What’s New in San Diego, Spring 2020
January 2020

Major Attractions

LEGOLAND® California Resort announced the largest addition in the park’s history: The LEGO® Movie™ World, opening in spring 2020. The new attraction area is based on the blockbuster films The LEGO Movie and The LEGO Movie 2: The Second Part. The new land fully immerses guests into the LEGO Movie universe and places them onto the streets of Bricksburg. On the flagship ride, Masters of Flight, guests hop aboard Emmet’s triple decker flying couch for a thrill-seeking adventure. Visitors will also enjoy the rush of falling from Unikitty’s Disco Drop after they are launched to the top of Cloud Cuckoo Land, then dropped, spun and bounced down to earth. Guests can also explore Benny’s Play Ship, ride a fully reimagined carousel, and meet Emmet and friends in Emmet’s Super Suite apartment. (10/19)

SeaWorld San Diego plans to open “Emperor,” the park’s new dive roller coaster, in summer 2020. There are currently 14 dive coasters in the world designed by Bolliger & Mabillard; these rides feature near-vertical drops with a holding brake at the top of the coaster, just before the drop. The Emperor will be the tallest, fastest and longest dive coaster in California, as well as the only floorless dive coaster in the state. Named for the world’s largest penguin, the new ride will mimic this species’ amazing underwater diving ability. Climbing to 153 feet with feet dangling in the air, riders on Emperor will be suspended on a 45-degree angle at the crown of the ride before plunging down a 143-foot facedown vertical drop accelerating to more than 60 miles per hour. Riders will also experience inversions, a barrel roll, Immelmann loop, hammerhead turn and flat spin as they race along the nearly 2,500 feet of track. This exciting attraction will highlight an important new animal-conservation partnership between SeaWorld and Penguins International that will focus on penguin awareness and the conservation needs of this special aquatic bird. A portion of the proceeds from sales of penguin merchandise at the Emperor retail store will be donated to Penguins International to support conservation, education and research efforts. (1/20)

SeaWorld Entertainment and Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street®, plan to open a new Sesame Place® theme park in spring 2021. Sesame Place San Diego, only the second Sesame Place® in the United States, will be located on the site of the current Aquatica San Diego, SeaWorld’s waterpark. The new, nearly 17-acre park will feature all the fun, laughter, and learning of Sesame Street in a highly immersive way with exciting family rides, water slides, live character shows and parades. Sesame Place San Diego will open as a Certified Autism
Center (CAC), mirroring its Philadelphia sister park, which was the first theme park in the world to achieve this designation. Staff-wide autism sensitivity and awareness training will be completed prior to the park’s debut, and robust pre-visit planning resources, including a park-specific sensory guide will be featured on its website, making it easier for parents to plan activities that satisfy their child's specific needs and accommodations. Designated quiet spaces with adjustable lighting and comfortable seating will also be incorporated into the park’s design. Construction on Sesame Place San Diego does not impact Aquatica’s operations. It will open for its final season on Memorial Day weekend in 2020. (1/20)

**New Hotels & Renovations**

Opening February 2020, The Legacy Resort Hotel & Spa is a new luxury hotel and conference center with unique attractions set in San Diego’s Mission Valley neighborhood. The Legacy features 126 non-smoking guestrooms including a Presidential Suite and Executive Suite and 51 rooms with balconies. The Spa at Legacy offers a variety of internationally inspired spa treatments including massage, body treatments, skin care, waxing, nail care and memorable spa packages. The hotel’s 18-acre setting offers stunning attractions and exhibits such as a 28-foot diameter, interactive world globe that transports guests to the nations of the world by simple touch panel, plus a dynamic 4D theater with a 56-foot dome screen and 100 full-motion seats. Visitors can stroll through an international marketplace resembling the old-world shops of the Middle East filled with goods from Africa, Asia, Middle East and South America. A 100-ft long, 16-ft tall Western Wall at Legacy International Center replicates and pays tribute to the “Wailing Wall” in Jerusalem. The Plaza Fountain features vibrant displays of music, water and lights. Dining options include authentic Italian steakhouse cuisine at Theresa’s Restaurant as well as the Fountains Restaurant offering an all-day menu, healthy and convenient grab ‘n’ go options, and a Mission Valley view. The resort’s pool offers poolside dining and cocktails. In addition to a 500-seat theater, flexible indoor and outdoor meeting space includes adaptable spacious ballroom and foyer, and an outdoor gazebo and garden walk perfect for weddings. (1/20)

