

# WHAT'S NEW IN CALIFORNIA

SPRING 2023



visit  
California





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Visit California is pleased to present this Spring 2023 update on What's New in California. The information in this publication is also available on our online Media Center at [media.visitcalifornia.com](https://media.visitcalifornia.com). There you can dynamically search the most up-to-date information by category and region. For even more information and inspiration, please visit our consumer website at [visitcalifornia.com](https://visitcalifornia.com).

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Above:  
Santiago Resort, Palm Springs, CA  
On the cover:  
El Capitan Canyon, Santa Barbara, CA

# What's New

What's New in California showcases new openings and developments happening across the Golden State. Find inspiration for stories revolving around accommodations, culinary, arts and entertainment, family, outdoors, and tours and transportation. Dates listed are subject to change. Confirm with appropriate media contacts listed with each entry.

## Accommodations



### PACIFIC GROVE

#### Four Sisters Inns Unveils Major Renovations of Green Gables And Gosby House Inns

Four Sisters Inns is excited to announce a major set of renovations to two properties in Pacific Grove, led by Jennifer Wojtkiewicz of Indigo Coast Design. Originally constructed in 1888, **Green Gables** was the first property in the Four Sisters Collection. The redesign of Green Gables combines an oceanfront location with modern architectural elements to create a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere. Updates include unveiling the original maple hardwood floors in the oceanfront Parlor room and an increased focus on views, via a color palette of soft whites, blues, greens and grays. Historic elements of the inn were refurbished, including the original stained glass windows and the intricate crown molding trim, medallions, and unique cornices. **Gosby House Inn's** renovation extended to all 22 guest rooms, public spaces and dining areas. The new look blends the Inn's historical old-world charm with modern amenities, furnishings and refinement.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** ANDREW GARSETTI, WAGSTAFF MARKETING, (631) 873-5445, [FOURSISTERS@WAGSTAFFMKTG.COM](mailto:FOURSISTERS@WAGSTAFFMKTG.COM)

### SAN DIEGO

#### AC Hotel Opens in San Diego

AC Hotels, the design-led lifestyle brand with a European sensibility from Marriott International, is opening its first San Diego property in spring 2023.

**The AC Hotel San Diego Downtown Gaslamp Quarter**, a 147-room hotel in partnership with The Briard Group, invites travelers to experience a hotel with style and intention in the heart of San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter. The new hotel embodies AC Hotels' brand promise of going beyond travel conventions to create experiences that perfectly balance the details guests want and the services they need. Located at 743 5th Avenue, just steps from some of San Diego's most iconic destinations, travelers and locals alike will enjoy a purposeful, curated and elevated style, along with AC Hotels' signature beverage and food programming. AC Hotels' first hotel in San Diego provides visitors with thoughtfully designed spaces and refined, crafted offerings that remove friction from guests' travels, providing a seamless, intuitive experience.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** DAWN SEYMOUR, KATALYST PR, (516) 965-7373, [DAWN@KATALYST-PR.COM](mailto:DAWN@KATALYST-PR.COM)

## Lafayette Hotel & Swim Club

Opening in June 2023, North Park's historic **Lafayette Hotel & Swim Club** is undergoing a complete reimagining by San Diego's Consortium Holdings, known for creating San Diego's most exciting and, at times, wayward restaurants and bars. The Lafayette will feature a collection of seven distinct culinary venues open to the public. The half-acre Colonial-style property was originally built in 1946. Historically, The Lafayette was a dining and drinking destination for 1940s and 50s Hollywood elite, including Ava Gardner, Lana Turner and Bob Hope, as well as well-heeled San Diegans and visitors. The vision is to bolster the property far beyond its heyday. The new Lafayette, designed by Brooklyn-based Post Company, is a place where everyone can connect with the city in a more intimate way.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** DAWN SEYMOUR, KATALYST PR, (516) 965-7373, [DAWN@KATALYST-PR.COM](mailto:DAWN@KATALYST-PR.COM)

