



Photo by Edwin Goei | Illustration by Greg Diaz

AROUND THE WORLD IN 10 ORANGE COUNTY RESTAURANTS

BY EDWIN GOEI

This month marks a year since the pandemic hit the U.S. This means that even for those with wanderlust, it's likely been at least that long since they've gone abroad.

Despite declines in reported COVID-19 cases, flying to another country still harbors a lot of uncertainty and risk. However, if you're like me and your primary reason for traveling is the food, you're in luck: The Orange County dining scene is surprisingly international. It's well-represented by small businesses that offer tastes from far-flung cultures — cuisines that are perhaps less familiar to you than your weeknight sushi or Mexican takeout meal.

In fact, there are so many restaurants from so many nationalities in O.C. that cataloging them all could itself fill a "Lonely Planet" guidebook.

What follows is a selection of 10 restaurants representing 10 countries from four continents, where you can eat your

See *World*, page R4



Courtesy of Delice Breton

AN OMELET like those of the Brittany region of France at Delice Breton in San Juan Capistrano.

KABSAT
El Mahroosa in Anaheim.



Edwin Goei



TRADITIONAL COMBO at Abyssinia in Anaheim

Edwin Goei

Attacks against Asians on the rise

With the number of incidents growing nationwide, O.C. leaders call on the public to help stem the violence.

BY AGNES CONSTANTE

Asian American community leaders and elected officials in a news conference on Feb. 25 urged the public to stop and report incidents of anti-Asian rhetoric and violence, which have increased during the coronavirus pandemic.

Between March and December 2020, there were more than 2,800 reported anti-Asian hate incidents across the nation, according to Stop AAPI Hate, a coalition tracking anti-Asian hate and discrimination during the coronavirus pandemic. Of these incidents, about 7.3% of cases involved people over the age of 60.

Among attacks on Asian American seniors that have been reported include 84-year-old Vichar Ratanapakdee in the San Francisco Bay Area who was killed during a walk around his neighborhood in January and Noel Quintana, 61, who was slashed across his face on his way to work in a subway train in New York in February.

Christie Nguyen, co-founder of Nailing it for America, a volunteer group that formed last year and has provided PPE and meals to frontline workers and seniors in Southern California, said seeing attacks on the elderly has been upsetting.

"We must do better," she said. "We must end the violence of hate racism and discrimination."

Orange County District Atty. Todd Spitzer said the county has filed more hate crimes in the last two years than in the previous 22 years.

Don Han, operations manager at the Orange County Human Relations Commission, an agency established in 1971 to help the county track hate incidents and hate crimes, said it has recorded 40 hate incident cases against Asian Americans since January 2020 — 10 times higher than pre-

See *Asians*, page R5

Pacific Symphony uploads performances from an empty hall

BY VERA CASTANEDA

The Pacific Symphony returned to the stage this year for a new online performance series.

The "Symphony Thursdays" series, filmed at Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall during its COVID-19 closure, is available through an online service called Pacific Symphony+, and it's available online for free.

The program kicked off with a 23-minute video of Richard Strauss' "Serenade for 13 Winds" and the finale of Tchaikovsky's "Serenade for Strings" on Feb. 25 in conjunction with the symphony's new mobile app. While 300 live viewers tuned into the performance, viewership after the event grew. Compared to last year, the symphony's YouTube page received six times additional view-

ership, and its Facebook page received eight times additional viewership.

Every Thursday at 7 p.m., a new video will stream and be available for 30 days on the symphony's website, mobile app, YouTube channel and Facebook page.

The March 4 performance, with a brass and percussion section, was scheduled to feature Morten Lauridsen's "O Magnum Mysterium" and Michael Daugherty's "Asclepius."

Other performances will include Mozart's "Serenata Notturna," the finale from Gounod's "Petite Symphonie for Winds," suites from Stravinsky's "Pulcinella" and "The Firebird" and a number of Bach concertos.

"The musicians and I are gratified to be creating and making music again after such a long pe-

riod of being unable to play together. I planned the repertoire for these online concerts in such a way that each piece can be performed by a smaller ensemble rather than the full orchestra. This allows us to be properly socially distanced on stage and assures that everyone is safe," Music Director Carl St.Clair said in the announcement.

In the past, orchestra concerts filmed to document the performances for the symphony archives were not meant for wider distribution. However, the Pacific Symphony edited and released new and archival videos on KCET and PBS programs at the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic. The orchestra produced concerts in living rooms and backyards in the

See *Symphony*, page R4



Courtesy of Doug Gifford

PACIFIC SYMPHONY musicians rehearse for the online series.

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Attorney says sheriff's deputy may have filed a false report

The woman is representing a homeless man who was allegedly beaten and Tased where he was living.

BY BEN BRAZIL

An attorney representing a formerly homeless veteran who was allegedly beaten and Tased by Orange County sheriff's deputies believes a deputy filed false police reports on the incident.

Attorney Narine Mkrtychyan said that Deputy Chad Renegar beat her client, Jeremy Holloway, and then fabricated the details of the violent episode.