Formerly known as the Hilton San Diego Resort & Spa, San Diego Mission Bay Resort completed a $21 million renovation of the luxury waterfront resort and spa in January 2020. Located on Mission Bay Park’s aquatic preserve, the 357-room destination resort offers an ideal basecamp for guests seeking to explore the city’s vibrant culture and nearby attractions while experiencing San Diego’s beach lifestyle. The newly renamed resort transformed its guestrooms, conference center and executive board room with enhanced technology, expanded amenities, all-new custom furniture and original artwork, and new guest bathrooms with tubs and custom tiled showers throughout the resort. San Diego Mission Bay Resort offers a 4,000-square-foot outdoor pool area and poolside grill, five tennis courts, spa and fitness center, onsite watersports rentals, gift shop and restaurant. Additionally, the Mediterranean-style hotel provides more than 16,000 square feet of interior meeting and function space and 9,600 square feet of outdoor meeting space. (1/20)

**Major Events**

During Feb. 13-23, 2020, nearly 40 San Diego performing arts organizations will participate in the fourth annual San Diego Theatre Week. This celebration of dramatic arts will offer a variety of promotions including special performances, ticket discounts, concession offers, cast talkbacks and more.
The **Flower Fields in Carlsbad, California** open March 1, 2020, and feature 80 acres of Giant Tecolote Ranunculus flowers on coastal farmland overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The fields have theme gardens, fresh strawberries, antique tractor wagon rides, a sweet pea maze and picnic areas, and special events and activities are organized throughout its 10-week season. Events are free with admission and include a kids’ day, wine tasting, yoga, arts and crafts, photography workshop, and Mother’s Day celebration. Concert days include bands playing jazz, bluegrass, blues and rock ‘n’ roll.

On March 7-8, 2020, downtown’s scenic Waterfront Park on San Diego Bay will host the twice yearly **CRSSD Fest**, an electronic music festival featuring top acts like ODESZA, Phantogram, Maetrik, The Martinez Brothers, and Justin Martin & Friends on three stages during this ticketed, paid-admission event for attendees aged 21 and older. Craft beer, mixed drinks, local food and a VIP area will also be available.

San Diego **shamROCK** will paint downtown’s Gaslamp Quarter green with San Diego’s largest Saint Patrick’s Day block party. Drawing more than 20,000 attendees, this annual celebration on March 14, 2020, is produced by and benefits the Gaslamp Quarter Historical Foundation. Six city blocks are covered with over 50,000 square feet of emerald green AstroTurf where guests can watch performances by traditional Irish steppers along with three stages of live music including nationally recognized Irish rock and Celtic bands. Tickets to the age 21+ event start at $39.

A new festival celebrating Champagne and sparkling wine, **BBLs** debuts March 13-14, 2020, at the new **JULEP** event venue in downtown San Diego. The festival includes tastings, educational sessions and a Champagne brunch. This new event is produced by the team behind the San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival and will be an international showcase of the world’s most celebrated libation.

On April 11, 2020, San Diego hosts California’s first **Spartan City** obstacle course city competition. This all-new course is located at Spanish Landing Park, just a 10-minute drive from downtown. Competitors will dash across hard top paths and crush obstacles along North San Diego Bay for an intense 5K sprint that offers participants stunning city views. (1/20)

Held April 17-19, 2020, at Scripps Park overlooking scenic La Jolla Cove, the **La Jolla Concours d’Elegance** draws vintage car enthusiasts to the luxury seaside village of La Jolla. The sophisticated event includes a cocktail party, VIP Steam Punk party and the signature Concours d’Elegance car show.

