

BEVERLY HILLS

STYLE

GUSTAVO DUDAMEL

FEATURE INTERVIEW



HOLIDAY 2025

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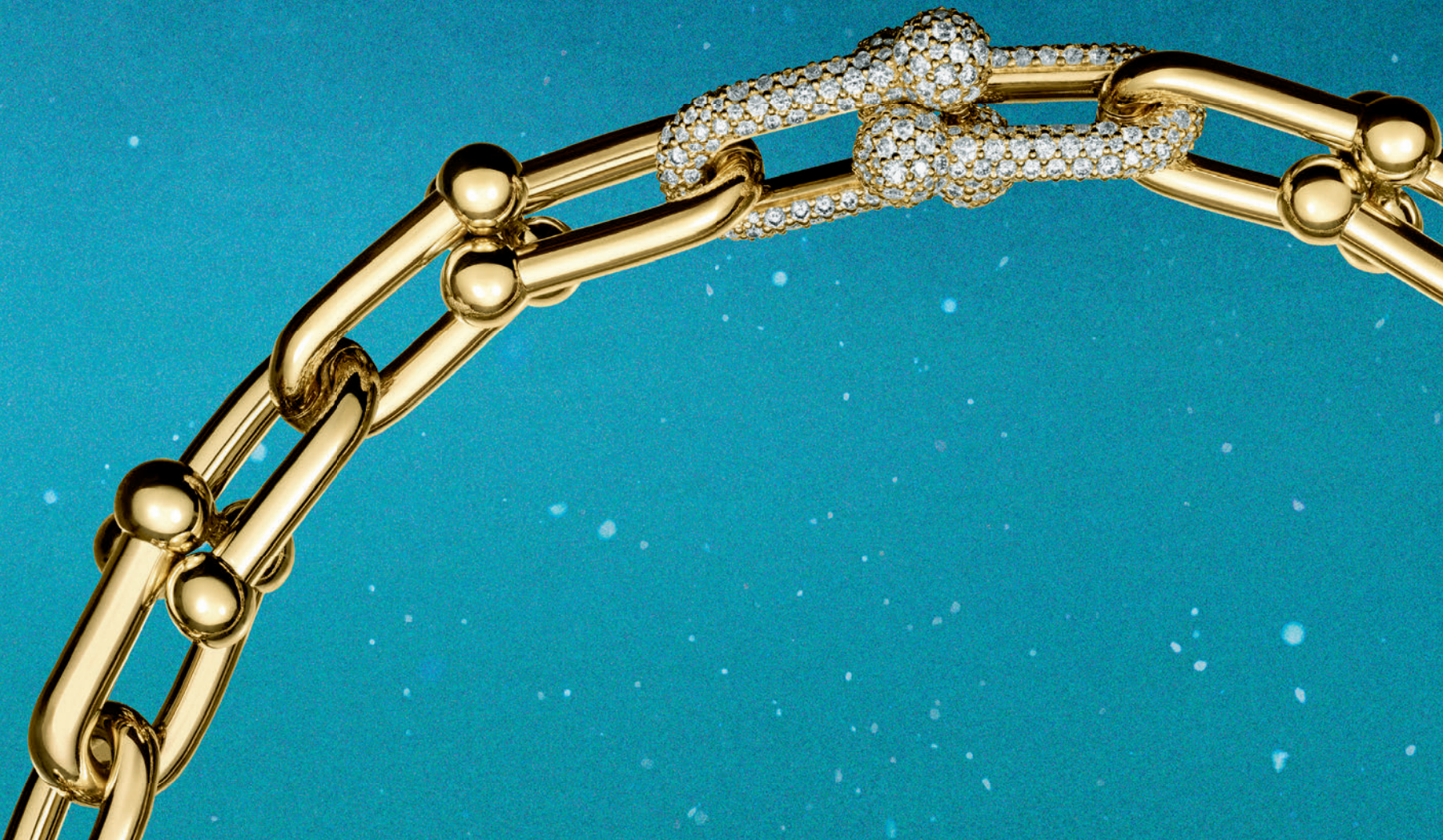
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LISA FRIEDMAN BLOCH



JOHN BENDHEIM

In this STYLE issue, the holiday spirit comes alive with celebrations of family and community enhanced by the power of music. Not only does music inspire feelings of love and joy; it also has the ability to unify us. This holiday season there is no better musical superstar than Los Angeles’ reigning king “conductor,” the LA Philharmonic’s Maestro Gustavo Dudamel, to harmoniously lead us along our merry way.

Giving back to those in need is also an essential theme for the holidays. In this issue, we take an exclusive look at legendary rock ‘n’ rollers who are doing just that. Find out what Roger Daltrey of “The Who” and his fellow “Hall of Famers” have done in our community to help teenagers with cancer.

Turning to an even younger group, who can resist the sweetness of our little ones this holiday season? Venture with us into the world of highly specialized Beverly Hills boutiques designed for budding fashionistas in “Pint-Sized Luxury: In Beverly Hills, Fashion Begins at Birth.”

Wondering why, as a grandmother, you can’t get enough of your grandchildren? We have the latest scientific research about this groundbreaking connection in the brain in “The Neuroscience That Explains Why Grandmothers Are So Special.”

To add to the fun, are you interested in family time activities? We present two possibilities to fill up your calendars in “Winter Movies: The Heat Is On” and “Where to Go in 2026: Top U.S. Travel Destinations.” If you are thinking about entertaining, try the newest drinks by some of our greatest stars in “Celebrity Spirits on the Rise.”

And finally, give yourself a treat and experience our exclusive cover feature, a deeply personal, inside view of the pop culture music master who has led L.A.’s world-famous orchestra to its highest heights ever. Learn about his life’s extraordinary journey, the Dudamel era, and how he believes music can help heal the world in “Gustavo Dudamel: The Legacy of a Megastar Maestro.”

Thank you, Gustavo, for honoring me with this once-in-a-lifetime privilege. Thank you to our loyal and cherished, global, national and local advertisers as well as our friends who believe in the importance of local journalism.

As we close out our 60th Anniversary year serving Beverly Hills, John and I cannot help but feel gratitude for the past and excitement for the future. Along with the Courier family, we wish you healthy times and happy blessings during the holidays and throughout the new year.

LISA FRIEDMAN BLOCH, PUBLISHER AND WRITER

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Celebrity Spirits on the Rise

BY CAROLE DIXON



TOP: DWAYNE JOHNSON IN AN AGAVE FIELD FOR HIS TEQUILA, TEREMANA
BOTTOM RIGHT: TEREMANA TEQUILA
PHOTOS COURTESY OF TEREMANA

These days, it seems that every celebrity with a Netflix deal has a spirit or wine brand. Some of the best new products were created in and around Beverly Hills by enterprising locals and yes, famous faces too, who are mixing up the cocktail game.

It is undeniable that agave spirits have risen in popularity and are neck and neck with vodka sales (the most popular), according to many industry professionals.

Actor and Beverly Park resident Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson has built a lifestyle platform around his Teremana tequila brand, rooted in his Polynesian background. “Mana has always been a part of my life and my culture,” says Johnson. “It’s the spirit and energy we bring into every room and every interaction.”

This new initiative was created to prove that positivity and optimism, or “mana,” is contagious, so the actor has launched a series of culinary gatherings with over 100 people for a community experience at one long table, where food and drinks are shared, called “Share The Mana, Share The Table.” “It’s about creating a real platform for people to learn about the power of coming together, connecting, and feeling that contagious positive energy,” he said. “The chance to share that with more communities everywhere means the world to me.”

Johnson is not simply putting his name on a brand but personally tasted 113 distillations when developing his tequila (in 2020), which has three expressions: Blanco, Reposado, and Añejo, all under a \$40 price range, and can be found at Saks Fifth Avenue, Spago, The Hideaway, Mastro’s, and Craig’s, among others. teremana.com



CELEBRITY SPIRITS CONTINUES ON PAGE 38

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Pint-Sized Luxury: In Beverly Hills, Fashion Begins at Birth

BY BIANCA HEYWARD

Beverly Hills has long been synonymous with global luxury, and its reputation as a playground for high fashion extends naturally into the children's market. The city's prestige creates a powerful draw for both a local and international clientele, many of whom expect the same level of exclusivity and refinement for their children as they do for themselves. Even Rodeo Drive, with its lineup of flagship designer boutiques, reflects this trend—and many fashion houses now dedicate space within their stores to children's collections, offering everything from couture baby wear to mini versions of iconic styles. This convergence of heritage brands, institutional boutiques, aspirational shopping culture, and the allure of Beverly Hills itself cements the city as a global hub for luxury shopping across generations.

While children's fashions emphasize comfort and quality fabrics, they're often inspired by what adults are wearing, too. With everything from matching sets to exclusive prints and collaborations, kids' styles are not an afterthought but a category with its own prestige.

English Rabbit at 9412 Brighton Way has become a destination for discerning parents seeking the extraordinary. Inside, racks are lined with pieces from the world's most exclusive children's designers—think seasonal couture, stacks of Fendi shoe boxes, and a variety of miniature Chloe and Dolce & Gabbana handbags.

"Parents value brand names, trends, quality, and they're still price conscious, even though it is Beverly Hills," Kelly Dowdy, owner of English Rabbit, told the Courier. The store caters to newborns up to size 14, with mixed brands, price points, and styles.

"Kids' fashion is usually a season off from what's happening in women's, so it tends to follow pretty closely what's happening in adult fashion," Dowdy said. "And I buy things that are close to that, and it doesn't look like tie-dye and tutus."

The most popular items are high fashion and contemporary pieces, including those from Off-White, Zimmermann, and Self-Portrait. "We carry Marni Kids, and when people come in and see that direct takedown from women's, and that it's stuff they have, they get excited," Dowdy said.

For baby essentials, MarMar Copenhagen is a frontrunner, since the brand is known for using high-quality fabrics for long-lasting wear. Onesies, rompers, dresses, and more formal first birthday dresses are also big in that department.

"Fendi has done really well, and that's kind of where people splurge and will buy a statement piece that's really expensive."

One of the pricier items at English Rabbit is a \$2,292 Fendi dress for baby girls, made of light pink organza with colorful florals embroidered throughout and an airy silhouette. Dolce & Gabbana's classic floral and butterfly print dresses are also among the most popular specialty garments for girls. For boys, shirt jackets from Bonton and reversible puffer jackets from Stella McCartney do very well.

Many people splurge on luxury kids' items, particularly when gifting, and presents like \$295 Christian Louboutin crib shoes create a show-stopping baby shower moment. "It's fun buying a child their first Louboutins, which the parents probably wouldn't do because it's not a necessity," Dowdy said.

English Rabbit offers styling services, too, because many of their clients shop remotely. Each store associate is trained on how to put together outfits, as well as blend brands. "One of our top customers has only been into the store once," she said.



TOP: BONPOINT JELMA RUFFLED DRESS KNITTED IN WOOL AND SILK
PHOTO COURTESY OF BONPOINT

BOTTOM: SHELVES AT ENGLISH RABBIT STOCKED WITH COZY KNITS,
DOLCE & GABBANA TOTES, AND MONCLER SUEDE BOOTS
PHOTO BY BIANCA HEYWARD

PINT-SIZED LUXURY CONTINUES ON PAGE 40



FESTIVE SEASON

It's the most wonderful time of the year as The Maybourne Beverly Hills sets the scene for the holidays. From magical stays and festive menus to cozy gingerbread house decorating sessions and wreath & wine classes that bring the spirit of the season to life.



Winter Movies: The Heat Is On

BY NEELY SWANSON



It's that time of year when the studios, both large and small, bring out the heavy artillery for their pre-Oscar campaigns. There will still be lots of fodder for the youngsters, but the emphasis is going to be on adult fare with an eye toward award season.

You may have already seen some of the films that premiered in early November, but I'll give you a recap of some of them, with an emphasis on movies scheduled to premiere at the end of the month and into December.