Mkrtychyan believes Holloway's case is stronger now after Renegar was charged last month with falsifying a separate police report.

"My client was injured and beat up, and then they lied about it, claiming that he was violent and that he was refusing to comply with their commands," Mkrtychyan said Monday over the phone. "... My client has suffered serious injuries. I'm really happy that now we can use that criminal case to push my client's case and get some compensation for his injuries."

Renegar faces up to four years and eight months in prison for the charges, which allegedly occurred while he was working as a field training officer in 2019 in Rancho Santa Margarita.

According to district attorney spokeswoman Kimberly Edds, Renegar and the deputy he was training at the time responded to a woman who reported that her license plate was stolen. The woman told Renegar that the license plate was stolen in Santa Monica, which led to the initial report being rejected by a sergeant because it was out of the Sheriff's Department's jurisdiction, Edds said.

Renegar allegedly told the deputy he was training to change the location to Rancho Santa Margarita, but the trainee didn't, Edds said. Renegar then allegedly typed up a report under the trainee's name. He also filled out a second form, changing the location to Rancho Santa Margarita and forging the victim's name, Edds said.

Edds said Monday that there have been no updates on the case since the announcement. Sheriff's spokesman Dennis Breckner said Monday that Renegar is on paid leave. He is scheduled to be arraigned later this month.

Renegar is just the latest Orange County sheriff's deputy to be investigated for falsifying police reports. The department has been embroiled in an evidence booking scandal, where several deputies failed to file evidence or filed it late.

Mkrtychyan, whose firm is based out of Glendale, said the license plate case bears significant weight in Holloway's case, where Renegar was the arresting officer.

Mkrtychyan said Renegar filed false reports about the incident with her client, claiming that Holloway provoked the attack

by resisting arrest and making threats toward the deputies. The district attorney's office dropped the case against Holloway, she said.

Holloway's account — laid out in a legal complaint — describes a much different picture.

The alleged beating of Holloway occurred in January 2018, when he was approached by deputies at his tent in O'Neill Regional Park in Trabuco Canyon.

Holloway, who was 41 at the time, was awakened by deputies following up on a report of domestic abuse, the complaint says.

Mkrtychyan said the Sheriff's Department received a call from someone who said a woman and man were involved in the dispute, yet the deputies zeroed in on Holloway, whose only companion was his dog.

Renegar and another deputy searched Holloway's belongings in the tent without his consent, the complaint says. Then the deputies left.

Mkrtychyan said the department then received another call of a woman screaming at the campsite. However, a police report said the caller indicated that a man was walking around the campsite searching for whoever called the police on him.

The deputies confronted Holloway, who according to Mkrtychyan, was on informal probation for insurance fraud at the time. According to the complaint, Holloway complied with a deputy's orders to step away from his tent with his hands up.

"Suddenly and without provocation, at least one defendant punched Jeremy on the left side of his face, causing him to fall to the ground," the complaint says. "Immediately after his fall, he had deputies get on top of him while choking him and kneeling him in the temple, maliciously causing him pain and suffering. While on the ground already detained, he was shot with a Taser approximately five times."

"As he lay helpless on the ground bleeding profusely, he was ruthlessly attacked from all sides, and could feel the right side of his face get kneed and his head get kicked multiple times ..."

Holloway was left with bruised ribs and legs, a head injury, a severely bleeding and swollen face, loss of vision, severe pain in his back and periodic loss of consciousness, the complaint says.

Holloway, who Mkrtychyan said served as a Marine in Iraq, is receiving treatment at a Veterans Affairs hospital near him in Pennsylvania for vision loss, headaches, backache and severe emotional distress, the complaint says.

The trial of Holloway's case is set to begin in May.

Mkrtychyan said it's "unfortunate" that the Sheriff's Department has not disciplined Renegar.

"It's very interesting, the department does not do anything," Mkrtychyan said.

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Luis Sinco | Los Angeles Times

A CASHIER helps a customer at the checkout stand in the Vons grocery store in Long Beach.

Santa Ana OKs boost for grocery workers

BY BEN BRAZIL

The Santa Ana City Council approved "hero pay" for grocery and pharmacy store employees on Tuesday night in an effort to support high-risk workers in the city.

The council voted 5-2 in favor of an urgency ordinance requiring grocery store employees in the city to be paid an extra \$4 an hour for 120 days. Council members Nelida Mendoza and David Penalzoza dissented.

The urgency ordinance, which is effective immediately, applies to grocery stores and pharmacies with more than 300 workers nationally and more than 15 workers per location in Santa Ana.

Santa Ana is the second city in Orange County to approve hazard pay for grocery workers. Irvine approved a similar ordinance in early February. Buena Park also approved a wage hike last week, but the council still needs to take a second vote before it becomes law.

Costa Mesa voted Tuesday night in favor of drafting an urgency hazard pay ordinance. The council will vote on it at a future meeting.

Mayor Vicente Sarmiento and Councilwoman Thai Viet Phan spearheaded the ordinance.