## SAN FRANCISCO

### San Francisco's Villa Florence Hotel in Union Square is Now "The Barnes"

The historic San Francisco Union Square hotel, Villa Florence, is now The Barnes. The property recently underwent room renovations to complement the hotel's new name and vibe, boasting a new retro-chic ambiance with an urban accent. The new name is inspired by the historic bronzed figure of winged victory located at Union Square. **The Barnes** name traces back to Old English roots and means "young warrior" – a brave champion of independent spirit. As such, the renovated property carries worldly appeal and is a perfect companion for guests looking for a true, centralized San Francisco experience. The Barnes is located at 225 Powell Street, within steps of the iconic San Francisco cable cars, near some of the city's best shopping, and surrounded by culinary excellence.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** ANGELA TUELL, PERCEPTURE, (410) 430-9518, [ATUELL@PERCEPTURE.COM](mailto:ATUELL@PERCEPTURE.COM)

## SANTA BARBARA

### The Steward to Debut in Spring 2023

**The Steward**, a Tribute Portfolio Marriott Hotel, will debut this spring in Santa Barbara, offering guests a secret hideaway, tucked between the ocean and mountains in California's idyllic central coast. Sitting on nearly five verdant acres of lavish gardens, the 87-all suite boutique hotel will be rooted in the land's rich history with a focus on sustainability. The property promises to embrace its future and anchor all of its efforts into being good stewards - both of its lush locale and its guests. Offering the best of both worlds with nearby beaches and mountain terrain, The Steward is also located a short drive away from Downtown Santa Barbara. Upon completion, the hotel will feature a lobby library and intimate market, a nature inspired cozy bar with signature garden-cocktails, custom local artwork, a tasting room featuring local wine and high-end spirits, and a plethora of hidden moments scattered throughout the grounds — from a serene pool surrounded by nature, a daybed swing, outdoor dining and fitness, and artistic benches scattered among the gardens, all spaces are designed to enrich and feed the soul.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** KRISTEN AHRENS, JPR, (619) 255-7069, [THESTEWARD@JPUBLICRELATIONS.COM](mailto:THESTEWARD@JPUBLICRELATIONS.COM)



## Culinary



### LOMPOC

#### **Camins 2 Dreams Opens New Tasting Room in Lompoc**

After the harvest, the **Camins 2 Dreams** team labored tirelessly to get their new tasting room in the Wine Ghetto up and running. The walls were painted, the bar area was restructured, and woodworking was executed with precision to ensure that everything came together seamlessly. Finally, the team added carefully curated decorations to craft a warm and inviting ambiance. The grand opening was thoughtfully planned for the first weekend of March, coinciding with Women's History Month.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** MIREIA TARIBÓ, **CAMINS 2 DREAMS**, (805) 717-1179, [MIREIA@CAMINS2DREAMS.COM](mailto:MIREIA@CAMINS2DREAMS.COM)

### MARTINEZ

#### **Local Downtown Wine Tasting from Sustainably Grown Grapes**

**William Welch Wines** is a new winery operating in Downtown Martinez that opened in March 2023. Wines sold at the winery have been produced locally in Martinez, often with grapes grown locally, using sustainable growing and winemaking practices. The location offers the chance to connect with growers and winemakers to learn about the science and art of grape growing and winemaking in both an outdoor and indoor setting.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** STEVE WELCH, **WILLIAM WELCH WINES**, (925) 260-3960, [SHASTAWOLF@AOL.COM](mailto:SHASTAWOLF@AOL.COM)

### OAKLAND

#### **Left Bank Brasserie Opens Waterfront Location in Jack London Square**

Vine Hospitality, the group behind the popular French Left Bank Brasseries in Larkspur, Menlo Park, San Jose, and **Petite Left Bank** in Tiburon opened its fourth **Left Bank Brasserie** in February 2023 with a massive waterfront location in Oakland's Jack London Square. This latest sprawling location marks the evolution of the brand over nearly 30 years with an impressive new location with over 5,500 sq. ft. indoors, and 2,000 sq. ft. of outdoor dining and waterfront views. While the all-day menu of French bistro fare will be similar to the other locations, it also offers a seafood plateau and a fried chicken with Esplette honey, and a new design. The bar will offer classic cocktails of a bygone era, typical of what one would find in the French "Bar Américain" in 1920s-1940s Paris, non-alcoholic cocktails and CBD drinks, as well as a wine list compiled by Director of Wine & Spirits Serena Harkey who has won multiple Wine Spectator awards at other Left Bank Locations.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** LEITH STEEL, CARBONATE, (669) 296-9364, [LEITH@CARBONATEGROUP.COM](mailto:LEITH@CARBONATEGROUP.COM)