Early November

"Bugonia" is for fans of filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos who will celebrate his take on alien conspiracy theorists who meet their match in the corporate executive they kidnap. Convinced she has been put on Earth to destroy the planet, something will have to give, and neither she nor her crazy kidnappers will give an inch. Lanthimos favorites, Emma Stone and Jesse Plemons, star.

"Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery" features Daniel Craig as Benoit Blanc, back to solve another mystery with Andrew Scott, Josh Brolin, Glenn Close, Jeremy Renner, Kerry Washington and Josh O'Connor as victims or suspects.

"Nuremberg" revisits the postwar trial in Nuremberg, Germany of Hermann Göring and features an all-star cast led by Russell Crowe as Göring, the face of evil, matching wits with psychiatrist Douglas Kelley (Rami Malek) and lead prosecutor Robert H. Jackson (Michael Shannon). Göring's crimes and his part in the "Final Solution" were gut-wrenching and all will be exposed.

"Predator: Badlands" is all about predators and prey. On a planet where all present are the prey, the search for the predator by alien monsters is aided by the limb-challenged Elle Fanning.

"Die My Love" shows the disintegration of a woman whose life begins to go downhill catastrophically when she moves to her husband's small town. Jennifer Lawrence stars as a woman who begins to unravel after the birth of her first child.



TOP: OSCAR ISAAC AS DR. FRANKENSTEIN IN "FRANKENSTEIN"

PHOTO BY KEN WORONER COURTESY OF NETFLIX

RIGHT: DANIEL CRAIG AS BENOIT BLANC IN "WAKE UP DEAD MAN"

PHOTO BY RIAN JOHNSON COURTESY OF NETFLIX

1.



2.



3.



4.



1. JENNIFER LAWRENCE AND ROBERT PATTINSON IN "DIE MY LOVE"
PHOTO BY KIMBERLY FRENCH COURTESY OF MUBI

2. GLEN POWELL AND COLMAN DOMINGO IN "THE RUNNING MAN"
PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES

3. RUSSELL CROWE AS HERMANN GÖRING IN "NUREMBERG"
PHOTO BY KARA VERMES COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

4. SHANNON GORMAN AND BRENDAN FRASER IN "RENTAL FAMILY"
PHOTO BY JAMES LISLE COURTESY OF SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

"Christy" is a story about the resilience of Christy Martin, the most successful female boxer in the '90s. The role is played by Sydney Sweeney, who is almost unrecognizable in a bad shag hairdo and a mouth guard.

"Frankenstein" lets Guillermo del Toro combine his incredible visual sense with his love of monsters to retell this famous tale. As Dr. Frankenstein, played by Oscar Isaac, says, "In seeking life, I created death." Heartthrob Jacob Elordi is his creation.

"Jay Kelly" is George Clooney and George Clooney is Jay Kelly in a movie about a movie star who has lost his way and wants to find it. Think of the old Cary Grant quote: "Everyone wants to be Cary Grant. Even I want to be Cary Grant."

"Peter Hujar's Day," starring Ben Whishaw as photographer Hujar and Rebecca Hall as Linda Rosenkrantz, his interviewer, treats us to an extended conversation between them in 1974 about his career photographing the New York scene in its Bohemian heyday. Their conversation on screen is anything but static; it makes that era come alive while shining a light on a talented photographer whose fame has fallen to the wayside.

"The Running Man" is a reimagination of the Stephen King classic by director Edgar Wright and starring screen darling Glen Powell. Trying to raise money to save his child, Ben Richards joins "the game," a last-man-standing contest where the players are hunted down and killed.

"Now You See Me, Now You Don't" is best expressed by one of the characters: "Eight magicians against a worldwide criminal network? I like our chances." A sequel to "Now You See It," Jesse Eisenberg, Woody Harrelson, Isla Fisher and David Franco are back, with the tantalizing addition of Morgan Freeman and Rosamund Pike.

"Keeper" is the latest in a string of horror movies where a loving couple on a romantic getaway rents a house that happens to be haunted. How will they keep love alive, let alone survive this haunted house? Directed by Osgood Perkins, it stars TV favorite Tatiana Maslany.

Nov. 21

"Wicked for Good" arrives, and the wait is finally over. Part II continues the story of Elphaba (Cynthia Erivo) and Glinda (Ariana Grande) as they try to find their places in a world where Elphaba has become the Wicked Witch of the West. Dorothy will enter this picture, and the Wizard (Jeff Goldblum) will return alongside hunky Flyero (Jonathan Bailey) and Madame Morrible (Michelle Yeoh). Expect more fabulous songs from the "Wicked" playbook.

"Rental Family" reveals an interesting concept in Japanese society. Phillip Vandarploeg's acting career is at a standstill when he gets an unusual offer from an agent in Japan. His gig? Be a stand-in character in real families needing someone to play the role of a family member—a missing brother, father, husband or son. Finding what's missing in his life while filling in something for the people who hired him has its own peculiar reward.

Nov. 26

"Eternity" is something of a damned if you do and damned if you don't proposition. Arriving in the afterlife, Joan has one week to decide where she will spend eternity and with whom. Adding to the inherent complexity of these choices, she is reunited with both men she married: her recently deceased husband of many years and her first husband, who died very early in their marriage and who has been waiting an "eternity" for her. It's a competition where there can only be one winner. The film stars Miles Teller, Elizabeth Olsen and Callum Turner, with Da'Vine Joy Randolph as a heavenly overseer.

"Zootopia 2" finds Judy and Nick (voiced by Ginnifer Goodwin and Jason Bateman) together again, this time hunting giant reptiles causing havoc. A plethora of famous voices adds to the delight of this animated favorite, including Yvette Nichole Brown, Quinta Brunson, Idris Elba and Macaulay Culkin.

WINTER MOVIES CONTINUES ON PAGE 44

Rock Legends Give Back to the Youth Who Made Them

BY JESSICA OGILVIE



ROGER DALTREY AT THE BACKYARD CONCERT
PHOTO BY LISA FRIEDMAN BLOCH

Blue lights bathed the trees at a hilltop home as 950 members of the greater Beverly Hills community watched The Who deliver a seven-set show on the heels of their farewell tour.

Speaking to the crowd during a break between songs, lead singer Roger Daltrey thanked everyone for being there. The event was the 10th year of The Who's Backyard Concert, which benefits Teen Cancer America (TCA)—the organization Daltrey co-founded with bandmate Pete Townshend—and the UCLA Health Center.

"These are your young Americans," Daltrey said of the community the organization works to support. "This age group has been forgotten too long in the hospital system. We are changing it, [and] I'm very positive for the future. Thank you very much. We love you."

The Backyard Concert was emceed by producer, writer and director Judd Apatow and included performances by The Doobie Brothers, Peter Frampton, John Fogerty, Def Leppard, Cheap Trick and Eddie Vedder in addition to the performance by The Who.

The event is remarkable in a number of ways. Thanks to the tireless work of Daltrey, Townshend and members of the TCA Board such as Board President and CEO Rebecca Rothstein and board members Rick French and Chris Stewart—both of whom also sit on the board of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame—rock legends including Robert Plant, Van Morrison, Billy Idol, Melissa Etheridge, Green Day and many more have

graced its stage.

"I now call it Yardstock because they've had more stars than Woodstock," said Daltrey over the phone a week after the performance.

According to Daltrey, the musicians who participate do so because of a shared belief that they owe their careers to the teens and young adults who champion their music, and that those who receive the devastating news of a cancer diagnosis deserve the music industry's support.

"All the bands understand the support that this age group has given them to have the success they've had in their lives, and they're giving back big time," he said. "Teenagers and young adults are the people that drive the music industry. They're the ones that discover new music, push the new trends, drive it forward."

TCA, which has its headquarters in Santa Monica, opened its doors 12 years ago. But in truth, its roots stretch back further than that.

Daltrey became involved with Teenage Cancer Trust in the United Kingdom in 1990 at the behest of his general practitioner, Dr. Adrian Whiteson. Whiteson founded the organization with his wife, Myrna, after recognizing that most cancer centers have programs for pediatric patients and adult patients but nothing for individuals who fall in the ages between.

ROCK LEGENDS CONTINUES ON PAGE 48

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Where to Go in 2026: Top U.S. Travel Destinations

BY CAROLE DIXON



PHOTO BY ELEVATED ANGLES FOR VISIT PHILADELPHIA®

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While Los Angeles will host the FIFA World Cup in 2026 and the Super Bowl will take place up north in Santa Clara, it is also a great time to consider traveling to other major U.S. cities for historic events.

Next year marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, so let's start there.

Philadelphia: America's 250th anniversary celebration in July and events all year

The birthplace of the United States is preparing for the country's big anniversary, so you can visit all year for select neighborhood and community events across the city.

Activations include a full calendar of cultural festivals, attractions, and experiences rooted in community, including a new public event, "Bells Across PA." This program will feature local artists designing 20 large replica Liberty Bells, each being displayed in a different area of the city. Another celebration is the "Neighborhood Tour Series," taking place over 20 weeks in the spring and summer of 2026 and featuring a different community each time.

Stay at the newly renovated historic Bellevue in the city center and dine at one of Marc Vetri's eponymous Italian eateries, Michael Solomonov's Zahav, or Friday, Saturday, Sunday, which is one of North America's 50 Best Restaurants.

Park City: Sundance Film Festival Jan. 22 to Feb. 1, 2026

With the final season of the late Robert Redford's pioneering Sundance Film Festival taking place in January 2026 before it moves to Boulder, Colorado, in 2027, this is one schedule of independent films not to miss. Stay at the Montage Deer Valley with fireplaces and outdoor firepits, the Bourbon & Burgers restaurant, Yama Sushi, and a bowling alley for burning off a little steam indoors, plus ski-in, ski-out options.

San Francisco: The Super Bowl Feb. 8, 2026

If you plan to travel to the Bay Area for the Super Bowl in Santa Clara, consider staying at Nobu Palo Alto. Make sure to allow time in your schedule for a visit to San Francisco. As part of a Union Square revitalization, acclaimed chef and restaurateur Michael Mina is opening Bourbon Steak San Francisco, a new expression of his popular steakhouse concept. Adjacent, The Eighth Rule, a bourbon-driven bar developed by two-time MVP and four-time NBA champion and entrepreneur Stephen Curry (husband of Ayesha Curry), will also open inside the hotel. This is Curry's first foray into hospitality, two years after launching his Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, Gentleman's Cut.

"We believe in San Francisco," said chef Mina, "and we are committed to continuing to provide spaces where people can come and eat, drink, celebrate, and feel welcome in one of the best cities in the world."

Palm Springs: Modernism Week Feb. 13-23, 2026

Marking its 21st year, the mid-century architecture and design festival offers a staggering 500 events over 11 days amid a stunning desert mountain backdrop and plenty of poolside parties.

Stay in the middle of downtown, at the Thompson Palm Springs, the sleek, new property with a world-class art collection. Dine and drink at brand-new Bar Issi, by Marissa and Matt Hermer of Chez Mia, also designed by Fettle, and inspired by the iconic 1970s imagery of Mediterranean glamour along the Italian coastline.

New York: New York Fashion Week in February and September, and the Met Gala on May 4, 2026

While both fall and spring Fashion Week events will congregate around Spring Studios, the Met Gala in May is all about the revitalized Upper East Side and Ground Zero for years has been The Mark Hotel. With a private apartment-living feel (The Mark Penthouse is the largest in North America), the property was designed by Jacques Grange. The Mark is dog-friendly, with a “Spoiled Dogs Menu” created by chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten, who has a variety of dining concepts in the hotel, from his namesake flagship eatery with the best truffle burger, to a collaboration with Caviar Kaspia, and a haute dog cart in front. This is a prime location with easy access to Central Park and The Frick Collection. The hotel offers private tours of the Met and a new Augustine Bader spa coming in the new year.