Phan pointed out at the meeting that grocery stores have profited during the pandemic.

"I definitely think that there are a lot of businesses that have done really well and these employees are the ones who ensure that the rest of us can function,"

Phan said. "I have spoken to workers and we've heard workers today who are asking for this, because every day they put themselves at risk."

The council was expected to approve the item after a majority of the members came out in favor early last month. At that meeting, the council voted on whether to approve a resolution directing staff to bring the proposed urgency ordinance back this week.

Councilman Phil Bacerra cast a dissenting vote on that item along with Mendoza and Penalzoza. At the February meeting, Bacerra was concerned that the city didn't have the authority to enforce the ordinance and that it could hurt the city's financial infrastructure to put regulations on businesses.

But he voted in favor of the ordinance on Tuesday.

"Frankly, I still am not 100% comfortable that our City Council is weighing in on this issue," Bacerra said. "We shouldn't typically punish reasonable profits and success. But the thing that's really weighed on me is when you have a company where the profits are growing between 90% and 150% during a pandemic, and those profits aren't shared with workers who are risking their lives to make sure all of us are able to have essential items, it's no longer success, it's absolutely glutton."

Several cities across the state have been considering hero pay for grocery workers.

The Los Angeles City Council

provided initial approval and Los Angeles County approved an extra \$5-per-hour wage boost last week for grocery and pharmacy workers.

Oakland, Seattle, Santa Monica, San Jose, Montebello and Long Beach have also approved similar ordinances.

A federal judge ruled in favor of Long Beach last week, upholding the hero pay ordinance.

Opponents of the raises have stated that it potentially opens up cities to litigation. The California Grocers Assn. has sued Oakland, Montebello and Long Beach over the wage hikes.

"I recognize that the people mean well in supporting this ordinance, one would believe that the workers would benefit from such hazardous pay," Councilwoman Mendoza said at the meeting. "However, this ordinance actually has the opposite effect and workers will suffer tremendously in significant ways. We must also recognize that many grocers already provided hazard pay to their employees."

"Some of the unintended consequences of a yes vote are as follows: increased operational expenses, decrease in profits, increase in grocery prices, decrease in workforce, potential bankruptcy, potential lawsuit against the city of Santa Ana, eventual store closures, hundreds of Santa Ana grocery and pharmacy workers being laid off."

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O.C. nonprofit needs car and booster seat donations

The Orange County Rescue Mission announced this week that it is in crucial need of car and booster seats for children living in its homeless shelter.

The nonprofit is asking the community to donate 36 car and booster seats to en-

sure the safety of the children living at the Village of Hope transitional housing facility in Tustin.

"Over the last several months there has been a rapid increase in homelessness throughout the region," nonprofit President Jim Palmer said

in a news release. "In fact, the homeless crisis has been exacerbated as a result of the pandemic."

The nonprofit is requesting six new infant car seats with a base, 10 new child car seats and 20 new booster seats.

Donations can be

dropped off between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Sunday at the Village of Hope at I Hope Drive. Donations can also be purchased online and sent to the address.

For more information, visit rescuemission.org.

— Ben Brazil

Orange County will have to find space for 183,000 homes

A regional board OK'd long-debated Southern California housing goals in a Thursday meeting.

BY BEN BRAZIL

Cities in Orange County will have to find space for about 183,000 new homes after a regional board approved long-debated housing goals for Southern California at a meeting on Thursday.

The state has mandated that six counties in Southern California, including Orange and Los Angeles, will need to find zoning for 1.3-million homes by 2029.

The Southern California Assn. of Governments, or SCAG, was tasked with allocating these housing goals to each city. The group, which is made up of local officials and addresses regional issues, approved a draft of the plan in 2019.

On Thursday, the regional group voted to finalize the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, or



Courtesy of the Smith Group

CALIFORNIA HAS SAID that six counties in Southern California, including Orange and Los Angeles, will need to find zoning for 1.3-million homes by 2029.

RHNA, housing numbers.

The process has been mired in controversy for the past year. Cities have contested the numbers allocated to them, citing the difficulty of reaching such lofty housing goals. Nearly half

the cities in Orange County filed appeals with SCAG, but all were denied.

Most cities in Orange County have a couple of hundred to a couple of thousand homes mandated. Fullerton, with

13,209, Huntington Beach, 13,368, Anaheim, 17,453, Garden Grove, 19,168, and Irvine, 23,610, have the highest number of homes to zone for.

When the state decided on the 1.3-million new

home mandate in 2019, it pitted Gov. Gavin Newsom against many Southern California cities. Local governments had originally proposed zoning for the development of 430,000 new homes by 2029.

Newsom has said that the housing is needed to solve the state's significant affordable housing deficit.

About 75,000 of the mandated homes in Orange County will need to serve the county's low-income residents. "The governor has said California must use every tool in its toolbox to combat the state's housing affordability crisis," Newsom spokesman Nathan Click said in a statement in 2019. "This is part of that approach."