## OCEANSIDE

### Oceanside Welcomes Michelin-Recognized Heritage Barbecue and Other New Eats

Oceanside continues to cater to foodies everywhere with the opening of four anticipated new restaurants. In January, Michelin Bib Gourmand honored restaurant, **Heritage Barbecue**, opened its second location and first to feature house-brewed craft beer in South Oceanside. Other recent openings include **Ryes and Grind**, a breakfast and lunch establishment from Chef Daniel Pundik (the creative force behind Oceanside's popular Local Tap House) rooted in East Coast Jewish deli traditions; **Toasted Gastrobrunch**, a brunch to dinner restaurant with Mediterranean inspired menu in a whimsical indoor-outdoor space; and **Q&A Restaurant and Oyster Bar**, a New Orleans inspired cozy venue occupying the first floor of the new historic Brick Hotel.

### Oceanside Pier Dining Concept Unveiled

The long-awaited replacement for Ruby's Diner at the end of Oceanside's iconic pier is finally in sight. Celebrated restaurant duo and Oceanside locals Davin and Jessica Waite (Wrench & Rodent, The Plot, Shoots Fish & Beer) are bringing their award-winning sustainability-minded ethos to the pier, starting with plans for the 109-square-foot kiosk that sits adjacent to the larger restaurant space. The yet-to-be-named kiosk will be transformed into a take-out oriented seafood concept with revolving menus based on seasonality and local catch. In a similar spirit to their other concepts, Chef Davin's menu will incorporate local, regeneratively farmed produce, including sea vegetables. The venue is expected to open in spring 2023. Plans for the larger restaurant concept are coming soon.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** SHAE GEARY, **VISIT OCEANSIDE**, (760) 721-1101, [SHAE@VISITOCEANSIDE.ORG](mailto:SHAE@VISITOCEANSIDE.ORG)

## REDONDO BEACH

### New SOL restaurant Offers a SoCal Twist on Asian/American Fusion Cuisine

In the relaxed yet luxurious **Sonesta Redondo Beach & Marina**, SOL restaurant opened recently to rave reviews. Helmed by Executive Chef Gary Howard, SOL is open for traditional breakfast daily with à la carte and buffet options, complete with an omelet station and a mimosa and Bloody Mary bar. It reopens Wednesday through Sunday evenings for creative Asian/American fusion food, using the delectable fresh seafood the South Bay region is justly renowned for, among other local ingredients. Executive Sous Chef Hayato Yanai comes to the restaurant from Tokyo, where he was trained in French and Japanese cooking techniques. As a result, he creates a culinary experience unlike any other in the area. Diners can eat in the tastefully appointed dining room or relax on the heated patio with fire pits outside while enjoying King Harbor's beauty.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** EMILY POLSBY, CHALKBOARD COMMUNICATIONS, (510) 912-3386, [EMILY@CHALKBOARDCOMM.COM](mailto:EMILY@CHALKBOARDCOMM.COM)

## SAN DIEGO

### El Dorado Cocktail Lounge Reopened in March

**El Dorado**, a cocktail lounge formative in establishing San Diego's craft cocktail scene, reopened in March under its new ownership, Pouring With Heart. The revamp of this downtown watering hole is Pouring With Heart's second project in San Diego. The group has owned and operated North Park's Seven Grand since 2012 and will bring a similar neighborhood vibe to El Dorado while reviving it as a timeless San Diego institution. The menu will be deeply rooted in classic cocktails plus playful riffs created by the El Dorado team. Aiming to bring consistently great drinks 365 days a year, El Dorado offers a timeless cocktail experience with a comfortable contrast between highbrow and lowbrow, making it a go-to spot for regulars any night of the week.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** PAULINA MILLAN, KATALYST PR, (516) 965-7373, [PAULINA@KATALYST-PR.COM](mailto:PAULINA@KATALYST-PR.COM)