Austin: South by Southwest (SXSW) March 12-18, 2026

What’s new at SXSW in 2026? For the first time, all conferences and festivals run side by side with seven days of interactive media, film, television, and music. With the Austin Convention Center redevelopment, SXSW 2026 transforms downtown Austin into a creative village.

To get the lay of the land, you should probably start on South Congress. This block runs from the north to the south of the city and is where you can find casual Austin staples such as Güero’s Taco Bar, where everyone from President Clinton to Matthew McConaughey has dined.

Hotel Van Zandt is a boutique hotel nestled in the heart of Austin’s Rainey Street District for live music, just steps from Lady Bird Lake and the vibrant downtown district. Inspired by the city’s musical roots and rich Texas history, the rooms and suites have a sophisticated rock ‘n’ roll charm, including the rooftop pool deck (with piped-in underwater music) and art installations throughout the property.

Washington, D.C.: National Cherry Blossom Festival March 20 to April 13, 2026

The Tidal Basin is the most popular spot to view the D.C. cherry blossoms in spring, with more than 3,000 Yoshino cherry trees. Stay nearby at The Jefferson, a dog-friendly boutique hotel dating back to 1923 with a Beaux-Arts architectural style that’s located steps away from the White House. The two Michelin Key hotel offers lavish suites, a state-of-the-art fitness center, an in-house historian for curated itineraries, a dedicated Book Room with a First Library book program, a private wine cellar, 24-hour butler service with in-room mixed cocktails, and all-day dining at The Greenhouse beneath the lobby skylight.



LEFT: THE MARK HOTEL EXTERIOR
RIGHT: ANNA WINTOUR AT THE MARK
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MARK HOTEL

New Orleans: Jazz and Heritage Festival April 23 to May 3, 2026

For one of the largest musical gatherings in the states, head to the Big Easy, where you can catch a diverse group of talent from Lenny Kravitz and Pearl Jam to Harry Connick Jr. and Trombone Shorty, along with local, African and Native American village-style marketplace crafts and food.

New to the area are two charming boutique properties, The Garden District Hotel and The Blackbird Hotel, that are both helping to shape a new chapter for the city while celebrating a new culinary era with award-winning restaurants. The design-forward properties' distinct personalities and amenities include The Garden District Hotel's 47 retreat-like guestrooms, heated saltwater pool, and the city's only swim-up bar, and The Blackbird Hotel's 13 unique guestrooms, sultry lobby bar, and pool area surrounded by lush greenery.

Louisville: Kentucky Derby May 1-2, 2026

After a day at the races, stay at the 21c Museum Hotel, pioneers in launching a contemporary art-inspired hotel in 2006 by visionary art collectors and preservationists, Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson. Their mission? To make contemporary art more accessible by offering free, 24/7 exhibitions while sparking economic revival in historic downtowns. Stay in The Apartment, 21c's sky-high sanctuary overlooking the Bourbon City skyline.

Newer to the scene is Hotel Bourré Bonne (meaning good bet), with a design and art influenced by the city's historic French Beaux-Arts architecture and the city's famed horse racing culture and French origins of Kentucky bourbon.

San Diego: NASCAR June 20-21, 2026

For car racing, comic book collectors, and soccer fans, the NASCAR series at the Naval Base in June, the Comic-Con festival at the Convention Center in July or the new FC Major League Soccer, which debuted in 2025 at Snapdragon Stadium, should be summer and fall (September-October) draws, respectively.

To continue the romp, stay at the completely refurbished Lafayette Hotel in North Park—a haven for Hollywood elite in the 1940s and '50s. The over-the-top maximalist design with bold zebra and floral motifs includes a main circular lobby bar, vintage bowling alley, breakfast diner, basement speakeasy with live music, and a lively pool bar scene. Next door is an upscale Mexican restaurant in a church setting, complete with stained-glass windows, with masa and mole created from family recipes by chef José Cepeda.

Chicago: James Beard Awards June 13-15, and the Route 66 Centennial on Nov. 11, 2026

To keep up with the level of culinary excellence and excitement of the annual James Beard Awards, dine at chef Grant Achatz's Alinea, celebrating 20 years—and dozens of accolades.

In addition, Palmer House, North America's longest-operating hotel, since 1871, and another landmark Chicago destination, is celebrating the Route 66 Centennial in 2026 with a "Get Your Kicks Near Route 66" package, commemorating Illinois as the road's official starting point. This will offer hotel guests luxe accommodations, welcome cocktails at the hotel's speakeasy-inspired lounge, Original Palmer House Brownies (the baked treat was invented at the hotel in 1893 for the World's Fair), a Google Map with points of interest and a Spotify playlist of cruising songs to set the mood.

Aspen: Art Week and The Aspen Art Fair July 29 to Aug. 2, 2026

While you might enjoy an annual ski trip to one of Colorado's top mountain ranges, consider a trip to this tony town off-season during the summer months, especially during Art Week and The Aspen Art Fair in its third year, which is gaining international momentum—the second edition drew more than 4,000 galleries, curators, and collectors from across the globe.

Stay at Hotel Jerome, and you will have easy access to the fair which takes place along the corridors and ground-floor suites of the property and even spills out onto the terraces. Do make time to have drinks at one of the hotel's historic bars and admire the permanent collection of black-and-white photographs of the town, curated in partnership with the Aspen Historical Society.

"The Hotel Jerome is synonymous with Aspen and the heart and soul of town," Becca Hoffman, CEO and founder of The Aspen Art Fair, told the Courier. "There is no better place to host a contemporary and modern art and design fair."

WHERE TO GO IN 2026 CONTINUES ON PAGE 52



TOP RIGHT: THE ASPEN ART FAIR 2025 OPENING PREVIEW AT HOTEL JEROME

PHOTO BY JASON SEAN WEISS

BOTTOM RIGHT: THE LAFAYETTE HOTEL IN SAN DIEGO

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LAFAYETTE HOTEL



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Greg Ito

Tunnel Vision, 2021

Acrylic on canvas over panel
88 x 64 inches

Collection of East West Bank.
Image courtesy of the Artist.



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The Neuroscience That Explains Why Grandmothers Are So Special

BY EVA RITVO, M.D.

A new study has shown what occurs when grandmothers interact with their grandchildren, scientifically validating what many have long felt intuitively. The grandmother-grandchild bond operates on a deeply connected and profoundly different level compared to other relationships.

Anthropologist and neuroscientist James Rilling and his colleagues at Emory University used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to capture real-time brain activity by measuring blood flow changes. Thus, they were able to peer directly into the minds of grandmothers as they processed images of family members and strangers.

Fifty grandmothers volunteered to be placed inside an fMRI scanner where they viewed a series of photographs in four categories: images of their grandchildren, unknown children of similar ages, their adult children (the same sex as the grandchild), and unfamiliar adults.

As grandmothers gazed at photos of their grandchildren, the scientists observed robust activation in areas associated with emotional empathy. These neural networks enable us to literally feel what another person is experiencing.

When a grandchild experiences joy, the grandmother's brain lights up in ways that mirror that happiness, and she feels the same delight. When a grandchild is in distress, the grandmother's neural pathways fire with corresponding concern. This pattern of activation suggests that grandmothers are neurologically wired to experience their grandchildren's emotions as if they were their own.

When grandmothers viewed images of their adult children, something different happened. Rather than activating those same emotional empathy regions, these encounters triggered neural networks associated with cognitive empathy. These are our brain regions involved in understanding others' thoughts, intentions, and mental states rather than directly sharing their emotions. It's the neural machinery we engage when we're trying to figure out why someone feels a certain way or what they might be thinking, rather than automatically mirroring their emotional state.

These findings suggest that while most grandmothers remain deeply attached to their adult children, their brains process these relationships through a more cognitive lens, understanding rather than directly experiencing their adult children's emotional states.

When grandmothers viewed images of unknown children of similar ages to their grandchildren, as well as unfamiliar adults, their brains showed relatively little activation in either emotional or cognitive empathy regions. While grandmothers often feel general warmth toward children in general, the intense empathetic responses appear to be more easily triggered by their own children and grandchildren.

These findings suggest that grandmothers' brains have been specifically designed to recognize and respond to their own family members with remarkable precision and intensity. Most likely, thousands of years of evolution have created this intimate neurobiological connection.

Unlike most mammals, human females often live for decades beyond their childbearing years. "The grandmother hypothesis," put forward by anthropologist Kristen Hawkes, offers an explanation for this evolutionary puzzle. According to this theory, grandmothers who invested in their grandchildren's welfare provided significant survival advantages to their families, leading to the evolution of extended human lifespan and the unique role of grandmothers in human societies.

Studies spanning continents and cultures have validated this hypothesis showing that grandmothers' involvement correlates with improved outcomes for their grandchildren: better nutritional status, more stable and nurturing household environments, enhanced



educational opportunities, and ultimately, higher survival rates into adulthood.

Research has also demonstrated that active, engaged grandmothers enable their daughters to have children more frequently and at younger ages, while also increasing the likelihood that these grandchildren will themselves survive to reproductive age and continue the family legacy. These factors create a powerful evolutionary advantage that has shaped human family structures across thousands of millennia.

In our contemporary world, where life expectancy continues to increase and medical advances enable people to remain healthy and active well into their later years, the potential impact of grandmothers is growing. Today's grandmothers often enjoy decades of healthy, engaged involvement in their families' lives, bringing wisdom, emotional stability, and financial support that can profoundly influence future generations.

Although many modern families are separated by geography, this research offers tremendous hope. The neural activation patterns observed in the study occurred in response to mere photographs of grandchildren, suggesting that visual connection alone can trigger these powerful connections.

Photo sharing through social media and messaging apps enables grandparents to witness and emotionally participate in their grandchildren's daily lives and milestones despite the distance. Video calls through platforms like Zoom and FaceTime allow for face-to-face conversations that can also activate those crucial neural pathways and foster and nourish this special connection.

This important and heartwarming study reminds us that the special role of grandmothers appears hardwired in our brains to optimize human potential. Rather than viewing grandparents as peripheral figures whose primary value lies in occasional babysitting, hosting holiday gatherings, or funding education, we might better understand them as essential, unique components of healthy family systems occupying a very special evolutionary role. We are wise as individuals and a society to respect, nurture and support the vital role of grandmothers. ●

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GUSTAVO WALKS OFF STAGE AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL.
PHOTO COURTESY OF L.A. PHILHARMONIC

GUSTAVO DUDAMEL

The Legacy of a Megastar Maestro

BY LISA FRIEDMAN BLOCH

Enjoying the moments before rehearsal with his orchestra friends, young Gustavo's playful enthusiasm took charge. As the first violinist of the Youth Orchestra of Barquisimeto, Venezuela, the 11-year-old prodigy set down his violin, stepped onto the conducting block and began to imitate the absent conductor. To Gustavo's delight, his orchestra friends followed, filling the hall with a magical sound. In the heavenly moment, Gustavo closed his eyes and allowed the music to transform him.

Suddenly, the sound unraveled. Quickly opening his eyes, Gustavo saw worried, pale faces staring back at him. His instructor, Maestro Luis Jimenez, had arrived and stood in the back of the hall.

"Oh my God, this is the end of my life as a musician," said Maestro Gustavo Dudamel, recounting his terror in the hall's silence. He thought, "I'm done. This is the end."

Maestro Jimenez slowly approached Gustavo. In a serious tone he said, "You have kind of a talent for conducting." He then walked to his conducting block and raised his baton to begin the rehearsal.

Later, Gustavo was summoned to the Maestro's office. Instead of a stern reprimand, Gustavo was offered the introductory position of assistant conductor. This defining moment changed Gustavo's life forever.

"I have to thank him a lot. I'm 'here' because of him."

"Here" is the magnificent Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles. For the past 17 years, beginning at the age of 27, Maestro Gustavo Dudamel has been the ordained "gift" to Los Angeles, the honored and cherished Music & Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. But soon Los Angeles will be saying, "Gracias, Gustavo!"

