

Discover some of season's best events around Orange County.

By Allison Emery

FOR THE FAMILY



Date: Feb. 21-28; Sunday, 1:30 and 5 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 4:30 and 8 p.m.
Location: Big Top at OC Fair & Event Center, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa
Cost: \$50 general admission (premium and VIP seating will be available). Parking is \$10 general, \$15 preferred, \$20 bus/limo
Information: cirquedusoleil.com/luzia or 877.924.7783



"LUZIA" BY CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

Take an imaginary trip to Mexico with Cirque du Soleil's jaw-dropping act "LUZIA," playing at the OC Fair & Event Center. Guests will be awed by amazing feats performed inside the infamous Big Top, including acrobatic acts and larger-than-life props in this thrilling production that will surely leave kids and adults alike in wonderment.

SAN CLEMENTE'S 90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The city of San Clemente celebrates its 90th Anniversary on San Clemente Day. To commemorate its storied history and traditions of the city there will be open houses, historians and discounts at city facilities including free recreation swim at the Ole Hanson Beach Club.

Date: Feb. 24, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Location: Ole Hanson Beach Club, 105 W. Avenida Pico, San Clemente
Cost: Free
Information: san-clemente.org or 949.361.8200

47TH ANNUAL DANA POINT FESTIVAL OF WHALES

One of Southern California's largest maritime celebrations, the Dana Point Festival of Whales draws more than 100,000 visitors each year to pay homage to the annual migration of the gray whales along the West Coast. Festival highlights include an opening day parade, street fair, art and craft shows and sales, classic car exhibits, stand-up paddling, kids' activities, lots of food and whale-watching excursions aboard a variety of vessels from Dana Point Headlands or Conservation Park.

Date: March 3-4 and 10-11
Location: Dana Point Harbor
Cost: Free
Information: 949.496.1045 or festivalofwhales.com



SEA STAR ADVENTURES

Parents or guardians and their little ones are invited to join a maritime-themed educational class exploring shapes, colors, textures and more using coastal Southern California's native tide pool animal, the sea star. Each session, held on Tuesdays, includes exploration, an animal encounter, and an activity. Suitable for ages 2 to 3 years.

Date: Through March 13, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
Location: Ocean Institute, 24200 Dana Point Harbor Dr., Dana Point
Cost: Drop-in class: \$30; members receive a 10 percent discount; enter your member ID in the "Enter Promotional Code" field to receive your discount.
Information: 949.496.2274 or ocean-institute.org

SPRING CELEBRATION

Spring is in the air—join in on the family fun at Ladera Ranch Community Services' Spring Celebration. The event includes photos with Peter and Mrs. Rabbit, egg scrambles for toddlers, a spring craft fair, food and beverages and much more.

Date: March 24, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Location: Founders Park, 28275 Avendale Blvd., Ladera Ranch
Cost: Presale activity wristbands \$5; available on laderalife.com through March 22 at 5 p.m.
Information: 949.388.8300 or laderalife.com

60TH SWALLOWS DAY PARADE AND MERCADO STREET FAIRE

The Swallows Day Parade is part of the Fiesta de las Golondrinas, or Festival of the Swallows, a celebration of the return of the migratory songbird to Mission San Juan Capistrano on St. Joseph's Day. During the parade, the Mercado Street Faire will also be taking place, where the whole family can go to eat, dance, play and shop. There will also be a kids' play zone in the Historic Town Center Park, where awards for many of the parade entrants take place after the parade. Visitors are encouraged to take the convenient shuttle bus or arrive early as most street closures are in effect by 10 a.m.



Date: March 24, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Location: Downtown San Juan Capistrano
Cost: Free
Information: 949.493.1976 or swallowsparade.com

FOR THE KIDS

"RAINFOREST ADVENTURE" EXHIBIT

Kids will love this "expedition" that allows them to explore and learn about the tropical rainforests of the world by discovering a gorilla nest, building a model insect, identifying endangered species and crawling through a tree log. The exhibit also highlights the challenges facing rainforests and its inhabitants. Visitors are invited to role-play as research assistants on a series of problem-solving adventures as they meet scientists and learn how to study rainforests.

