesfmarathon.com), which will be held July 27. The marathon is actually a series of races that attracts thousands of runners of all skill levels, from novices (5 km) to experienced athletes (the

RON NIEBRUGGE / WILDNATUREIMAGES.COM



The California Coastal Trail offers stunning ocean views as it runs through the Presidio and along San Francisco's western coastline.

event's Ultra Marathon race is 52.4 miles long—the equivalent of two marathons!).

One of the best ways to explore the city is by bicycle. Blazing Saddles and Bay City Bike are two of the many outfitters that offer visitors bicycle rentals and organized tours. The shops also provide bike maps of the city, including the popular San Francisco Bay Trail that follows the waterfront.

A favorite section of the trail is along Fisherman's Wharf, one of the most popular destinations in the city. This area along San

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An Insider Look at Dating in the Modern World

Why does dating often times seem so difficult and daunting? With all the dating websites and social networks out there, you'd think it would be easier than ever for singles to meet someone special. But that's not the case. Meeting the right people seems harder than ever. To get the latest on real-time dating trends, we caught up with Melissa Brown, one of the many dating experts at *It's Just Lunch*.

Q: So what does today's dating scene look like?

A: Dating today is an interesting paradox: we're more connected than ever through social media and online networking, yet we're also more disconnected than ever. Today's technology makes communication faster, but I'm not sure it's better. You can't make a genuine connection with someone by texting, emailing or friending. When you meet someone in person and share a meal together, you see how that person interacts with you and the people around you. You observe their body language and how they carry themselves. That's where the true chemistry happens: face-to-face, one on one. At *It's Just Lunch*, our focus is to get people out from behind their computers and out making connections with real people.

Q: What's the biggest frustration singles have with modern dating?

A: I hear the same thing over and over: "it was like a second

job spending all that time looking over online profiles trying to find someone who could be a match". It just takes all the fun out of dating. Most singles don't have a problem finding dates, but they can't find "good" dates. After a round of bad matches and a busy schedule, it's easy for one to feel like giving up on dating all together.

Q: So why do people come to you at It's Just Lunch?

A: People hire specialists such as financial advisors and personal trainers to handle so many aspects of their lives, so why not use a professional to help you find someone special. We specialize in dating—we've made more than two million matches over the past 22 years!

Q: What differentiates It's Just Lunch from other dating sites out there?

A: We believe that the best way to get to know someone is face to-face. We meet every IJL client in person to get a feel for his or her personality, preferences and relationship goals. In addition, our clients meet their dates face to face at a local restaurant. All they have to do is show up and have fun meeting someone new. No wasted time with emails, winks and on-line chats.

Q: Does it work?

A: Answer: 22 years, 150 cities and over two million first dates. Get in touch with It's Just Lunch at 800.858.6526 or ItsJustLunch.com.

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Francisco's northern waterfront offers many sites to enjoy, including Ghirardelli Square, an array of restaurants, an aquarium, specialty shops, street performers and live music every day. It is also home to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, which displays a variety of historic vessels. The Bay Trail offers an easy ride from Fisherman's Wharf southeast to the Embarcadero and beyond.

To the west of Fisherman's Wharf, the Bay Trail meanders for about two miles along the waterfront and into the Presidio,

a 1,500-acre park covering the northwest corner of the city and the southern end of the Golden Gate Bridge. The former U.S. Army base is now part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and includes beaches, extensive parklands, observation points, and museums, including the Walt Disney Family Museum.

Another great ride winds through the Golden Gate Park, one of the world's great metropolitan green spaces. The park, which covers more than 1,000 acres and includes a territory from the western edge

of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood to the Pacific Ocean, includes the Botanical Garden, the renowned de Young Museum and the California Academy of Sciences. The academy is a family favorite, housing an aquarium, a natural history museum, an indoor rain forest-like habitat and a planetarium.

Being bordered by water on three sides—not to mention being the host city of last year's America's Cup sailing race—San Francisco offers plenty of maritime adventures. The city's waterfront offers ferries to many parts of the Bay Area, including the famed Alcatraz prison. Fisherman's Wharf is home to various charter services, including Adventure Cat, which takes passengers aboard a 55-foot catamaran on a bay cruise. City Kayak at San Francisco's Pier 39 organizes paddling excursions around the bay, including trips to Alcatraz.

Those who prefer a less challenging body of water can rent pedal boats by the hour at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park.

For a more nature-intensive experience, consider hiking a short section of the California Coastal Trail along the northwest corner of the city. The eight-mile hike begins at Fort Point, above the southern entrance of the iconic Golden Gate Bridge in the Presidio, and runs south along the western coastline to the remnants of the historic Sutro Baths.

Along the way you'll discover cypress-topped bluffs, historic forts and breathtaking lookout points. You may even see swimmers in wet suits braving the cold waves at the nearby China Beach. Once you complete the walk, treat yourself to a well-earned meal at the 150-year-old Cliff House, which offers wonderful views of the rocky coastline and roiling sea.

Just south of the Cliff House, surfers (and kite enthusiasts) congregate at Ocean Beach. If you want to give surfing a try, the nearby Aqua Surf Shop rents equipment, and you'll be in the good company of friendly and helpful surfers.

Beyond staying active, residents of the Bay Area also love their sports—both college and professional—and there is no shortage of teams for which to root, including 2012 World Series Champions the San



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One of the city's most beautiful settings can be found at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco's Marina District, where an ornate rotunda and Greek colonnades stand next to a peaceful lagoon.

Francisco Giants (Major League Baseball), who play at the waterfront AT&T Park from April through October. The San Francisco 49ers (National Football League) will no longer play in the historic but aging Candlestick Park. Instead, the team will move next season 39 miles south to the new Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara.

Among the college ranks, the Bay Area

enjoys many top teams, ranging from Berkeley's California Golden Bears of the University of California, located 14 miles to the northeast of San Francisco; the University of San Francisco Dons, located in the heart of the city; and the Stanford Cardinal teams, which play 35 miles to the south on the Stanford campus.

Attending a sporting event is one of

many reasons to cross the Bay Bridge and visit Oakland, home to the Athletics (MLB), the Raiders (NFL) and the Golden State Warriors (NBA). At the south end of the bay, San Jose fans cheer on the Sharks (NHL) and the Earthquakes (MLS).

With so many Bay Area activities, ranging from cycling along the Embarcadero to sailing in San Francisco Bay or cheering on your favorite sports teams, this region is a healthy, fun and exciting getaway for the whole family. ▲

Chaney Kwak is a freelance writer living in the Bay Area.

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DELIGHTFUL ORANGE COUNTY

Exploring the region's outdoor lifestyle
| By Valli Herman

High above the Pacific Ocean on the Huntington Beach pier, I look out at the unique delights of Orange County, home to some of California's most iconic beaches.

Birds that live along the shore and in the nearby Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve glide past in an aerial ballet. Acrobatic brown pelicans swoop near my perch on the pier before they turn and dive, plunging under the water in search of food.

The 1,850-foot-long pier is a hub of activity in this water-front community that boasts the fitting nickname Surf City USA and has come to typify the California beach scene.

I watch from the pier as surfers expertly ride the steady Pacific Ocean waves, and on the beach below, teams of volleyball players lunge and leap on the wide, white sand. At the foot of the Huntington Beach pier where it meets Main Street, the busy bike trail fills with skateboarders toting bodyboards, bicyclists hauling surfboards and pedestrians strolling along, enjoying the views and the sea breeze.

Orange County's surf, skate and board-sport culture has inspired fashion designers, visual artists and musicians the world over. The county, a large coastal area south of Los Angeles that stretches from La Habra in the north to San Clemente in the south, is known for being the home of the Disneyland Park and the Disney California Adventure Park. In addition, Orange County offers many other attractions, including The Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, world-class shopping and, of course, plenty of beaches.

The region's 42 miles of coastline have inspired residents and visitors to creatively explore the legendary outdoor lifestyle. Here, people are known to float, swim, sail, paddle, pedal, rollerblade, skateboard and Segway their way through the area.

Huntington Beach, home to the U.S. Open of Surfing, is perhaps the best place for a first-time visitor to begin exploring Orange County's beach scene. Within blocks of the pier, you can shop for beachwear, sample craft beers and learn to surf at one of Huntington Beach's dozen or so surfing and paddleboarding outfitters. You can also explore miles of beach bike paths on a beach cruiser from Bargain Bike Rentals.



COURTESY: BARGAIN BIKE RENTALS

Left: Surfer Dusty Payne competes in the U.S. Open of Surfing at Huntington Beach in 2011. Above: The Huntington Beach bike path is popular for walking, running and cycling. Below: A group takes part in a self-guided tour of Newport Harbor aboard a Duffy Electric Boat.



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When you work up an appetite, try visiting a Bruxië sandwich shop, home of the gourmet waffle sandwich.

The chain is quickly becoming an Orange County institution and now has six locations, including one on Fifth Street in Huntington Beach. One of its best-sellers is the buttermilk fried chicken Bruxië, with chili honey and cider slaw.

Anyone visiting Orange County will surely want to travel the 16 miles inland from Huntington Beach to Anaheim and visit the Disneyland Park and the Disney California Adventure Park. The world-famous entertainment and resort destination has expanded to include the 12-acre Cars Land, an attraction that is modeled

Clockwise from top: Customers enjoy shopping at the South Coast Plaza. The Balboa Fun Zone offers rides and attractions. A kayaker paddles in the Upper Newport Bay preserve.

after the characters made famous in the popular Disney-Pixar animated movies. The Disneyland complex is also home to hotels where your kids can be greeted by one of the many Disney characters while eating breakfast, lunch and dinner.

About two miles southeast of Disneyland is Angel Stadium, home of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim. Featuring center fielder Mike Trout, one of Major League Baseball's best young players, and first baseman Albert Pujols, one of the game's most dangerous hitters, the Angels are a popular ticket from April through September.

Antique lovers will enjoy Old Towne in Orange, California. The

EXPLORING SANTA BARBARA

With charming Mission architecture, beautiful ocean vistas and a serene vibe, Santa Barbara wins accolades as one of the most desirable travel destinations in California.

The city offers natural beauty, recreation and plenty of activities. Santa Barbara County is home to six public 18-hole golf courses, including four that are within a half-hour's drive of downtown Santa Barbara. These layouts include **The Sandpiper**,

which, according to city officials, is the only ocean-front course between Los Angeles and the Monterey Peninsula.

Known for its red-tiled roofs and white stucco building facades, Santa Barbara is compact and easy to explore by foot.

Begin a short walking tour of prominent cultural sites at the **Old Mission Santa Barbara**, where self-guided or docent-led tours of the 1786 structure and grounds illuminate the

history of the mission. Explore the adjacent **Mission Rose Garden**, which features more than 1,500 rose bushes, including a butter-yellow variety that is named Julia Child, in honor of the former resident's favorite ingredient.

Walk across the street from the mission to visit **Rocky Nook Park**, a 19-acre expanse of wilderness in the city.

Just down the road is the **Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History**, home

to a 73-foot blue whale skeleton; exhibits on birds, insects and mammals; and the Gladwin Planetarium. To celebrate Global Astronomy Month in April, planetarium shows are free during March and April, with paid museum admission.

The natural history museum also operates the **Ty Warner Sea Center** in another pedestrian-friendly area, Stearns Wharf. Join the kids in the hands-on exhibits, includ-

ing touching a live shark and tide pool encounters. Santa Barbara is also known for its excellent whale watching. Unique ocean currents surrounding the eight nearby Channel Islands help direct migrating whales into easy viewing distance. In the spring, watch gray whales and their calves migrating to Alaska or perhaps catch a glimpse of dolphins, sea lions and humpback whales that also migrate by the city. — V.H.

city plaza boasts an extensive number of historic buildings that date from the 1880s to the 1940s. It also has nearly 60 antique shops in its downtown area. One of the town's most popular stops is the Watson Drugs & Soda Fountain, where visitors can enjoy an old-fashioned milk shake.

For a different kind of adventure, travel about six miles northwest of Anaheim to Premier Exhibitions at Buena Park, where "Titanic: The Experience" is on permanent display, offering more than 250 artifacts from the famous shipwreck.

Disneyland's Mad Tea Party ride, inspired by the Walt Disney classic film *Alice in Wonderland*, is popular with park visitors.

The exhibit also includes the re-creation of some of the notable rooms inside the ship.

Another favorite destination is the South Coast Plaza shopping center in Costa Mesa.

Featuring nearly 250 retailers—that range from large department stores to interna-



GREG BALFOUR/EVERETT COLLECTION

tional boutiques—and 30 restaurants, the shopping center represents a best-in-class collection.

The shopping center covers 140 acres and offers the best of high-end fashion, including stores by Balenciaga, Cartier, Fendi, Hermès and Christian Louboutin. Adjacent to the shopping center is the Segerstrom Center for the Arts, a 14-acre performing-arts campus that offers music, dance and theater performances.

Farther south along the coast, visitors will find Newport Beach, an upscale community that offers high-end shopping and easy access to aquatic recreation.

Balboa Peninsula, a narrow tongue of land that protects Newport Bay, Upper Newport Bay and Balboa Island, is the site of an excellent beach, Balboa Village and Balboa Fun Zone—a small amusement park with a waterfront Ferris wheel, an arcade and various food stands.

Make sure and try the local specialties: a frozen banana and a vanilla ice cream bar, both dipped in chocolate and covered in your choice of toppings.

You can also board a ferry for the short, but fun, trip from the Balboa Peninsula to Balboa Island in Newport Harbor. Area outfitters offer rentals, lessons and guided paddling tours through Newport Harbor that allow visitors to explore the area's many waterways.

Various services offer guided tours through Newport Harbor and the 800-acre Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve and Nature Preserve. Also known as the Back Bay, the nature preserve is surrounded by craggy bluffs and a 10-mile path for biking, hiking and strolling.

The preserve is one of the largest coastal wetlands in Southern California



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and a prime bird-watching location. The Newport Aquatic Center on Upper Newport Bay is a nonprofit membership and training facility for rowing, canoeing and kayaking that also offers hourly membership and rentals so the general public can enjoy the local waterways.

On a first-come, first-serve basis, the club rents one-person kayaks and two-person kayaks, as well as stand-up paddleboards. With team training and a regular schedule of races and regattas in the area, you may find yourself sharing the water with future Olympians and other top aquatic athletes.

Those wishing to pilot a boat around Newport Bay might want to rent a Duffy Electric Boat, which can seat up to 12 passengers. The boats are easy to pilot and are docked on the north side of Balboa Bay. Sailors will want to pack a lunch or eat at one of the area's many dockside restaurants, such as the Bluewater Grill.

A short distance from the sand and surf is the Newport Beach Fashion Island. Shop at the open-air center, which includes such notable stores as Jonathan Adler, C. Wonder and Kate Spade. Visit the Tesla Motors showroom, where you can preorder one of the company's electric sports cars. Later, you can relax on the shaded outdoor patio of the recently opened Lark Creek Newport Beach restaurant or transport yourself to the French Riviera by visiting the Fig & Olive restaurant, an upscale bistro that specializes in excellent European cuisine.

Orange County is a unique location that is home to Mickey Mouse, top-flight shopping and year-round beautiful weather. This coastal county compels visitors to get outdoors and explore its many natural wonders. Even if it is just an afternoon watching the birds soar along the Huntington Beach Pier, a visit here is always magical and memorable. ▲

Valli Herman is a Los Angeles-based freelance travel writer.

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NATURAL PLAYGROUND

Sun and surf in San Diego
| By Stephanie Avnet Yates

It is another warm spring day in San Diego as surfers in black wet suits expertly ride the waves at La Jolla Beach and rollerbladers whiz along the boardwalk at Mission Beach Park, enjoying the warm temperatures and abundant sunshine. In this city where sun and sea activities reign supreme year-round, golf clubs, running shoes and surfboards rarely get time off.

San Diego affords visitors the chance to enjoy beachfront recreation in just about every form they could choose. The



The Seaport Village on San Diego's waterfront is a dining and entertainment center.

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area is blessed with 70 miles of beaches that offer something for everyone, including easy rentals of bicycles, surfboards and rollerblades. Dog owners and their pets feel right at home at Dog Beach, a designated section of Ocean Beach for off-leash play. The beach at Coronado—selected as America's best in 2012 by Stephen P. Leatherman, a professor at Florida International University, who is better known as the beach expert Dr. Beach—is perfect for sunbathing, tide pool exploration or gathering around a fire pit at sunset.

San Diego County is also a golfer's paradise, offering more than 90 golf courses that range from excellent municipal layouts to championship-caliber resort courses. Each year in late January, PGA Tour players flock to the breathtaking—and public—Torrey Pines Golf Course in La Jolla to play in the Farmers Insurance Open. Golfers who play a round at Torrey Pines will be walking the same layout played by golfing superstars such as Tiger Woods—he's won here eight times, including at the 2008 U.S. Open.

Get an up-close view of San Diego's natural beauty by walking, running, hiking or biking the many designated trails and scenic paths in and around the city. One of the best options is to walk the paths in the manicured hills of downtown San Diego's famed Balboa Park—1,200 beautiful acres of gardens, museums, restaurants and theaters that function as a shared backyard for San Diego residents.

A destination for the entire family, Balboa Park boasts several ornate Spanish-Moorish-design buildings dating from the 1915 Panama-California Exposition that now hold some of the city's best museums, including the Museum of Art, the Air & Space Museum, the Mingei International Museum and the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center. The park also houses the world-



JOHN MCCAULEY / ORANGE AND PARK

Above: A stand-up paddleboard instructor in Coronado rides the ocean waves. Below: Beachgoers enjoy Memorial Day weekend at the shore in the La Jolla community.



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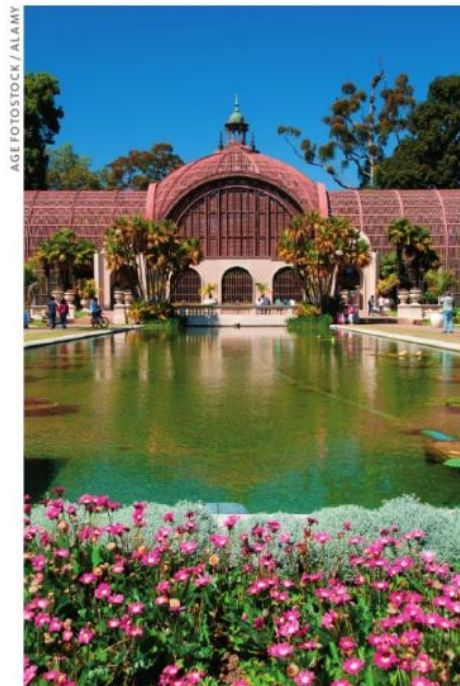
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renowned San Diego Zoo, best known for its successful panda breeding program. While visitors still flock to see popular cub Xiao Liwu (which means “little gift”), born in July 2012, they are also eagerly watching many other animals, including the antics of the female giraffe calf born in December 2013.

Other walking options include the trails that lead out to wind-swept coastal bluffs in Sunset Cliffs Natural Park, a 68-acre park that extends more than a mile along Point Loma Peninsula’s western shoreline. About four miles south of the park on the Point

Below: Colorful restaurants in San Diego’s Old Town State Historical Park draw many visitors. Right: The Laguna de las Flores is a picturesque setting in Balboa Park.



along with plenty of paved paths to explore on two wheels. The Bayshore Bikeway runs for 24 miles along the San Diego Bay, while the Pacific Coast Highway meanders through the attractive beach towns of San Diego’s North County. Experienced mountain bikers often head to Mission Trails

Loma Peninsula is the Cabrillo National Monument, commemorating Spanish explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, who landed in the area in 1542 and became the first European to set foot on what would eventually become the West Coast of the United States. Urban walking tours of neighborhoods such as the city’s historic Gaslamp Quarter or upscale La Jolla are also great ways to learn more about the San Diego area.

Bicycle enthusiasts will find abundant rental opportunities,

Regional Park, where rugged hills and canyons belie its convenient location—just eight miles from the heart of the city.

Spending time on the water is an essential part of the San Diego experience, whether visitors choose paddleboarding, kayaking or touring in a sightseeing vessel. Sportfishing excursions from San Diego Harbor’s Shelter Island and Harbor Island marinas feature everything from half-day fishing trips to 10-day charters to Mexico’s Baja Peninsula.

ENCHANTING CORONADO

Coronado is among San Diego’s most unique beachfront communities.

While often viewed as an island, this sliver of land is a peninsula. Visitors usually reach the community by either taking a ferry or by driving over the soaring Coronado Bay Bridge.

Coronado exudes a charming resort ambiance, with quaint village shops and tree-shaded streets containing lovingly maintained Victorian and Craftsman homes. Site of the North Island U.S. Naval

Air Station, the Coronado area is also home to many retired admirals and navy personnel.

The peninsula’s most famous landmark is the Victorian-era Hotel del Coronado. Steeped in history and lore, the Del, as locals refer to it, was built in 1888 on beachfront property, and has been named a National Historical Landmark and one of the nation’s best beach resorts. A frequent guest was author L. Frank Baum, who wrote several volumes

of his “Wizard of Oz” series here. It’s believed he modeled the Emerald City’s conical spires after the Del’s distinctive red turrets.

Coronado offers a bevy of activities, including 15 miles of scenic bike paths that are perfect for leisurely rides, walks or jogs. Vast San Diego Bay invites kayaking, cruising or even a sunset gondola ride from nearby Loews Coronado Bay Resort. There’s also the Coronado Golf Course—a municipal layout known for its celebrity clientele.



The Pacific Ocean side of Coronado boasts some of the nation’s best white-sand beaches, with the shops and cafes located just a few feet away. —S.A.Y.

The historic Hotel del Coronado is a famous San Diego landmark.