His leadership is often described as magical, as he infuses enthusiasm and spontaneous engagement, making classical music feel relevant and alive. With his bold and diverse programming, his dynamic, performative approach and his ability to inspire contemporary works, Maestro Dudamel has captured the world's heart in classical music. He has not only dramatically increased his audience fan base, but he's also transformed younger more diverse enthusiasts towards classical music. The New York Times has called him the "superstar conductor" and has praised his talents with helping to make the LA Philharmonic "the most important orchestra in America—period."

"Under his leadership, we've become a model for what a 21st-century orchestra can be: boldly creative, fiercely relevant, and deeply connected to its community," said Chairman of the Board of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Jason Subotky.

During his extraordinary tenure, he's energized global audiences, holding additional positions as Music Director of the Paris Opera (2021-2023), Music Director of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra of Sweden (2007-2012), and Music Director of the Simón Bolívar Youth Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela (since 1999).

As a visionary, he's created many symphonic firsts. He has led orchestra performances at major pop culture events, including the Super Bowl halftime show with Bruno Mars, Beyoncé and Chris Martin. He conducted the LA Philharmonic as it opened the 91st Academy Awards broadcast, and many collaborative performances with artists like Billie Eilish and Coldplay, as well as having been featured in mainstream films and series such as "West Side Story," "Sesame Street," and "Mozart in the Jungle." He's been awarded eight Grammy Awards and five honorary doctorates in music from highly respected institutions from around the world, including Harvard University. Internationally, he has received Spain's Gold Medal for Merit in Fine Arts, Chevalier and later Officier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France, the Queen Sofía Spanish Institute Gold Medal, and is a foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music.

Accolades aside, what drives this megastar maestro is deeply rooted in his humble beginnings and the transformative power he experienced as a participant in El Sistema of Venezuela. Modeling that system he founded the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (YOLA). In partnership with the LA Philharmonic, YOLA today boasts over 1,700 young musicians ages 6-18, who receive free instruments, intensive music training and academic support.

President and Chief Executive Officer Kim Noltemy of the LA Philharmonic noted, "For years, audiences have witnessed this profound and mutual affection between Gustavo and the orchestra, because when Gustavo conducts, what radiates from the stage is pure, shared joy. His deep respect and love for the orchestra are unmistakable in every performance."

This natural connection with his orchestra, and his innovative thinking and trailblazing collaborations, have inspired audience enthusiasm. This past spring, at Coachella, Maestro Dudamel brought the LA Phil to perform for the first time. He smashed all expectations and records by intermingling works by Bach, Strauss, Wagner and John Williams, with contemporary artists such as LL Cool J, Laufey, Dave Grohl, Zedd and Cynthia Erivo. Gustavo stated in the Los Angeles Times, "This performance 'represents a journey of making music accessible to everybody.'"

By successfully "crossing over" from classical music into the world's pop culture, Gustavo Dudamel has ignited awareness, exponentially, of the transformative power of music. His historical Billboard magazine cover story in 2024, the first classical musician ever to be featured, signifies this unprecedented crossover. As he packs his bags for the New York Philharmonic, ending his extraordinary reign in late spring 2026, the Courier was honored with this rare opportunity to gain an intimate understanding of his astonishing, meteoric journey, his wisdom, and how he believes music can be a unifier to help heal the world.

From the calm, carpeted corridor, I opened the Disney Concert Hall's auditorium door to the thunderous power of the LA Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Master Chorale, led by Maestro Dudamel. Having been invited to peek in on his private rehearsal of a new contemporary composition, I quickly slipped into a back mezzanine seat. The empty hall in its colorful and acoustical grandeur further heightened the mesmerizing moment.

The piece, "Earth Between Oceans," explores the power of nature through the lens of the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire and Water. Undoubtedly, I had entered during the dramatic Fire section. The robust "wordless choir added a dynamic timbre to the ensemble," said Ellen Reid, its Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, at the world premiere the following night.

Suddenly, Gustavo's large arm gestures silenced the sound. In the quiet, he turned in his conductor's rehearsal chair and called to Ms. Reid sitting in the orchestra section behind him. They shared words of interpretation. He then swiveled back to his orchestra, lifted his arms, and revisited the refrain. It was extraordinary to watch his process.

"The good thing is that she's there," said Gustavo, reflecting on the rehearsal later that afternoon with me in his private office. "But she's letting me go. She writes the music, and we interpret it. She was very touched about what was happening."

Ms. Reid had never heard her creation performed live before that afternoon. Neither had Gustavo nor the orchestra.

He continued, "And for me, it's wonderful. It's like having Mahler or Beethoven there. 'Hey, Ludwig, what do think about it? Are we doing well?'" Gustavo chuckled at the thought. "Although they [Mahler and Beethoven] are not present with us, they are present with their music, and you have to really read the music to understand and bring them alive."

This is one of the benefits of performing new, contemporary compositions.

"It's like a baby that walks immediately," said Gustavo. "When we are playing something, we don't know what is going to happen. [Ms. Reid] has an idea. We have an idea. She's very talented. I have premiered other pieces by her, and she's very clear in what she wants. But in that moment when you play something for the first time." He pauses. "It's beautiful."

"Beautiful" is also the way Gustavo describes hearing the sound of live orchestral music for the first time in his life.

Little Gustavo was 5 years old. It was Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade, a symphonic suite inspired by the tales of "One Thousand and One Nights," also known as "The Arabian Nights." His young father was a trombonist in the youth orchestra.

"I was blown away. It was like, wow! I have the memory of the theater where we were, and the amount of sound that was coming. I was so excited. I was trying to see my father. But I couldn't see him because I was very little."

Music is in Gustavo's blood. His parents met in a folk music group in Barquisimeto at the ages of 15 and 16. Young Solangel Ramirez Vilorio, a singer and voice teacher, fell in love with Oscar Dudamel Vasquez, a trombonist and salsa musician. They raised their two sons,



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Roger and Gustavo, in a musical environment, beginning with Latin music, bolero, salsa, and merengue.

Gustavo's grandmother, Engracia Vasquez de Dudamel, lived with the family when Gustavo was a boy. She has shared stories about him, arranging his toy soldiers in orchestral positions. While the music played on the record, he would conduct their performance. This imaginative play from an early age made conducting feel very natural to him.

But it was the revered Maestro José Antonio Abreu, and his trailblazing work to democratize access to the arts, who lit the fire under Gustavo. While mentoring him toward maestro prominence, Maestro Abreu inspired Gustavo toward a life commitment to social advocacy.



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1. GUSTAVO IN HIS YOUTH WITH HIS FIRST INSTRUMENT, VIOLIN

PHOTOS 1 AND 2 COURTESY OF GUSTAVO DUDAMEL

2. GUSTAVO WITH HIS PARENTS, SOLANGEL AND OSCAR, AND

GRANDMOTHER, ENGRACIA

3. GUSTAVO AND LL COOL J AT COACHELLA

4. MAESTRO ABREU INSTRUCTING YOUTH AS PART OF EL SISTEMA

5. GUSTAVO AND ZEDD AT COACHELLA

PHOTOS 3 AND 5 COURTESY OF L.A. PHILHARMONIC

6. GUSTAVO AND ABREU

PHOTOS 4 AND 6 COURTESY OF EL SISTEMA

In 1975, Maestro Abreu created a groundbreaking music education program, funded by the Venezuelan government's social services division, to provide free musical education for all children regardless of their socioeconomic background. Believing music is a universal right, Maestro Abreu felt music education was essential for the well-being of children at risk, providing social inclusion and personal development through shared music making. As music transmits harmony and mutual compassion, he was convinced it could unite communities. Called El Sistema, it grew into a nationwide network of hundreds of music centers reaching hundreds of thousands of children from underprivileged backgrounds. Maestro Gustavo Dudamel is indisputably El Sistema's most successful alumnus.

Entering the program as a young boy, Gustavo thoroughly enjoyed making music with his friends. It was his happy place. El Sistema was popular and thriving. At the young age of 12, he was selected as a violinist from all the children in youth orchestras in Venezuela to be in the National Children's Orchestra. This was his first encounter with Maestro Abreu.

"Of course, he was there all the time supervising the rehearsals. One day he asked me to lead, to show the people how to do it."

Maestro Abreu recognized Gustavo's talent and took him under his wing. Soon after, he invited Gustavo on a trip to Caracas, at age 14, to witness his first ballet performance. It was a ballet rehearsal of "Swan Lake."

"I was sitting there, and he asked me, 'Do you see the rhythm? ... in the body? Do you see the melody?' I was like, wow, I have to discover that." "Now, where do you feel the harmony? The chords?" It was amazing because it was the most beautiful natural expression ... Maestro Abreu was a genius."

He was instructing Gustavo to see the orchestra in the movement of the body. At another point, Maestro Abreu used the analogy of a flying bird as a metaphor to help teach the movements of conducting hands.

"He said to me, 'Your hand is like a bird. You feel all the air in the palm of your hand and there is the dimension of sound. You are taking the sound that is everywhere. Even if you think it's silent, there is energy. That is harmony and that is sound. And when you are making the movement of the upbeat to start, you are bringing that sound there,' as he gestured lifting his arms in his office. "And this is the way I hold the baton in my hand because it's the body and the wings. And this is the head," as he continued to demonstrate.



1.-2. GUSTAVO CONDUCTING IN WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL
 PHOTO 1 BY DUSTIN DOWNING, PHOTO 2 BY RYAN HUNTER
 3. FRANK GEHRY AND GUSTAVO
 4.-5. GUSTAVO CONDUCTING THE YOUTH SYMPHONY
 OF VENEZUELA
 PHOTOS COURTESY OF L.A. PHILHARMONIC

Maestro Dudamel often conducts major repertoire and signature works like Beethoven and Stravinsky without a music score. He credits Maestro Abreu for this preparation. When asked about his dynamic, performative choreography possibly being memorized, as it pairs seamlessly and harmoniously with the memorized music, Gustavo quickly dismissed the thought.

“No, never. I don’t practice my gestures. I have never practiced my gestures. The thing is, if I prepare everything perfectly, maybe what I have in mind doesn’t go with what the orchestra is expecting. My advice to young conductors is to be flexible, to manage the moment ... The process has to be very natural.”

Additionally, there’s commentary about Maestro Dudamel’s magic when he performs. It’s referred to as a spiritual connection that transforms him. Gustavo did not deny this interpretation. Instead, he recalled a “very important lady in the arts,” who was the head of the Latin American Festival of Theater in Venezuela and a dear friend of Maestro Abreu. After observing Gustavo’s talent as a young man, she declared that he had “duende,” from Federico García Lorca’s essay, “In Search of Duende.” It explores the concept of artistic spirit, or “magic,” that presents itself through a visceral, spontaneous power.

“She told me I have magic. I thought, OK, I’m possessed or something. But it’s true. There is something that goes naturally with my body, with my soul, what I listen to, and what I feel.”

When Gustavo was 18 years old in 1999, he was appointed as the youngest Music Director of the Simón Bolívar Youth Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela. All of the musicians were graduates of the El Sistema program. As the chief conductor, he led the orchestra performing in Venezuela and around the world.

“I had a series of concerts. I remember we played at the U.N. [United Nations].”

Enjoying performing with his friends, he was less motivated to do competitions. But Maestro Abreu had other plans for Gustavo. He felt Gustavo needed competition experience in order for his conducting talents to be seen and recognized internationally.

Years earlier, when he was 11 years old, Gustavo heard a recording of Gustav Mahler’s Fifth Symphony and quickly became a lifelong fan. When the opportunity arose in 2004 for Gustavo, at the age of 23, to enter the prestigious Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition in Bamberg, Germany, Maestro Abreu wanted him to enter. But Gustavo was in Berlin for three months as an assistant conductor to Sir Simon Rattle at the Berlin Philharmonic. Nonetheless, back home in Venezuela, Maestro Abreu filled out the application paperwork.