Like the rest of the state, Orange County is facing a substantial housing shortage. The Orange County Business Council said in a 2019 report that the county's housing deficit would grow from 58,000 to 115,000 units by 2045. Economic issues brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic could

worsen those numbers.

Orange County has also been struggling with rampant homelessness over the past several years. More homeless people died in Orange County in 2020 than any other year.

Feeling that the state's mandates aren't helpful, local leaders have been advocating for more local control.

"But I think all of us can agree that local control is really the thing that we need to focus on to do what's best for our communities," Yorba Linda Mayor Peggy Huang said at the meeting. "Because RHNA has shown that one size fits all does not work. As well as all the various housing bills, in this one size fits all, really will instead of help our cities meet our RHNA numbers, they will only further exacerbate the problems, and I think you'll further divide our community and our region rather than bringing us together."

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“My daughter’s breast cancer saved my life.”

AMY & KENN’S STORY



Orange County’s leader in the fight against cancer.

Hoag Family Cancer Institute is one of few hospitals in the United States to offer a surveillance program for pancreatic cancer. Amy’s aggressive breast cancer helped her and her family discover they are BRCA 1 carriers, an inherited genetic mutation. Kenn was immediately enrolled in Hoag’s pancreatic cancer surveillance program which detected an early tumor on his pancreas. **Hoag’s relentless drive to provide leading cancer care, saved both Amy and Kenn’s lives.**



hoag

Hoag Family
Cancer Institute

hoag.org/cancer-risk

Artist discusses his digital take on the county landscape

BY VERA CASTANEDA

The starting point was walking the coastline of Orange County's beach cities.

Roughly six years ago, artist Jesse Colin Jackson was teaching a class at UC Irvine in which a group of students, who either grew up or moved to O.C., grappled with the question: How does an artist respond to the place they live?

Jackson had moved to O.C. from Canada in 2013 and started to answer the question for himself. He walked along San Clemente, Dana Point, Laguna Beach, Newport Beach, Huntington Beach and Seal Beach — shooting eight panoramic photos per city, then combining the eight shots to form one digital composition in “The Orange Coast” series.

The six images are one of the pieces included in Jackson's “Suburban Ecologies” exhibit at the city-owned Great Park Gallery in Irvine. “Jackson's subject matter has the potential of being accessible to a range of viewers,” stated curator Adam Sabolick via email. “The Orange County coastline,



A CLOSE-UP OF “The Orange Coast #1 (Huntington Beach),” 2020, by Jesse Colin Jackson featured in the “Suburban Ecologies” exhibit.

Santa Ana River and Orange County suburbia are familiar subjects to the region.”

The gallery is closed, but a video tour is available online. It shows a sculpture of the Santa Ana watershed at the center surrounded by photos and video of a hike up the Santa Ana River fall line in the background.

The watershed sculpture

Courtesy of Jesse Colin Jackson

opens to “The Orange Coast” images hung on the gallery wall. A separate smaller room is dedicated to the pre-planned communities of Irvine with digital images of suburban housing and a second sculpture.

At the entrance, a wall panel of waste material from 3-D printed face shields in a geometric pattern is hung to commemorate the UC Irvine proj-

ect Jackson led early on the pandemic. The face shields were created for local medical professionals. “I am interested in creating connections between the lives we live and the territory we have arguably colonized in this case,” Jackson said. “Colonists of Orange County — we've literally reorganized the topography. The river is a great example of this. It's actually very difficult to figure out where the river would have been prior to channelizing ... The river introduces all sorts of complications about what organizes Orange County and how we're connected to this bigger region in a very specific way. All of the water that comes from the mountains has to flow through Orange County to get to the ocean.”

The centerpiece sculpture, “Marching Cubes Watershed #2: Santa Ana,” is an exaggerated 3-D model made out of the same material Jackson used in a previous “Marching Cubes” installation. He was inspired by how central the river was to the county's history from being a fertile plain for Acjachemen and Tongva groups to being the

IF YOU WATCH

What: Suburban Ecologies
When: Wednesday at 6 p.m.
Where: Zoom webinar
Cost: Free
Info: illuminations.uci.edu/events/2021_3_10_Suburban_Ecologies.html

source of irrigation for ranches and agriculture and eventually dammed at the O.C. and Riverside juncture.

While it has served as an open space for recreation (walking, biking and hiking), in recent years it became a homeless encampment that the county pushed to clear. “I've been in a long conversation with a local anthropologist named Valerie Olson, who has been looking at the politics and the kind of lives lived around this river,” Jackson said.

Their conversation will continue at 6 p.m. on Wednesday in an online artist talk between Jackson, Olson and Sabolick.

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Anyone can play their heart out in this interactive virtual orchestra

BY VERA CASTANEDA

If you can't read sheet music, don't worry. You're still a musician in “The Adjacent Possible” orchestra.

The free interactive musical performance, hosted by the Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana, kicked off this month and will run through May.

Joshua-Michèle Ross, Adam Brick and Adam Lucas have made a virtual experience drawing from theater, storytelling, improv and tech — all ending with a published piece of music that goes on to live on their website.