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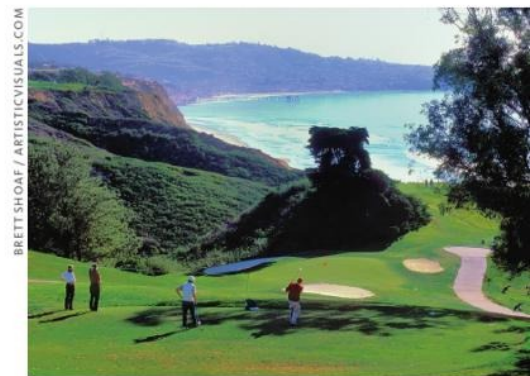


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The Torrey Pines Golf Course is among the best public courses in the nation, offering breathtaking views and challenging play.

The Mission Bay Aquatic Park is the place to go to enjoy local water activities. This unique two-bay park is among the largest water parks of its kind in the world, covering about 4,200 acres and containing numerous peninsulas and islands.

The Mission Bay waterways are protected from ocean waves but not wind, making them perfect for sailing and windsurfing. The park is also home to SeaWorld, one of San Diego's most popular family destinations. The 165-acre aquatic attraction is a showplace for marine life, with water stadium shows that are entertaining and educational. Mission Bay watersports centers rent kayaks, motorboats, pedal boats and more.

Rentals and charters can also be found at the Port of San Diego, on Coronado; farther north in the community of La Jolla, kayakers paddle through kelp beds teeming with sea life in the La Jolla Ecological Reserve located just offshore.

Whale-watching is another popular water activity. Between mid-December and late April, as many as 20,000 gray whales travel close to the California coastline and right past San Diego during their annual migration to and from the breeding grounds in the lagoons of Mexico's Baja Peninsula en route to the food-rich waters of Alaska.

During the summer, visitors may also see other sea mammals—including blue whales and dolphins—migrating through the local waters. Boat excursions are widely available, and range from inexpen-

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Nathan Oliveira, *Unfilled Standing Figure I*, 1989, oil and vine charcoal on canvas, museum purchase with funds provided by the Contemporary Art Council, 1990, and the General Acquisition Fund © Estate of Nathan Oliveira and Mona Oliveira

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Indah, a mother Sumatran orangutan at the world-famous San Diego Zoo, holds her 3-month-old daughter, Aisha. The newest member of the orangutan group, Aisha has proved a popular addition to the facility.

sive half-day cruises to personalized, naturalist-led tours. Land-based vantage points include the glassed-in observatory at Cabrillo National Monument, and La Jolla's Birch Aquarium, which also offers seasonal whale events.

San Diego Zoo Safari Park—1,800 acres of natural terrain located about 40 miles north of San Diego—is home to exotic animals that roam within vast habitat enclosures. Established in the countryside near the town of Escondido, the park was originally a breeding facility for the zoo. Today, open trams carry riders through realistic animal habitats.

Families with younger children often take a detour 20 miles west of the Safari park to the pretty town of Carlsbad, home of the Legoland California Resort. The world's most famous plastic building blocks are featured in an adventure park with a hotel, rides, shows and hands-on fun for families, especially those with kids who are 10 and under.

Back in San Diego, a great way to combine outdoor activities and explore

the area's history is by visiting the Old Town State Historic Park, the birthplace of San Diego.

Featuring restored historic structures and interpretive programs, the park explains the history of San Diego, while also offering costumed performances, souvenir shops and excellent authentic Mexican food. The park's annual Fiesta Old Town Cinco de Mayo (May 3–4, 2014) spices things up even more and is a favorite local event.

Whether it is golfing at Torrey Pines, kayaking in Mission Bay Park or just enjoying the local beaches, visitors to this sunny coastal city will always find plenty of year-round activities to entertain and amaze. ▲

Writer Stephanie Avnet Yates is a Southern California native.

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VINTAGE ADVENTURES

Enchanting excursions in
Napa and Sonoma | By Christine Delsol

As I drive along Highway 29, past vineyards glowing with sunny carpets of mustard blooms, I wonder why so many visitors wait until the fall harvest to take a tour of California's Napa Valley and Sonoma County wine country. For me, spring is prime time—the hills are green, the air is cool, the tasting rooms are serene, and the deceptively barren vines are bursting with fuzzy green nubs—the “bud break” that signals the start of a new growing season.

California boasts an impressive 120 American Viticultural Areas (AVAs), or distinct wine grape-growing regions—each with its own personality and flavor. However, for many, wine country remains the Napa Valley and Sonoma County, located



COURTESY: WINE COUNTRY BIKES

about an hour north of the San Francisco Bay Area. These two regions, which bracket the Mayacamas Mountains, with Sonoma to the west and Napa to the east, attract millions of visitors each year to enjoy the wines, the attractions and the natural beauty.

While only about 45 minutes apart, Napa and Sonoma have notably different personalities and geography. Napa's wine region, the eastern bracket, is contained within a single valley and is the more developed of the two. Sonoma is a larger area, where wineries stretch west from rolling hills and farms to redwood forests and finally to the coastal plain. Visitors to these areas, which together are home to more than 1,000 wineries, will find that both Napa and Sonoma offer great food and wine, relaxing resorts and beautiful scenery. In addition, the springtime—when there are fewer visitors and the weather is mild—showcases these two wine regions at their best.

Many wineries move beyond the tasting room this time of year. In the small Napa Valley town of Rutherford, for example, you can reserve Frog's Leap Winery's guided tour and tastings, where they pour samples in the garden, the barn and the vineyard at different points along the tour. Taking a tip from the ancient Romans, some wineries in Napa have built wine caves, where wine rests in an ideal subterranean environment of high humidity and constant temperatures.

The caves appear on quite a few tours and even accommodate tastings. These are not rough-hewn caves, but rather large underground storage facilities. Some even feature chandeliers and water-



COURTESY: THE MERITAGE RESORT AND SPA

Left: Cyclists enjoy a springtime ride near vineyards in Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley. Above: A couple experience the Meritage Resort's Spa Terra in Napa. Below: Sonoma Valley docent Bill Myers leads a tour through the large Kunde Family Estate.



COURTESY: KUNDE FAMILY ESTATE

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COURTESY: THE FAIRMONT SONOMA MISSION INN & SPA



COURTESY: THE HESS COLLECTION

Left: The Willow Stream Spa at The Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn. Above: Art displayed at Napa's The Hess Collection Winery. Below: Touring the Benziger Family Winery in Glen Ellen.

olive-stone body scrubs and facials using sea micro-organisms and grape-seed extract.

In Sonoma County, the Benziger Family Winery in the town of Glen Ellen has put its own spin on touring by having a tractor pull a tram full of

falls. Napa Valley's Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, for instance, has a Foucault pendulum within its cave. And Rutherford Hill Winery, near St. Helena, boasts a mile-long cavern that houses approximately 8,000 barrels.

Those who enjoy mixing art with their wine will like The Hess Collection, located in the small town of Napa, which is as much art gallery as winery. It offers a well-chosen selection of modern art displayed in the century-old stone facility. The well-known Robert Mondavi Winery in Oakville showcases artworks throughout its extensive grounds.

Calistoga is also home to Sterling Vineyards, where visitors can ride an aerial tramway up to the winery's hilltop home, 400 feet above the valley floor. The trip offers stunning views of the valley and countryside. My excursions to Napa and Sonoma are as much about unwinding in a beautiful setting as they are about wine. The fun of standing in the shadow of a medieval-looking Tuscan castle at Castello di Amorosa in Calistoga is a unique experience you won't find anywhere else.

While the castle is actually a replica, it was built with 13th century techniques, right down to the hand-forged nails.

The town of Calistoga, at the north end of the valley, is home to mineral springs that have drawn travelers since the 1860s. Calistoga's local resorts boast an array of treatments and mud baths, composed of hot mineral water and volcanic ash. The town of Napa is also home to various spas, including the unique Meritage Resort & Spa's Spa Terra, which is located in a wine cave. The facility offers such treatments as

visitors through the vineyards for one of the best educations in organic, sustainable and biodynamic grape growing anywhere.

The Benziger tour is among dozens available in this extensive wine region. To help you decide where to visit, the Sonoma County Winegrowers' Vineyard Adventures program offers free, self-guided tours of vineyards at eight wineries in six appellations, from Carneros in the south to Alexander Valley in the north. The tours give insights into winemaking and the unique local wine regions. Those seeking advice can also join the Wine Road, Northern Sonoma County, an organization that offers tours, special events and maps to the region's wineries.

Among my favorite places to visit is the Kunde Family Estate, which offers monthly (except December) hikes through its 1,850-acre property, pouring wine in vineyards along the way. Gundlach Bundschu, located in the town of Sonoma and one of the region's



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first wineries, offers cave tours and vineyard excursions. Another favorite is Korbel Champagne Cellars, located near Sonoma County's Russian River. The daily tours are a journey into more than 130 years of winemaking history.

UPTick Vineyards, near the town of Healdsburg, in 2013 opened a handsome tasting room and large outdoor patio area that is set amid the winery's vineyards and offers views of the beautiful countryside.

Continuing north, you will find the 16-mile-long Dry Creek Valley. This wine region is home to 70 excellent wineries. About seven miles north of Dry Creek Valley is the popular Francis Ford Coppola Winery in Geyserville. While known for its excellent wines, the facility is also famous for its displays of the renowned director's awards, props from *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now* motion pictures, and other memorabilia.

Workaday stress vanishes when you visit the famous Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn's Willow Stream Spa. Indulge in a bath fed by local hot springs before enjoying massages, wraps, facials and other treatments. There is also Santa Rosa's Vintners Inn, which offers the Courtyard Spa Room, where couples can enjoy massages and skin treatments.

Spring also offers various wine festivals, including 2014 Savor Sonoma Valley (heartofsonomavalley.com), March 15–16, in which 26 wineries will pour their latest vintages. The Stags Leap District Winegrowers Association is marking its 25th anniversary at this year's annual Vineyard to Vintner festival (stagsleapdistrict.com), April 25–27.

Such festivals are great ways to begin exploring the many attractions, getaways and boundless beauty to be enjoyed in Napa Valley and Sonoma County. ▲

Christine Delsol is a freelance writer living in the Bay Area.

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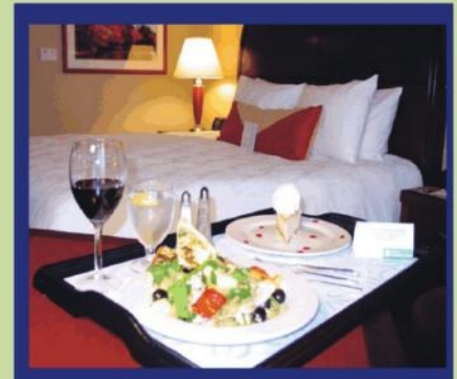
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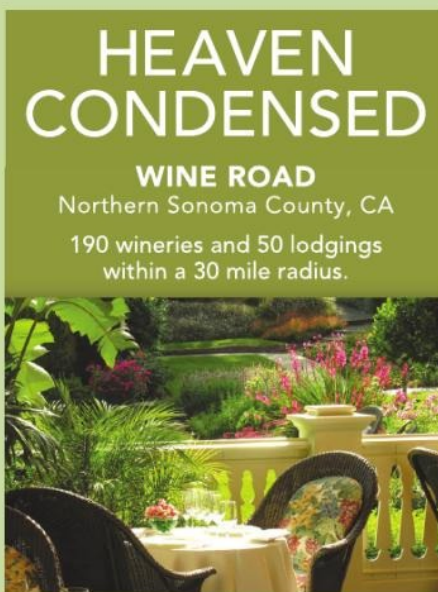
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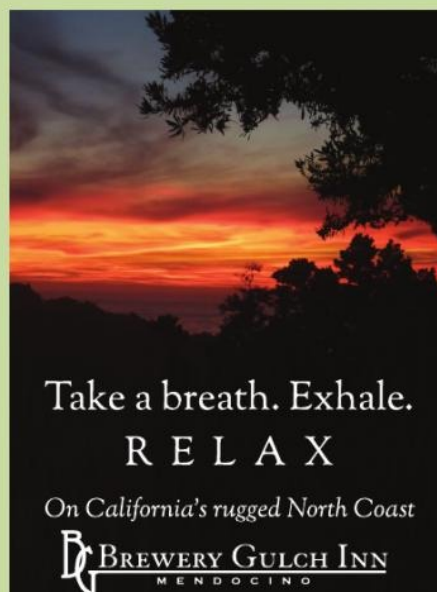


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Left: Coachella Valley's Covered Wagon Tours give visitors a taste of the Old West. Above: The eighth hole at Marriott's Shadow Ridge Golf Club offers breathtaking mountain views.

COURTESY: COVERED WAGON TOURS

COACHELLA VALLEY COUNTRY

Adventures in the California desert
| By Barbara Beckley

"Wagons ho!"

Neil Fawcett gives the command—and we're off—rocking and rolling across the desert in a covered wagon pulled by two handsome mules. I'm seated on a comfortable padded bench in the front of the wagon, looking out at the sunny landscape from beneath the arched white canvas tarp and imagining the views the early settlers would have experienced about 150 years ago.

I'm traveling in a wagon with 22 other passengers, both adults

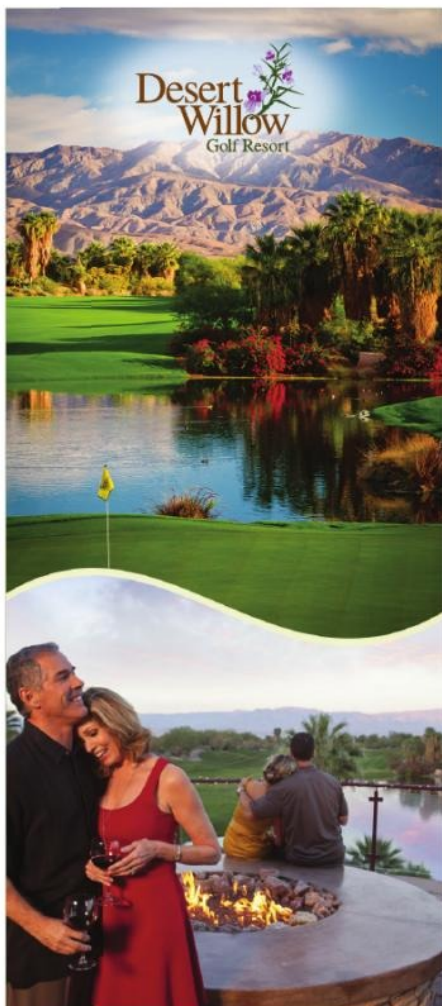
and kids. We are all excited to see the desert from a pioneer's perspective on this four-hour excursion with Covered Wagon Tours. Fawcett founded the company 28 years ago to give visitors a taste of what 19th century pioneers would have seen and felt as they crossed the desert in search of new lives in the Old West.

"Most pioneer families came across the country in a wagon half this size, and they averaged about 20 miles a day," Fawcett explains, as he stops the mules for a brief rest. During the stop, Jona Kalayjian, our naturalist guide, takes us on a short walk, bringing the landscape to life with her knowledge.

"Those are coyote wells," she says, pointing to shadowy holes halfway up a rocky slope. "Some parts of the desert have high water tables, and the coyotes instinctively know to dig shallow holes in the ground—and in flows drinking water."

The wagon trip makes a roughly two-mile loop through the 21,000-acre Coachella Valley Desert Preserve (25 minutes east of Palm Springs). Midway on the excursion, we are treated to spectacular valley views. The journey ends in proper pioneer fashion, with a campfire. Warmed by the fire, we enjoy an excellent tri-tip steak barbecue dinner and live guitar music, and watch the sun set and the lights of Coachella Valley homes come on in the distance. Fawcett tells me that one family recently rebooked because the mother said that for three straight years her son has not stopped talking about singing around the campfire.

Fawcett's unique tour is one of the numerous adventures to enjoy in the Coachella Valley, which has a population of nearly 600,000 people. The popular vacation destination offers hikes through state parks, museums and botanical gardens, as well as championship golf and tennis.



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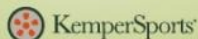
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COURTESY: PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAMWAY

The next morning I set off for the Wildlands Conservancy's Whitewater Preserve, which includes grassy wetlands that are home to at least 216 species of birds. While it's relatively undiscovered, the preserve is only 30 minutes northwest of Palm Springs in the San Geronio Wilderness. After a short drive through narrow, steep foothills, I see the Whitewater Canyon open into a scenic green valley and the narrow Whitewater River. The area also contains sycamore-dotted picnic grounds and shady ponds (the remnants of a former fish hatchery that was located here).



BUDDY MAYS / ALAMY

Left: The Palm Springs Aerial Tramway ascends San Jacinto Mountain. Above: Visitors can buy rare native plants at The Living Desert's Palo Verde Garden Center.

I pop inside the visitor center and learn more about the guided and self-guided activities from hikes to catch-and-release trout fishing. I walk along the 3.5-mile Canyon View Loop Trail that begins at the visitor center, admiring the rocky outcroppings along the trail and searching for the large herds of elusive bighorn sheep that live in the area.

After leaving the preserve, I take the 25-minute trip to the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, one of the region's most popular attractions. Inside the world's largest rotating tramcar, I ascend more than two miles up San Jacinto Mountain and arrive at Mountain Station, located 8,516 feet above sea level. The station, which includes two restaurants, offers breathtaking views of the valley and distant mountain ranges, including the Little San Bernardino Mountains. This is also a popular location to

ADDITIONAL OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

(parks.ca.gov/?page_id=638), 98 miles southwest of Palm Springs, offers 60,000 acres of desert beauty. View ancient Indian rock art, hike, camp and enjoy four-wheel drives through arid sands, sun-bleached mountains and an array of springtime wildflowers.

Joshua Tree National Park

(nps.gov/jotr), 35 miles north of Palm Springs, offers 1,250

square miles of desert landscape that includes a number of the famous Joshua trees. Rock climbing and camping are popular activities and the three-mile Ryan Mountain hike offers great panoramic views.

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument

(blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/santa-rosa.html) encompasses the mountain ranges bordering the

western edge of the Coachella Valley. Here, you can hike the Pacific Crest Trail, bicycle, ride horses, camp and enjoy scenic drives.

The 2,200-acre Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge

(fws.gov/refuge/sonny_bono_salton_sea/), 70 miles southeast of Palm Springs, is home to one of the most diverse arrays of bird species (more than 400) found in any national wildlife refuge in the western


United States. It's also the only place in the country you'll see yellow-footed gulls.

Enjoy camping, fishing, hiking, kayaking and watersports along 18 miles of shoreline at the **Salton Sea State Recreation Area** (parks.ca.gov/?page_id=639), 60 miles southeast of Palm Springs. Explore this unique environment with ranger-led boat tours and walks, from October through June. —B.B.



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Hikers on Palm Canyon Trail in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park watch wild Peninsular bighorn sheep.



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begin exploring the more than 50 miles of alpine trails that wind through San Jacinto State Park.

Coachella Valley is also famous for its golf and tennis facilities. The valley is among the nation's best golf destinations, boasting more than 120 golf courses that include numerous public layouts with amenities that rival private clubs, such as impressive clubhouses, restaurants and views. Among the area's highly recommended public facilities are Pete Dye's TPC Stadium Course at PGA West in La Quinta; the SilverRock Resort's Arnold Palmer Classic Course in La Quinta; Marriott's Shadow Ridge Golf Club in Palm Desert; the Celebrity and Players courses at the Indian Wells Golf Resort in Indian Wells; and the Mountain View and Firecliff courses at the Desert Willow Golf Resort in Palm Desert.

For those who enjoy watching the top players, PGA Tour professionals gather here in January for one of the first tournaments of the year, the Humana Challenge, which is played on three different courses, including the Arnold Palmer Private Course at PGA West.

Tennis fans will be able to watch many of the world's top players in action at the BNP Paribas Open, March 3–16, at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. Last year, nearly 400,000 visitors packed the stands during the course of the tournament.

When tournaments aren't scheduled at the tennis garden, members of the garden can play on many of its 29 hard courts (14 lighted). Other great tennis facilities include the 20 courts (including three clay and two grass) at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert. The Plaza Racquet Club in Palm Springs has nine excellent lighted courts, ball machines and rental equipment.

I always enjoy visiting The Living Desert in the town of Palm Desert. Founded in 1970 as a nature preserve, this popular attraction has grown to include 1,200 acres and more than 500 animals, including cheetahs, pythons, herons and an Arabian oryx.

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The Palm Springs Art Museum is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year with an exhibit of new gifts of art that were donated to commemorate the occasion.

Living Desert conducts educational programs such as the Wildlife Wonders Show that displays the variety of animals found in the desert. There are also hiking trails, guided tours and more.

The Palm Springs Art Museum is another must-see for those who enjoy fine art. This excellent museum, with an eclectic collection that includes works by Ansel Adams, Alexander Calder, Roy Lichtenstein, Pablo Picasso and Andy Warhol, is celebrating its diamond anniversary this

year with an exhibit titled "Into the Future: New Gifts to Commemorate the Museum's 75th Anniversary." The exhibit, which runs through May 25, includes new works, such as a sculpture by contemporary Chinese artist Zhan Wang.

The Palm Desert branch of the art museum includes the Faye Sarkowsky Sculpture Garden, with more than 10 sculpture works that are displayed in a 4-acre garden. I enter the sculpture garden on a sunny Sunday morning. Birds twitter.

Light shines through the palo verde trees, casting lacy shadows on the brown earth. The winding walkways are embedded with glittery blue-glass mosaics, creating the sense of a stream flowing through the rolling terrain. Waterfalls, ponds framed by California fan palms, and ravines sprouting pink-hued smoke trees, yucca and other indigenous plants create a microcosm of the valley's landscape. Artworks such as *Acrobats*, Barry Flanagan's whimsical bronze sculpture of hares, complement the natural beauty.

I relax on a bench, and reflect on how my recent outdoor adventures allowed me to rediscover the many wonders to be found throughout the Coachella Valley. ▲

Barbara Beckley writes from Alhambra, California.