When Gustavo returned from Berlin, he said, “I told my Maestro I was feeling bad. I need to check with the doctor. I was trying to avoid going back to Germany.”

But Maestro Abreu pressed. It was to be the first time that Gustavo would be leading an internationally acclaimed orchestra as a conductor, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. After two weeks in Venezuela, Gustavo acquiesced.

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"I never pushed myself to say, I've got to do this. I got to win. It's not my personality. I went there to enjoy, to experience the beautiful moment of knowing a wonderful orchestra, and knowing great people."

The outcome dramatically changed Gustavo's career trajectory.

"I passed the first round; my name was there. The second round, I said, well, this looks serious; let's keep going. Then third round, then semifinals, then I'm a finalist. And it was very natural. I never pushed myself, saying I've got to win. But I felt that from my fellow competitors."

Gustavo won and the international community took note. One of the esteemed judges in Bamberg was, at that time, the current Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Maestro Esa-Pekka Salonen. In 2027, he will be returning to the LA Philharmonic as Creative Director, bookending Gustavo Dudamel's tenure.

Maestro Salonen shared, "When I saw him at the Gustav Mahler competition, it was stunning how naturally he connected with the orchestra and how effortlessly music flowed from him. He stepped in front of the Bamberg Orchestra, conducting a professional orchestra for the first time, Symphony No. 5 by Mahler, which is notoriously difficult to conduct, and it just flowed. The musicians [a hundred all older than him] accepted the fact that there was this young Venezuelan guy in front of them, guiding them, who didn't speak much English. It just lined up beautifully. I thought this kind of talent doesn't come across every year. It's more like a generational thing."

Maestro Salonen quickly placed a call to the CEO Deborah Borda, requesting an invitation for this "conducting animal." Soon after,

Gustavo arrived in Los Angeles for the first time at age 24. The pressure was on, but Maestro Abreu had prepared him.

Gustavo explained, "He made me play in the orchestra, to watch the conductors, and to feel what the musicians feel to be conducted. The work of conducting is not only making the orchestra sound good; it's making the orchestra feel good ... Remember that we are creating a sound together. We have the notes; we have the music composed by the geniuses of Beethoven or Mahler, all of them. But we have to reproduce that [sound]. And that is a feeling, a metaphysical process. [The conductor] has to create an environment where it is healthy to create beauty."

For him, the key is about inspiring and motivating the orchestra, adding, "I'm no one without the musicians because my instrument doesn't sound."

"You know how many times these musicians play Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with so many conductors? What can be different in that moment? That is the secret. The secret is how you don't change things. You try to enhance the moments and the spirit of everybody."

That first visit to Los Angeles could have been overwhelming for Gustavo. He was coming from conducting a youth orchestra in Venezuela, and stepping onto the platform to lead one of the top orchestras in the world.

"It was an instant connection ... I was conducting them and the interaction was, at the highest level, artistically friendly. The sharing of my ideas and how they were taking those ideas and making a sound from my ideas felt natural."

“What I find maybe most amazing about him is that, after all these years of fame and success and adulation, he's still an idealist. He believes in the importance of music as a social force, and that's really impressive.”

- Maestro Esa-Pekka Salonen

His United States conducting debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl in September 2005 was met with immediate and overwhelming success. More performances with demanding repertoires at the Walt Disney Concert Hall followed. His graceful and natural strength empowered the enthusiasm, reflecting the genuine admiration from the orchestra and his “charismatic power” with the audiences. The Los Angeles Philharmonic did not waste time. He was appointed Music & Artistic Director, succeeding Maestro Esa-Pekka Salonen, in October 2009 at the age of 27.

In 2007, before Gustavo formally took on his position as Artistic Director, he launched the YOLA program, directly inspired by his own formative experiences with El Sistema. With the dual goal of developing musical proficiency and fostering social change in diverse, underserved communities, it became a key component in negotiations with the LA Philharmonic’s leadership. As they enthusiastically embraced this concept, YOLA has become not only Gustavo’s signature project but also a foundational pillar of the LA Philharmonic’s mission. Together, they erected the Judith and Thomas L. Beckman YOLA Center in 2021, designed by Frank Gehry, located in Inglewood, as YOLA’s first permanent home.

“When you give an opportunity to a young child that is not in the environment of having opportunities, you are not changing the life of one person; you are changing the life of all that surrounds this kid ... It's a lot of circles: his family, his neighborhood, his community. Everything changes. When they see a kid walking with an instrument, they feel proud ... This is the philosophy of YOLA. This is the philosophy of El Sistema. They are transforming their lives and the lives of the people that surround them.”

It's also about one's identity.

“Mother Teresa of Calcutta said the worst thing about being poor is to be no one. And what a beautiful thing when you give a child an instrument. You are giving them an identity. You are giving them a place in society with the most sublime expression of humankind. That is art.”

Gustavo further explained, “If we look pragmatically and we open our mind and our soul, what we see are people producing beauty. Whoever you are, whatever you think, wherever you come from, you are united in that moment because you are sharing energy at the same time. What a beautiful thing. This is what happens on stage.”

He believes it's similar to a violin and a trombone, a flute and a tuba. They all come together, and there is harmony.

“I think the world right now is not in harmony. It's in a cacophony. It's noisy. But noisy in cacophony is also harmony. We [need to] really open our ears, open our souls, open our minds. We will see the beautiful chords that are inside. But we need more of this.”

This is what connected Gustavo to the love of his life, his wife, actress and director, María Valverde. They met while working on the film, “The Liberator.” She was the star; he composed the film’s soundtrack. Years later, their friendship developed into a romance, and in 2017 they were married in a private ceremony.

From the very beginning, they shared “beautiful, deep talks about art, about the concept of ‘viendo la belleza del arte, looking at the beauty of art.’” He expounded, “This concept goes beyond what we can understand about art. But by opening the paths for opportunity, the younger generations can contemplate, share, work together and understand that community connections create harmony.”

The Dudamel Foundation, which María co-chairs, instills the belief that art and music are fundamental human rights. Capable of fostering a more just, peaceful and inclusive society, music is a universal language that transcends barriers and speaks directly to the soul. Their foundation, which is a part of a global movement, not only aims to give every child the chance to fulfill personal dreams through music; it also sees music as the catalyst for societal transformation, inclusion, empowerment and lasting change.

“What I find maybe most amazing about him is that, after all these years of fame and success and adulation, he's still an idealist. He believes in the importance of music as a social force, and that's really impressive,” said Maestro Salonen.



GUSTAVO AND HIS WIFE, MARÍA VALVERDE
PHOTOS COURTESY OF L.A. PHILHARMONIC

Margot McKinney.

THE FINEST JEWELS



THE PENINSULA BEVERLY HILLS

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Our time together was evaporating. We ventured toward his bookshelves, and I spotted his first Grammy, for Best Orchestra Performance in 2011, resting prominently as well as his most recent Grammy, one of three won in 2025, awarded for his conducting of the LA Philharmonic. There was a photo of him giving a speech at the White House honoring his friend José Andrés accepting the Medal of Freedom, and other prizes and awards from world leaders such as the President of Chile, and the President of France.

He grabbed a small, weathered book off the shelf. “This was my Maestro’s, his agenda book from 1978,” a significant treasure from which Maestro Dudamel has modeled his life’s mission. He began to thumb through the pages of his heirloom. “See, he wrote, ‘This is done. This is what I have to do,’” pointing to the Spanish multicolored, handwritten entries. He took a moment, reading, clearly moved.

There were other memorabilia from some of his trailblazing concerts, which begged the question about future music collaborations. He offered that he has many.

“I was with Jimmy Page, of Led Zeppelin, the other day. It would be a dream for me to do something with him. Radiohead is a group that I admire and I love. And many Latin artists I would love to work with. That was my home. I was listening from salsa, to rock, to classical. There was no border or a wall that separated music ... Music is one, with different styles. It’s an expression of humans. That’s it.”

Which music does he choose when he is with María? He chuckled, “A lot of music.” Then he changed the direction of the question. “Family for me is the most important thing. And that is what provides me inspiration. I think of María, my son Martin, my parents ...” as he grabbed a photo of his son.

“He’s a teenager now. He’s wonderful. I love to go with him to eat and talk. I learn a lot. I think every time is my favorite when I’m sharing it with him.”

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Martin lives in Madrid. Gustavo confirmed it is his home as well.

“Yes, Madrid and Los Angeles.” His answer opened the door. Is he really not saying goodbye?

“Under his leadership, we’ve become a model for what a 21st-century orchestra can be: boldly creative, fiercely relevant, and deeply connected to its community.” - Jason Subotky, Chairman of the Board of the Los Angeles Philharmonic

Gustavo has said, “When a finale is approaching, you can feel it. Whether an orchestral piece concludes with a bang or a whimper, its ending is rarely ambiguous There’s only one thing a final movement, third act, and proper goodbye will always have in common—they are never easy to get right.”

He has referred to Los Angeles as “home” in the media. He has also shared his intentions to continue to perform with the LA Phil in some capacity each year going forward.

“I’d like to see this as Gustavo not leaving, just changing the nature of his role in the life of the LA Philharmonic. He will be coming back. It will be everybody’s highest priority to see him back in LA often. It’s not a farewell; it’s just a transition to another role. This is a relationship that will keep growing and deepening. I know Gustavo is going to be coming back as long as he’s around. And that thought gives me a lot of joy ... Gustavo feels like family to me. We are very close. It’s a great relationship, and I’m very, very proud of it,” shared Maestro Esa-Pekka Salonen.

After 17 years of the Gustavo Dudamel era, he leaves a legacy of purposeful, transformational, artistic leadership, explosive growth and impactful community engagement, and a prestigiously historic elevation of the LA Philharmonic’s international profile. With more than 50% of the orchestra members coming from the Dudamel era, his visionary, risk-taking approach and deep connections with the musicians will ensure his influence will resonate in Los Angeles for decades to come.

“We are closing a chapter, and we are opening a new chapter. It’s very important for our institution to evolve and to be flexible to new things. But it’s beautiful to see that we are closing a chapter in such a beautiful state. It’s working perfectly ... As I told the orchestra, they are the most important [part]. Whoever is at the podium, that is OK. In the end, it’s the LA Philharmonic. And that is why I’m so happy and proud of being part of this family.”

Gustavo has been having these discussions with his musicians during his orchestra rehearsals.

“We talked about how this time has transformed us. It’s an evolution that is very powerful. This relation will never end.”

Still, it’s hard to close the chapter. Maestro Dudamel offered a Colombian poet who described it best.

“A century in an instant,” he said. “Everything is so beautiful and intense that a hundred years passes in an instant ... It’s what I feel. It has been 20 years coming regularly to Los Angeles. It feels like this year. It was yesterday, one hour ago. It happened because of love, a century in an instant ... Love for the people of Los Angeles, love for the orchestra, love to all of these communities. It’s their generosity ... I’m so grateful.” ●



GUSTAVO AND LISA FRIEDMAN BLOCH
PHOTO COURTESY OF L.A. PHILHARMONIC

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GUCCI
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HERMÈS
HUBLOT
JAEGER-LECOULTRE
JIMMY CHOO
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Academy Award-winning actor Benicio del Toro is the co-owner of high-end brand Perro Verde Mezcal, handcrafted by a fifth-generation family of Oaxacan mezcaleros for over 120 years, but he has taken this endeavor a stylish step further. Co-founded by Juan Santiago Rodriguez and Mariana Carvajal, the Colombian-born, L.A.-based couple reshaping luxury in the spirits world, and mezcal producer Don Porfirio Chagoya, they are offering three expressions: Espadin, Blend, and Tobasiche, bottled in fashionable green-hued glass vessels with wooden stoppers, that would look perfect on any home bar cart.

“I connected with Perro Verde because it embodies the spirit of imagination, craft, and heritage. And it tastes pretty good too,” del Toro told the Courier.