Each 45-minute session gathers 20 people over Zoom at first. There's no need for a microphone or a camera. No names will pop up on screen. It's all anonymous.

“I think [anonymity] can free your mind to go deeper into your imagination a bit more,” Lucas said. “It kind of loosens your self-consciousness a little bit.”

John Spiak, the Grand Central Art Center's director, said the project was a good fit for the center because it's about social engagement and audiences can feel like they are in a room with 20 people.

Ross's calm voice guides participants along to a separate website where the theater experience begins. One enters first through the backstage area and then moves to the green room. Musicians choose an instrument and play in a brief rehearsal before the performance starts.

On Thursday evening, my

digital instrument was cloud, one of the air-themed choices. Other instruments, all seemingly named with a nature in mind, sounded like wind chimes, chirping birds, waves and heartbeats.

The improvised performances are recorded and come to an end at random when a participant hits a button at the center of the screen titled “The End.”

“There is no coming back from the end,” Ross warned before the performance.

My performance abruptly ended after 3 minutes or so, making it the shortest they've ever had. Ross said musicians normally sit for 8 to 10 minutes.

Musicians joined from Irvine, Michigan, New York and Canada on Thursday. But Brick said the orchestra has reached five continents

and 25 countries so far. Their goal is to reach all continents.

The title of the project comes from theoretical biologist Stuart Kaufman's work. Kaufman coined the term “adjacent possible” to explain how organisms evolve into larger systems by seeking out numerous possibilities within their environment.

Ross said the project uses instruments that don't have a lot of functionality to explore how “collectively as a community, you're able to make something entirely unique through your contribution of what's possible for you.”

Initially, Ross began “The Adjacent Possible” as an in-person performance in 2019. But then he adapted it into a virtual experience

with the help of Brick and Lucas.

“In a pre-pandemic world, it felt celebratory and joyful because playing loud music together was fun,” Ross said. “When the pandemic hit, it shifted to be about finding community and possibility.”

Current social context makes some self-reflective aspects of the musical experience feel like a thermometer of the pandemic psyche.

Although the three collaborators on the project have musical backgrounds and met as colleagues in New York, they connected over the internet from their respective locations in New York, Missouri and London to create the virtual orchestra.

Brick handled technology and Lucas took on design.

IF YOU GO

What: “The Adjacent Possible”
When: Scheduled dates through May; advance registration is required
Where: Online
Cost: Free
Info: grandcentralartcenter.com

Over time and with survey feedback, the orchestra has evolved. Brick said they are on version 88 of the app.

March sessions are nearly sold out. April and May dates will be posted soon and may be extended to June.

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SYMPHONY

Continued from page R1

“Quarantine Clips” series.

“We all felt strongly that there was a need to consolidate and create an identity for all the digital work that was emerging from the Pacific Symphony,” said John Forsyte, president and CEO. “We were doing quite a bit of video work before that, but nothing of this scale. As we began to return to the stage, it made sense to help the other digital assets that are sort of sitting in our archives to gain greater attention while we're releasing all this new content.”

A recent donation from

Orange County philanthropist Janet Curci went toward updating the symphony's filming equipment (12 video cameras, microphones and high definition monitors) to provide more angles and close-ups.

Forsyte said organizers made the decision to have the performances range from 30 to 60 minutes to avoid digital fatigue. The average length of viewer duration for the first video in the series was almost nine minutes on YouTube.

“It's kind of a controversial idea to have cameras on a classical orchestra,” Forsyte said. “Gradually, our patrons have gotten used to it and actually quite

enjoy it because you really can see the concentration levels. You're not always aware of what instruments are creating a specific sound because it's very vertically stacked harmonically complex music, but the angles in the recordings make it clear.”

The safety protocols in the making of the series followed other California orchestras and were created in consultation with UC Irvine's public health department. All participants were tested for COVID-19 prior to filming and stayed at least 6 feet apart onstage. The brass and wind musicians performed encased by plexiglass while St. Clair

and the string players wore face masks. The last in-person performance with an audience was on March 8, 2020, with the American Ballet Theatre. The symphony received a \$2.1-million Paycheck Protection Program loan and entered into an agreement with the musicians to continue paying through September. The organization began to implement furloughs and staff salary cuts of about 25% on the administrative and production side of the company.

Musicians continue to be paid, and some furloughed staff were brought back full time while others returned at reduced hours. In the ab-

sence of earned revenue, the symphony is functioning through philanthropy.

Forsyte said one of the challenges is that California remains one of the only states that has not published reopening guidelines for arts organizations.

The goal is to expand the symphony's philanthropic outreach and reach \$12 million in capital resources and reserves while also focusing on helping Orange County.

“We have an economic role to play, but we also have a psychological music and wellness role. That's something we're anxious to do — play outside and in front of people. We think

IF YOU WATCH

What: Symphony Thursdays
When: Every Thursday through April 8 at 7 p.m.
Where: Online
Info: pacificsymphony.org

people are craving beauty, joy and congregation ... [We also want to] support free events, lowering ticket prices, lowering barriers to assure that the broader community can participate.”