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ON A GRAND SCALE

Mammoth offers year-round activities
| By Monica Prella

2014 Olympic gold medalist Sage Kotsenburg performs during a snowboarding competition on Mammoth Mountain.

On a recent spring morning in Mammoth Lakes, frost covers the tree branches and the creeks are still frozen from the winter cold. The sun is just beginning to shine, rising above the White Mountains on the horizon.

Before heading up to Mammoth Mountain to ski, I take a walk with my dog, King, on the trail that winds its way along Mammoth Creek. King, a black labrador retriever mix, stretches his legs and rolls in the snow before taking off in hot pursuit of a blackbird. Behind him the towering peaks of the Sierra Nevada range glow in the early morning light. Looking at this view, I'm reminded that for Mammoth locals such as myself, the biggest dilemma we face each day is deciding which of the area's many possible adventures to pursue.

Today, after taking King home, I go skiing. Riding up the gondola from The Village at Mammoth, located at the foot of the ski area, I gaze out at the amazing view of peaks, forest and the Mammoth Lakes community. With its pine trees and cabin homes, Mammoth Lakes is a picturesque mountain town.

I turn and look back at Mammoth Mountain as the gondola makes its way up the mighty peak. With an annual average snowfall of 400 inches and also averaging 300 days of sunshine per year, the mountain is a skier's and snowboarder's paradise.

That level of snowfall often ensures that the skiing lasts into May, or even July in some years. At 11,053 feet, Mammoth is the highest ski resort in California. It is also one of the largest, with 28 lifts servicing 3,500 skiable acres of terrain, and a vertical drop of 3,100 feet.



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It's no wonder so many professional athletes and Olympians, including Kelly Clark—the 2002 Olympic gold medalist and the 2010 and 2014 Olympic bronze medalist in the women's halfpipe, as well as an eight-time X-Games gold medalist—call Mammoth Lakes home.

A dominant force in the world of women's snowboarding, Clark moved to Mammoth in 2001 when she was 18 to train with the U.S. Snowboarding Team for the 2002 Winter Games. Today, Clark and fellow Winter Olympians Greg Bretz, John Teller, Stacey Cook and Kaya Turski have chosen Mammoth Mountain as their permanent home base and training center. Sage Kotsenburg, the 2014 Olympic gold medalist in the Snowboard Slopestyle competition, is also familiar with the area, coming in second at the 2012 Sprint U.S. Grand Prix in Mammoth.

The ski area offers a variety of terrain parks, including the Unbound Main Park where expert snowboarders and skiers hone their skills and try new tricks. Spectators can watch these top athletes hit the big jumps in the park as they ride to the top of the



DON RIDDLE IMAGES, COURTESY: MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

Above: Mammoth's spring skiing season can last until July. Right: The Devils Postpile National Monument is a popular attraction.



DEBRA BEHR / ALAMY

mountain in the Panorama Gondola, or take a break and sit outside on the sundeck at the Main Lodge.

For beginners, there is the entry-level Wonderland Park, located near Canyon Lodge, where novices can experiment with small jumps and a minipipe slope. No matter what their ability, skiers and snowboarders will find plenty of Mammoth ski runs and snow parks to fit their abilities.

ADDITIONAL OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

Events throughout the spring and summer in Mammoth:

The **Outlaw Snowdown** (outlawsnowdown.com), March 28–29, is an alternative country music festival at Mammoth Mountain this spring, featuring Whitey Morgan and the 78's, Hellbound Glory and Lydia Loveless. The event will take place snow or shine. The Underground Lounge located in The Village at Mammoth will be the primary venue for music each night. Lodging, festival and lift tickets are available.

The **Monster Energy Mammoth Motocross** (mammothmotocross.com), June 20–29. The

annual 10-day event includes a series of races and is the oldest continuously running motocross event in the United States. The race is expected to draw top professional and amateur riders from around the country. The course is located in a pine forest, near Mammoth Creek under the Sherwin Ridge.

Elite athletes and recreational runners are welcome to take part in the **Mammoth Half Marathon and 5K** (mammothhalfmarathon.com), June 22. The 13.1-mile downhill course leads runners along alpine lakes, scenic vistas and Mammoth Creek before they reach the finish line

in downtown Mammoth Lakes. About 1,000 runners participated in the inaugural race last year.

The **Mammoth Food & Wine Experience** (mammothfoodandwine.org) will be held July 11–13. Celebrity chefs, wine-makers and local food lovers join for the three-day event that includes chef-led seminars, wine education classes, a cooking competition, and an auction that supports education and the arts in Mammoth Lakes.

The **19th-annual Mammoth Festival of Beers and Bluesapalooza** (mammothbluesbrewsfest.com), July 31–August 4, is one of Mammoth



PETER MORNING

Lakes' most popular summer events. More than 75 of the top craft breweries in the country are expected to showcase their best brews for the Grand Tasting while blues bands perform on the outdoor stage. Past performers have included Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Los Lonely Boys and Blues Traveler. —M.P.

Young riders take part in the 2013 Mammoth Motocross. The oldest event of its kind in the nation, the motocross will be held June 20–29 and includes a series of races that encompass different ages and skill levels.



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While skiers are still enjoying the soft snow and spring sunshine on the slopes, another group of athletes begin their roadwork in the valley below.

Deena Kastor, the American record holder in the marathon—with a time of 2:19:36 at the 2006 London Marathon and a bronze medal from the 2004 Olympics in Athens—moved to Mammoth in 2001 to train with the Mammoth Track Club, for which her husband, Andrew, is the head coach. Deena Kastor, 41, works with a team of young up-and-coming elite distance runners training for the 2016 Olympic marathon trials. She can often be found running intervals on the track or putting in long miles on area trails.

In the late spring, Kastor and her fellow club members are joined by many other world-class runners who come to Mammoth Lakes—which sits at about 8,000 feet above sea level—to train in the area's high altitude. During the off-season, snowboarder Clark enjoys biking in the area and often rides the Benton Crossing Road or the Mammoth Scenic Loop, a popular 42-mile route that begins in Mammoth Lakes and follows Minaret Road, Mammoth Scenic Loop and Dry Creek Road before looping back toward town.

The warm spring temperatures attract many other outdoor adventurers to the local surroundings. Climbers head south of Mammoth to the sport-climbing walls in the Owens River Gorge or the renowned bouldering areas near the town of Bishop. With a range of moderate to advanced climbs, the gorge is home to one of the highest concentrations of sport-climbing routes in California. Tuolumne Meadows, about 50 miles northwest of Mammoth, is famous for its polished granite and spectacular multipitch routes such as the Regular Route on Fairview Dome and the West Crack on Daff Dome. Outfitters in Bishop and other nearby communities offer climbing lessons for all skill levels, as well as guided tours of the climbing areas.

Hiking is another popular summer activity in the area. The 210-mile-long John Muir Trail travels from Yosemite Valley in the north to Mount Whitney in the southern Sierra Nevada. Along the way, the trail

passes through the Reds Meadow Valley on the western side of Mammoth Mountain. Day hikers and trail runners can easily access the trails at a number of locations.

Also in the Reds Meadow area, the Devils Postpile National Monument offers miles of hikes. Visitors can board a shuttle at the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and ride to the monument, which includes a unique section of mountainside that is made of the large basalt columns that give the monument its name.

A favorite destination in the area is Red's Meadow Resort and Pack Station, offering cabins, hiking information and horseback riding. The resort's guided trail rides lead visitors to mountain meadows and the nearby Rainbow Falls, where they can see where the San Joaquin River plunges 101 feet.

Just upstream from the falls, fishermen cast lines on the river hoping to achieve the coveted Sierra Grand Slam: catching a brook, brown, rainbow and a wharton trout. Another popular fishing location is Crowley Lake, a reservoir on the Upper Owens River located about 12 miles southeast of Mammoth Lakes. Created in 1941 by the building of the Long Valley Dam, the lake offers excellent trout fishing and is popular with local anglers.

In the summer, Mammoth becomes a haven for mountain bikers, who can be seen cruising down more than 80 miles of track paths. The mountain also draws many summer hikers who can follow trails that are designed for all abilities. One of the best experiences is to ride the Panorama Gondola to the summit, where you can enjoy amazing views and visit the Sierra Interpretive Center.

No matter the season or outdoor activity, Mammoth Lakes is an extraordinary place to visit. As a resident, I know that there is always another adventure waiting for me just outside my front door. ▲

Monica Prella is a Mammoth Lakes-based freelance writer.

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Clint Dempsey, captain of the U.S. Men's National Team, moves the ball past Mexico National Team midfielders last September in a 2-0 victory that secured the U.S. a World Cup finals berth.

CAL SPORT MEDIA VIA AP IMAGES



Cup Dreams

MLS plays to a global audience

BY STEVE CLARE

A handful of recent high-profile player moves generated headlines well beyond the confines of North America and its Major League Soccer. Among them, Toronto FC brought American midfielder Michael Bradley in from Italy's top division and Jermain Defoe from the even higher rated English Premier League. The perennially underachieving yet well-supported club suddenly has the attention of soccer fans across North America and abroad. ■ This also will be Clint Dempsey's first full season with Seattle after the captain of the U.S. Men's National Team (USMNT) transferred from the EPL's Fulham. The Sounders FC will be under pressure to bring glory to its large fan base with a team that has radically

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changed personnel since a disappointing 2013.

Portland has added Argentinian flair to its squad with veteran striker Gaston Fernández and Real Salt Lake will have to face life without its iconic head coach Jason Kreis.

The league goes into motion on March 8 when 2013 MLS Cup champion Sporting Kansas City visits Seattle for the MLS First Kick.

Yet for all the change within MLS, a large portion of its season may be overshadowed by the worldwide phenomenon of the 2014 World Cup. Teams from 32 countries, including the United States, have already qualified for the World Cup finals in Brazil, following qualification rounds that involved more than 200 teams over the last three years. In December, a system of seeding and draws divided the surviving teams into eight groups of four. Round-robin group play in June, taking place in stadiums throughout Brazil, will lead to two teams from each group moving into the knockout Round of 16 and the eventual World Cup Final on July 13.

The luck of the draw in creating those groups was not



Kyle Beckerman, a Real Salt Lake midfielder, and Graham Zusi, a Sporting Kansas City midfielder, are MLS stars vying for spots on the U.S. Men's National Team roster.

kind to the U.S. team. Its Group G has the USMNT facing powerhouse Germany; a Portugal side led by Europe's top player, Cristiano Ronaldo of Real Madrid; and the Ghana team that eliminated the United States from the 2010 World Cup tournament. In some ways, that draw has put a brake on the spiraling expectations of the national team following an impressive run through qualifications, but North American interest in the tournament will be the highest it's been since the United States hosted the World Cup in 1994.

Recognizing the possibility of being overshadowed by

PLAYERS TO WATCH

As the World Cup finals in Brazil

approach, the U.S. Men's National Team is taking shape under head coach Jurgen Klinsmann, though he has said he plans to keep the final 23-man roster open as late as possible. Following are some of the players who have made strong bids for inclusion in Klinsmann's starting 11.



Clint DEMPSEY

30, forward, 101 international game appearances (caps). National Team captain; last summer signed with Seattle Sounders FC.



Jozy ALTIDORE

24, forward, 66 caps. Currently with Sunderland; started with New York Red Bulls in 2006 at age 16; transferred to Villarreal in 2008.



Michael BRADLEY

26, midfielder, 82 caps. Plays for Toronto FC after 8 years in Europe, most recently Roma in Italy's Series A; played 2010 World Cup.



Landon DONOVAN

31, midfielder, 155 caps. On LA Galaxy roster since 2005; played on loan to Bayern Munich and Everton; National Team leading scorer.



Tim HOWARD

34, goalkeeper, 96 caps. Signed with Manchester United in 2003; goalkeeper for Everton since 2007; third World Cup for U.S.



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World Cup telecasts, MLS has suspended its calendar during the two-week opening stages of the Cup, during which the USA will play its three group matches.

MLS Commissioner Don Garber views the World Cup as a splendid opportunity for the burgeoning U.S. league. "The World Cup raises the profile of our sport every four years and provides a tremendous boost for Major League Soccer," he says. "The appetite for the World Cup in the United States and Canada has grown substantially during the last decade, and MLS has certainly benefitted from the increasing popularity of the tournament."

His view is shared by John Strong, the lead announcer for MLS on NBC Sports. "I happen to be a very firm subscriber to the theory of a rising tide lifting all boats," Strong says. "I think any attention on soccer is a good thing, no matter what it is. People talked a lot about this last year, when NBC started covering the English Premier League. Any time you're getting eyeballs on soccer, there's going to be some reflection and some boost for

MLS in there. It's just natural."

Richard Fleming is a World Cup broadcasting veteran, having reported two World Cups for the BBC. He is now the high profile and highly respected announcer for the Colorado Rapids. He doubts the World Cup will distract fans from local American soccer. In fact, he sees advantages in MLS deciding not to compete with the group stages, but resuming play during the cutthroat knockout rounds when the FIFA spectacle is reaching the exciting stages, clashing with the Round of 16, the quarterfinals and the final itself when interest in soccer is at its highest.



American soccer fans showed enthusiastic support at home games throughout the World Cup qualifying stages. The USMNT defeated Jamaica 2-0 at Sporting KC Park last October.

PLAYERS TO WATCH



Jermaine JONES

32, midfielder, 38 caps
Currently plays for Besiktas in Turkey; has played largely in Germany since 1999.



Matt BESLER

27, defender, 13 caps
Began MLS career with Kansas City Wizards in 2009; MLS All-Star in 2011, 2013; called up to National Team in 2012.



Fabian JOHNSON

26, defender, 18 caps
Played on German national teams, U17-U21; currently plays for TSG 1899 Hoffenheim; U.S. call-up in 2011.



Graham ZUSI

27, midfielder, 19 caps
Signed with Kansas City Wizards in 2009; MLS Best XI and All-Star in 2012, 2013; international debut in January 2012.



Omar GONZALEZ

28, defender, 17 caps
Drafted in first round of 2009 MLS SuperDraft by LA Galaxy; made international debut against Brazil in 2010.



Brad EVANS

28, defender, 17 caps
Plays midfield for Seattle Sounders FC; started MLS career at Columbus in 2007; with Seattle since 2009.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DAVID RICHARD / USA TODAY SPORTS; JOHN RIEGER / USA TODAY SPORTS; KIRBY LEE / USA TODAY SPORTS; MATTHEW MONROE / USA TODAY SPORTS; JAYNE KAMIN-ONCEA / USA TODAY SPORTS; PETER G. AHEARN / USA TODAY SPORTS

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Wilmer Cabrera played in the World Cup for Colombia in 1998 and was also part of the 1990 squad. After being the assistant coach at the Rapids for two years, he was recently appointed the new head coach of Los Angeles side Chivas USA. He sees the World Cup as a positive force on MLS, with the group-stage hiatus allowing teams an opportunity to plan some rest and training sessions and make adjustments for the second half of their regular season. Switching gears to World Cup play, he says, "can also be used to motivate, to learn and to inspire all of us."

USMNT Group-Stage Matches

USA vs GHANA
June 16, 6 P.M. EDT

USA vs PORTUGAL
June 22, 6 P.M. EDT

USA vs GERMANY
June 26, 12 P.M. EDT

What fan is really going to focus on a Dallas versus Chivas USA match when the best American players are trying to defeat global-powerhouse Germany, or when American right back, Sounders FC's Brad Evans, is giving Portugal's global superstar Cristiano Ronaldo a master class on American soccer?

MLS taking a break for World Cup matches is not an ideal scenario, Fleming admits, "but if MLS plays it cute, and the USA emerges from what is a very difficult group, then they'll ride the crest of the World Cup wave. Momentum can be a magical thing."

North American soccer is in a very different place than it was even in 2010, the year of the previous World Cup tournament, contested in South Africa. The sport is not only more popular across North America from a grassroots, youth-soccer perspective, but MLS also has continued its rapid expansion, adding four

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teams in the last four years. And three more franchises—two with superstar owners—are in development. New York City FC, owned by the New York Yankees and English Premier League giant Manchester City, will begin play in 2015—with Kreis as head coach. So will the new Orlando City FC. Global marketing phenomenon and former England international star David Beckham will be spearheading a Miami team as the 22nd MLS franchise. Along with the new teams come new soccer-specific stadiums—smaller and more intimate than American football facilities, but typically filling to near capacity for each home game.

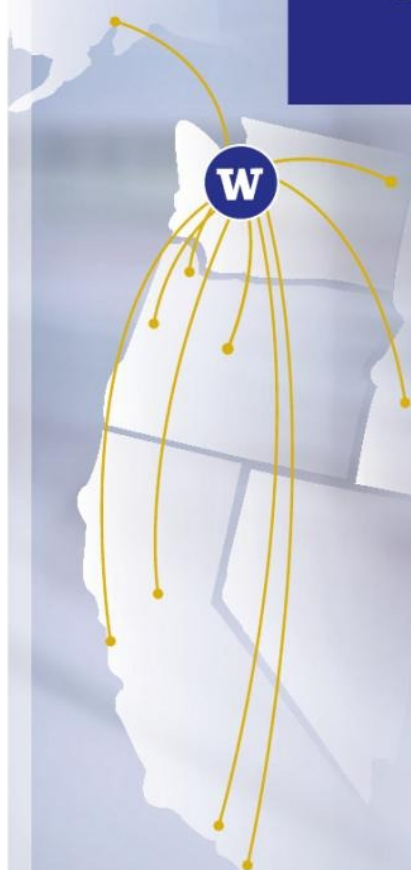
In addition, this World Cup has the potential to be transformative for MLS growth, Strong says. “Firstly, you’ll have a World Cup with an unprecedented number of American eyeballs on it, particularly given the fact that the kickoff times are going to work so well for American television—Rio de Janeiro will be one hour ahead of the U.S. East Coast time zone—and then you’re going to have these massively important pillars of the U.S. team coming back and playing for their MLS clubs.”

It’s that last point that carries the greatest potential for soccer in America. Many of the stars American and Canadian fans pay to watch in their hometown stadiums stand a decent chance of being selected to represent their nations in Brazil—though Klinsmann says final U.S. selections will be last-minute decisions.

Sounders FC’s Clint Dempsey and Brad Evans, Sporting Kansas City’s Matt Besler and Graham Zusi, and LA Galaxy’s Omar Gonzalez and Landon Donovan are very likely members of Head Coach Jurgen Klinsmann’s squad, while Real Salt Lake’s Kyle Beckerman, Luis Gil and Nick Rimando are solid possibilities.

Strikers Eddie Johnson (moving to D.C. United from Sounders FC), Mike Magee (Chicago Fire) and Chris Wondolowski (San Jose Earthquakes) could earn a trip to Brazil, depending on who manages to display exemplary form in the MLS season between MLS First Kick and the deadline for Klinsmann to select his final squad.

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Additionally, news of Michael Bradley's transfer to Toronto FC—after eight years in Europe, playing most recently for AS Roma—was the talk of MLS in January. In particular, the move brought into question the value of having the country's superstars playing in MLS versus playing in the top international leagues.

"This is why it's going to be so exciting this year," Strong says. "You have a lot of the main cogs of the U.S. team playing here, between Bradley, Dempsey and Donovan, just for three right there. And we'll find out more. For example, does Zusi find a place in the starting lineup? Gonzalez and Besler, do they find places in the starting lineup? There are still a lot of spots in Jurgen's 11 that are going to be up for grabs. Outside of the goalkeeper position, I think maybe the three most important players on the U.S. team going to Brazil play in MLS. I think that's huge."

Still, soccer has its challenges. Fleming notes that those Americans who are implacably soccer-skeptic will remain so. "For me, there seems to be a misconception about the growth, interest, knowledge and passion for the sport of soccer in North America," he says. "In this modern age, it's about the brand and the quality of the product. It's not the popularity of the sport of soccer in the United States that is up for debate, rather the MLS brand. Yes, the World Cup will gain more media attention, steal a few more column inches and showcase some of the game's glitterati, but those in North America who pour scorn on soccer and distance themselves from the sport [sports fans and media alike], are unlikely to be glued to their TV sets watching the drama unfold in South America."

For Fleming, then, growth for MLS is more a matter of winning over fans of the English Premier League and other popular leagues in Europe and South America.

That opportunity begins when the league restarts in early July, with a heightened interest in soccer after the group stages.

"Our players who compete in the World Cup in Brazil will return immediately to their MLS clubs, and fans want to see them back on the field," Commissioner Garber says. "We have always seen an increase in our key business metrics—attendance, television ratings, website traffic—following the World Cup."

If the U.S. national team advances to the Round of 16 and beyond, a number of MLS teams will have to restart without some of their key players, but even then, there's the opportunity for fans to double up on games, combining the biggest games on the planet, playing live on television, with an afternoon game in their hometown MLS stadium.

While it appears that MLS will benefit from having its top players representing the United States in Brazil, a heated argument is brewing over whether it's best for the U.S. national team to have its players plying their trade in England or Germany, playing weekly against the stars of European leagues, or at home in an MLS



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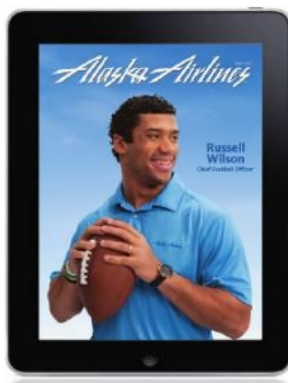
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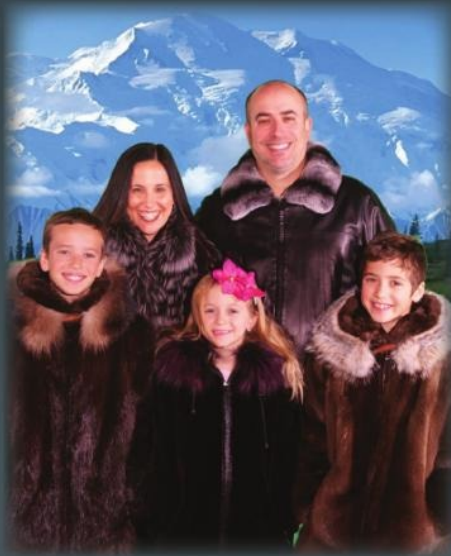
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that is growing in stature. Much of that controversy stems from the recent decisions of Dempsey and Bradley to return to the MLS in the prime of their careers.