Carvajal taps into her background in fashion and time spent in Paris to bring a minimalist elegance with the sculptural bottle design—an homage to French apothecaries. Rodriguez, who comes from the floral world, approaches mezcal like a botanist and storyteller, with a deep reverence for the land, the agave, and the generations behind its craft.

Launched earlier this year with several parties in Beverly Hills at the Horseshoe House and at the Hotel Bel-Air, fans include Formula 1 champion Jenson Button, actor Kevin Connolly, designer Marc Ange, and producer Rick Yorn, among others.

Perro Verde Mezcal was inspired by the colloquial Spanish and Latin American expression “Más raro que un perro verde,” which translates to “rarer than a green dog,” a nod to its extraordinary taste, which spans from yellow apples to lemongrass. With prices starting at \$72 up to \$325, it’s also available at Wally’s in Beverly Hills and Brentwood Fine Wines, or for cocktails at Honor Bar on South Beverly Drive and Eataly Century City, to name a few. perroverdemezcal.com

From Jalisco to Rodeo Drive

For a true born-in-Beverly Hills spirits success story, Rodeo de las Aguas Tequila, produced by Doheny Road Spirits, was conceived locally by Tony Garcia and producer-director-writer Jefery Levy (his wife Pam Levy co-founded Juicy Couture clothing brand), who lives in talk show host Merv Griffin’s former estate on Doheny Road.

After meeting in a wine tasting group about 25 years ago, Tony and Jef decided after many discussions on the history of the area—the brand name pays homage to Maria Rita Valdez and her El Rancho Rodeo de las Aguas (The Ranch of the Gathering of Waters), a 4,500-acre expanse of fertile hills and natural springs dating back to 1838 in Beverly Hills—and the abundant water source, to launch a tequila company. After researching and tasting tequila brands during the COVID-19 pandemic, they started working hand-in-hand with master tequilero Álvaro Ramírez and CEO Enrique Balderas.

“I just took everything I learned from wine,” recalls Garcia, who has traveled extensively in Burgundy, France and Piedmont, Italy. “The French term ‘terroir’ [in this case rooted in the red soil from mineral-rich highlands of Southern Los Altos de Jalisco] can also be applied to the agave fields, along with the highlands and the lowlands. There’s a difference in water and where it’s produced. Tequila from the highlands is more premium,” he added.

That approach has clearly paid off as the brand’s five expressions, which start with a Blanco at a \$44 price point, Reposado, Añejo, Cristalino, and 5-year extra Añejo, at \$225, have collectively garnered 52 medals, and counting, including Platinum, Double Gold, Silver, Bronze, Best of Show, Best in Class, Innovation Award and Design awards.

Can’t decide? The brand has launched a mini bottle set of all the expressions that would make a perfect stocking stuffer or hostess gift for \$39.99 and is available at Wally’s or Total Wine. rodeodelasaguas.com

CELEBRITY SPIRITS CONTINUES ON PAGE 54



LEFT: BENICIO DEL TORO FOR PERRO VERDE
RIGHT: PERRO VERDE ENSAMBLE
PHOTOS COURTESY OF PERRO VERDE

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"I think retail has been really challenging for a lot of other industries within retail, but ours has continued to grow," Dowdy said. "I think during hard times, people find joy in spending on kids and still having that outlet to shop. So, we've filled that need during the past few years of ups and downs with the economy."

A few blocks west, at 9631 Brighton Way, stepping inside the Bonpoint boutique feels like crossing the Atlantic without a passport. As one of the few French couture brands that's dedicated almost exclusively to children, it's known for timeless silhouettes in whisper-soft cottons and blossoming patterns. Since its inception in 1975, Bonpoint has collaborated with British design house Liberty, using their iconic floral prints and signature Tana Lawn patterned cotton fabrics.

"Our attention to detail, from hand embroidery to the use of the softest of fabrics, the clothes are all designed with the children's comfort in mind, while also maintaining couture standards," Daniel Davidson, area manager for the Beverly Hills Bonpoint store, told the Courier.

Parents who shop there want their kids to look polished without feeling overdressed and look for pieces that transition easily from every day to special occasions.

Each collection emphasizes a blend of timeless elegance, playful creativity, and luxury. With Bonpoint celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, the current capsule is a tribute to the brand's heritage.

Recently, styles have been modernized with embellishments, such as long-sleeve tops or T-shirts with ribbon details that add a playful three-dimensional element. Davidson noted that parents favor more ornate items that showcase Bonpoint's artistry over a simple sweater.

While they rarely make clothing in dark colors, the solid black wool "Jelma" dress has been hugely popular this season. With a ruffled neckline, a delicate cherry eyelet pattern on top, and a pleated godet skirt, it's ideal for a wintery special occasion. The dress is styled with black patent Mary Jane shoes, a black velvet bow hairband, and a silver flower-shaped crossbody bag to complete the polished ensemble.

The \$625 "Josiane" dress sold out almost immediately for girls. It features a warm raspberry flower print on Liberty fabric and decorative gold piping. Romantic and vintage-inspired, the dress reflects the signature Bonpoint style—a blend of French elegance and timeless Liberty charm.

For boys, the most sought-after items include a \$295 cotton and wool crew-neck sweater with a raised Paris Archives inscription on the front and a \$425 color-blocked sweater with a nostalgic cinema design woven on.

As soon as new merchandise is received, Davidson will put together outfits and text photos of looks to his roster of regular and high-profile clients. "They'll heart the photos they like, and I'll send things out without them even coming into the store. They can try on the items with their kids at home and then send back whatever doesn't work. We send out tens of thousands of dollars of consignments to each client, and they'll get a one-week turnaround." To make the process as easy and seamless as possible, they have couriers drop off and pick up whatever is being returned. "Customer service is huge."

Bonpoint has also collaborated with brands like Golden Goose and Veja for sneakers, and in October released a curated assortment of pieces with Gigi Hadid's knitwear line, Guest in Residence. In February, they are launching a limited collection with Porsche, including T-shirts, hats, bandanas, cardigans, and even a leather coat for boys and girls. For babies, the Porsche collaboration will primarily consist of T-shirts and beanies.

If Bonpoint is understated refinement, Monnalisa, at 338 North Beverly Drive, is joyful exuberance. The Italian label's Beverly Hills boutique bursts with bold florals, rhinestone studs, and playful couture that transforms every day into a celebration.



BONPOINT JUAN CREWNECK SWEATER WITH PARIS ARCHIVE EMBROIDERY, JAGGER ORGANIC COTTON KHAKI DENIM PANTS, AND BONPOINT X GOLDEN GOOSE CHILDREN'S SNEAKERS
PHOTO COURTESY OF BONPOINT

The global brand originated in Italy in the 1960s and has operated its Beverly Hills store for almost 15 years. The store offers unique collections and maintains a family-owned identity with a second-generation leading design. The brand caters to a wide age range, from newborns to teenagers, focusing on quality materials and singular designs.

"Our clients like the brand's exclusivity," Monnalisa store manager Lana Andreic told the Courier. "We're not sold in the department stores, and people really appreciate it when they come in and know these are things that they cannot find anywhere else."

The brand collaborates with Disney every year, with different characters featured on the clothing each season. For Pre-Fall 2025, Stitch, from the Lilo & Stitch franchise, appears on everything from striped sweaters to tulle dresses, as well as Minnie and Mickey Mouse.

For the Fall-Winter 2025-26 collection, the main print is designed with colorful gemstones and crystal embellishments that can be easily mixed and matched. For autumn, Monnalisa interpreted the season's mood with teddy bear motifs and warm brown hues.

According to Andreic, their most popular items are tulle dresses for girls ages 2 to 12. The garments feature bodices with layered, ruffled short sleeves that add a romantic flair, and tiered skirts with ruffles, adding volume and movement. A slim belt at the waist with a small jewel detail completes the look. "This is our iconic style, which we have every season, and the only things that change are the print and color. They are super, super popular for birthday parties and special occasions. Girls just love tulle, and it's all lined with 100% cotton. Everything that touches the skin is cotton."

The store carries a \$355 velvet dress for infants with a Peter Pan collar, three decorative rosettes at the waist, and delicate pleats falling below to create movement for a more sophisticated, formal look.

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While the brand's baby collection is always slightly different from the girls', many clients request matching outfits for their newborn and toddler. For the Spring-Summer 2026 season, the same garments will be carried for babies up to 6 years old.

"One of our best local clients, her daughter is now 22," Andreic said. "Then she had three nieces, so she came back here to shop for them. People are really loyal to the brand."

Venturing down to 179 South Beverly Drive, Auntie Barbara's General Store is more than a shop for kids; it's a Beverly Hills institution. Having been on the street for over 50 years, the boutique is where luxury meets nostalgia. The store carries books, toys, jewelry, purses, and clothing sourced from Europe and all over the United States for newborns up to size 14.

The shop's assortment blends practicality with panache: special-occasion dresses alongside everyday wear, traditional layette items, and gifts. Unlike the mono-brand flagships on Rodeo Drive, Auntie Barbara's thrives on variety, pulling from a curated mix of labels. While it may not command the sky-high price tags of Gucci, its value lies in curation, customer loyalty, and community identity.

"We carry it all, from a sweater for \$48 and one for \$100," longtime owner Barbara Bartman told the Courier. "You can pretty much get anything you need from a rattle to a fur coat."

Bartman curates everything in the store and ensures that the fabrics and materials of each garment are of high quality. "I first ask myself, is this itchy?" Bartman said. "If a kid puts it on and doesn't want to wear it, then we'll sit on it. Seams must be in the right place, and it has to be super soft."

One of the store's most popular brands is a Spanish line called 1+ in the Family, which Bartman orders a year in advance. With a minimalist and modern aesthetic, the line is known for wrap onesies, button-front cardigans, drawstring pants, and slouchy overalls in neutral palettes and unfussy silhouettes for babies and kids ages 0 to 4.

"This generation wants everything to be gender neutral, which I think is the most awful thing in the world," Bartman said. "They only want their kids to be in beige."

On the wall, the shop displays printed vintage-inspired T-shirts for boys from Something Corporate with phrases like "Someone Famous" and "Sky Ya Later" printed on the front. Beneath them, folded shirts and sweatshirts in earthy tones are neatly stacked, in styles that mix sporty and fun.

For girls, shoes are arranged on top of round tables with styles like mesh Mary Janes with buckle straps that mirror the trendy Alaïa women's ballet flats, and denim blue slip-on sandals with a cutout "H" design, similar to the Hermes Chypre shoe.

"We got into Labubu's too, because I had to," Bartman said. "I've even got someone in New York making dresses with them on it. I'm not crazy for them, but I don't always buy what I like. I have to keep up with and buy what kids want."

Of everything in her store, her favorite items are decorative woven storage boxes with playful designs that she imports from Europe. They are all under \$200, come in three sizes, and feature colorful, whimsical scenes embroidered on them.

On Rodeo Drive, the icons of high fashion have extended their reach to even the youngest clientele. The children's sections at stores like Gucci and Dolce & Gabbana are not afterthoughts tucked in the back of the flagships, but gleam with the same grandeur as their adult counterparts, only scaled to miniature proportions. At Gucci, the kids' department is designed like a playful theater, with sweeping red velvet curtains framing the entrance. Inside, the mini mannequins are styled in coordinated, polished kids' wear looks with Gucci's signature pattern, and shelves are stacked with GG-printed \$1,350 backpacks and \$1,100 tote bags that feel both collectible and practical. As part of the 2025 Cruise children's collection, many feature fanciful motifs of cats, dogs, and mushrooms designed by South Korean painter Naon Jeong.

Heritage motifs are reimagined for a younger generation. For parents looking to splurge on items that never go out of style, tiny \$560 horsebit loafers for boys and girls are a classic fan favorite.