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WORLD

Continued from page R1

way through an international journey.

AFRICA

DESTINATION: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: *Abyssinia*, 2801 W. Ball Road, Anaheim, (714) 826-8859

Though a huge part of an Ethiopian restaurant experience is bearing witness to the arrival of the gigantic platters at the table, it can be argued that Abyssinia's dishes are actually best consumed in the privacy of your home. This is, after all, food designed to be eaten with your hands.

The potential of drips, licking of fingers and public embarrassment is real if you're new to the cuisine. It all depends on how deft you are at handling a flat bread called injera that functions both as plate and utensil. You use the injera to dip into stews, pick up meat and sop up sauces by employing only the fingers of your right hand. Made from fermenting teff flour, injera is as delicate as a crepe and has the tanginess of sourdough.

It's eaten with everything — the literal basis of the cuisine, especially the Traditional Combo, which is a greatest-hits sampler served atop a platter covered with injera. Use a piece from the injera provided on the side to tear chicken meat from the yedoro wot, a drumstick and hard-boiled egg simmered in a ruddy stew

made from sweet red peppers. Use another swatch of injera to pick up the awaze tibs, beef strips sautéed in butter with onions, tomatoes and green peppers.

The dish is seasoned with berbere, Ethiopia's indigenous spice blend. The rest of the combo consists of side dishes, such as sweet and savory lentils, a simple iceberg salad in Italian dressing and, best of all, a cabbage-and-carrot stir fry that also needs to be delivered to your mouth with injera.

DESTINATION: Cairo, Egypt: *El Mahroosa Restaurant & Hookah Café*, 930 S. Brookhurst St., Anaheim, (714) 991-9200; elmahroosa.com

Before COVID-19, when you came to El Mahroosa Restaurant & Hookah Café for Egyptian food, you'd eat while sheltered under a steel-covered patio. Your fellow customers would be smoking fruit-flavored tobacco from gurgling hookah pipes.

You'd start with the fried kebbeh appetizer that looks like Christmas ornaments. Then you'd drag a torn piece of warm pita through the hummus, onto which charred bits of beef have been added. You'd take spoonfuls of the kabsa, scrumptious basmati rice cooked with saffron, cinnamon and cardamom. Next you'd tear a piece of lamb that's falling off the bone. And when the om ali, a baked-to-order dessert somewhere between bread



Courtesy of Seasons Kitchen USA

A DISH OF NASI LEMAK at Seasons Kitchen USA, a Malaysian restaurant in Anaheim.

pudding and baklava arrives billowing, you'd ooh-and-aah.

But these days, even if you just do takeout, you can still enjoy these spectacular Egyptian specialties at home — and without the secondhand smoke.

ASIA

DESTINATION: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: *Seasons Kitchen USA*, 641 N. Euclid St., Anaheim, (714) 829-4213, seasonskitchenusa.com

For Seasons Kitchen USA owners Khim and Soon Teoh, operating one of the few Malaysian restaurants in O.C., a county with very few actual Malaysian residents, means never staying complacent.

Even before the pandemic hit, they branched out far and wide. They teamed up with a restaurant pop-up service to introduce their flavors to thousands of worker bees

in office parks all over the county. And when the shutdown happened, they didn't just rely on the usual online delivery apps to distribute their food; they set out on their own runs, fulfilling orders as far down as San Diego.

Through it all, they continued to produce some of the best Malaysian food in O.C.: candy-like char siu pork, crispy-skinned pork belly, silky char kway teow (stir fried rice noodles), bold curry laksa, and best of all, nasi lemak, arguably Malaysia's most iconic dish. It has it all: fragrant rice cooked with coconut cream and pandan; ikan bilis (fried anchovies with peanuts), cucumber, tomato, hard-boiled eggs, homemade sambal and your choice of beef rendang or chicken curry. If you only order one thing, let it be this gateway drug to a lifetime of a Malaysian food addiction.



Edwin Goei

NASI BUNGKUS at Indo Ranch in Lake Forest.

DESTINATION: Jakarta, Indonesia: *Indo Ranch*, 22722 Lambert St. #1701, Lake Forest, (949) 458-1108; indoranchoc.com

For a long time, Indonesians were better represented at the Rose Parade than they were in Orange County's food scene. It's gotten better over the years, but as of this writing there are still only two restaurants that serve Indonesian food within our borders. If you ask actual Indonesians, though, they'll say there's really only one true Indonesian restaurant in O.C.: Indo Ranch.

The place started out as a grocery store a few years ago but has since slowly transformed itself into a full-service eatery by setting up a few tables and pushing back the shelves of imported Indonesian goods to the corner. The national staples of gado gado (a salad of boiled vegetables doused in peanut dressing),

nasi goreng (Indonesian-style fried rice) and satay (barbecued skewers of chicken, lamb or beef) are mainstays.