Sunil Gulati, president of the U.S. Soccer Federation, the organization responsible for the U.S. Men's National Team, seems to be treading carefully regarding the rise of U.S. national players appearing in MLS. It's a trend he generally

**The 1950 U.S. team,
though they had
trained together
only once, shocked
the world by
emerging 1-0
winners over
then-powerhouse
England.**

welcomes, although he notes it is important that the players actually get significant time on the field for whichever club they represent.

"The players make the decisions on which clubs they are going to play for, and there are a lot of factors involved in making those decisions, whether they be competitive, financial or personal. Taking in all those considerations, the players' goal is to be on the field consistently and continue to develop. If they are in that type of environment, it can only help when they are with the national team. Over time, with the continued growth of MLS, I think you've seen more USMNT players decide that the right situation is right here at home."

And while MLS and the USMNT enjoy a reciprocal boost, there is a similar situation evolving with the league's international players. MLS is not only supplying players to the American team, but members of other national teams are increasingly found in the ranks of MLS. That includes players such as Tim Cahill (New

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York Red Bull/Australia), Victor Bernardez (San Jose Earthquakes/Honduras) and Álvaro Saborio (Real Salt Lake/Costa Rica), all playing on a global stage for their countries, but also representing MLS.

"Think how many internationals there are from the CONCACAF nations, for instance, the number of Costa Rica players such as Álvaro Saborio, and hopefully Portland Timbers' Rodney Wallace," Strong says.

"I'd love to see Wallace find a way to make the Costa Rican team. It's going to be a bit of a challenge, but Costa Rica is one of those nations that perhaps can be feisty, find a way out of their World Cup group, and just maybe make some noise."

And that's been the beauty of the World Cup over its 84-year history: the opportunity for unknown players, for underdogs to shine on a global stage, in the most popular sport on the planet.

The last World Cup held in Brazil was in 1950. England, then a powerhouse, played the United States in the group stages. That U.S. team was a very different animal from today's team with Dempsey, Donovan and goalkeeper Tim Howard. The American team members were amateurs, with postmen, hearse drivers, dishwashers and teachers among them, coached by a wily Scotsman, William Jeffrey, who told the English press that his team "had no chance." The U.S. team, though they had trained together only once, shocked the world by emerging 1-0 winners, courtesy of a goal by Haitian Joe Gaetjens.

For each MLS star who steps up in Brazil to become some nation's hero, the league gains a little more respect in the world's beautiful game. ▲

Steve Clare covered the MLS Western Conference for six years for his own site, ProstAmerika. He is now editor-in-chief of Soccerly.com.

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Bathed in Color, Warmed by Wood

New hues, sustainable materials
brighten 'soft modern' remodels

By Debra Prinzing



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This Seattle home, by Prestige Residential Construction and DeForest Architects, illustrates two popular decor trends—wood accents and spacious layouts.

In your brushed-steel, multifunction stove top, chicken soup simmers while prawns grill over the gas flame.

You, meanwhile, are six feet away at the home “command center” charging your Kindle, putting together your weekend getaway itinerary and boosting the temperature in the family room for the after-dinner movie.

Welcome to the dream kitchen of 2014, which according to design experts is part living room, part technology hub and part culinary center. Imagine a sparkling but practical, spacious arena complete with a home office center next to the pantry, where you cook up everything from shopping lists to the next great American novel—while cookies bake.

Walk down the hallway to the bathroom and you’ll find innovative spalike features, such as a huge, stand-alone soaking tub, as well as energy-efficient fixtures and family-friendly designs.

Continue to the master bedroom where streamlined electronics and multifunctional furnishings enable a spare, compact space: Now we lay us down to sleep on a platform bed complete with storage underneath.

Throughout the home, you’ll find soothing color palettes, a few brighter accents, high-tech composite materials and an abundance of sustainable materials. One design maven calls this emerging style “soft modern,” which encompasses all of the above.

According to Janice Jones, vice president of merchandising for the PulteGroup, Inc.—a homebuilding industry leader with operations in 28 states—focus groups and homebuyer surveys, from young families to empty nesters, have helped builders and designers define this new design aesthetic. It is popular for both stand-alone single-family home and multifamily condominium configurations.

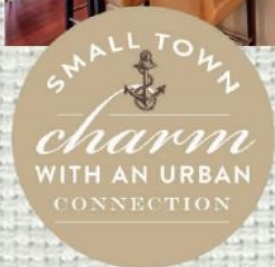
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"Increasingly, people are drawn to clean lines; cooler, soft color palettes; open spaces with natural lighting; and squared-off edges on trim, countertops, faucets and hardware—it's a toned-down version of ultramodern," Jones says. "This new look is about mixing and matching a warm, comfortable environment with modern finishes and angular details. It incorporates a lot of natural materials, too."

Visually refreshing, soft modern falls nicely between contemporary and traditional styles and reflects in part the influence of big, upscale retail companies such as Pottery Barn, West Elm, Restoration Hardware and Crate and Barrel. Websites such as Pinterest and Houzz are "dramatically changing the way that consumers experience interior design," Jones adds—design inspira-

tion is just a click away on the Web in the form of untold thousands of actual examples.

As for the "modern" part of soft modern, trend-watchers, including the National Kitchen & Bath Association, say homes are getting leaner and greener. Each year, the NKBA surveys its members for their input on ranking top design trends. According to John Petrie, president of NKBA and owner of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania-based Mother Hubbard's Custom Cabinetry, the design, materials and appliance trends of last year—incorporating energy efficiency, sustainable materials and high technology—will only grow stronger in 2014. And that reflects good news for the entire home improvement industry.

"When I talk to our dealers and chapters throughout the United States and Canada, we're hearing that consumer spending on kitchens is increasing. People have worked hard to shed debt and they're ready to invest back into their homes," he says. "And the two rooms that are most popular in home improvement are the kitchen and the master bath."

For several years after the start of the "Great Recession" in 2008, a sluggish economy meant that most kitchen and bath renovations were relatively modest, Petrie recalls. "People were making fairly small changes, such as adding a new countertop or backsplash. But today we're seeing many more top-to-bottom makeovers."

Above: Custom counters by ThinkGlass and Ferrari-red appliances illustrate the colorful accents that designers such as Elina Katsioulas-Beall favor today. Left: Steam ovens, such as this Miele model, are popular gourmet substitutes for microwaves.





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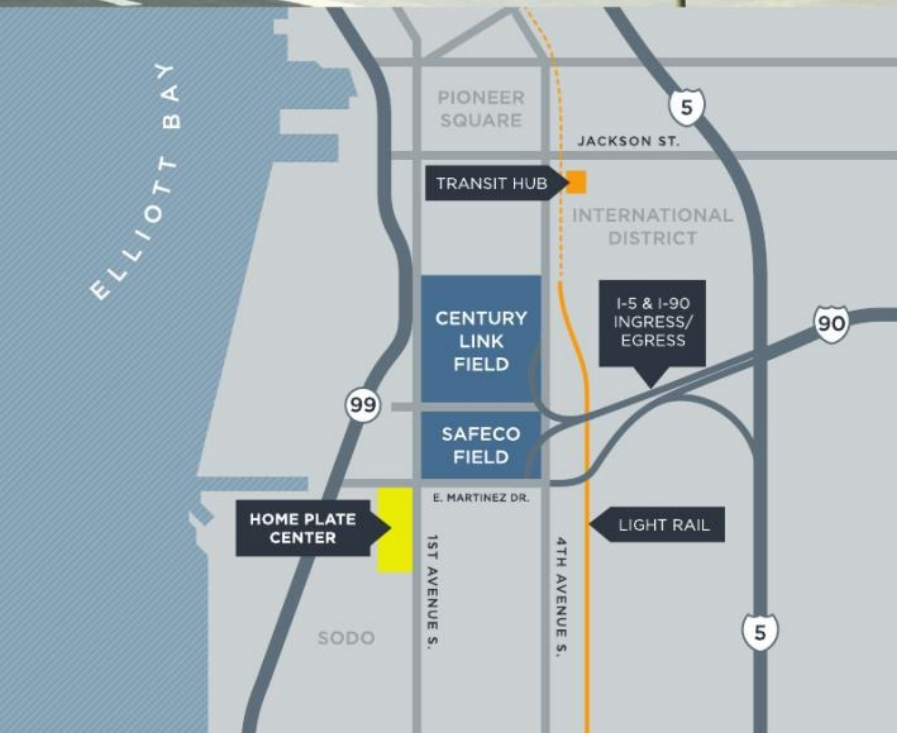
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Lifestyle-oriented design now factors into renovation budgets, adds Rhonda Knoche, a Portland, Oregon-based designer who also specializes in “aging in place” design. “We’re seeing down-scaling in house sizes for some homeowners, but most are asking: How can we live in this home as healthfully and as long as possible?”

“Ninety-five percent of the work we’re doing is remodeling,” reports Elina Katsioulas-Beall, vice president and principal designer of Dewitt Designer Kitchens, based in Pasadena, California. “More people are remodeling the home they have and putting significant amounts of money into the kitchen—up to 15 percent of the value of the house.”

Whether you’re considering a new custom home, finishing off your new condominium or just modernizing an aging kitchen or bath, here are some of the most noteworthy ideas to consider:

- **Open floor plans:** Nearly every expert interviewed for this article says the open kitchen is here to stay. While it’s not for everyone, the walls have come down in many formerly cramped kitchens. This fundamental shift in home design began in the 1990s (think “great room,” the kitchen’s sidekick).

“Most of our awake hours in the day are spent in the kitchen. It’s the new living room,” says Katsioulas-Beall. “In the past 10 years, almost every single client I’ve



worked with wants to open up the kitchen, take out the walls and join it to the rest of the home.”

“Separate dining rooms and living rooms are disappearing,” agrees Seattle-based designer Karen Ellentuck of Ellentuck Interiors. “I just removed a kitchen wall to create a larger L-shaped space for a client. On one side of the island is the kitchen; on the other side is a sitting area with a sofa and a couple ottomans, plus end tables and matching lamps.”

The bathroom is also gaining elbow room by borrowing a few extra feet from the adjacent bedroom, say some designers. One reason is the free-standing tub, a spa-style feature that is much more than a vintage cast-iron clawfoot, says Ellentuck. “The free-standing tub has a little of the old-fashioned idea, but it’s very contemporary and clean-looking. It is replacing the built-in tub deck.” Bathrooms are getting more spalike because today’s homebuyers travel a lot, stay at upscale hotels and enjoy luxury features they want to incorporate in their own living environments, she explains.

Family-friendly bathrooms are also on the rise, says Jones of the PulteGroup. “By just adding 3 feet to the family bathroom, we’ve opened up space to have one kid in the tub; another brushing her teeth; and mom or dad sitting on a little stool instead of the toilet lid. Now there’s space for a shelving unit to hold bath toys or



Above: Command centers, such as this one in a PulteGroup home, are practical and popular kitchen adjuncts.

Left: Ample space is the focus of family bathroom design.

towels next to the tub, and more family members are comfortable being there together.”

• **Technology:** Open floor plans call for inventive space and storage planning to keep clutter out of sight. And because we’re moving so many electronics into the kitchen, designers are finding savvy solutions to organize them. Knoche, principal of Rhonda Knoche Design, says “the usual ‘desk in the kitchen’ is now a message center and charging station.”

The PulteGroup is adding dedicated planning nooks—so-called “command centers”—to many of its homes, says Jones. “The command center runs the household; there you can pay bills or kids can work on their homework—it’s become a strong design element of our homes.” Measuring about 8 by 8 feet, this mini-office space has built-in work counters and is wired to charge phones, computers and other devices, she explains.

Along with this trend is a move toward the long-predicted electronic home. “As more people want to be connected ‘to’ their house, we’ll continue to see new Wi-Fi devices integrated into the kitchen,” adds NKBA’s Petrie. “It’s moving to the point where you can control lighting and temperature from your smartphone or tablet—or even from your laptop at the office.”

‘You can personalize the way you cook, rather than having the same gas range that everyone else has.’

As technology becomes more streamlined, there are other payoffs, too, adds Jones. “Flat-screen TVs are iPad-lean, which means you don’t need that big chunky armoire to hold a huge television,” she says. Thus, master bedrooms can be smaller, but don’t necessarily feel smaller. The three- or four-piece bedroom set has been replaced by a platform bed, giving sleeping areas more breathing room. Storage is provided under the bed or in walk-in closets.

• **Counters:** Thanks to manufacturing innovations, marble and granite are no longer the only must-have countertop choices. The use of “quartz” is on the rise, and last year it was the second most popular counter surface for kitchens and baths, according to the NKBA.

“Quartz” is a generic term that refers to a manufactured stonelike product, with several brand names dominating the marketplace. “The industry has been



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working hard at perfecting colors, textures and patterns—and as a result, has been able to produce a more natural-looking countertop product,” explains Petrie. Engineered quartz combines natural stone with resins to produce a versatile and solid non-stain surface. It isn’t necessarily less expensive than stone, but it is an increasingly popular option, competitive with mid-priced granite. Its key attributes are stain resistance and color variability.

• **Appliances:** Today’s cooktops offer a little bit of everything to home chefs, says Seattle’s Ellentuck. “People want to customize their cooking venue, so we’re using modular options that may include a griddle, a grill, a couple burners and an induction burner. You can personalize the way you cook, rather than having the same gas range that everyone else has.”

Steam ovens are another innovation, with models by manufacturers such as Miele, Thermador and Wolf in the marketplace. Ellentuck predicts this type of oven may eventually replace the microwave. “It steams and reheats food with moisture, enhancing the flavor,” she says.

The pantry in this DeWitt Designer Kitchens installation is made from reclaimed wood, bringing both sustainability and warmth into the room.

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Steam ovens may not be as fast as microwaves, but their superior culinary results drive their appeal.

Finding quality appliances for the downsized kitchen—such as for a townhouse, condominium, or guest suite—is now easier than ever, Ellentuck adds. “I just found a line of small-scale appliances including a 24-inch refrigerator and a 24-inch range—and they’re a perfect fit for my client’s compact kitchen.”

Stainless steel appliances are here to stay, as well, and the finish is no longer just for luxury kitchens. “Homeowners can get nice stainless appliances in many price ranges,” says Petrie.

Katsioulas-Beall calls stainless a modern classic. “It’s a decor chameleon, because it takes any nearby color, absorbs that hue and reflects it back.” Shiny or brushed, stainless appliances read as “neutral,” blending well with both warm and cool color schemes. This designer likes adding in an unexpected color—such as a Ferrari-red



Urban timber, such as this repurposed walnut, is the environmentally friendly material used by a company called, appropriately, Urban Hardwoods.

light fixtures, metal portions in cabinetry, buttons on upholstery,” she adds.

“I’m branching into metals such as brushed brass, which has a champagne look,” echoes Katsioulas-Beall. “Colored coppers, painted or acid-washed, are also new options.”

• **Wood finishes:** Wood adds a softer element to the kitchen or bath where so many otherwise hard surfaces exist. Many designers and contractors cite reclaimed wood and “live edge” wood (the uneven

range. Yes, it is the same paint the carmaker uses.

“I like a few surprises in my kitchens,” she explains.

• **Metal finishes:** Shiny is out; matte is in, says Knoche. “I’ve not done a polished surface for several years. Instead, we’re seeing soft, burnished brasses that have a beautiful glow,” she reports. Brushed and weathered metal finishes are “showing up in hardware,

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edge of a plank) as favorite elements in the kitchen.

Bryan Reed, general manager of Urban Hardwoods, with showrooms in Seattle, San Francisco and Santa Monica, agrees. "We're seeing more and more homes that celebrate the use of natural materials. In an austere contemporary living space, wood surfaces warm up and complement everything else. Similarly, in a traditional home with lots of softer materials and warm finishes, the organic form of wood provides contrast, yet the colors are compatible with the setting."

Specializing in turning reclaimed lumber and logs into one-of-a-kind slabs for dining tables and counters, Urban Hardwoods works with a wide range of tree varieties. While Reed doesn't recommend using wood as a countertop or work surface due to maintenance issues, he likes seeing touches of wood, such as on a bar top or pass-through counter. All woods are porous and need to be sealed, but letting the natural grain and color show through with a clear finish or oil is recommended. "If you want a darker look, choose English elm or walnut," Reed suggests. "American elm, maple and ash are lighter in tone."

For Jeff Santerre, owner of Seattle-based Prestige Custom Builders, wood is a beautiful way to add drama to the kitchen ceiling. "I recently used 1-by-6-inch Douglas-fir for a tongue-and-groove kitchen ceiling," he notes. Engineered woods are a good choice for flooring, because they can withstand the temperature fluctuations of in-floor radiant heat, Santerre adds.

Katsioulas-Beall calls decor incorporating wood elements "Rustic Urban," a blend of old and modern. "We're using reclaimed factory or warehouse wood, then we're adding new lighting designed to reflect old industrial materials."

- **Lighting:** Desire for greater energy efficiency has prompted homeowners to embrace LEDs (light-emitting diodes), now specified by a growing percentage of designers, according to NKBA.

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Tape lighting, a thin, flexible material embedded with miniature LED lights, is ideal for installation beneath upper cabinets or in toe-kicks. "It's slightly thicker than duct tape and allows you to add a little accent lighting in the bathroom or kitchen," says Knoche.

- **Colors:** "Radiant Orchid" was recently named the 2014 "color of the year" by the Color Marketing Group and Pantone. A "captivating harmony of fuchsia, purple and pink undertones," according to Pantone, it's a feminine color you're likely to find in the bedroom, or as a subtle accent that plays nicely with shades of gray.

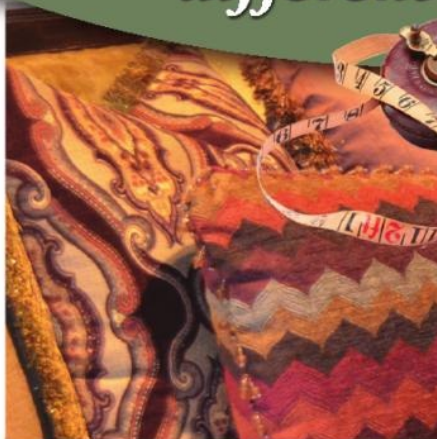
"It's really gray that is providing the broadest spectrum of opportunity," says Jones. "Gray tones have a multidimensional effect as they range from cool shades to heather tones. Paint and highly textured woven wall coverings in light gray, lightened with blue tones, are also a growing trend." These misty shades have a sense of calm and complement fashionable purples and plums cited by color forecasters. "Gray cabinets, wood flooring and hard surfaces continue to grow in popularity," Jones explains.

The graying of America's interiors is showing up in applications that have nothing to do with paint color, such as wood stains, adds Katsioulas-Beall. "We've moved from the rich honeys, espresso brown and latte colors to a grayer look with wood."

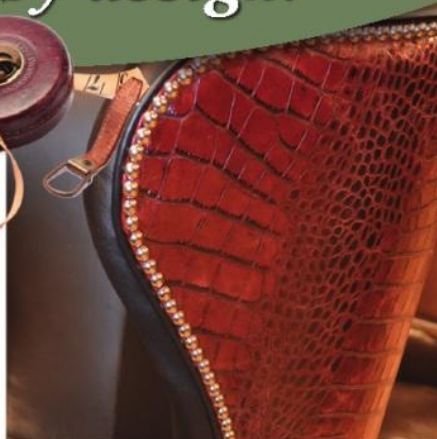
- **Architectural glass:** Whether in tiles or cabinet doors, the use of glass is a popular option for vertical surfaces in the kitchen (and the bathroom). According to NKBA, the preference for glass backsplashes has grown dramatically over the past three years and will continue into the coming year.

"It's a material that contrasts well with ceramic or porcelain tile," says Ellentuck, who recently inserted a running strip of 1-inch glass tile into a backsplash of 2-by-10-inch ceramic tile. Katsioulas-Beall singles out the Think-Glass line, which fabricates textured and

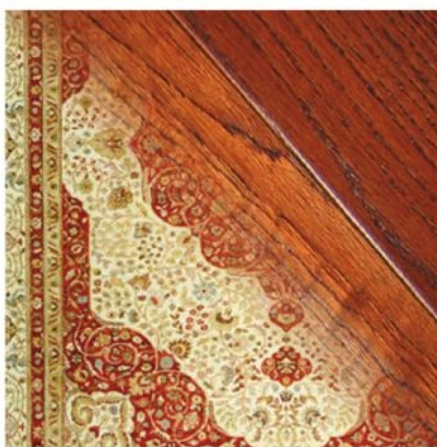
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geometric glass for counters, back-splashes, tabletops, bars and shower enclosures. "It's a classic material with so many possibilities," she says.

• **Fixtures:** Water conservation codes in many states and municipalities have prompted manufacturers to design highly effective low-volume shower-heads. According to NKBA's Petrie, several makers have taken the Environmental Protection Agency's 2.5 gallon-per-minute requirement for showerheads even lower. "Some companies have come up with 1.5 or 1.75 gallon-per-minute fixtures and you can't tell the difference from the old high-flow fixtures. It's not as if you're standing under a drippy faucet. You're saving water and you're saving energy, as well."

Wellness furnishings are also enhancing bathrooms, says Knoche. "I'm seeing more steam therapy in showers. This is damp heat rather than dry—and consumers are discovering the benefits. No matter your fitness level, recreation lifestyle or age, having a healthful spa treatment at home is appealing."