## **Kinme Omakase Now Open in Bankers Hill Neighborhood**

From Shihomi Borillo and Nao Ichimura of Azuki Sushi comes **Kinme Omakase**, which opened in early March. Inspired by Kaiseki and Edomae style omakase, Kinme is an immersive sushi experience that tells a story of Japan's bountiful culinary history. With just ten seats, secured by reservation only, a meal at Kinme is sure to be a sought-after experience. Kinme's monthly tasting menu is based on close attention to detail to execute a course-by-course experience centered around expressing the season's flavors. Kinme boasts a fine selection of vintage burgundy wines, exclusively allocated sakes, and Japanese whiskeys to accompany the cuisine. The inspiration for the restaurant's architecture comes from the matcha tea ceremony that culminates each meal, allowing for a meditative environment in which guests can focus on the process of dish preparation and the intricacies of Kinme's cuisine.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** PAULINA MILLAN, KATALYST PR, (516) 965-7373, [PAULINA@KATALYST-PR.COM](mailto:PAULINA@KATALYST-PR.COM)

## **Leave of Absence Now Open at the Kimpton Alma San Diego**

Grab a towel and leave your baggage at the door. Recently opened boutique hotel, **Kimpton Alma San Diego**, just welcomed its newest dining destination – L.O.A – which debuted on March 8 in the heart of the historic Gaslamp Quarter. Standing for Leave of Absence, L.O.A is located on the hotel's pool deck and features a menu of crave-able finger foods straight out of the wood-fired, stone brick pizza oven and creative cocktails meant to be enjoyed in the sun and by the pool. This venue marks the third dining destination to be spearheaded by acclaimed Los Angeles-based chef-restaurateur Jason Neroni within Kimpton Alma. The hotel also houses upscale restaurant The Desmond, whose seasonal menu showcases the region's best ingredients, and The Cafe at Hotel Alma, an all-day, French-inspired cafe. A tribute to San Diego's laid-back lifestyle, L.O.A invites guests to sit back, relax and put the out-of-office responder on.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** SHAYNA ZEIGEN, SEQUEL, (619) 922-2483, [SZEIGEN@SEQUEL-INC.COM](mailto:SZEIGEN@SEQUEL-INC.COM)

## **SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**

### **The Secret Cellar at San Ysidro Ranch**

San Ysidro Ranch, A Ty Warner Property famed for ultimate privacy and A-list discretion, is pleased to debut its latest exclusive offering: The Secret Cellar. **The Secret Cellar** experience is open to hotel guests and the public and includes a private tour of the cellar as part of the tasting journey. Curated by Advanced Sommelier Tristan Pitre, The Secret Cellar features 2,000 bottles – bringing the property's impressive collection to 14,000 wines, spanning 70 regions across the globe, and making it one of the largest collections in the country. The hidden entryway into The Secret Cellar opens to a private room flanked by dark woods, metal and old-world charm. The Secret Cellar experience touts three wine-pairing menus inspired by the world's great wine regions and pairs perfectly with Executive Chef Matthew Johnson's seasonally inspired tasting menu.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** AISLING MAHONEY, REM PR, (203) 246-5722, [AISLING@REMPUBLICRELATIONS.COM](mailto:AISLING@REMPUBLICRELATIONS.COM)

## **SAN FRANCISCO**

### **LUMA Hotel San Francisco Welcomed Rooftop Cocktail Bar Cavaña in February 2023**

**Cavaña**, San Francisco's newest rooftop cocktail bar, opened atop Mission Bay's newest innovative lifestyle hotel, LUMA Hotel San Francisco, in early February 2023. This stunning new destination, owned and operated by Managing Partners John Park (BxB Hospitality Group) and Anthony Parks (True Hospitality Group), is set within the city's most burgeoning neighborhood and boasts a mosaic of flavors from Central and South America and the Caribbean. A love letter to the wide variety of cultures found throughout Latin America, Cavaña offers elevated, shareable plates, served alongside a one-of-a-kind beverage program consisting of modern and innovative cocktails developed by Emilio Salehi, Miguel Salehi and Anthony Parks, featuring an expansive collection of sugar-cane and agave distillates, and unique Latin ingredients.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** EMILY SOURY, AF&CO., (818) 489-9381, [EMILY@AFANDCO.COM](mailto:EMILY@AFANDCO.COM)