But you can also slurp mie ayam jamur, Jakarta-style noodles slicked with flavorful oil, topped with chicken and mushroom and served next to a side bowl of broth. Then there's the nasi bungkus, a dish whose name comes from how it's packaged — inside a banana-leaf tetrahedron. Unwrap it to discover a mess of rice paired with beef rendang, egg balado (fried hard-boiled egg in chili sauce), fried chicken, jackfruit curry and a piercing green sambal guaranteed to have you sweating more than actually being in Jakarta during summer.



Edwin Goei

PAR LU DAR at Irrawaddy Taste of Burma in Stanton.

DESTINATION: Yangon, Myanmar: *Irrawaddy Taste of Burma*, 7076 Katella Ave., Stanton, (714) 252-8565; irrawaddytaste.com

If there was a Venn diagram of Thai, Indian and

See *World*, page R5

WORLD

Continued from page R4

Chinese cuisine, the intersection would look, taste and smell like Burmese food. At Irrawaddy Taste of Burma in Stanton, there's samosas, parathas and biryanis like in India, but also a pad Thai lookalike called shan kauk, and taut taut pork, which is Chinese sweet-and-sour by another name.

As good as these dishes are, what you want is the stuff unique to Myanmar, such as lahpet thoke. This salad — presented as separate components of lettuce, tomato, cabbage, crunchy fried lentils — features lahpet, the national delicacy of fermented tea leaves whose flavor equivalent is pesto, except with much more tannins and tang.

Finish with par lu dar, a Technicolor demo reel in a bowl. The dessert contains a rose-syrup-sweetened milk soup, various jellies, tapioca pearls, chunks of flan and ice cream on top.

EUROPE

DESTINATION: Bucharest, Romania: *Goodies in the Pantry, 1108 E Katella Ave., Orange, (714) 602-7524; goodiesinthepantry.com*

Goodies in the Pantry isn't just a butcher shop from another country, it's a butcher shop from another era. It offers the kind of service your grandparents might reminisce about, where the guy behind the counter knows your name and how you like your steaks cut.



Courtesy of Goodies in the Pantry

PAPANASI DESSERT at Goodies in the Pantry, a butcher shop in Orange.

That guy is Claudiu Giorgioni, who, in a former life, was a sturgeon farmer in his native Romania and a Brazilian jiu-jitsu world champion. Now his passion is sausages, including the Romanian kind, which he stuffs into coils after he seasons the meat with allspice and lots of garlic.

He offers it raw, but if you're lucky, the Romanian sausage will be that day's chef's choice for the grilled

in-store lunch, served with your choice of side. The rest of his meat-forward breakfasts, lunches and dinners are a carnivore's dream, with all manner of fauna roasted and barbecued to make up sandwiches and steak-house-level plates.

Giorgioni is now starting to offer weekend-only specials of papanasi, a Romanian version of a donut smothered with sour cream and jam, and langos, a deep-fried bread with the circumference of a pizza,



Edwin Goei

A PLATE WITH a knackwurst and German potato at Continental Deli in La Habra.

topped with cheese and dill sauce.

DESTINATION: Munich, Germany: *Continental Deli, 1510 W. Imperial Hwy. # C, La Habra, (562) 697-0333; continentaldeli.us*

For nearly 30 years, local fans of FC Bayern Munich have converged upon Continental Deli in La Habra to watch and root for their hometown soccer team with German beer and food. But you don't have to be a "fussball" fanatic or even German to appreciate the culture and the house-made sausages here.

You should, of course, start with the bratwurst. It's got a snappy natural casing outside, a marvelous coarse texture inside, and peppery overtones throughout. Next, try a plump knackwurst as smooth as mousse. It eats like a giant garlicky hot dog. Or perhaps you've always wondered what a currywurst tastes like. The latter comes with fried potatoes to sop up the excess curry ketchup.

When you opt for the bratwurst and knackwurst, you get sauerkraut and a choice of two homemade potato salads. The house special potato salad, which is like mashed potato since it's pushed through a ricer, is a customer favorite. The German potato salad follows a traditional recipe where sliced potato is tossed in vinegar, bacon and onion, then served warm.

Either way, you're not leaving hungry or without a few German pastries such as a decadent home-made cheesecake to take home.

DESTINATION: St. Malo, France: *Delice Breton, 31451 Rancho Viejo Road Suite 103, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 503-1577; delicebreton.com*

If you've ever eaten an omelet in the Brittany region of France, you'd notice they're unlike their slender, all-yellow Parisian

cousins. These instead have a pronounced brown outer crust and a puffy crescent shape. They're also fluffier than a Parisian omelet since they're whipped in a copper bowl to incorporate millions of air bubbles, cooked over a steady flame, and flipped only when they go on the plate.

These kinds of omelets are an attraction of nearby Mont Saint-Michel, where a hotel called La Mère Poulard has been serving them for the past 130 years to everyone from Monet to Jacques Chirac. San Juan Capistrano's Delice Breton replicates the experience with an omelet that possesses an ethereal texture somewhere between shampoo foam and cheese fondue. Served next to a salad, it's a luxurious lunch that needs to be followed by one of the best crepes in the county for dessert.