THE EVER-DYNAMIC American home reflects our busy lifestyles, family size, generational changes, aspirations and more. And there are as many design solutions as there are homeowners. But one prevailing desire touches all, says designer Elina Katsioulou-Beall. "We all want to enrich our lives. Human beings want to be surrounded by what they love, and your home is your own personal museum of family history."

"There are hundreds of ways you can make a kitchen or bathroom beautiful, but it has to be the homeowner's way," says Katsioulou-Beall. "I like to think of clients as characters in their own movie—and I give them solutions that reflect their own personality, lifestyle, and the way they entertain or cook."

That's the sort of home movie anyone would enjoy. ▲

Debra Prinzing is a Seattle-based landscape and design writer.



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Trending Up

Optimism builds for a revitalized
real estate market in 2014

By Joe Follansbee



Tyler Zoellin watched the Seattle housing market for two years before getting serious about buying a home. The 32-year-old IT consultant and his family wanted to find the classic American single-family home with a nice back yard to raise their 4-year-old. They lived in a condo in Seattle, and starting in the summer of 2013, began their new home search in urban residential neighborhoods. At first, they discovered what industry observers have been noting for a year now—the market has been heating up.

“It seemed like every good property we looked at was sold within 24 to 48 hours of listing,” Zoellin recalls.

Eventually, they found what they were looking for in the Seattle suburb of Issaquah: a 2,300-square-foot house built in 1988. It had four bedrooms, two and a half baths, and a three-car garage. It was affordable, relatively near the urban amenities they had grown used to—and, with Issaquah’s location at the foot of the Cascade Mountains, it was also close to their favorite recreational options. “We’re really outdoorsy and it definitely feels like those things are a lot closer now,” Zoellin says, happily. The family moved in last December.

Meanwhile, Supriya Uchil wanted to live on top of a hill—but not just any hill. After three years renting a restored 1920s-era one-bedroom apartment below Seattle’s prosperous Queen Anne neighborhood, the Amazon employee decided to move up. “It was time for me to buy a house, to own a home,” she says. Uchil needed a bigger place to entertain guests and host extended visits by family and friends from as far away as her childhood home in India. She wanted to walk to work, and find a place that showcased the mountains and water landscape that makes Seattle special. “My heart was set on top of Queen Anne Hill.” After looking at 10 houses, she found a 2,800-square-foot house and picked up her keys in February.

Their stories exemplify several conspicuous trends in the real estate market today:

- Market activity is shifting from the high-profile major metro areas of the early part of the decade—New York, San Francisco—to cities such as Seattle and Portland.

The urban village, where work, shopping and recreation cluster, exemplifies the growing strength of the U.S. real estate market.

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The many advantages of condominium living have proven appealing to the millions of Gen Y members now entering the housing market.

- While families such as Zoellin's are happy to head to exurban areas for their American dream single-family home, other Gen Y professionals such as Uchil remain committed to the in-city advantages of urban neighborhoods—nearby services and amenities and even employment options that do not require use of a car.

- So-called “move-up buyers” constitute the majority of activity. These are young families with wage earners in tech professions whose kids will soon enter public schools; or “millennials” such as Uchil desiring to expand their living quarters while retaining a central location. Although the condos and apartments that have burgeoned so visibly in urban areas the past decade served their needs admirably for a while, these young professionals are now ready for stand-alone homes.

“I’d say ‘move-up’ buyers are 60 percent of the business we’re seeing these days,” reports Lance Morgan, area manager and mortgage consultant at Windermere Realty’s Sandpoint office in Seattle. “The demand is strong, and the biggest problem is that inventory is tight enough that buyers often cannot wait on contingent sales of their existing homes.” Sometimes, Morgan adds, buyers are so anxious to accomplish their move-up mission that they sell

their existing home and rent until they find a new home to buy.

So, with activity such as this becoming common, is 2014 the year the real estate economy returns to normal after its half-decade slump? Many economists



Real eStats

1 The highest-priced major metro area housing market at the end of 2013, according to National Association of Realtors statistics, was San Francisco, with a median listing price of \$799,000. Los Angeles was \$450,000; Seattle was \$350,000; Portland, \$289,000.

2 Time on market, a key expression of market activity, was lowest in Honolulu (64 days) and San Jose (70 days). Highest were Philadelphia (145 days) and Newark (124 days).

3 The national median list price, \$195,000, was 8.1 percent higher at the end of 2013, compared to December 2012.

4 Total housing inventory at the end of 2013, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, was 132.9 million units—362,000 above 2012, a 0.27 percent increase.

5 The rental vacancy rate at the end of 2013 was 8.2 percent, down from a high of 11.1 percent in 2009. Homeowner housing vacancy rate was 2.1 percent, down from a late 2008 high of 2.9 percent.

Second homes, such as these deluxe cottages at Kukui'ula on Kaua'i, are proving very popular with the baby boom's many empty nest couples.

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believe so. In 2013, low inventory and low interest rates, as well as a slowly improving broader economy, drove much of the increase in house prices from the lows of 2009. In 2014, "inventory should gradually stabilize and return to traditional seasonal levels," predicts Realtor.com, which adds that the tide of "underwater" mortgages is likely to continue ebbing. In 2013, foreclosures nationwide reached their lowest point since 2007, before the bubble burst. At the end of 2012, 1.2 million U.S. homes were in foreclosure; by the end of 2013, that number had dropped dramatically to just 837,000. The "serious delinquency" rate, a different measure than outright foreclosures, was also at a five-year low of 2.52 percent, compared to 3.2 percent two years prior.

Add all these factors up and, according to a report by the nonprofit Urban Land Institute, this year the national real estate market will be "recovering from the recovery," that is, the market will respond less to the echoes of the deflated bubble and more to economic fundamentals such as demographics and continued low interest rates.

"Tailwinds," such as good, if not great, job growth in energy, technology, health care and biological research, education, and financial services will overcome the "headwinds" of relatively high unemployment, uncertainty over government regulation and fiscal policy, and concern about rising interest rates, according to ULI.

Nationwide, house prices rose 8 percent last year; listings increased 1 percent; and time on market—a key indicator of real estate activity—declined 5 percent.

Of course, the health of real estate markets varies from town to town, and ULI predicts that investors, developers and builders will turn their attention away from so-called "gateway" cities such as San Francisco and New York, where land is tight and prices high, to more moderately priced cities such as Seattle, Austin, and the cities of Orange County, California.

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Some severely stressed markets have been reporting dramatic gains. Las Vegas prices were up almost 30 percent in 2013; Phoenix, 20 percent.

In the Portland metro area, where prices rose 10 percent last year and time on market declined more than 9 percent, real estate agent Terrie Cox anticipates a good year. "I see a slow but positive growth in 2014 with an abundance of new home construction permits being issued," she says. "Builders are snapping up lots close to shopping, schools and airports."

The changing demographics of the country will play a key role in the trends that shape the housing market in 2014 and beyond. The newest buyers on the scene are the millennials, sometimes called Generation Y, who were born in the 1980s and '90s. The older members of this cohort, now in their 30s, face a home ownership environment different from their Gen X and baby boomer parents. Many are relatively recent college graduates, and affordability is a key challenge. In 2013, the National Association of Realtors Home Affordability Index dropped to a five-year low as price increases outpaced income growth. Glenn Crellin, an economist at the Runstad Center for Real Estate Studies at the University of Washington, says many millennials have put off buying. "What we're seeing is a three- to five-year delay in home ownership decisions," he says. But he remains confident that millennials will eventually own homes at about the same ratio as their parents.

The potential market is huge: Gen Y, the millennials, has 72 million members, according to ULI. The baby boom generation, once the premier economic force of our time, is now down to 73 million.

But the millennials' expectations and tastes are markedly different from older generations'. A 2013 survey by Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate found that one in three prefer a "fixer-upper." And they're ready to get calluses: 72 percent of millennials consider themselves "just as handy—if not more so" than their parents. They're also choosing different neighborhoods. Like Supriya Uchil, they want to walk everywhere, and that means down-



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town areas or neighborhoods with restaurants, entertainment venues and personal services. "Millennials are time-sensitive and really prefer to walk to work," says Dean Jones, principal at Seattle-based Realogics Sotheby's International Realty. He's seen the transformation of Seattle's downtown from a strictly retail and office environment to a true neighborhood with high-rise condo towers and world-class high-tech companies, such as Amazon. And neighborhoods such as Ballard, once almost

completely dominated by single-family housing, now boast multistory condo and apartment complexes that have attracted hundreds, if not thousands, of new residents. When these residents move up, they may move just four blocks from a condo to a traditional single-family house.

At lunchtime and after work in the evenings, millennials crowd the sidewalks of the South Lake Union and Belltown neighborhoods next to the downtown core; and the bustling resta-

urant and entertainment districts such as are found in Ballard and in Portland neighborhoods such as the Pearl District. "Millennials are less interested in chasing the American dream 20 miles from work [in a suburb]."

Jones notes that many of those workers are renting, not owning, in part because they value mobility; it's easier to pull up stakes to take a new job in a different city if you rent. However, that's likely to change if rents continue to rise in Seattle at the current 6 percent annual rate. Owning will become more appealing, Jones says.

Millennials do share some preferences with their parents, the so-called empty nesters, middle-aged singles and couples who no longer need that big suburban house with an expansive backyard for raising a family. Many baby boomers are downsizing to urban condos and townhomes (and selling their homes to young families such as Tyler Zoellin's). The Urban Land Institute says this trend will continue in 2014 as people 55 and older look for neighborhoods with high "walk scores" close to cultural amenities and health care services.

Harold and Laurie Linebarger are typical of these couples. They owned a 3,600-square-foot house in a San Diego suburb, and once their youngest child moved out, the house was too big. Harold remembers discussing the situation with Laurie. "This is crazy. Let's sell," Harold told her. "Within three days, we had multiple offers, and the house sold after five days on the market." They rented a condo in downtown San Diego, then decided to move to Seattle to be closer to family. At first, they thought they'd rent. "But rents in Seattle are 20 percent higher than San Diego," Harold says, leading them to a condo purchase this spring. The walkable lifestyle is perfect for their needs. "It's great to walk to go out for dinner, rather than drive to a restaurant. You can walk off your dinner on the way home."

Real estate developers and agents are also responding to an ongoing trend among empty nesters with means: While

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they are enjoying a more carefree life in their new urban-village homes, these buyers may also be in the market for second homes to enjoy a couple times a year or more. A new property development in Hawai'i has turned its attention to this segment of empty nesters.

Located on the south shore of Kaua'i on a former sugar plantation, Kukui'ula sells lots from one-third to a full acre, starting just under \$1 million. Lots with cottages range in price from \$2 million to \$4 million. Members-only amenities

include an 18-hole, Tom Weiskopf-designed golf course, a restaurant, a pool, a 6-acre farm growing fresh fruit and vegetables, and a fishing lake stocked with peacock bass. Brent Harrington, president of the company developing Kukui'ula, says sales have been picking up. Many of his buyers are the heads of families "who watched their kids grow up and scatter to the four winds," Harrington says. "They are purchasing a second home which becomes a rallying point for their fami-

lies." These homes may be used only a few times a year, but the concept still pencils out for his buyers, such as Randy Lert, a retired chief portfolio strategist for Seattle-based Russell Investments. He plugged the numbers into a spreadsheet and found that Kukui'ula's program of renting out owners' cottages when they're empty (akin to the classic fractional ownership vacation properties) means the investment pays for itself. "The place is fabulous," Lert says. "It's exceeded our expectations."

Similar interest is appearing south of the border in Mexico, where activity has been picking up at Cabo's Villa la Estancia, a vacation-home complex along San Lucas Bay, very close to the shops, services and restaurants of Cabo San Lucas. The development registered a 62 percent increase in sales last year, compared to 2012, reports sales manager John Berliner. Two-thirds of the resort's buyers would be considered empty nesters, he adds, and many have used profits from last year's equity markets run-up to buy their vacation homes. But that doesn't mean they come to Cabo alone.

"The majority of our owners are couples with extended families, who choose to balance their stays with family, and by themselves," says Berliner.

The past decade's experiences lead many in the industry to welcome today's moderate growth. And the two groups that are leading it—millennials and baby boomers—hold enough clout that today's market may well represent the new normal. Among millennials, 63 percent say they expect to move in the next five years, compared to 42 percent in the entire adult population. And various surveys show that up to a third of baby boomers are interested in having a second home. "Both generations want increased amenities and lower risk," says Portland real estate agent Terrie Cox. Hopefully, by the end of 2014, the country can comfortably say the real estate market has continued its upward, healthy trend. ▲

Joe Follansbee writes from Seattle.

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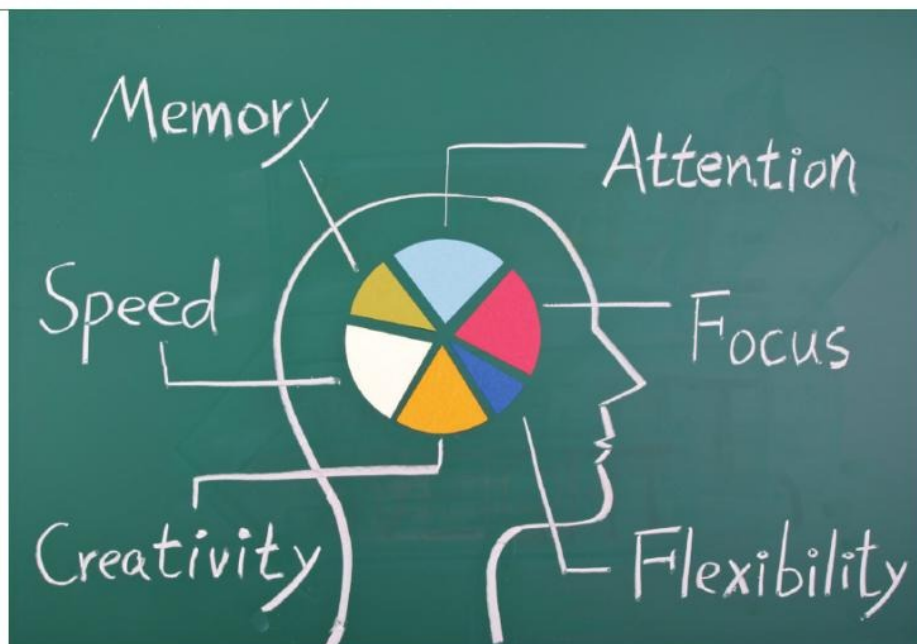
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Training Your Brain

By Evelyn Spence

If you listen to the radio, watch television or use a computer, you've probably heard of Lumosity, a company that offers a brain-training program to boost your memory, sharpen your attention and work on developing your cognitive performance through a regimen of interactive computer games. Sound tempting? If you think so, you're far from alone. The popularity of brain games has soared in recent years, fueled by

wide-ranging research that suggests the mysterious matter between our ears can change—and even grow in complexity—throughout adulthood. Some 50 million people in 180 countries have signed up for Lumosity's programs since its website went live in 2007. These users have invested more than 2 billion minutes working on activities such as recalling the placement of tiles on a grid after they disappear, matching a color to its name when the name is shown on-screen in another color (the word *red* printed in blue, for example) and solving arithmetic problems displayed in falling raindrops that quickly cascade down the screen.

Lumosity claims to “act as a personal trainer for your brain,” and many users are

convinced that their brains are getting fitter. Take David Božjak, a 24-year-old software developer in Lund, Sweden, who tried Lumosity for the first time in March 2012 and trains an average of 6.3 days per week for about 15 minutes at a time. (The company recommends a training program of five games per day, for a total of 15 minutes daily.) Božjak says his Brain Performance Index, or BPI—the measurement the company uses to track progress—has risen from the 65th percentile to the 99th percentile. Božjak says there were several instances when he felt the benefits of his training in other settings, such as when he successfully memorized complex formulas while studying for final exams at his university. “I consciously thought: ‘Wow! This

must be Lumosity talking. Stuff like this was way harder to learn in the past.’”

Barbara Johnson, a 67-year-old health assistant at a grade school located outside of Phoenix, Arizona, uses Fit Brains, another popular brain-fitness platform, four to five times per week, for a half-hour to an hour per session. (The Vancouver, B.C.-based producers of Fit Brains, which is now owned by the Rosetta Stone company, recommend 20–30 minutes of brain-training daily.) Johnson says she spends extra time training because she gets involved in the games. She has found that her focus, ability to remember names and attention span have all improved. “The games are designed to get harder and harder and make you want to keep trying, so they're always challenging,” she says.

That's exactly what the creators of Fit Brains, Lumosity and other programs are aiming for. They're all working to harness the potential of a phenomenon called neuroplasticity: the brain's natural ability to rebuild and remodel itself. Neuroplasticity promotes the opportunity for brain resilience—the buffering effect of healthy, interconnected cells that may delay the onset of cognitive decline with age. As Paul Nussbaum, a clinical neuropsychologist at the University of Pittsburgh and co-founder of Fit Brains, explains, “You want your brain to look like a jungle, dense with cell connections, rather than a series of palm trees.” If some of those connections deteriorate, the brain is designed to reroute signals, he says. To create more connections and a thicker forest, you need to keep stimulating your gray matter.

That's where brain-fitness software comes in.

In recent years, many scientific papers have explored what, exactly, contributes to brain health—and whether computers can help. One, published in September 2013 in the journal *Nature*, showed that a video game called *NeuroRacer*, a sort of virtual driving course with visual distractions,



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helped adults ages 60 to 85 become better multitaskers. The enhanced ability to multitask lasted six months and helped 80-year-olds outperform 20-year-olds who didn't train with the program.

"I have a lot of enthusiasm for video games functioning beyond entertainment," says Adam Gazzaley, the senior author of the NeuroRacer study, and a professor at the University of California, San Francisco. "This is the beginning stage of an entirely new field."

Another report, published in January in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* about the long-term, 2,832-patient Advanced Cognitive Training for Independent and Vital Elderly (ACTIVE) study, indicated that older adults who had trained in reasoning or speed-of-processing skills retained measurable benefits 10 years later. One of the brain-training exercises used in the ACTIVE study is already available commercially as part of the BrainHQ platform developed by the San Francisco-based company Posit Science.

One of the biggest hurdles that remain for game-based training, according to Gazzaley, is that determining everyday-life improvement from the training is subjective; results are difficult to quantify outside of a laboratory setting. "Proving benefits in the real world is very challenging, because the real world doesn't have many quantitative measures of performance," he says.

And the statistics that commercial brain-training platforms compile aren't necessarily proof of success. "Lumosity tells me that my BPI, overall Brain Performance Index, is higher than 99 percent of people in my age group," says David Božjak. "On the other hand, I can't be sure the effect is spilling over. My brain-training results say I'm good at math and short-term memory, but it's fair to say I was always good at those things."

For Barbara Johnson, it's actually the sense of escape she gets while practicing, and the relaxation it brings, that she finds most valuable.

In short, the broader benefits of brain training have yet to be proved. "Can these games transfer to real-world activities?" asks



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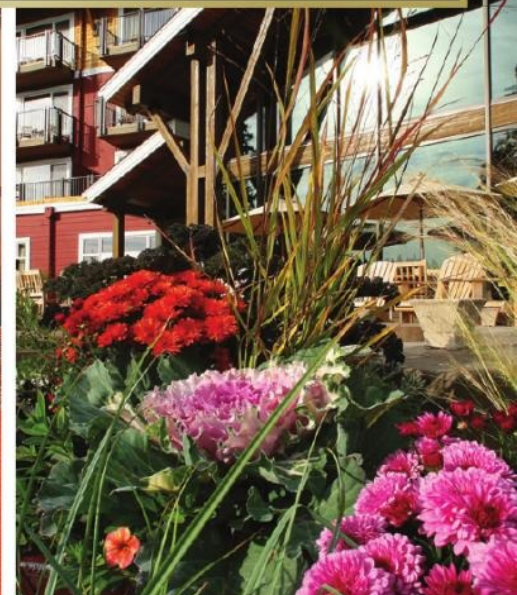
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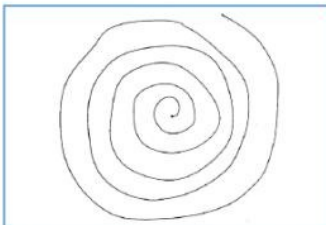
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Gazzaley. "Transferring training results to real-world activities is the Holy Grail."

While this issue is still being addressed, companies are making the most of the brain-fitness buzz with commercial training platforms such as HAPPYneuron, BrainBuilder, BrainHQ, CogniFit, Cogmed and Nintendo's Brain Age (one of the earlier training programs).

According to Alvaro Fernandez, CEO of the San Francisco-based research firm SharpBrains, the global market for brain-health software and brain-health biometrics (the measurement and analysis of brain-fitness programs' data) was \$210 million in 2005 and will reach \$6 billion by 2020. Fernandez says that the biggest brain-fitness consumers include baby boomers, younger professionals looking for higher performance, and parents of children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

IF YOU WANT A TASTE of the cognitive-fitness pie, you have a variety of options available to you—including some that are quite different from digital exercises you perform alone on a computer. For instance, Marbles: The Brain Store has a chain of retail locations that sell games, multidimensional puzzles and books—evaluated by neuroscientists, occupational therapists and psychologists—that challenge users in areas such as word skills, memory and critical thinking. Founder Lindsay Gaskins opened her first store in Chicago in 2008 and now employs almost 200 people in 27 stores. "It was thrilling, exciting stuff," she says. "And we're just beginning to understand the supercomputer in our body. The possibilities are huge."

Gaskins believes that physical games, such as intellectually challenging party games, allow families and friends to play together more than digital games; she notes that studies have found socializing to be important for maintaining a healthy brain. Gaskins also believes that physical games and puzzles foster skills such as coordination—practiced through manipulating objects—that may not be addressed by apps and computer games. Plus, she says, "It's only when something is fun and

intriguing that people will actually do it.”