Held April 25-26, 2020, the **Mission Federal ArtWalk** will celebrate its 36th year in the streets of Little Italy. Featuring more than 300 artists filling 17 square blocks of the iconic urban neighborhood with art, craftsmanship and beautiful goods, this annual event attracts artists from across the globe. The festival is a family-friendly opportunity to participate in interactive art installations and features live music and dance performances.

San Diego’s longest running LGBT Film Festival, **FilmOut**, is moving venues to Balboa Park for its 21st year. The San Diego Natural History Museum will host the opening night movie and after-party gala on April 30. The Museum of Photographic Arts (MOPA) will screen a wide assortment of LGBTQ+ feature-length movies and collections of short films May 1-3, 2020. (1/20)

**New Venues**
The **San Diego Symphony’s** highly anticipated permanent bayside concert venue located in the Port of San Diego’s Embarcadero Marina Park South opens summer 2020. The new venue will feature a permanent, highly innovative, architecturally striking and acoustically superior outdoor stage that will allow the symphony to showcase a wider variety of musical presentations and enrich the patron experience with improved sightlines, expanded concession area and permanent bathrooms. The symphony’s project transforms a public park on San Diego Bay into a welcoming community space that will host approximately 3,100 concertgoers per event with the flexibility to accommodate a maximum capacity of 10,000 attendees. (10/19 with updates)

In December 2019, **Mingei International Museum** officials announced a major project milestone as the museum enters the final construction phase for the transformation of its facility on the Plaza de Panama in Balboa Park. The $52 million project opens in 2021 and will feature a newly designed community gathering space including a new plaza level open to the public free of charge, an education center, a garden courtyard accessible to all park visitors, and quiet and spacious upper level galleries devoted to exhibitions with a library open to visitors. Restored historic spaces including upper terraces will be opened to the public for the first time in decades, offering views of the Plaza de Panama, El Prado and the California Tower. Access to the building’s historic Bell Tower will be opened and activated with a new grand staircase. Also planned is a multipurpose theater space for performances, lectures, concerts and special events, a new iteration of the Shop Mingei store, and a full-service cafe with coffee bar. (1/20)

For the second year, **Beach House** at Belmont Park will offer beach chair and umbrella rental set up and food service from spring to September 2020 on weekends at Mission Beach. Guests pay $20 an hour, $25 for two hours or $50 for noon to sunset for two lounge chairs, table and umbrella on the public beach in front of the amusement park. Renters can order from the Beach House or El Jefe menus, excluding alcoholic beverages and the service is availability Friday-Sunday from noon-sunset. (1/20)

**Restaurants, Breweries and Nightlife**

In November 2019, Executive Chef Brad Wise of San Diego’s Trust Restaurant Group opened **Rare Society**, serving wood-fired steaks, chops, seafood and modern riffs on favorite steakhouse sides. Pastry Chef Jeremy Harville directs the bakery selections and dessert menu featuring sweet-tooth satisfying treats such as house-made cakes and scoops of signature Mr. Trustee ice cream. Rare Society offers the ultimate steakhouse cocktail list with a selection of classic martinis and well-balanced, handcrafted libations with flavor profiles designed to pair with the hearty dishes. The carefully selected wine list features classic producers and cult-like wines from across the globe. The intimate space invites guests to slide into comfy booths and dine like mad men and women or enjoy small bites around a fire pit on the outside patio in the charming University Heights neighborhood. (1/20)

Opening summer 2020, **Callie** will feature California-Mediterranean cuisine from Executive Chef Travis Swikard. Following 10 years cooking alongside iconic French chef Daniel Boulud in New York, where he was Executive Chef of Boulud Sud and culinary director of Bar Boulud and Epicerie Boulud, Swikard returns home for his first solo project. Callie will put the farmers, fisherman, and fresh, local ingredients of the greater San Diego region at the forefront and blend them with a
Mediterranean palette. The setting for Callie is an open, natural light-filled space set in downtown’s East Village neighborhood. (1/20)