## SAN MATEO

### **Porterhouse San Mateo Opened New Downtown San Mateo Location in Early 2023**

**Porterhouse** unveiled its new downtown location in February 2023, set in a historic 1924 bank vault and well-known San Mateo landmark. Owned and operated by restaurateur Hamdi “Bruno” Ugur, Porterhouse has been a beloved local institution since its doors first opened in 2007 and has since become a prime dining destination for local residents, tech workers and Porterhouse loyalists alike. The new Porterhouse location offers the same exceptional quality, service and atmosphere that guests have come to expect from the steakhouse, but with a completely reimaged dining menu and all-new happy hour menu in an effort to create a memorable dining experience. The menu features a selection of signature cuts sourced from Midwest stockyards, ranging from filet mignon to porterhouse steak, all dry-aged in-house for maximum flavor and tenderness.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** CLARISSE GLASGOW, AF&CO., (760) 669-4780, [CLARISSE@AFANDCO.COM](mailto:CLARISSE@AFANDCO.COM)

## VENTURA

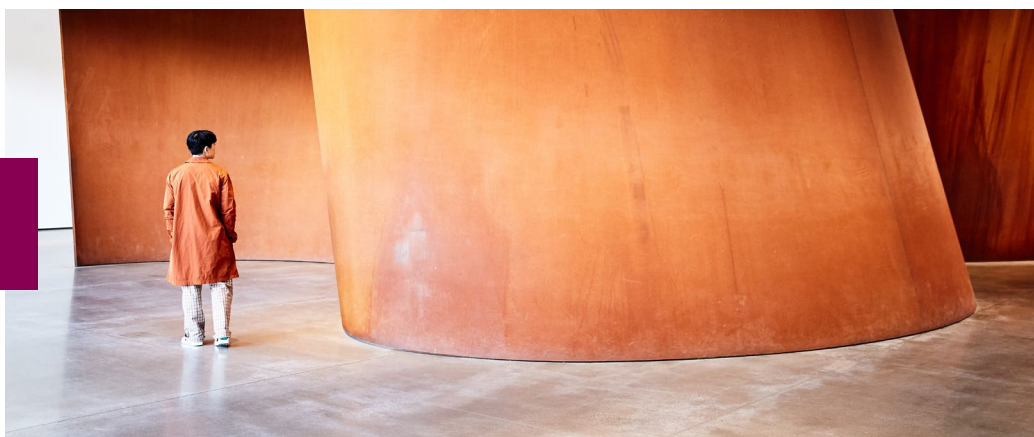
### **Strange Beast Opened in Early 2023 in Ventura**

**Strange Beast**, Good Lion Hospitality’s second Ventura concept, is named after the monsters of Japanese folklore and legend. The contemporary cocktail izakaya will feature cocktails with Japanese flavors, sake, natural wine, beer, and a menu of Japanese tapas from the Michelin Bib Gourmand chef/owners of Santa Barbara-based restaurant Sama Sama. Cocktail highlights include the Ube Pina Colada made with purple sweet potato, rums, coconut, pineapple, baking spices, apple brandy, and lime, and the House Old Fashioned made with Japanese whiskey, pandan leaf aged rum, banana peel oleo, and macadamia. Bites from Sama Sama will feature various hand rolls, including salmon and ikura, cucumber and crab; blistered shishitos with sea salt and sanshō pepper, and Sama Sama’s famous wings.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** DAWN SEYMOUR, KATALYST PR, (516) 965-7373, [DAWN@KATALYST-PR.COM](mailto:DAWN@KATALYST-PR.COM)