Taking another approach, an increasing number of “brain gyms”—physical locations that provide training programs, supervision, and even nutritional coaching and meditation classes—are also opening. Some, such as the Brain Fit Club at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, tailor their services to patients with Alzheimer’s, concussions or ADHD. Other brain-fitness centers are open to almost anyone, and use games from Lumosity, HAPPYneuron, CogniFit and other platforms to create a custom regimen for each customer. Nifty after Fifty, a chain of fitness centers for seniors in cities including Los Angeles and Houston, offers BrainAerobics classes. And, according to Fernandez, more than 600 retirement facilities now offer computerized brain-fitness programs. Some insurance companies are providing brain-fitness software to their members at no charge, and some AAA clubs offer DriveSharp, a set of exercises developed by Posit Science to improve reaction times.

THERE’S LITTLE DOUBT IN the scientific community that regularly stimulating the brain can improve cognitive function. What is still being debated is what types of brain exercise—or what lifestyles or activities—are the most beneficial.

“There’s a wonderful capacity of our brains to change with training,” says Nancy Isenberg, a cognitive neurologist at Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle. “To be frank, though, there isn’t a lot of empirical data to support the use of these video games. You won’t stay out of a nursing home if you can do a puzzle quickly. But, if you can remember to take the boiling pot off the stove top, it may help you remain independent.”

In other words, brain games help you learn how to use a specific tool, but the results may not transfer beyond that tool’s application.

Sandra Bond Chapman, director of the Center for BrainHealth at the University of Texas at Dallas, goes one step further: She believes that downtime—taking a 30-minute nap on an airplane, say—is actually better for your brain than doing solo soft-

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ware drills. “These days, information doesn’t ever let up, and there’s no time to think deeper,” she says. “If you can reset your brain for a half-hour, you’ll consolidate all that data. You can solve big-picture problems, whether it’s your relationship or how to approach a business meeting.”

Every moment spent pecking at a computerized task is a moment that you’re not using to learn, have a philosophical discussion with a friend, go for a brisk walk, or try a new and nutritious recipe, she says.

And that may be the key thing to

remember: Today’s brain-fitness products are not magic pills. They are a form of mental stimulation, and such stimulation is one part of a holistic approach that is supported by peer-reviewed research and endorsed by many experts, including Isenberg and Paul Nussbaum.

Physical exercise is another important activity for maintaining a healthy brain. The connection between exercise and general brain health has been clearly established. In one 2011 study, researchers followed 60-year-old to 80-year-old sub-

jects for a year; some subjects walked 40 minutes three times a week, and some subjects simply stretched and toned. Tests showed that the hippocampus (a tiny part of the brain that encodes new memories) in the walkers actually grew by 1 to 2 percent—“and it usually shrinks as we age,” says Isenberg.

You need to stay on top of your sleep, too, she says. “A recent study in [the journal] *Science* found that sleep actually clears out toxins from your brain. Otherwise, you may develop a buildup of beta-amyloid plaque, a precursor to Alzheimer’s.”

When it comes to beneficial meals, she says, a plant-based diet, plus omega-3-rich fish rather than all meat, is the perfect brain food.

Maintaining good social support is also crucial, says Nussbaum: “If you become isolated, your brain won’t build that jungle of connections.”

And many neuroscientists emphasize that stress is harmful and can even contribute to the death of neurons. The antidote? Studies indicate that a mindfulness practice—such as tai chi, yoga or sitting meditation—may increase the number of circuits in the prefrontal cortex of the brain, “our newest, most ‘human’ part,” says Isenberg.

The final ingredient for a resilient brain is, of course, continuing some form of cognitive stimulation, whether you decide to learn Italian, travel to Mexico, try sudoku for the first time or sign up for a brain-training program.

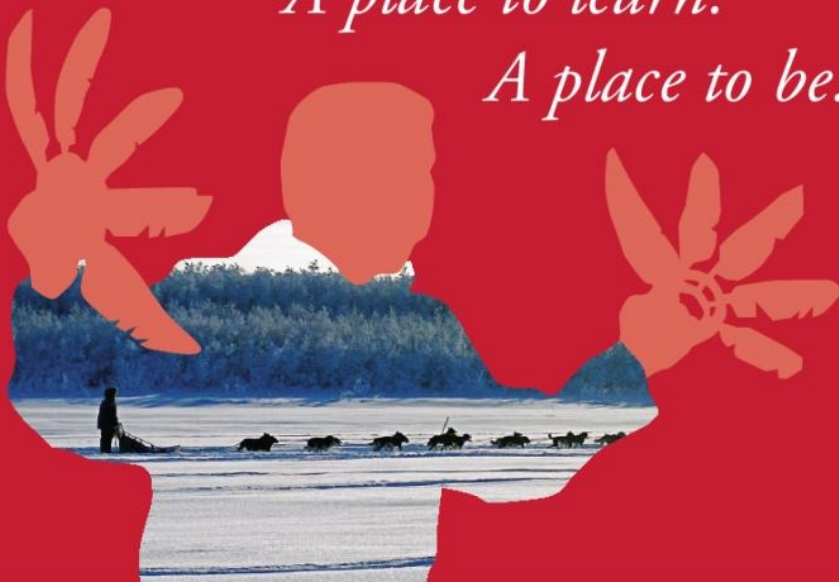
The key, says Fernandez, is “novelty, variety and challenge.” Once any activity gets too easy or rote, when we’re merely reinforcing what we already know or are good at, our minds may not function optimally—they may stagnate, or even decline.

“Being comfortable is the goal of a lot of people in life, but brains don’t do well with comfort,” says Gazzaley. “Their plasticity is only beneficial if you push them, so get out of your comfort zone in whatever way you can.” ▲

Evelyn Spence writes from Seattle. She hopes her brain grew a little bit from working on this article.

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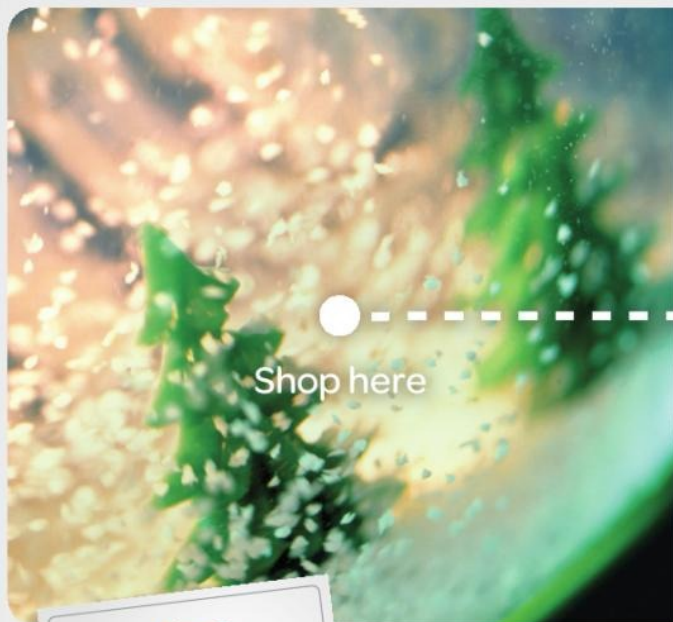
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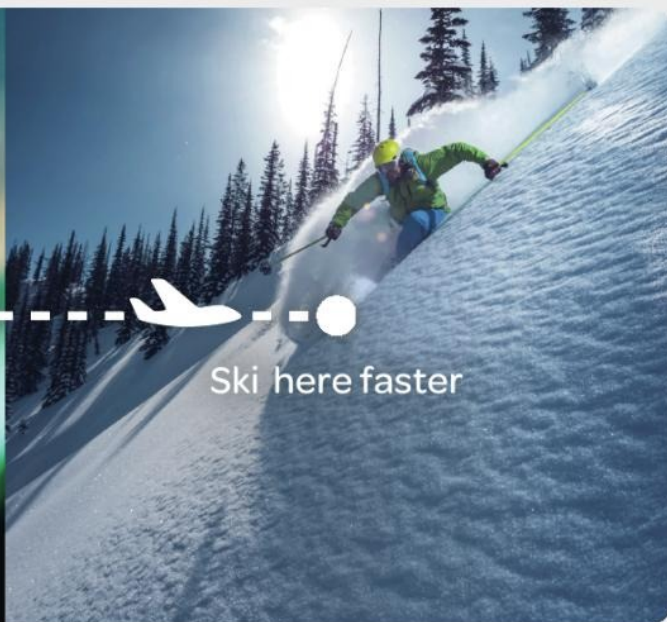
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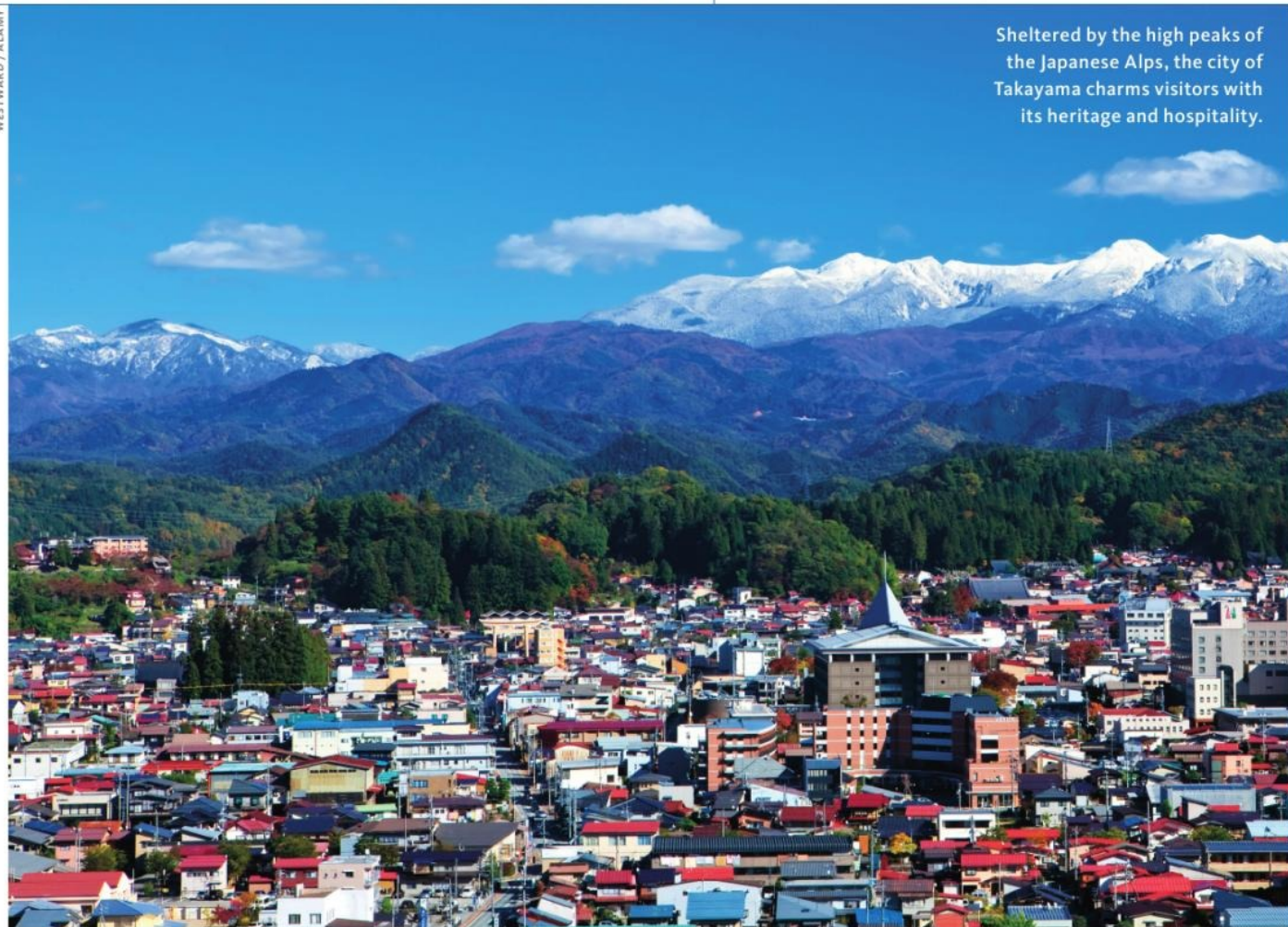
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Sheltered by the high peaks of the Japanese Alps, the city of Takayama charms visitors with its heritage and hospitality.

Takayama Tranquility

Enjoying a restful visit in Japan's "high mountain" city

By David Armstrong

It's our first morning in Takayama. My wife, Georgina, and I are walking across a stone bridge that spans the Miyagawa River, a swift, clear waterway that runs through the heart of this calm, welcoming community. The riverbanks are lined with artfully placed stone and graced with pines and cherry trees. It is a clear, bright day in spring. Patches of snow linger in shady areas, but the sun is warm on our backs.

Takayama is a mountain city founded in the 1500s and known in Japan as "Little Kyoto" for its dense concentration of lovingly preserved historic buildings. Locals have long held that some of Takayama's centuries-old buildings were created by

artisans who helped build Kyoto, the old imperial capital to the southwest. Takayama grew slowly around a feudal castle that is now a ruin. Nestled in a river valley amid the rugged Japanese Alps, the city has come through to modern times

largely untouched by war, natural disaster and overdevelopment.

Takayama is located at the inland heart of Japan's main island, Honshu, northwest of Tokyo, today's capital. We journeyed here on a sleek *shinkansen* (a bullet train) from Tokyo to Nagoya, then transferred to a local train—a trip that took about five hours in all. Sipping tea and nibbling bento box lunches on our journey, we passed tidy farms with trackside apple orchards, and sweet potato and cabbage patches, and gradually ascended tree-covered moun-

tains, rumbling through tunnels, crossing cascading streams and rolling slowly through the city's nondescript outskirts to the picturesque historic core of Takayama.

Old Takayama retains the charm and pace of preindustrial, pre-high-tech Japan. It could hardly be more different from the next-world futurism of Japan's big cities. I am a major fan of neon-lit Tokyo, and on most of my 10 visits to Japan I have been perfectly happy to stay the whole time in this bustling metropolis (population 13.2 million). This time, though, I want to trade dynamism for serenity, and take a figurative and literal breath of fresh mountain air.

As I walk through Takayama's heritage-rich San-machi Suji district, I realize I am stepping into history. A compact district of two-story wooden buildings, San-machi Suji is an area centered on three narrow pedestrian streets. These lovely lanes are flanked by deep, paved gutters to channel Takayama's abundant rain, and are lined with art galleries, food stores, microbreweries that make sake (Japanese rice wine), restaurants, specialty gift shops and traditional inns—*ryokans*. English is not widely spoken here, so we use the smile-and-point method. Happily, most attractions are within walking distance of the historic center, which gives this city of about 96,000 the intimate feel of a small town.

We have arrived a few weeks before Japan's famous cherry blossoms (*sakura*), but these delicate pink and white blossoms will soon be visible here, downtown and along the river. Takayama, which is in the mountainous Hida region of Gifu prefecture, has trees that bloom in mid- to late April—later than in much of Japan—thanks to the city's high elevation. Takayama translates into English as “tall mountain.”

Just after crossing the Miyagawa River, Georgina and I shop in the open-air Miyagawa morning market, held just past the riverbank. On our right as we walk downstream are modest stalls and shops. In one establishment, women are buying salty, locally made miso for home cooking. To our left are folding chairs and tables heaped with locally grown vegetables—such as radishes, onions and sweet potatoes. There are also wood carvings, woodblock prints with inky-black decorative scenes, fine lacquerware and *sarubobo*—small cloth dolls that are good-luck amulets traditionally given by mothers to daughters or by grandmothers to granddaughters. Now, anyone can purchase the bright-red, faceless charms. We buy a keepsake *sarubobo* for our Christmas tree.

Leaving the market, we stroll to nearby Takayama Jinya, an impressive wooden structure dating to early in the era of the

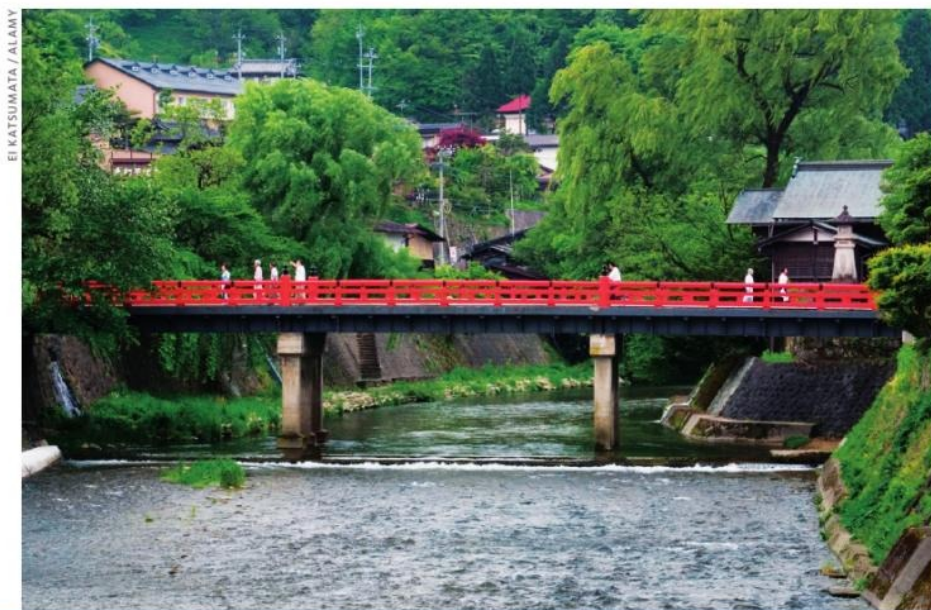


Edo shogunate (1603–1867). A government center from 1692 to 1969, the building complex is now a history museum. We thread through a series of rooms—tiny spaces for the scullery maids, big ones for the senior clerks—and clamber up and down staircases in slippers provided for the tour.

Kusakabe Heritage House gives us another look at the past—in this case, the lives of old Takayama's prosperous merchants. This former private home, rebuilt in 1879 after a fire, includes a Buddhist altar, 18th and 19th century furniture, and an open hearth. Visitors are served tea and rice cakes.

There is additional history on display at the Hida Folk Village, an assemblage of authentic thatch-roofed farm buildings and homes from the Edo period that have been moved from their original locations to this waterside site 10 minutes by bus from Takayama's city center. Hida Folk Village features tour guides in traditional costumes and artisans who demonstrate crafts such as making ceramic cups and glass wind chimes. The buildings have astonishingly steep roofs, the better to shed the heavy snows of winter.

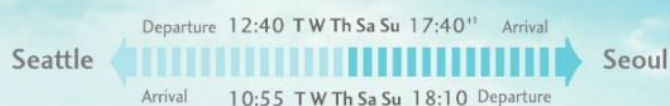
The Nakabashi Bridge spans the Miyagawa River in historic Takayama.



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I admire the village, but I am most interested in how tradition and modernity meet in the heart of today's city. This is visible in the 21st century versions of traditional inns—the aforementioned ryokans. Takayama has purely modern lodgings, too, to be sure, but I want a taste of the old ways, so Georgina and I stay at Ryokan Tanabe, in the San-machi Suji area.

With tightly woven straw tatami mats on guestroom floors, sliding doors fashioned from blond wood, and three sets of slippers neatly laid out—one set for the

Above: Sannomachi Street, in the old-town San-machi Suji area, has buildings surviving from the Edo period (1603–1867). **Below left:** Young women wear traditional kimonos at a festival in Takayama.

guestroom, another set for the bathroom and another for public areas—tradition is honored. Guests leave their shoes in the lobby, also in accordance with tradition. In a more modern twist, the inn offers Western breakfasts as well as Japanese breakfasts of pickled vegetables and fish. On the ground floor, we luxuriate in a traditional, steaming *onsen*: mineral-rich, geothermal hot springs baths.

I enjoy sleeping in a futon on the floor during our three-night stay. Japanese futons are something like especially plush, cozy sleeping bags that are unfolded and laid on tatami mats. After a restful night, we eat breakfast while seated comfortably

LUCKY CATS

Many shops and businesses in Japan display some variation of a *maneki-neko*, or “beckoning cat” charm, at their entrances. The wooden figurine shown here is a *maneki-neko* meant to bring good fortune to a store in Takayama.



WHEN YOU GO

LODGING

Best Western Hotel Takayama, 6-6 Hanasatomachi; 81-577-37-2000; bestwestern.co.jp/english/takayama. A Western-style, three-star hotel near the train station.

Ryokan Tanabe, 58 Aioityo; 81-577-32-0529; tanabe-ryokan.jp/english. A comfortable, traditional inn in San-machi Suji.

DINING

Street food, available from carts and stalls everywhere in San-machi Suji. Try Hida beef steamed buns or *mitarashi dango*—glazed rice dumplings brushed with tamari (a type of soy sauce) and eaten on a skewer.

Suzuya, 24 Hanakawamachi St., in San-machi Suji; 81-577-32-2484; www7.ocn.ne.jp/~suzuya (Japanese only). Try the thin-sliced shabu-shabu beef.

SIGHTSEEING

Cherry blossoms, mid- to late April, riverside.

Hida Folk Village, 1-509 Kamiokamoto-cho; 81-577-34-4711; hidanosato-tpo.jp/english12.htm. An open-air reconstruction of a traditional country village.

Miyagawa morning market, along the Miyagawa River; hida.jp/english/activities/sightseeing-information/morning-market. 6 A.M. to noon, daily.

Takayama Jinya, 1-5 Hachiken machi; hida.jp/english/activities/sightseeing-information/old-government-outpost. Beautifully maintained wooden government offices of the Edo era.