"I literally only buy it for a wedding or special event, because in two seconds, your Gucci dress has a throw-up stain on it that never comes out," Oren Katz Paskover, mother of two, told the Courier.

On Via Rodeo, the Dolce & Gabbana children's section is designed with the same bold energy. It has modern lacquer surfaces and mirrored walls and shelving, giving it a mini boutique feel within the larger store. Racks of clothing decorated with the brand's signature florals bloom vibrantly across party dresses for girls and \$455 cotton poplin rompers for babies, alongside simple jersey dresses emblazoned with the Dolce & Gabbana logo.

"I look for things that'll last as long as possible—babies grow so fast, so you want to maximize the value if you're spending on it," Stephanie Roach told the Courier. "Also, they spit up or have accidents on everything!"

For boys, the color palette is more monochromatic, with black and white prints that channel the brand's unmistakable baroque sensibility. Here, classic short-sleeve crewnecks are elevated with Sicilian maiolica tile patterns and paired with matching Bermuda shorts.

Even Amiri, known primarily for menswear, has expanded to the kids' market and carries a small selection of children's clothing and accessories at the store on Rodeo. Their most popular items here are their \$150 "Core Logo" T-shirts, which have Amiri printed on the front, and the sold-out \$170 "Ma Quad Scribble" T-shirt with their signature monogram reimagined in a colorful radial burst. Parents who shop here are looking for logos and street style.

Beverly Hills children's stores showcase a range of kids' luxury fashion, where quiet luxury and maximalist glamour can be found on the same street. From the refinement of Bonpoint to the exuberant florals of Dolce & Gabbana, to Amiri's street-luxury edge and Auntie Barbara's community roots, the offerings are diverse. Together, these boutiques and flagship houses prove that style in this city begins early. ●



DOLCE & GABBANA NEWBORN SHOES
PHOTO BY BIANCA HEYWARD

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#ONLYONRODEO



Nov. 28

“The Thing With Feathers” dissects the world-shattering grief of a father (Benedict Cumberbatch) when his wife suddenly dies and he is left to raise his two sons. Trying desperately to cope, his grief appears to him as a crow, the metaphorical representation of where he is stuck and where he must go to help his children.

Dec. 3

“Oh. What. Fun.” for everyone but mom. Overwhelmed by Christmas preparations and activities that never end, Claire Clauster feels underappreciated by her brood, who take everything for granted. After all, no one ever talks about Mrs. Claus, and she probably does all the work. When she goes MIA, they finally realize how amazingly she did everything and how little they appreciated it. Without Claire (a luminous Michelle Pfeiffer), there is no Christmas. Also starring Felicity Jones, Danielle Brooks, Denis Leary and Eva Longoria, to name just a few.

Dec. 5

“The Secret Agent” is Brazil’s submission for the Best International Film Oscar and the most awarded film this year at the Cannes Film Festival. It tells the story of Armando, a former teacher, with a mysterious background, who is on the run from a corrupt CEO with a personal grudge against him. The powerful executive hires assassins, some of whom may work for the junta and the police, to kill him. Mixing horror with suspense and political intrigue, the film travels backward and forward in time to tell Armando’s story. Wagner Moura (Armando) won Best Actor at Cannes. Writer/director Kleber Mendonça Filho won Best Director.

“Five Nights at Freddy’s 2” finds Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza about to reopen. The video game animatronic characters are about to raise more havoc. Starring Elizabeth Lail, Josh Henderson and Matthew Lillard, it’s “Five Nights” all over again.

“Fackham Hall,” look out “Downton Abbey.” The lives of Lord and Lady Davenport go south when their daughter marries her wastrel cousin, and their daughter begins a clandestine romance with a petty thief who has ensconced himself in the manor house. Competing with the local vicar for her hand, he is soon framed for murder. It’s all very 19th-century fun and who couldn’t use a bit of aristocratic shenanigans? Starring Damian Lewis, Jimmy Carr (who also wrote the screenplay), Katherine Waterston and Thomasin McKenzie, it’s oh sooo British.

“100 Nights of Hero” is a reimagining of the Arab tale “A Thousand and One Nights.” Left alone in her husband’s castle, Cherry is being courted by their houseguest Manfred, who has bet her husband that he can seduce her in 100 nights. Aware of the wager, Cherry, with the help of her faithful servant Hero, devises a plan to avert his attentions by regaling him with stories from Hero’s arsenal. Based on the popular graphic novel, it builds a fairy tale with deadly stakes.

Dec. 12

“Hamnet,” based on the bestselling novel by Maggie O’Farrell, speaks to the love of Shakespeare and his wife Ann, as they navigate the devastating loss of their son Hamnet, whose name would live forever as Hamlet. Directed by Chloé Zhao, Academy Award winner for “Nomadland,” it stars Paul Mescal and Jessie Buckley.

“Ella McCay” brings back director James L. Brooks’ refreshing comedic touch to the screen. Families! Can’t live with them, can’t live without them. Ella (Emma Mackey) has a doozy of a family, and their hilarious dysfunction only increases when she is elected governor of the state. Also starring Jamie Lee Curtis, Woody Harrelson and Jack Lowden, Julie Kavner even shows up without that blue beehive she wore as Marge Simpson.

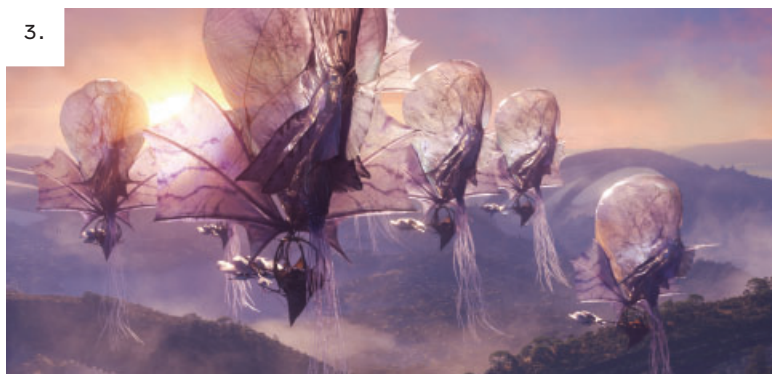
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1. WAGNER MOURA IN “THE SECRET AGENT”

PHOTO COURTESY OF MK2 FILMS

2. JESSIE BUCKLEY AND PAUL MESCAL IN “HAMNET”

PHOTO BY AGATA GRZYBOWSKA COURTESY OF FOCUS FEATURES

3. “AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH”

PHOTO COURTESY OF 20 CENTURY STUDIOS

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3.

Dec. 19

“Avatar: Fire and Ash” is the third in James Cameron’s “Avatar” franchise. Expect outstanding effects and magical creatures. Will they survive the invading human armies? The soon-to-follow Part IV is an indication that they will. The stellar cast of actors includes the returning Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldña and Sigourney Weaver. Michelle Yeoh plays a human scientist, with Oona Chaplin as the villain.

“The Housemaid,” based on the bestselling novel, is a thriller with lots of twists and turns, too plot-revealing to divulge. The book was a killer, literally and figuratively, and the casting is pitch perfect, with Sydney Sweeney playing the newly hired maid with a big secret and Amanda Seyfried as her wealthy employer who isn’t what she appears to be.

“The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants” returns for a sea adventure with pirates. This fourth big-screen addition to the franchise is sure to please the fans of this long-running TV series.

“Father Mother Sister Brother” relates family dysfunction through three related stories, all about the relationship of adult siblings to each other and their parents. Expect absurdist comedy from writer/director Jim Jarmusch, starring Adam Driver, Tom Waits, Charlotte Rampling, Cate Blanchett and more.

“Is This Thing On?” is loosely based on the life of British comedian John Bishop. Bradley Cooper directs from a script he wrote with Will Arnett and Mark Chappell that details the end of Alex’s marriage to Tess and the beginning of his new adventure. It stars Will Arnett and Laura Dern, with appearances by Cooper, Amy Sedaris and Sean Hayes.

Dec. 25

“Anaconda” is the very definition of a reimagination. The previous two Anaconda movies were horror films. This time around, led by Steve Zahn, Paul Rudd and Jack Black, all of whom know their way around absurdity, it’s comedy all the way as this trio decides to make their own “Anaconda” movie. Traveling to the jungle, they run into one problem after another, including a giant, very hungry, man-eating anaconda.

“Marty Supreme” is an unlikely movie about an unlikely man, Marty Reismara, a world-famous table tennis player trying to make his way through life when everyone else doubts his path. Starring Timothée Chalamet and Gwyneth Paltrow, they bring the flamboyant Marty to life.

“The Choral” is a look into the life of the villagers in a small Yorkshire town through the prism of the town choir. World War I has already scooped up many of the town’s young men, some members of the choral group, and its choral director. The appointment of a new director is controversial because of his ties to the hated Germans, but they need him to keep the choir running and get ready for their winter show.

1. TYLER OKONMA AND TIMOTHÉE CHALAMET IN “MARTY SUPREME”
PHOTO COURTESY OF A24

2. LUKA SABBAT AND INDYA MOORE IN “FATHER MOTHER SISTER BROTHER”
PHOTO COURTESY OF MUBI

3. RALPH FIENNES IN “THE CHORAL”
PHOTO COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES CLASSICS



LEE BYUNG-HUN IN "NO OTHER CHOICE"

PHOTO COURTESY OF NEON

"No Other Choice" is a Korean black comedy thriller about a man who loses his longtime position at a paper company and determines to find another, even if it means eliminating the competition, literally and figuratively. Winner of the International Award at the Toronto Film Festival, it is directed by Park Chan-wook and based on the Donald Westlake novel, "The Axe."

"Song Sung Blue" features Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson, down-and-out singers looking for a break. That break comes when they start a Neil Diamond tribute band called Lightning and Thunder. Together they find romance, heartache and success. It is based on the documentary by Greg Kohs about Mike and Claire Sardina.

December TBD

"In the Grey," release date still to be announced, is Guy Ritchie's newest action thriller. Jake Gyllenhaal and Henry Cavill are extraction specialists assigned to rescue a translator trapped behind enemy lines. Eliza Gonzalez also stars with Rosamund Pike and Fisher Stevens in support. There is no release date yet and Ritchie has been famously silent about details.

This is just a sampling of what's coming. There will be something for everyone as we approach the holidays. Head on down to the nearest multiplex, grab some popcorn and a soda and treat yourself to a movie on the big screen. It's a respite from the holiday preparations and fraught family visits.

Happy Holidays and Happy Viewing. ●



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“The ages between 13 and 26 are totally different from either a child or a geriatric, and there needs to be some provision made in the hospital system for that age group,” said Daltrey. “They need to be amongst their peers, and their mental health and social needs need to be met. You take care of that age group; you will build a far better society.”

Daltrey quickly became interested in launching an organization similar to Teenage Cancer Trust in the United States. He hadn’t gotten far with the idea when, in 2009, someone knocked on his dressing room door before a show at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville.

“I opened it, and there was this young woman standing there, and she said, ‘Can I talk to you?’” Daltrey said.

The young woman said she had a brain tumor, and that she was familiar with Daltrey’s work at the Teenage Cancer Trust. If she survived, she said, she wanted to help him get the same thing started in America.

After that, Daltrey said, “It all came together relatively quickly.” He had recently become friends with Rothstein, who lives and works in Beverly Hills, and asked for her help launching the program. At the time, Rothstein had four young children and a full-time job at Merrill Private Wealth Management as one of the top-ranking female financial advisors in America.

“Roger had been trying for years to get somebody to say yes to him to bring the program to America,” said Rothstein. “I kept saying to him, ‘Roger, I’m busy.’ And he kept saying to me, ‘You’re not too busy for this.’”

As it turned out, Rothstein had a personal connection to the cause. At the age of 22, her brother passed away from a highly aggressive form of brain cancer.

“He died right at the beginning of his life,” she said, “and I watched how it affected my parents.”