## Arts & Entertainment



### SAN DIEGO

#### The San Diego Museum of Art Launches Groundbreaking O’Keeffe and Moore Exhibition

The San Diego Museum of Art presents “**O’Keeffe and Moore**,” a groundbreaking exhibition uniting the work of these artistic giants for the first time, on view at The San Diego Museum of Art from May 13-Aug. 27, 2023, before traveling to Albuquerque Museum in New Mexico and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in Canada. The exhibition re-creates Georgia O’Keeffe’s and Henry Moore’s studios with their original found objects, tools and furnishings. Visitors can experience the working practices of the two artists to see how natural forms such as animal skulls and bones, coiled seashells, gnarled driftwood, and interlocking and layered stones inspired the majority of their most iconic creations and see more than 120 works of art by the two artists on view across five galleries.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** KAITLYN PALOCSKO, 62ABOVE, (215) 870-8193, [KAITLYNP@62ABOVE.COM](mailto:KAITLYNP@62ABOVE.COM)

#### New Museums and Exhibits in San Diego

**WNDR Museum** opened in downtown San Diego in January featuring more than 20 exhibits. The museum is an unparalleled immersive art and technology experience that redefines the traditional museum experience. **Mingei International Museum** will also open **25 Million Stitches: One Stitch, One Refugee** from March 25 through October 15. The exhibition raises awareness of the unfathomable number of refugees displaced around the world by counting and acknowledging each displaced person with a hand-sewn stitch.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** EDNA GUTIERREZ, SAN DIEGO TOURISM AUTHORITY, (619) 557-2887, [EGUTIERREZ@SANDIEGO.ORG](mailto:EGUTIERREZ@SANDIEGO.ORG)

### SAN FRANCISCO

#### New Exhibit at The Walt Disney Family Museum

The Walt Disney Family Museum debuted “**Pencils and Passion: A Student Art Exhibition**” in May 2023 as a celebration of the museum’s educational initiatives, and the achievements of its students. Pencils and Passion is the 37th original exhibition produced by the museum. It highlights both past and current student artwork, recognizes the accomplishments of its alumni, and chronicles the development of The Walt Disney Family Museum Animation Academy. This special exhibition will present student-created traditional and digital artworks, including animated short films, which have been produced over the past decade at both The Walt Disney Family Museum and on location at partner schools and organizations. There are 121 artists and over 280 works featured, encompassing a wide range of traditional artwork media and multi-media. The exhibit will be on display through fall 2023.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** CAROLINE QUINN, **THE WALT DISNEY FAMILY MUSEUM**, (970) 989-8007, [CQUINN@WDFMUSEUM.ORG](mailto:CQUINN@WDFMUSEUM.ORG)

## Family



### ANAHEIM

#### **Mickey's Toontown Reopen at Disneyland Park**

Disneyland Resort continued the Disney100 anniversary celebration with the reopening of the reimagined **Mickey's Toontown** at Disneyland Park on March 19, 2023. The reimagined land offers young families even more experiences to enjoy together in a distinct area of Disneyland Park, adjacent to Fantasyland, home of "it's a small world" and the uplifting "Tale of the Lion King." Mickey's Toontown was thoughtfully designed by Walt Disney Imagineering to try to remove as many barriers to play as possible, with more open green spaces for gathering and play. At this animated neighborhood, families can explore, discover and unwind together while enjoying: new interactive areas, including CentTOONial Park, Goofy's How-To-Play Yard and Donald's Duck Pond; the new, family-friendly attraction Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway, which features no age/height restriction; photo opportunities with Mickey Mouse and some of his pals; favorite returning attractions, such as Roger Rabbit's Car Toon Spin, and the transformed fun-sized attraction Chip 'n' Dale's GADGETcoaster; and two all-new food and beverage locations, Café Daisy and Good Boy! Grocers and merchandise shop, EngineEar Souvenirs.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** VALERIE J. LEE, DISNEYLAND RESORT PUBLIC RELATIONS, (714) 801-4833, [VALERIE.J.LEE@DISNEY.COM](mailto:VALERIE.J.LEE@DISNEY.COM)

### SAN DIEGO

#### **SeaWorld San Diego Unveils Two Rescue-Themed Attractions**

In spring 2023, SeaWorld will be unveiling two new rescue-themed attractions, **Arctic Rescue** and **Rescue Jr.** Arctic Rescue will be the longest, fastest straddle coaster on the West Coast and will invite riders to hop on a snowmobile and launch at up to 40 mph on a chilly adventure as they race through the unpredictable arctic climate to help animals in danger. In Rescue Jr.'s kid-friendly hub of fun and fascination, the park's youngest guests can learn about animal conservation efforts in exciting new ways. The area will include all-new soft play and water play elements, rides based on open-water rescue vessels and natural marine habitats, an obstacle course, and a close-up look at real rescue vehicles and how they help the SeaWorld Rescue teams make a difference.