In January 2020, **Border X Brewery** in San Diego’s Barrio Logan neighborhood begins a year-long quest to create new flavors of beers reflecting seven regions in Mexico. The brewery currently produces beer that reflects the cross-border influences within its neighborhood such as horchata golden stout, featuring the classic Mexican rice drink, horchata, and abuelita’s chocolate stout flavored with Mexican chocolate. The brewery owners will travel to seven regions to get inspiration, starting in Mexico City, followed by Guadalajara, and then develop a beer it will serve in-house using the regional influences. The brewery has also launched successful public programs, such as the ongoing Mujeres Brew Club with monthly sessions including beer industry speakers and guest brewery tastings, as well as hosting live music three nights a week with acts ranging from Latin Jazz to Rock in Español to Cumbia and a *Loteria* game night (similar to bingo) with a DJ. (1/20)

**Arts and Museums**

In November 2019, the **Maritime Museum of San Diego**, home to a collection of historic vessels, opened an exhibit of vintage postcards of San Diego and other global ports of call since the 1930s titled *Wish you Were Here*. The new exhibit is on display through 2020. In July 2020, the museum launches a major new interactive exhibit aboard the world’s oldest active sailing ship, *Star of India*. *Sea Monsters: Delving into the Deep Myth* will take visitors on an imaginary journey at the end of the 19th century, investigating the existence of sea monsters in various parts of the globe. Guests wandering the deep hold of the ship see specimens both real and reconstructed and explore evidence from different cultures that express humanity’s innermost fears, our search for truth, and the thrill of discovery that ultimately bring sea monsters to life, including skeletal aquatic dinosaur replicas, marine biological specimens, historic zoological magic lantern images and hands-on immersive activities within the historic ship. (1/20)

The **California Tower** at the **San Diego Museum of Man** reopens for public tours in early 2020 following the completion of a seismic retrofit of the historic structure, which had reopened in 2015 after being closed for decades. The brand-new tour experience will highlight the histories of San Diego’s diverse communities, while still culminating with spectacular 360-degree views of San Diego after visitors climb the winding staircase within the tower. (1/20)

**The Old Globe** theater in Balboa Park continues its exciting 2020 season. Productions include **Little Women**, a new version of Louisa May Alcott’s classic novel about Jo March and her three unforgettable sisters, March 14–April 19; **Faceless**, about an American teenager who joins ISIS and the Muslim prosecutor who takes the case, March 28–April 26; **The Gardens of Anuncia**, inspired by the life story of American stage icon Graciela Daniele, May 8–June 14; and **What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank**, a story of two high school friends whose adult lives have taken them to opposite ends of the earth, May 28–June 28. In July, the Tony Award-winning theater brings the legendary rock musical *Hair* back to the stage. (10/19 with updates)

The Tony Award-winning **La Jolla Playhouse** is teaming up with two of the most exciting writers in American theater today, Rajiv Joseph and Kirsten Childs, to bring a cherished tale into the present. From Feb. 18–March 29, 2020, **Fly**, an exciting new musical based on *Peter Pan*, takes audiences on an adventure propelled by a powerful and percussive score, dynamic choreography and aerial acrobatics. Wendy’s life is about to change forever when she meets a boy named Peter, a pirate
named Hook, and a beguiling Crocodile in this thrilling, funny, dangerous look at JM Barrie’s novel. Then, opening in May, the Playhouse shows the West Coast premiere of another new musical, *Lempicka*. Amid the violence of the Russian Revolution, a young painter named Tamara de Lempicka and her aristocrat husband are forced to abandon their luxurious lifestyle and flee to the dubious safety of Paris. Relying on raw talent and relentless ambition, Tamara claws her way from penniless refugee to in-demand portraitist, earning a place among Parisian high society. Her world is upended once again when she meets Rafaela, a free spirit from the city slums, who introduces Tamara to a new world of decadence and passion. (10/19 with updates)