Daltrey then took Rothstein to visit a hospital and meet young patients. Once she saw the need, she couldn’t say no.

“The word ‘yes’ came out of my mouth,” she said, “and so it began.”

Rothstein brought on Simon Davies, who at the time was running the Teenage Cancer Trust. Together, they assembled a board and began growing the organization. Much of their early work involved meeting with hospital representatives, explaining the idea behind TCA and endeavoring to build partnerships.

In the years since, TCA has partnered with 72 hospitals in the U.S., including some of the biggest names in cancer care: Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, MD Anderson Cancer Center and more. TCA’s services have reached over 200,000 adolescents and young adults, and their modules and programming have become the standard of care for the age group they serve.

“I have an active board,” said Rothstein. “There are 13 board members that all participate in developing and pushing this charity down the road. This is a village of people that have worked to make the mission of TCA as successful as it has become.”

Now, hospitals interested in creating programs for teens and young adults often seek the organization out. Bringing together multidisciplinary teams that include representatives from pediatric and medical oncology, which are often siloed inside hospitals, TCA’s expert providers collaborate to ensure that young patients’ physical, emotional, social and psychological needs are met.

“Teens and young adults are in a critical period of their development where they’re becoming independent from their families, or they’re starting their own families,” said Jackie Casillas, a pediatric oncologist and a health services researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the first hospital to partner with TCA. “They may be in high school, looking forward to college and working or at a job, and all of that can be disrupted by the cancer diagnosis.”



JUDD APATOW, JORDAN KAPLAN AND REBECCA ROTHSTEIN AT THE BACKYARD CONCERT
PHOTO BY CRAIG WESTON

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Alec Kupelian was one of those people. Kupelian, 31, was nearing the end of his freshman year of college at the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2014 when he drove home to Los Angeles to take a friend to her high school prom. He planned to be in town for one night before returning to college.

For several months, Kupelian had been experiencing pain in his leg. But like most people his age, he assumed it would go away on its own.

His father, an oncologist, thought differently. After taking one look at his son upon Alec's arrival home, Kupelian's father took him into the hospital for an MRI.

From there, everything changed.

"Saturday was prom," Kupelian said. "Sunday, I had an MRI. Monday, I had a biopsy. Tuesday was my port placement, and by Wednesday, I started chemo."

Kupelian was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a type of cancer that often spreads to the lungs and bones. He was 19 at the time and spent a year getting chemotherapy and radiation at UCLA. While there, he became involved with TCA, which at that time had a physical space in the hospital for teens and young adults, including a lounge where young people could hang out together as they would outside the hospital.

"To have people who understood what I was going through during treatment and could laugh about it with me in a time where laughing is sometimes hard to come by was incredible," said Kupelian.

Kupelian and a friend bonded over their IV poles, which they named Earl and Steve.

"They were so chatty, and they just loved to have conversations," he said with a laugh. "There are things that only the people going through it can understand and connect on."

The importance of this social network, said Sullivan, cannot be overstated.

"Seeing that they're not alone, that there's a community that supports them and that they can move forward and life is going to be beautiful, there's still so much opportunity, is critical," she said.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, more cancer care has become remote. To that end, TCA put together a teen and young adult advisory group to discuss ways to bring young people together, whether online or in person. The advisory group worked with TCA to build a website and began making videos, including interviews with young people who have cancer diagnoses or are in their survivorship stage.

"We started with the bricks and mortar, but we really had to evolve upon that, because we need to bring the program where the patients are at," Casillas said.

Kupelian is one of many TCA patients who have maintained those



ALEC KUPELIAN WAS TREATED FOR EWING'S SARCOMA AT UCLA
PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEC KUPELIAN

close friendships well past his time in the hospital.

"I still have friends from treatment," he said. "I got married this last year, and one of my friends from treatment offered to have my wedding at their house for free."

At the beginning of a new partnership, staff from TCA lend their support to staff from the hospital to identify needs and strategize what a teen and young adult program might look like, since all U.S. hospitals function differently. From there, hospitals that want to pursue a program further may apply for a grant from TCA to help fund staff such as nurse navigators, social workers, program managers or mental health specialists.

Since its inception, TCA has provided 49 grants, funding 85 positions in 35 cities throughout the country.

A critical element of care for this age group is also fertility education and preservation.

"Patients may not be thinking about having a child right now—say they were diagnosed when they were 18—but you do want to make sure they have all options for their future," said Casillas.

In addition to its grantmaking programs, TCA offers ongoing training, education, resources and connections for its existing partners. Those include monthly webinars for health care providers, access to advisory panels and ongoing support from TCA staff.

Recently, the organization launched Play It Back, a program that pairs cancer patients and survivors with a music producer. Together, they work for six months to a year writing songs and lyrics and producing their own music.

"They meet other young people from all across the country who are equally passionate about music and about music production," said Sullivan. "It really becomes such a therapeutic way for them to move forward."

Daltrey said he would like to see more individuals in the music industry give back to the age group that pays their bills.

"The music industry itself needs to give, and start to think about this, because they haven't been quite as generous as they should be," he said. "We need a little bit more support from the big music companies, so let's give them a kick."

His greatest hope for TCA, he said, is to have an adolescent and young adult program in every hospital in the U.S.

"I would like that to be available to everyone who needs it in America," he said, "all across the country." ●



KENLI MATTUS, A PRODUCER AND THE DIRECTOR OF TCA'S PLAY IT BACK PROGRAM, WITH TCA PARTICIPANT NATHAN HOOPER
PHOTO COURTESY TCA

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Vegas: Formula 1 (F1) Nov. 20-23, 2026

Public charter service JSX has expanded routes from its private terminal near Hollywood Burbank Airport that will have you at the racetrack with ease and zero airport hassles. Once you arrive, stay at the luxury five-star Wynn Las Vegas with new dining spots such as the iconic Sartiano's Italian Steakhouse from New York, or head "next door" to The Venetian for the new Michelin-starred Cote Korean Steakhouse from Miami and New York with curated artwork by Damien Hirst and design by David Rockwell. For more meat, The Palazzo opened a new 20,000-square-foot Bazaar Meat by José Andrés offering a tableside martini cart and a special illuminating chocolate dome dessert, Sphere Graffiti, with a mallet to break it open, revealing an assortment of sweet treats. "It's almost more Vegas than Vegas!" shared chef Andrés about the new spot. The Venetian Resort is the only place fans can get the full experience of Sphere with concert and hotel packages, plus preferred seating.

Miami: Art Basel and Design Miami Dec. 5-7, 2026

During this busy time, most activities take place in the Miami Design District or South Beach. As the leading international art fair in the Americas, Art Basel Miami Beach welcomes 284 premier galleries from 43 countries and territories across the Americas, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. At this same time, Design Miami celebrates its 20th anniversary of creating a global forum for collectible design.

For a prime (and relaxing position) stay at the Four Seasons Hotel at The Surf Club in Miami Beach. It is located in a historic 1930s mansion property, with modern suites and sweeping ocean views that will make you feel far from the fray when you need to recharge. The Champagne Bar is great for drinks before delicious fresh pasta at Lido, and Thomas Keller also has a restaurant on the property with a bar and live jazz. ●



TOP LEFT: WINNERS STAGE AT THE BELLAGIO AFTER F1 2024

MIDDLE LEFT: CHEF DAVID CHANG AND MARIO CARBONE ON DAY 4 OF F1 VEGAS 2024

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MGM

BOTTOM LEFT AND RIGHT: FOUR SEASONS HOTEL AT SURF BEACH, MIAMI
PHOTOS COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS AT THE SURF CLUB

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Not Your Granddad's Rye

The most surprising brand launch of recent note has been the Beverly Spirits Beverly High Rye, which is catching on with a younger demographic. It was founded by 30-something local Andrew Borenzweig—who “fell in love” with rye while working at Drake’s whiskey company, Virginia Black, when he was just 20 years old. The young entrepreneur set out to create a rye that was not “too rough” but still harnessing that spicy flavor and infusing some of the richness while balancing it with a little bit of sweetness that you find in a bourbon.

The blend has struck a chord. In just a few short years, his rye has quickly been featured in specialty cocktails in some of the hottest restaurants and bars in Beverly Hills. These range from Funke to Cipriani (Beverly High Rye is used in the house Manhattan), The Grill on the Alley’s “Beverly Manhattan,” The Beverly Hills Hotel Polo Lounge, the Beverly Wilshire, a Four Seasons Hotel, and Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills, along with Erewhon for holiday gifting (\$64.99 for the original expression).

The brand has also created a special blend for The Beverly Hilton Hotel’s 70th anniversary. “The Beverly Hilton has such a special history,” Borenzweig told the Courier. “We wanted to honor that legacy of all of the celebrations that have happened at this hotel over the years.” The team took one of their signature blends, The Beverly Reserve, which is 60% straight bourbon, 40% straight rye, and bottled it at 100 proof, just for The Beverly Hilton. The result is a rich blend that is perfect for sipping neat. It can be purchased at the bar or delivered to a room as an amenity for \$270 per bottle.

For a limited time, The Beverly Hilton Reserve will also be featured on the Decades drinks menu at CIRCA 55 Restaurant + Lounge, with signature cocktails crafted by award-winning bartender and author Jeffrey Morgenthaler, including the “Golden Hour,” made with The Beverly Hilton Reserve, bianco vermouth, crème de pêche, thyme liqueur, and black lemon bitters.

Pop star Beyoncé has also stepped into the arena with SirDavis American Whisky, which was the official spirit of her Cowboy Carter Tour. Founded by Knowles-Carter herself, the spirit, encased in a tall, beveled glass bottle with a raised gold horse emblem, has rich and buttery toffee notes, and can be found at several local Beverly Hills and L.A. restaurants and bars, including The Maybourne Beverly Hills, L’Ermitage Beverly Hills and West Hollywood Edition. The “Honey Bee” cocktail, recipe in the sidebar, is perfect for chillier holiday weather.

Other celebrities that have “side hustles” in the spirits industry include rock star fashion designer John Varvatos in West Hollywood, who launched Villa One company with Nick Jonas of the Jonas Brothers right before the pandemic. “We come from two different ends of the world, but somehow we connected,” said Varvatos. “We ended up collaborating on fashion and a fragrance and we really hit it off. Every time we were together in L.A., we would celebrate over tequila.” Villa One is made at the brand’s own craft distillery, Fabrica de Tequilas Finos in Jalisco, using traditional techniques and natural ingredients for three expressions (Silver, Reposado and Añejo). villaonetequila.com

Walton Goggins of “White Lotus” fame quietly started his Mulholland Distilling brand with Matthew Alpert as a cinematic ode and celebration of their love for Los Angeles. They produce gin, whisky, and vodka which are meant to be enjoyed with friends—and even strangers. mulhollanddistilling.com

Academy Award-winning director Steven Soderbergh has a spirit called Singani 63 that he discovered while filming in Bolivia and is responsible for developing the brand and bringing it to the U.S. market. The unique brandy is distilled from white Muscat of Alexandria grapes and can be found at wine.com. ●

Honey Bee Recipe

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 oz. SirDavis American Whisky
- .75 oz. Lemon Juice
- .5 oz. Honey Syrup*
- Honeycomb garnish

INSTRUCTIONS:

Add liquid ingredients to a shaker tin with ice going in last. Shake for dilution and pour into a coupe glass. Garnish with honeycomb.

*To make honey syrup, add 2 parts honey and 1 part water into a small saucepan over medium heat. Stir until the honey is dissolved. Allow to cool and transfer to an airtight container.



TOP: SIRDAVIS WHISKY

PHOTO COURTESY OF SIRDAVIS

MIDDLE: THE BEVERLY HILTON RESERVE WHISKY

BOTTOM: JEFFREY MORGENTHALER, ANDREW BORENZWEIG, AND RYAN PATERSON OF THE BEVERLY HILTON

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BEVERLY HILTON RESERVE



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SEATTLE | \$17,000,000



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