Takayama Yatai Kaikan Hall, 178 Sakuramachi; hida.jp/english/activities/sightseeing-information/festival-floats-exhibition-hall. A handsome hall holding flamboyant, colorful festival floats.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Japan National Tourism Organization, 213-623-1952; jnto.go.jp/eng





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PHILIP AUGUSTAVO / ALAMY

This farmhouse is one of more than 30 traditional buildings in the Hida Folk Village, an open-air museum 10 minutes by bus from downtown Takayama.

on soft mats. The meal is served with a soft knock, the swoosh of a sliding door and many bows from a server in an elegant, silk kimono.

Graciousness is a hallmark of Japanese hospitality, especially in smaller cities such as Takayama. Indeed, the service at our ryokan is much more personal—and somewhat pricier—than that offered at most large hotels. The inn's co-owner, Akiko Tanabe, is so solicitous of our welfare that she walks with us—unbidden, on two separate occasions—to dinner at nearby restaurants, just so we won't get lost. She takes quick, short steps in her wooden *geta* shoes.

On our second morning in town, we stop first at Yatai Kaikan Hall. We gaze through huge picture windows at enormous, colorful and elaborate wheeled festival floats. The floats—which are handmade and topped by carvings, dolls, lacquerware and figures depicting mythical creatures—are rolled out of the building and pulled by hand along the city's main streets to the delight of onlookers during Takayama's annual spring festival (April 14–15, 2014) and fall festival (October 9–10, 2014). Locals advise booking a room months in advance if you plan to visit at festival time for the big, centuries-old seasonal celebrations.

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5 Osetra

San Diego, CA osetrafishhouse.com

6 Tony Mandola's

Houston, TX tonymandolas.com

7 Eddie V's Prime Seafood

Scottsdale, AZ eddiev.com

8 Lynnhaven Fish House

Virginia Beach, VA lynnhavenfishhouse.net

9 Capt. Anderson's Restaurant

Panama City Beach, FL captanderson.com

10 Oceana

New York, NY oceanarestaurant.com



Cast your vote and send your comments and nominations to:

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After visiting the festival hall, we wander back to the lanes of San-machi Suji for a meal. At Suzuya restaurant, we practically inhale thin-sliced, flavorfully fatty local Hida beef, used to make the dish shabu-shabu. We pick up the slices of raw beef with chopsticks and flash-cook them in boiling water at our table before eating them with rice. We round out the meal with sake, which we drink chilled, the way sake is often savored in Japan.

We depart Suzuya happily sated and stop before a large, round bundle of cedar branches hung above the otherwise unmarked doorway of a vintage wooden building. Here, we step inside one of Takayama's several locally owned artisanal sake breweries. The cedar foliage over the doorway signifies that this year's sake is for sale in this house-size brewery. Opaque bottles are arrayed inside, along with a barrel of fermenting brew. A worker dips paper cups into the barrel so we can sample the drink. The milky liquid is sweet and viscous, flecked with pale grains of rice: next year's vintage.

After another refreshing night in our ryokan, we end our visit with a dessert treat in a tiny restaurant in San-machi Suji. This place seats maybe seven customers, and there is no signage bearing its name. We sit at the counter, near a large hot pot.

We smile and point to the hot pot, and are served a sweet broth with red beans and a small heap of something green. The cook smiles back and mimes how to eat it. The mysterious green food turns out to be delicious, sweetened mochi—rice cakes, pounded into paste—that becomes pleasingly chewy in the soup. As we later learn, this is *shiruko*, a popular dessert and Japanese comfort food. I eat it all.

Sometime soon, I may have to return to Takayama for seconds. ▲

Journalist and author David Armstrong lives near San Francisco.

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December 31, 2013	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year
BVEFX Percentile Ranking %	10th	21st	9th
Number of Funds in Peer Group	1,213	947	617

Annualized Performance

December 31, 2013	1 Year	5 Years	10 Years
BVEFX	36.40%	17.42%	8.72%
Russell 1000 Value	32.53%	16.67%	7.58%
S&P 500	32.39%	17.94%	7.41%

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Shape of the Future

By Bengt Halvorson

True to the premise of what a concept car is all about, the 2015 Ford F-150 pickup truck unveiled at the 2014 Detroit Auto Show sported many of the visual cues and features Ford introduced on its Atlas Concept a year earlier. Features such as a trailer hitch-assist system, LED cargo-box lighting, a damped tailgate, a tailgate step, hidden cargo ramps, a 360-degree point-of-view camera system, next-generation EcoBoost

turbocharged engines, active grille shutters and engine stop-start technology had been showcased on the Atlas at the 2013 show, and it seems they made an impression.

Of course, the production F-150 doesn't have every feature of the concept, and some of the items, such as its "floating" instrument pods inside, active wheel shutters and drop-down front air dam (both to aid aerodynamics), haven't made it into production quite yet. But the comparison of the Atlas and production versions of Ford's best-selling truck represent an important lesson in what concept vehicles have become. They're no longer far-fetched novelties. They're an essential part of the

auto industry, and they're one of the most important ways automakers test innovative new shapes, features and design cues to see how the public, the press and even shareholders respond to them.

Automakers take advantage of the handful of major auto shows staged around the world each fall and winter—including Frankfurt, Tokyo, Los Angeles and Detroit—to introduce their visions. What follows is a collection of concepts that reveal some very creative thinking, and intriguing design and technologies that are coming down the road.

With its FT-1, Toyota boasts what's almost certainly the only concept car that

one could test-drive—at least virtually—immediately following its world debut at the Detroit Auto Show in January. The FT-1 is available for download through the game *Gran Turismo 6*.

The Toyota project grew out of a creative challenge, themed Vision Gran Turismo, issued by *Gran Turismo* creator Kazunori Yamauchi. Auto designers were asked to come up with forward-looking performance concepts or models that would be transferred over to the virtual world with the game's December 2013 release.

Toyota points to the FT-1 as building on the lineage of the legendary 1960s 2000GT sports car, as well as the 1990s-era Supra, which still maintains a devoted following. The FT-1 sports car—yes, both the real concept and the virtual racer—has received a big push from Toyota CEO Akio Toyoda, who has been aiming the brand toward more design passion and driving excitement. Let's hope the company waves the green flag for FT-1 all the way to dealerships.

A Mercedes-Benz concept, the AMG Vision Gran Turismo, was developed with some of that same inspiration. Shown at the Los Angeles Auto Show in November, the Mercedes-Benz AMG Vision Gran Turismo offers a look at the supercar of tomorrow. It presents a serious performance emphasis throughout, including extreme design elements such as gullwing doors, a dash design reflecting the gullwing shape, and eight individual tailpipes. Yet with its 585-hp biturbo V-8 taken right out of the new S63 AMG, and a lightweight aluminum spaceframe construction, the car indicates Mercedes might be suggesting that there's a vision for this concept that goes beyond the game screen.

The concept that seemed to generate the most buzz among auto enthusiasts this auto-show season was the Nissan IDx, which made its debut at the December Tokyo Motor Show, introduced as two

separate concept cars—the more casual IDx Freeflow and the sportier, track-focused IDx NISMO. The IDx is both a retro-modern nod to Nissan's compact-car heritage, with an aesthetic that harks back to the sporty Datsun 510 of the late 1960s and early '70s, and a simple canvas that so-called "digital natives" (20-something millennials) might customize with the details and level of technology they want.

Nissan also unveiled in Tokyo one of the most far-out concept sports car designs of the past several years. Called BladeGlider, this all-electric model is noticeably different, from its deltoid shape (influenced by the ZEOD RC racing car), narrow front and flip-up, scissor-style doors to its unique 1+2 seating arrangement, in-wheel motors and race-car cockpit. According to Nissan's senior vice president and global design chief, Shiro Nakamura, the brand is still working on a daring sports car that could find inspiration in this concept.

While any product based on IDx or BladeGlider might still be a couple of years away from market, Nissan hinted that its



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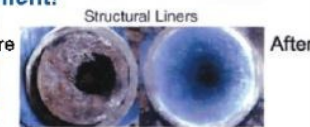
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Sport Sedan Concept shown at the Detroit Auto Show will point to the form of the next-generation Nissan Maxima. With a dramatic new "V-Motion" front end, LED boomerang headlamps and deeply sculpted sheetmetal—plus a "floating" roof with blacked-out front pillars that Nissan says will become a signature design element of all its sedans—this is one of the best-looking concept cars from recent shows, perhaps pointing to a more aggressive direction for what Nissan calls its "four-door sports car."

Kia hasn't sold a true sports car in the United States yet, but the company appears to be getting ready to with its

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stylish Kia GT4 Stinger concept. With a flamboyant, Euro-influenced look, this compact 2+2 coupe aims at the back-to-basics, affordable-sports-car crowd. The concept is outfitted with a 315-horsepower turbocharged four-cylinder engine, six-speed manual gearbox, and rear-wheel-drive layout. A sports coupe similar to the GT4, based on the same underpinnings as the Hyundai Genesis Coupe, could be arriving in showrooms surprisingly soon.

The market introduction of a small luxury crossover vehicle from Jaguar is still two to three years away, but the automaker provided a preview with the C-X17 concept that premiered at the Frankfurt Motor Show last September. While a production version will be based on new aluminum construction, and Jaguar has suggested

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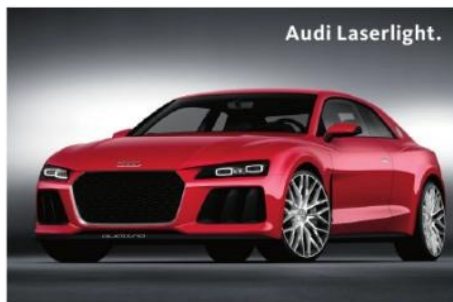
Puzzle © 2014 Penny Press, Inc.

that there are even plug-in hybrid and electric versions in the works, the C-X17 is a concept in the truest form—a test of the public's reaction to a swept-back, tall wagon stance and interior details such as the full-length Interactive Surface Console, which effectively turns the entire center console into a continuous touch screen.

Volvo is in the process of completely redesigning its cars. After wowing enthusiasts with a Volvo Concept Coupe in Frankfurt, the Swedish brand brought an equally stunning Volvo Concept XC Coupe to the Detroit Auto Show. Although the XC Coupe is a two-door, Volvo has noted that many of the design details from this smart concept—probably the chunky front-end design; smooth, continuous beltline; and chiseled rear light design—will follow through to the all-new XC90 that's due in about a year.

The Audi Sport Quattro Concept introduced at the Frankfurt Motor Show (and updated as the Laserlight concept for display at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January) serves not only as a nod to the 30th anniversary of the 1983 Sport Quattro, but also as a potential design direction for the next generation of the brand's sporty coupes, such as the S5. The concept is also a showcase for features that Audi is considering: futuristic multilevel instrument displays, a special race mode, laser headlights, and a performance hybrid system that pairs a twin-turbo V-8 and electric motor system to make around 700 horsepower.

While the Sport Quattro Concept represents a calculated display of what's coming in a few years, Audi's Nanuk Quattro Concept shows a true wild side. The Nanuk starts with the underpinnings of the Audi R8 and Lamborghini Gallardo and adds a lifted suspension for more ground clearance, along with a specially tuned turbo-diesel V-10 engine that makes 544 horsepower and 737 pound-feet of torque in the concept. It has a hunkered-down profile created by Italdesign (and originally called the Parcour) as well as design details that hint at a focus on toughness versus racetrack aerodynamics. The Nanuk would truly take the road less



Audi Laserlight.



Volkswagen Beetle Dune.

traveled by storm—if Audi decided that there were enough buyers for this kind of “outback supercar.”

Meanwhile, Subaru is clearly thinking

of applying its outdoors aesthetic to all of its cars—even its track-focused, rear-wheel-drive BRZ sports car, as suggested by the Cross Sport Design Concept the



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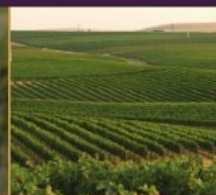
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Nissan Sport Sedan Concept.

automaker showed at the Tokyo Motor Show. Add a few inches of length, a wagon-style cargo area and a few extra inches of ground clearance, and this special BRZ might hit the right spot between sports car and crossover.

Take one look at the Volkswagen Beetle Dune concept that made its debut in Detroit and it seems clear that VW is also looking toward the Subaru crowd. The Beetle Dune has the same silhouette as the current Beetle, but it's been lifted two inches for more sand and snow-churning fun. Bigger wheel housings add a little more width. What's missing, however, is all-wheel drive.

With its long, wide hood and short overhangs, and a sporty stance that looks more like a scaled-up performance hatchback than a utility vehicle, the Volkswagen CrossBlue Coupe Concept shown in Los Angeles further refines the possibilities for a midsize passenger SUV that Volkswagen says will go on sale in 2016.

In this concept, a turbocharged V-6 works with two electric motors, for a hybrid powertrain that altogether makes 415 horsepower and 516 pound-feet of torque, and can go 13 miles at up to 75 mph on electric power alone, or up to 570 miles combined.

Inside, the CrossBlue Coupe Concept's colored leather with contrasting seams, dark aluminum and matte chrome details form a more serious, aggressive luxury look that you can bet Volkswagen is considering.

And that's what concept cars are all about—putting innovative new designs and technologies out for public consideration. ▲

Bengt Halvorson is an independent automotive journalist living in Portland, Oregon.

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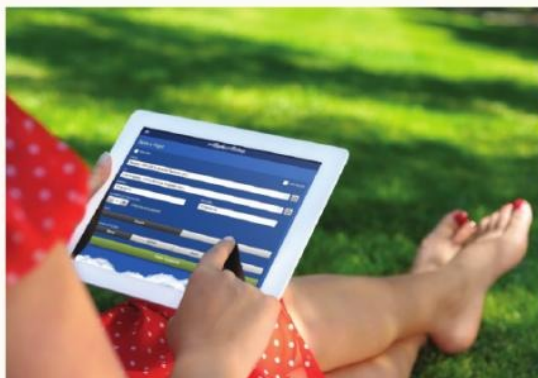
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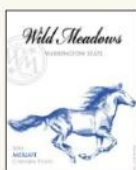
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The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug

PG13—edited; 2:41 (available with English subtitles)
The second in a trilogy of films, *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* continues the adventure of Bilbo Baggins as he journeys with a wizard and 13 dwarves on a quest to reclaim the lost dwarf Kingdom of Erebor.



Frozen

PG; 1:42 (available with English subtitles)
Fearless optimist Anna teams up with rugged mountain man Kristoff and his loyal reindeer Sven in an epic journey to find Anna's sister Elsa, whose icy powers have trapped the kingdom of Arendelle in eternal winter.



Gravity

PG13—edited; 1:30 (available with English subtitles)
Disaster strikes on a routine spacewalk, leaving two astronauts tethered to nothing but each other. As fear turns to panic, they realize the only way home may be to go farther out into the terrifying expanse of space.



The Book Thief

PG13; 2:01
A young girl named Liesel embarks upon a journey marked by discovery, courage, friendship—and the power to triumph over the most daunting obstacles.



Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?

1:46 (available with English subtitles)
Upon learning of his wife's desire for another baby, Weichung, an introverted optometrist, begins to question his marriage. Bumping into an old friend sets Weichung off on a quest for true romance and desire.

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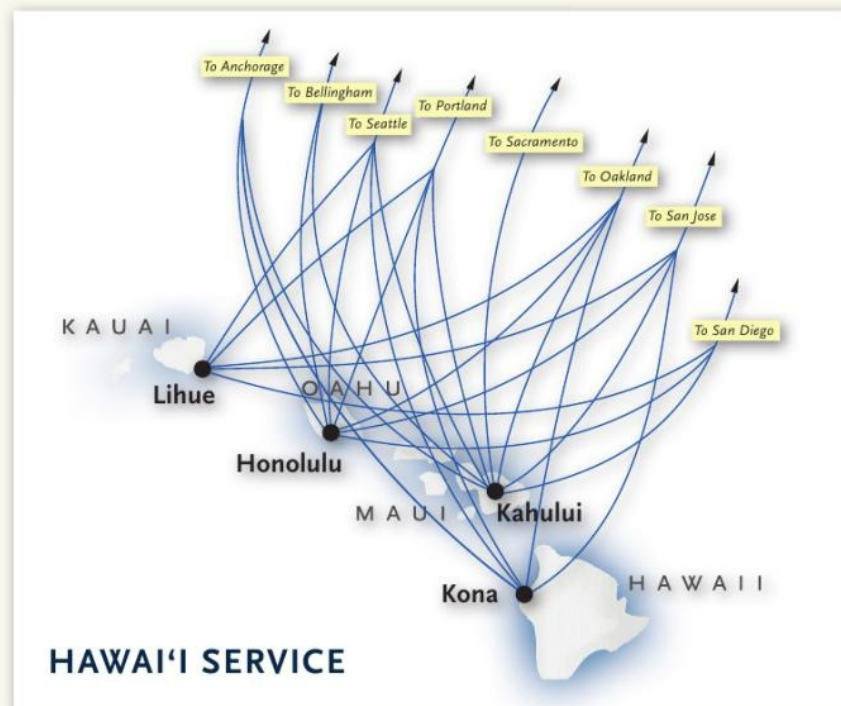
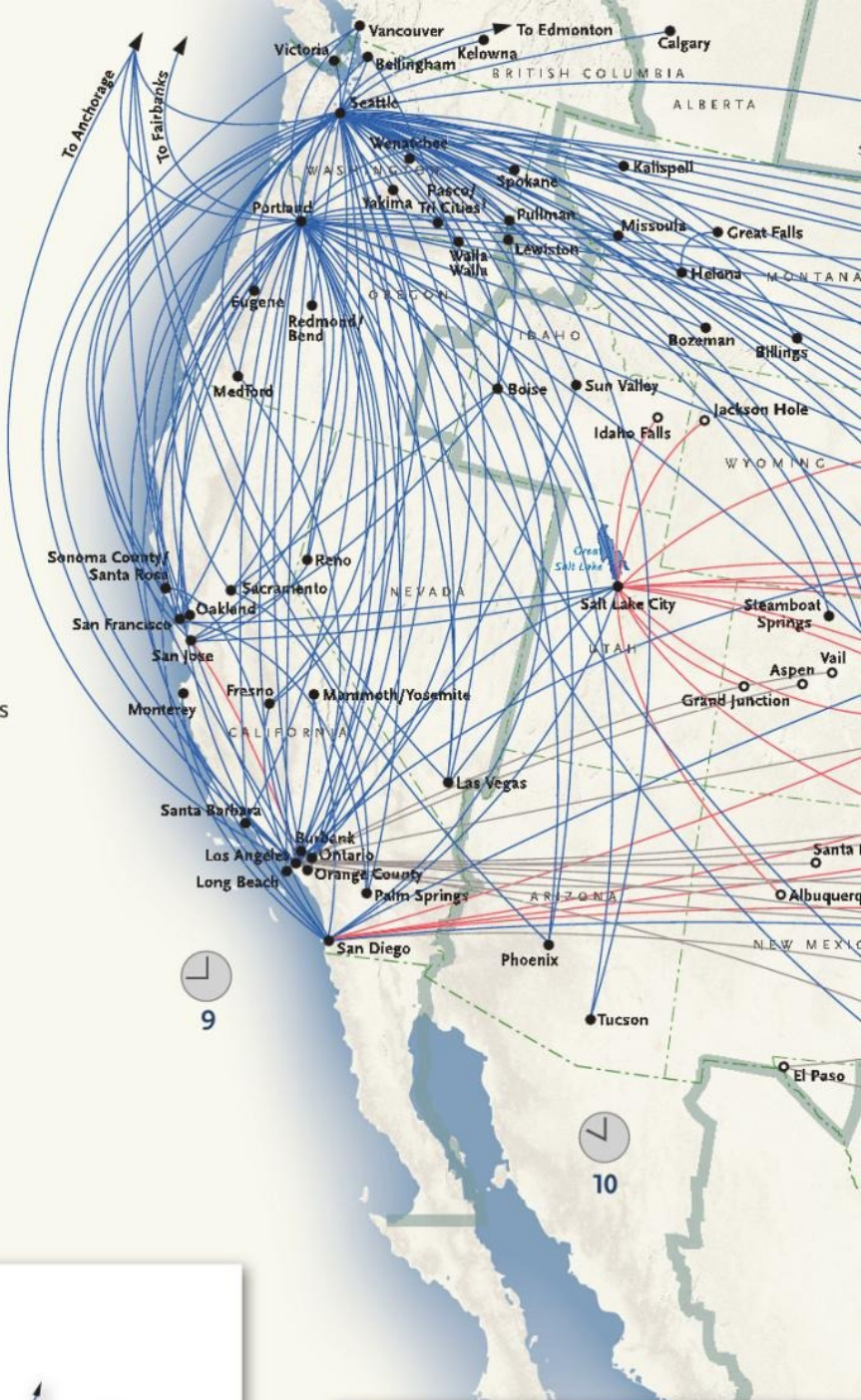
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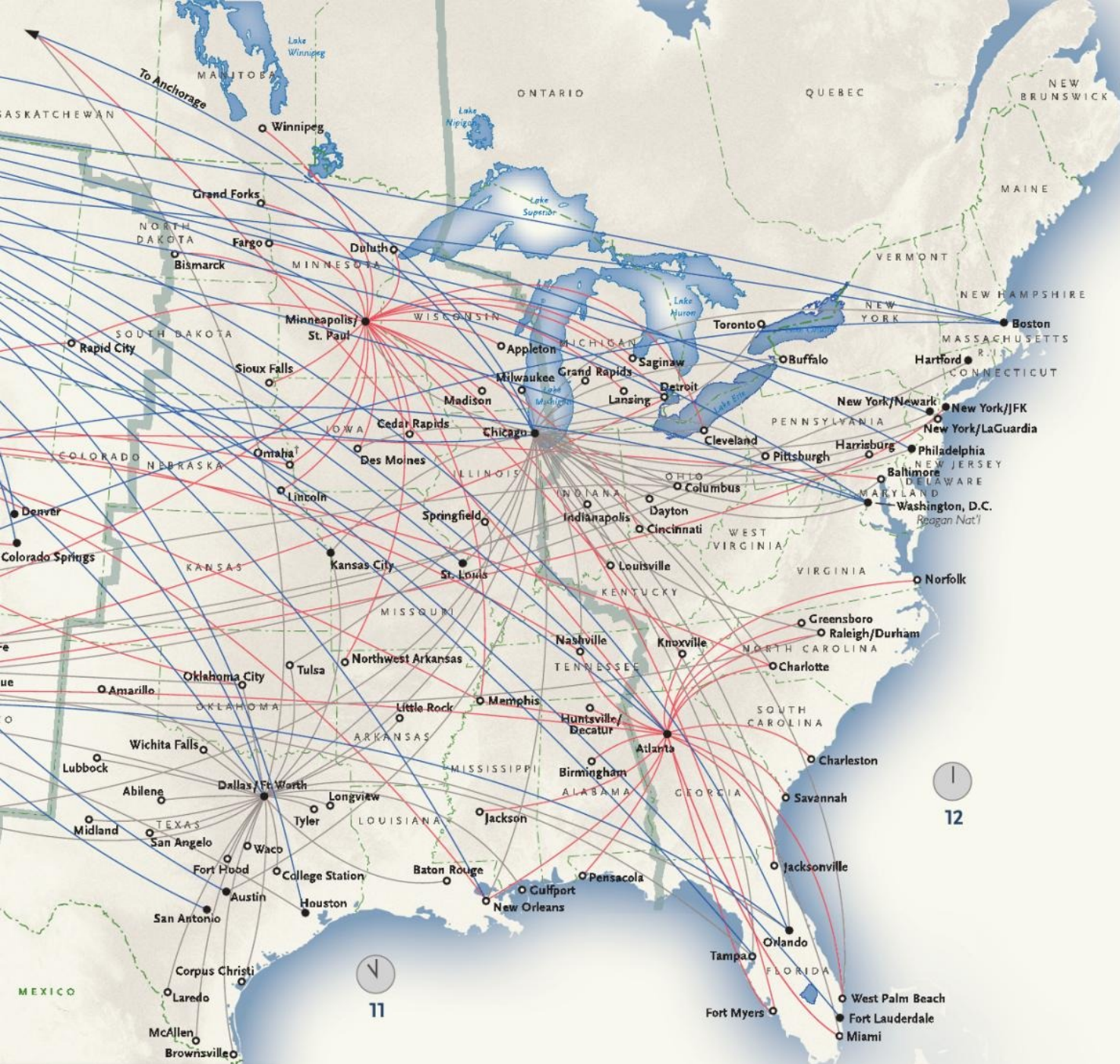
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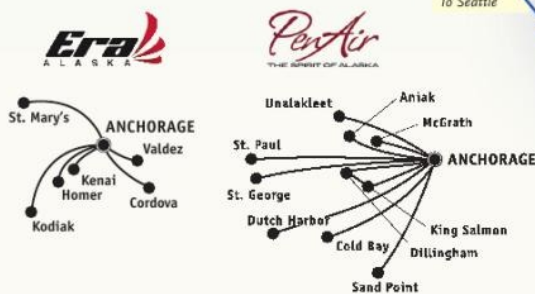
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Kotzebue	549
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Ketchikan	776
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Seattle	1448
Portland	1542
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Los Angeles	2375
Honolulu	2776
Chicago	2847