Edwin Goei

MILANESA at La Farola Empanadas in Costa Mesa.

SOUTH AMERICA DESTINATION: Buenos Aires, Argentina: *La Farola Empanadas, 2790 Harbor Blvd. #118, Costa Mesa, (714) 714-0588; lafarolaempanadas.com*

Empanadas are to Argentina what pizza is to Italy. It is so ingrained in the food culture that encountering an empanada in O.C. that's not Argentinian is almost as rare as an Argentinian restaurant that doesn't serve them.

La Farola Empanadas in Costa Mesa revels in empanadas. Each of the 15 kinds it offers possesses a crust thick enough to securely cocoon the filling, but not so thick that it's doughy. The basic beef empanada weeps so much juice, it's advisable to eat it over a bowl.

The Arab empanada has a lemon juice tang, and the sweet beef has raisins mixed in. The tuna empanada is so good, Subway needs to take note. Yet, La Farola owner Eva Galvan isn't content on resting her laurels on just the empanadas.

Her Milanesas are not to be ignored. In particular, there's the La Farola Milanesa where she pounds a steak to the thinness of an iPad mini. Then it starts. She breads and deep-fries it, brushes on some tomato sauce and layers on a slice of ham, melted mozzarella and two fried eggs. It's served



Edwin Goei

SALGADOS AT TASTE, Brazilian Style Gourmet in Huntington Beach.

with a side of hot fries and a tacit guarantee that you won't be hungry for a good long while.

DESTINATION: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: *TASTE, Brazilian Style Gourmet, 19933 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach, (714) 460-8606; tastelikebrazil.com*

There is more to Brazilian cuisine than all-you-can-eat churrascarias and acai bowls. TASTE, Brazilian Style Gourmet in Huntington Beach is proof of that. And if you know any Brazilians, they can attest that this humble shop is the county's preeminent salgado specialist.

Salgados is the term that describes all the pastry-based delicacies usually

sold by street vendors and corner shops back in the old country. Among the salgados offered here, there's the addictive, crispy-chewy cheese-bread balls called pão de queijo; the teardrop-shaped chicken-and-cream-cheese croquettes called coxinha; quibes, deep-fried foot-balls of bulgur wheat, ground beef, and mint; and the enroladinho de carne moída, which are stuffed with spicy beef. You can make a meal out of two or three salgados, but if you're lucky, there will be feijoada, the national dish of beans, sausage and pork.

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ASIANS

Continued from page R1

vious years.

Orange County Board of Supervisors chairman Andrew Do said these numbers don't include the larger number of unreported incidents, which may not be documented because victims are reluctant to come forward or don't know how to file a report.

"As a resident of Orange County since 1976, not since then have we seen this level of xenophobic rhetoric and racist language used so openly, nor have we seen so many people physically attacked in open daylight," Do said.

Linda Nguyen, executive vice president of 360 Clinic, shared an encounter she had early in the pandemic when a couple approached and accused her of having the coronavirus. It was a moment that left her in tears for several minutes.

"In the 40 years I've lived here in Orange County, I was shocked because I had never experienced anything like that living in this melting pot," she said. "It was a painful experience and although it was not an act of violence, it was emotionally painful and it was embarrassing."

Trang Hoang, a USC professor who specializes in Asian Pacific Interlander adult mental health, asked community members who discriminate and hold racist views to challenge themselves to change their behavior by not acting out but instead managing their fear of COVID-19 in a peaceful way.



Photo by Agnes Constante

O.C. BOARD of Supervisors chairman Andrew Do spoke at a news conference about anti-Asian hate and rhetoric Feb. 25.

Garden Grove Mayor Steve Jones said his city condemns any acts of discrimination, violence or hate against any person. He added that Garden Grove's diverse communities contribute to multiple facets of daily life, from cultural traditions to business, and civic, educational and social activities.

"More importantly they broaden our understanding and appreciation for living in an environment that values and celebrates that we are all unique individuals but together we are one community," he said.

Garden Grove Deputy Police Chief Amir El Farra said the Garden Grove Police Department will do everything in its power to make sure Asian Americans feel safe in the community. One of the ways they're working toward this is by dispatching patrol to areas where Asian American elders congregate, such as senior centers or areas where they exercise, El Farra said.

"We are just as aggressive at enforcing the law as people who use hate speech and manifest it in physical activity against a person," he said. "We will fight them back with everything we have in our resolve."

Do said Thursday's news conference was a public statement that racist conduct won't be tolerated and that the community is united in fighting against bigotry and ignorance.

"We are also standing up today to protect our community's future," he said. "Racial discrimination creates serious and long lasting harms against the physical health and psychological wellbeing of our children, especially young kids."

Speakers urged community members to report hate incidents to places including the Orange County Human Relations Commission by calling (714) 480-6580.

AGNES CONSTANTE is a contributor to TimesOC.



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