#### **Sesame Place Makes a Big Splash with Two New Attractions for Summer 2023**

**Sesame Place's** all-new Count's Splash Castle is a multi-level, interactive water-play attraction with 111 play elements, including two giant tipping buckets that dump over 1,300 gallons of water combined. There are three exciting water slides, soakers, flow pipes, hose jets, spray jets, water shooters, water curtains, tipping troughs, spinning and sliding buckets, and much more! At the all-new Sunny Day Café, guests can join their favorite furry friends for a dining adventure the whole family will love! The new indoor and air-conditioned 5,000-square-



foot building is where families will make precious memories and enjoy delicious, family-friendly buffet-style meals! Throughout the year, there will be special event opportunities and dining activities every season, including Dine with Elmo & Friends. The new café will seat up to 160 guests, and at each meal, Sesame Street characters will join diners for an immersive experience with singing, dancing and photo opportunities.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** MARY HAMULA, **SEAWORLD**, (619) 226-3649, [MARY.HAMULA@SEAWORLD.COM](mailto:MARY.HAMULA@SEAWORLD.COM)

## VALLEJO

### **Rainforest Trail Opening this Spring at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom**

Set amongst water features and plant life designed to represent the special ecosystem of a rainforest, the Rainforest Trail features over 500 free-flying butterflies from around the world, colorful fish, a sloth and more. The 100-foot-by-50-foot glass atrium was originally the first major walk-through butterfly habitat in the western United States when it opened in 1988. This attraction leads a new wave of enhancements to the park's animal offerings, including the new Cheetah Creek and a reimagined Shark Experience.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** MARC MERINO, **SIX FLAGS DISCOVERY KINGDOM**, (707) 556-5227, [MMERINO@SFTP.COM](mailto:MMERINO@SFTP.COM)

## Outdoors



### REDDING

#### **The Shasta Bike Depot and Redding Bikeshare Opening May 2023**

**The Shasta Bike Depot and Redding Bikeshare** is opening a new facility in Downtown Redding on May 12, 2023. This moment marks the realization of a ten-year vision for walking, biking and trail tourism, aimed at raising Redding and Shasta County to the ranks of top places for active, healthy living. The Bike Depot offers modern amenities to empower and encourage cycling excellence and trail tourism. Services promoting active living and clean mobility include long-term bike parking, e-bike sharing, and a bicycle-friendly café. Cyclists can park their bikes safely and head to work, shopping, or entertainment for only pennies per day. As the North State's first secure, long-term bicycle garage, the Bike Depot is a social and practical hub for local riders and trail enthusiasts, offering youth programs, e-bike charging stations, and guided E-bike tours of the Sacramento River Trail.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** JENNIFER ZIMMER, [VISIT REDDING](https://www.visitredding.com), (530) 945-1566, [JENNIFER@VISITREDDING.COM](mailto:JENNIFER@VISITREDDING.COM)

### YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

#### **Visitor Improvements Coming to Yosemite National Park**

After a year of construction projects in Yosemite National Park, several projects are set to be completed to improve the visitor experience. Set to open to the public in late spring 2023, the Yosemite Valley Welcome Center is a \$10.4 million project that will transform Yosemite Village's old "sport shop" into a 3,000-square-foot state-of-the-art space to welcome visitors to Yosemite. After a full year of being closed to vehicle traffic for road rehabilitation and improvements, the popular Glacier Point Road will reopen with some traffic controls and delays in summer 2023 as work continues. The popular trail to Bridalveil Fall, its parking area and its significantly larger and handicap-accessible viewing area will reopen in June 2023 after a multi-year closure.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** TONY MCDANIEL, [YOSEMITE MARIPOSA COUNTY TOURISM BUREAU](https://www.yosemite.mariposa-county.com), (618) 560-8585, [TONYM@YOSEMITE.COM](mailto:TONYM@YOSEMITE.COM)