Between	Mileage
Fairbanks &	
Barrow	503
Seattle	1533
Chicago	2785
Between	Mileage
Juneau &	
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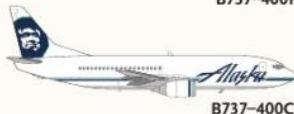
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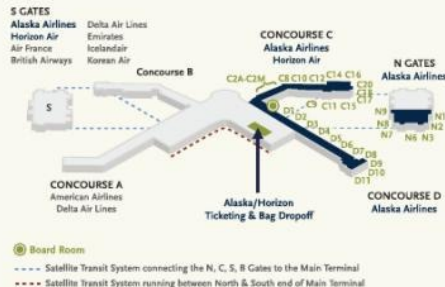
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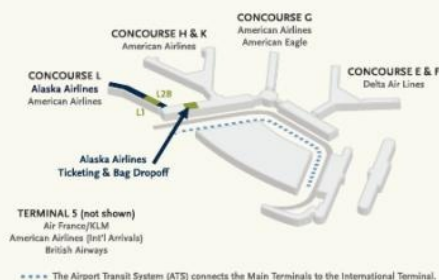
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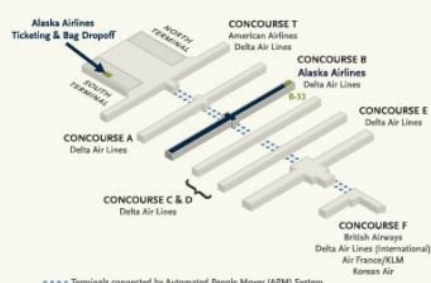
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- Después de pasar aduana, prosiga por la puerta de vidrio corrediza y a su su derecha.
- Empaque seguramente todos los líquidos que adquirió en la tienda libre de impuestos (duty-free) en su equipaje documentado, para evitar ser confiscados por Seguridad (TSA). Después entregue su equipaje al agente de Alaska Airlines en los mostradores, justo afuera de aduana en la Terminal Internacional.
- Proceda directamente al fondo del pasillo y de vuelta a la izquierda hacia los pasillos de conexiones de la Terminal Doméstica 1.
- Deberá llegar hasta donde se encuentran las indicaciones para las salas 20 a la 36. De vuelta a la derecha y deberá pasar por seguridad. Alaska Airlines usa las salas 20 y 22.
- El tiempo estimado para el recorrido hacia la sala 20 desde que usted aterriza, es de 40 minutos.

CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION

Customs and Immigration forms are distributed by flight attendants during your flight. Prior to landing, complete all forms that pertain to you, following the tips below. Completed forms are presented immediately upon entering the International Arrivals building.

Las formas de Aduana y Migración son distribuidas por los sobrecargos durante el vuelo. Antes del aterrizaje en su destino final complete las formas correspondientes usando las indicaciones que se proporcionan a continuación. Las formas completas serán presentadas en la Terminal Internacional.

TO THE UNITED STATES

U.S. CUSTOMS DECLARATION

Who must complete this form?

All travelers

Helpful tips

- One form per person or one per family with same address
- Lines 5, 6—If not using a passport, leave these lines blank
- Line 9—Enter "AS" for Alaska Airlines
- Sign at the "X"

DECLARACION DE ADUANA

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?

Todos los pasajeros

Datos de ayuda

- Una forma por persona o por familia con la misma dirección
- Línea 5, 6—Si no tiene pasaporte, deje esta sección en blanco
- Línea 9—Use "AS" para Alaska Airlines
- Firme en la "X"

TO CANADA

Flight Attendants distribute a combined Customs and Immigration form during your flight. Prior to landing in Canada, complete this form, which includes easy-to-follow instructions. Completed forms are presented immediately upon entering the International Arrivals building.

Los Sobrecargos distribuyen una forma combinada para aduana y migración. Antes de aterrizar en Canadá, llene esta forma que incluye instrucciones fáciles de seguir. Las formas completas serán presentadas inmediatamente al entrar al edificio de la Terminal Internacional.



TO MEXICO

MEXICO CUSTOMS DECLARATION

Who must complete this form?

All travelers

Helpful tips

- One form per person or one per family with same address
- Section 6—It is not necessary to declare medicine for your personal use

DECLARACION DE ADUANA

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?

Todos los pasajeros.

Datos de ayuda

- Una forma por persona o por familia con la misma dirección
- Sección 6—No es necesario declarar sus medicamentos de uso personal



FMM

Who must complete this form?

All travelers except citizens of Mexico

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?

Todos los viajeros, excepto los ciudadanos de México



FEM FOR MEXICAN NATIONALS

Who must complete this form?

Citizens of Mexico



FEM PARA MEXICANOS

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?

Ciudadanos de México (Aun siendo residentes permanentes de EE.UU.)

Datos de ayuda

- Complete una forma por persona. No olvide firmarla.
- Seleccione la opción "Entrada a México".
- En la línea 5 escriba el tipo y número del documento que usará como identificación.

MEXICO STATE CODES

City / State	State Code
Guadalajara / Jalisco	JAL
Ixtapa, Zihuatanejo / Guerrero	GRO
Loreto, La Paz, Los Cabos, San Jose / Baja California Sur	BCS
Manzanillo / Colima	COL
Mazatlán / Sinaloa	SIN
Mexico City / Distrito Federal	D.F.
Nuevo Vallarta, Bucerías and north / Nayarit	NAY
Puerto Vallarta, Mismaloya / Jalisco	JAL

Please use all capital letters with blue or black ink.

Por favor use letra mayúscula en tinta azul o negra.

A GUIDE FOR AIR TRAVELERS

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Alaska Airlines have set the following rules and regulations to assure your safety and comfort:

- Your seat belt must be fastened whenever the "FASTEN SEAT BELT" sign is illuminated. Keep your seat belt fastened at all other times in case of undetectable clear-air turbulence.
- Seatbacks and tray tables must be in the upright, locked position during taxi, takeoff and landing.
- All carry-on baggage must be stowed under a seat or in an enclosed overhead bin upon boarding and prior to landing, as directed.
- Please use caution when opening an overhead bin, as items may have shifted.
- Customers are requested to use the lavatory in their assigned cabin and are required to do so on inbound international flights; exceptions may be made for customers with special needs.
- Prior to takeoff and landing, service items provided by Alaska Airlines must be picked up or properly stowed under the seat in front of you, in carry-on luggage that is properly stowed or in an overhead bin.
- Alcohol may not be consumed aboard an aircraft unless it has been provided by a flight attendant. No alcohol may be served to any person who appears to be intoxicated, or who is under 21 years of age.
- During taxi, takeoff and landing, portable electronic devices and headphones may be used. Larger electronic devices such as laptops must be stowed during taxi, takeoff and landing.
- Cellphones may be used while the boarding door is open until advised by your flight attendant that cell service must be turned off. Upon landing, your flight attendant will advise when cell service can be enabled.
- During flight, electronic voice communications of any kind (e.g., cell/VoIP calls) are prohibited.
- Headphones must be worn when using electronic devices such as personal music players, Inflight Entertainment Players, etc.
- Interference with crew members' (including flight attendants') duties is a violation of federal law. Under federal law, no person may assault, threaten, intimidate or interfere with crew members in the performance of their duties aboard an aircraft under operation. Penalties for crew interference include fines up to \$11,000, imprisonment or both. An incident report may be filed with the FAA regarding a customer's behavior.
- Smoking is not permitted on any Alaska Airlines flight.
- Child-restraint devices must bear the FAA approval sticker.
- Seat-belt extension use is not allowed in exit rows for the safety of all passengers due to the possibility of entanglement by the extensions.
- Alaska Airlines prohibits the use of items that do not meet FAA Regulations or Company regulations. This includes the use of seat-belt extensions not provided by Alaska Airlines, devices that restrict the recline of seats, self-heating meals or beverages, air filters placed on overhead vents and personal air purifying devices.
- Pets must remain in carrier for entire flight. Carrier must be stowed for taxi, takeoff and landing.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

CUSTOMER CARE:
800.654.5669
(Mileage Plan, Web Support, Customer Relations)

Toll-Free Reservations
Within the U.S. and Canada:
800.ALASKAAIR
(800.252.7522)

(TTY 800.682.2221)

En Español:
800.858.5525

From Mexico:
001.800.252.7522

Alaska Airlines Vacations:
800.468.2248

USING YOUR DEVICES

We know use of your electronic devices is important, and we've adjusted our procedures to give you more time with those devices.

Allowed on the Ground and in the Air



- › Laptops (must be stowed for taxi/takeoff/landing)
- › Tablets/smartphones (Airplane Mode after door closure)
- › Wireless mouse/keyboard
- › e-readers
- › Media/CD/DVD players
- › Noise-canceling headphones
- › Cellphones (prior to door closure only)

Not Allowed During Flight



- › Voice calls of any kind, including VoIP
- › Devices with cell service enabled
- › AM/FM radios or TVs
- › Personal air purifiers
- › Remote-control toys
- › Electronic cigarettes

FROM PAGE 70 Out of this milieu of winter sports have come a number of Norwegians to challenge Alaskan mushers. Most notable is Robert Sørli, who has four times flown his team to Alaska. He won the Iditarod in 2003 and 2005, and in the process, he has more or less redefined strategic thinking by training his team to travel deliberately at relatively slow speeds. Because the dogs are calm and working easily, they travel for longer periods of time with less rest. The strategy can be difficult to execute, but slow may be the fastest way to reach Nome.

After a hiatus of seven years, Sørli is returning to The Last Great Race. No other Iditarod musher has a better batting average than Sørli. Contacts in Norway claim Sørli and his friend Thomas Wærner have put together an incredible team. Yet, it may be that another Norwegian, Ralph Johannessen, is even more daunting. Over the last several years, he has dominated races in Norway and he will race his first Iditarod this March. Surely Johannessen has consulted with Sørli.

The appearance of the Norwegians, the recent achievements of Aliy Zirkle, the enthusiasm of a group of younger mushers, the experience of old guard mushers, and the talent of the Seaveys—Mitch and Dallas—make it impossible for any reasonable fan to make a certain prediction.

One musher, having dedicated a winter's labor and careful thought, will find the "magic carpet ride." The team will stay healthy, will avoid moose holes, will never slip on glare ice, will knife through headwinds and trot effortlessly behind a hard-pulling leader—an essential canine athlete that emerges only occasionally in a musher's lifetime to lead the pack across the finish line on Nome's Main Street. ▲

Joe Runyan was the first musher to win both the Yukon Quest (1985) and the Iditarod (1989). Read his race commentaries and blog, *Running with Runyan*, at Iditarod.com.

Alaska Airlines offers daily service to Anchorage, Nome and communities throughout the state of Alaska. Book tickets at alaskaair.com or call 800-ALASKAAIR.

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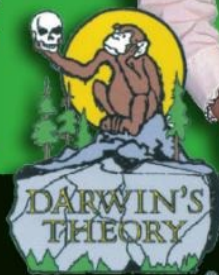
This small downtown bar is a favorite "Tourist Trap" where the locals view the "Urban Wildlife."

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Best Jukebox and Best Small Bar.

Darwin's signature drink is the
Cinnamon Red Hot and is
the world's biggest seller
of Cinnamon Schnapps.

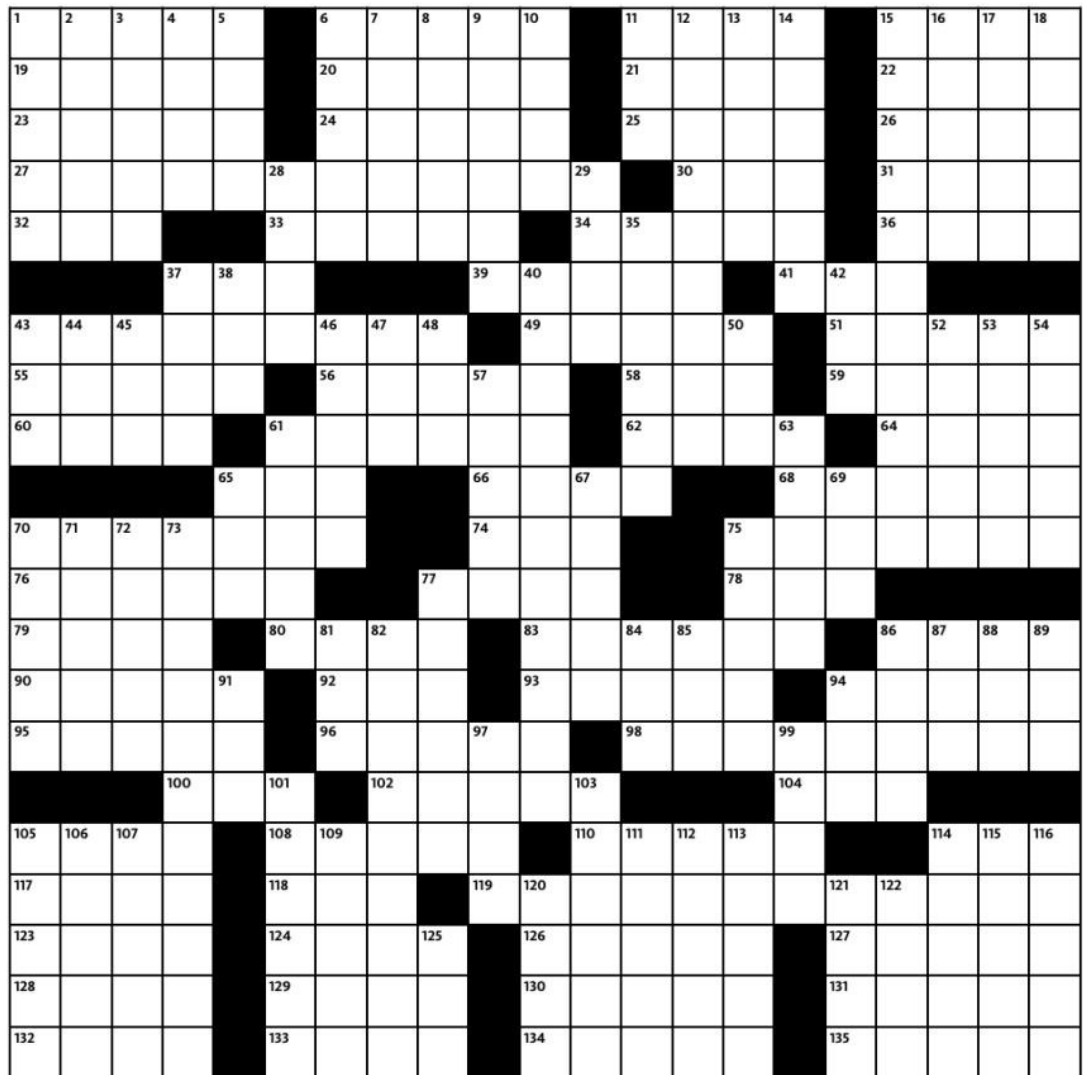
Darwin's Theory

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Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 277-5322



ACROSS

- 1 Diagram
6 Specialized vocabulary
11 Sigmund's daughter
15 Speed contest
19 One medium
20 *Ninotchka* star
21 Mrs. Clark Kent
22 Tabriz's land
23 Vote in
24 Slightly off
25 Circle parts
26 Belted
27 Overcapitalization
30 Informal conjunction
31 Sound
32 Cornerstone abbr.
33 Requisites
34 $C_4H_{10}O$
36 Erstwhile emperor
37 Diamond great
39 Line of cliffs
41 Fancy marble
43 Vermont waterway
49 Mary Ann Evans's pen name
51 U.S. coins
55 Lofty lair
56 Have food brought
58 Mr. Gulager
59 Shoshone Falls's waterway
60 Aspen footwear
61 Nab
62 Grasps, in Glasgow
64 You're filling it in
65 Mars Express org.
66 Neptune's purview
68 Preparing to drive
70 Truce talks
74 Do wrong
75 Nobles' body
76 Cling
77 Small tastes
78 Abner's adj.
79 Willingly
80 Dry run
83 Ancient colonist
86 Turkey
90 Certain viands
92 Filmom's Mrs. Charles
93 Bete noire
94 Hospitable
95 Japanese dish
96 Cashew-family member
98 I-95's stretch
100 Append to
102 Beat
104 Colorado tribesman
105 Social group
108 Judge Hoyle, in *The Verdict*
110 Ethyl acetate, e.g.
114 Nancy Walker role
117 Pause
118 Gear part
119 Catfish, e.g.
123 Leer
124 Part of QED
126 Game of chance



- 127 Angler's item
128 Jetty
129 Seines
130 Key
131 Veronese export
132 Lacking, in Lyon
133 Pine, e.g.
134 Cubic meter
135 Linda's *Exorcist* mom

DOWN

- 1 Canea's land
2 Nimbi
3 Skilled
4 Affluent
5 Convey
6 Yucca's family
7 Textile fiber
8 Use a pestle
9 Fix (on)
10 Pitch
11 ___ carte
12 Kringle's address
13 Market segment
14 Classify
15 Conservative
16 Bubbles's offerings
17 *Cheers* role
18 Record
28 Con
29 Emblem
35 10/31 options
37 He had his ups and downs?
38 Italian digit
40 This answer, e.g.
42 Notices
43 Part of to be
44 Musophobe's cry
45 Hindu address
46 Ms. Miles's namesakes
47 Auricle
48 Map abbr.
50 Large cask
52 Tony's love
53 Scratching out
54 Grassy plant
57 Post-1907 immigrant

- 61 To date
63 Oktoberfest vessel
65 Poetic contraction
67 Pyro's transgression
69 Conger
70 Body parts
71 Au revoir
72 Three-toed birds
73 Some pitchers
75 Tony honorees
77 Pal of Alfalfa
81 Raised trains
82 California city
84 Wedding-announcement adj.
85 "___ little teapot..."
86 Chilly raft?
87 Voodoo spirit
88 Surprised expressions
89 One way to stand
91 A Caesar
94 Be a thespian
97 Semite
99 Familiar area
101 Museum guide
103 Feel odium toward
105 Musical ability
106 Traditional maxims
107 George's Gracie
109 More painful
111 Hackneyed
112 Office-supply purchase
113 Ham it up
114 Perfect
115 Research thoroughly
116 *King of the Hill* town
120 Sapporo sashes
121 Latin being
122 Hydroxyl-group compound
125 Lit. monogram

SOLUTION ON PAGE 182.

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A man and a woman are shown in profile, smiling and playing slot machines in a casino. The woman is wearing a black top with a floral pattern and a large, ornate necklace. The man is wearing a grey shirt. The background is filled with the colorful lights and screens of slot machines.

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