**Tours and Transportation**

In December 2019, **GoCar San Diego**, a tour company offering two-seater storytelling cars that navigate passengers around the city, added electric GoCars and scooters to their fleet. The tour company has been operating in San Diego for 14 years and recently partnered with AYRO, Inc. to bring electric, street legal three-wheeled AYRO 311 GoCars for visitors to use to tour the sights of San Diego. GoCars are equipped with a touch-screen tablet that includes GPS software that talks to and guides the driver. The company created new routes and experiences for the electric car to add to their current tours, including one-hour Harbor and Gaslamp Quarter tours, two-hour Old Meets New tours of Old Town and Downtown, four-hour Shoppers Delight tours and full day tours of Balboa Park, Point Loma and more. The company has also partnered with Phat Scooter to include an electric scooter option, including a new tour to Coronado Island via electric scooter. (1/20)

In January 2020, **Fit City Adventures** added Pro Athlete Experiences to its outdoor adventure offerings. With the 2020 Summer Olympics adding surfing and skateboarding competitions, Fit City has partnered with local professional athletes to host experiences to teach these action sports. Damien Hobgood, pro surfer on the World Championship Tour and Surfrider Pro Team offers the unique chance to learn the basics of surfing from a pro. The surf adventure also includes shaping a surfboard, enjoying local fish tacos and microbrews, and SoCal swag. Carlsbad-based pro skateboarder Ryan Gallant, featured in the EA *Skate* video game and owner of *Visit Skateboarding*, will teach guests the basics and more at skateparks in San Diego County. Other adventures include the ultimate off-road motorcycle experience: ride with professional Motocross rider Daniel Sedlak and his crew and learn how to navigate San Diego tracks and trails on two wheels. (1/20)

On January 9, 2020, **Taos Air**, the airline launched out of Taos Regional Airport in New Mexico, began direct charter flight service to McClellan-Palomar Airport in Carlsbad in San Diego’s North County arriving Thursday, Saturday and Sunday weekly.

In January 2020, Alaska Airlines began offering daily flights to San Diego from Santa Maria (SBP) in San Luis Obispo County, California, and Redmond, Oregon (RDM).

**Air Transat** will offer seasonal service to San Diego from YUL Montréal-Trudeau International Airport, Canada, from June 15–Oct. 28, 2020. The flight will arrive three times a week, on Sunday, Monday and Wednesday and will provide 189 seats.

Beginning in May 2020, **Swoop Airlines**, the low-cost carrier owned by Canada’s WestJet Airlines, will offer new service from Edmonton, Alberta, to San Diego. Flights will arrive on Fridays and Sundays, and beginning June 16, Swoop will add a Tuesday arrival as well. (7/19 updated 1/20)
Carnival Cruise Line announced the return of its cruise ship Miracle to operate a new winter schedule from San Diego beginning Oct. 4, 2020. The itineraries include convenient three-day getaways to Ensenada, Mexico; four-day sailings to Ensenada and Catalina Island; and five-day cruises that spend two full days in the Mexican resort town of Cabo San Lucas. Also offered are four 15-day Carnival Journeys round-trip cruises to Hawaii departing Oct. 16 and Nov. 28, 2020, and Jan. 9 and Feb. 20, 2021. (1/19 & 1/20)

Guests and groups looking to give back can participate in Teams for Good, an opportunity for corporations to unite against hunger by supporting Feeding San Diego through volunteerism and giving. Groups can participate in two-hour volunteer shifts to help glean, sort and pack food before it is distributed to those in need. (1/20)

Awards & Recognition

In January 2020, MeetingSource.com released its 4th annual Best Cities for Conventions report and San Diego takes the top spot for 2020 based on an asset rating system that measures six important site selection factors, including walkability, affordable hotel rooms, distance of airports and the number of direct flights, safety and tourism infrastructure/appeal. (1/20)

In November 2019, TripAdvisor ranked San Diego #6 in its Top 25 Destinations in the U.S. to visit, according to its Travelers Choice Award. This ranking is a move up from #7 in 2018. (1/20)

Find your smile in San Diego. For more information on San Diego’s offerings, including exciting vacation packages and valuable coupons for attractions, restaurants and more, visit the San Diego Tourism Authority's website at www.sandiego.org.

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