## Technology & Tours



### MONTEREY BAY

#### Sea Goddess Whale Watching Expands its Monterey Bay Cruises

**Sea Goddess Whale Watching** is expanding its cruises for groups of all ages, offering school field trips, team-building events for businesses, corporate parties, weddings and even a new elegant sunset “Wine & Cheese” cruise starting in June. The tours are typically 2 1/2 to 3 hours, with wedding cruises lasting 4 hours. With two of the largest and most exquisite boats on Monterey Bay, a variety of whales, including Humpback, Gray, Blue, and Orca (Killer), can be seen as they migrate through the Pacific Ocean. An abundance of marine species also calls the Monterey Bay home, including dolphins, jellyfish, mola molas (sunfish), sea lions, sea otters, seals, pelicans and much more – all of which can be observed in their natural habitat during a tour.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** DUSTIN W. LOOSE, **SEA GODDESS WHALE WATCHING**, (702) 469-4173, [SPOTLIGHTVEGAS01@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SPOTLIGHTVEGAS01@GMAIL.COM)

### SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

#### Aquarium of the Bay Launches Sustainable Tours To Sonoma

In an all-electric vehicle, tours depart from **Aquarium of the Bay** in San Francisco and drive North to Sonoma County, where EcoXpeditions will visit sustainable wineries. The sustainable wine tours start in San Francisco, cross the Golden Gate Bridge through Marin County to Sonoma County, where visitors will see beautiful farms, vineyards, and the scenic mountain ranges of the Mayacamas Mountains to the east and the Sonoma Mountains to the west.

The tour stops for lunch in historic Sonoma Square, home of the San Francisco Solano Mission and the site of the Bear Flag Revolt. Wineries are selected for EcoXpeditions based on how aligned they are with Aquarium of the Bay’s mission to fight climate change, and all wineries on the tour are sustainably certified, meaning they must produce bottles with 85% certified sustainable grapes.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** PAUL NAKAMOTO, **AQUARIUM OF THE BAY**, (408) 391-2802, [PAUL@BAY.ORG](mailto:PAUL@BAY.ORG)

### TRUCKEE-TAHOE

#### Visit Truckee-Tahoe Features New Native Americans Past & Present Website Page

Visit Truckee-Tahoe’s new **“Native Americans Past & Present”** website page features the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, whose ancestral homelands are in the Truckee and Lake Tahoe region. This page gives information about the Tribe, including “Get to Know the Washoe Tribe” and “Washoe tribal women reflect on Tahoe resort name change.”

**MEDIA CONTACT:** SIOBHAN KENNEY, **VISIT TRUCKEE-TAHOE**, (406) 450-2753, [SKENNEY@VISITTRUCKEETAHOE.COM](mailto:SKENNEY@VISITTRUCKEETAHOE.COM)

# Contact Us

Visit [media.VisitCalifornia.com](https://media.VisitCalifornia.com) for more information.



VICE PRESIDENT OF  
COMMUNICATIONS

**Ryan Becker**

[rbecker@visitcalifornia.com](mailto:rbecker@visitcalifornia.com)



DIRECTOR OF  
PUBLIC RELATIONS

**Angie Pappas**

[apappas@visitcalifornia.com](mailto:apappas@visitcalifornia.com)



DOMESTIC PUBLIC  
RELATIONS MANAGER

**Kristen Bonilla**

[kbonilla@visitcalifornia.com](mailto:kbonilla@visitcalifornia.com)



PUBLIC RELATIONS  
MANAGER

**Xavier Roque**

[xroque@visitcalifornia.com](mailto:xroque@visitcalifornia.com)



MEDIA RELATIONS  
COORDINATOR

**Molly Bloss**

[mbloss@visitcalifornia.com](mailto:mbloss@visitcalifornia.com)