Date: Through Sept. 9
Location: Discovery Cube, 2500 N. Main St., Santa Ana
Cost: Included in general admission: \$17.95 for adults, \$12.95 for children ages 3-14, free for children 2 and under
Information: 714.542.2823 or discoverycube.org



FOR THE KIDS



CELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S DAY!

The luck of the Irish is celebrated at Pretend City with a fun-filled day of activities, including a treasure hunt leading to a pot of gold, storytelling, leprechaun-hunting and a parade at the end of the day. Kids and adults are encouraged to wear their greenest outfit.

Date: March 20, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Location: Pretend City Children's Museum, 29 Hubble, Irvine
Cost: Fee included with admissions; admission: \$12.50 adults and children over 12 months, free for infants through 12 months. Dress in a "Star Wars" themed outfit and receive \$1 off admission.
Information: pretendcity.org or 949.428-3900

THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING

Celebrate the season with arts and crafts, story time and educational games and activities at Pretend City Museum. Here, little ones will learn how to paint flowers, jump over pretend puddles and write their own stories to tell how they grow and change just like the different seasons.



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SAN CLEMENTE MICRO-BREW FEST
 Presented by Left Coast Brewing Co. and the San Clemente Chamber of Commerce, the San Clemente Micro-Brew Fest will surely be a must-attend event for beer lovers. Featuring brews from all over Southern California, including San Clemente's own Left Coast Brewing Co., attendees sip on 12 4-ounce craft beer samples while enjoying great fare provided by local food trucks. There will also be live music and an opportunity to visit the brewery's tasting room. Must be 21 to be admitted.

Date: April 14; VIP opening 12-1 p.m.; general opening from 1-5 p.m.
Location: Left Coast Brewing Co., 1245 Puerta Del Sol, San Clemente
Cost: Pre-order general admission: \$35; general admission at door: \$40; VIP admission: \$45 (admission includes 12 4-ounce micro-brew samples)
Information: 949.492.1131 or schamber.com

CHARITY EVENTS



OCEAN INSTITUTE JAZZ FESTIVAL

Ocean Institute's biggest fundraiser of the year, the Jazz Festival supports the institute's Adopt-A-Class, which gives underserved students the opportunity to engage in hands-on educational experiences at the Ocean Institute. There are two evenings to enjoy this event that features gourmet food by some of Orange County's top chefs, top jazz musicians and a beautiful sunset over Dana Point Harbor.

Date: March 2-3
Location: Ocean Institute, 24200 Dana Point Harbor Dr., Dana Point
Cost: Friday night tickets: \$75-250; Saturday night gala tickets: \$500
Information: 949.496.2274 or ocean-institute.org

SIP AND SAVOR



ORANGE COUNTY RESTAURANT WEEK

Celebrating 10 years, Orange County Restaurant Week returns with a great lineup of incredible culinary experiences. This year's participating eaters include local favorites like Sundried Tomato American Bistro and Catering in San Juan Capistrano; Bad to the Bone BBQ in San Juan Capistrano; and Tortilla Republic in Laguna Beach. The event is a great opportunity to try local restaurants at great prices. Search participating restaurants and menus on the official website—the only thing left to do is make a reservation.

Date: March 4-10
Location: Participating restaurants across Orange County
Cost: \$10-\$50 per person depending on offer
Information: ocrestaurantweek.com



CASA CLASSIC:

AN EVENING WITH TONY DESARE

Support performing arts and education programs for youth and people of all ages in South Orange County at An Evening with Tony DeSare. DeSare, a pop singer and pianist, has made the "Top 10" Billboard list for three jazz albums and played for the CBS "Early Show", NPR's "Prairie Home Companion" and NBC's "Today Show" as well as Carnegie Hall. Enjoy tunes from Frank Sinatra at this fundraiser held at Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens, which includes a black-tie dinner, entertainment and a live auction.

Date: March 16, 6 p.m.
Location: Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens, 415 Avenida Granada, San Clemente
Cost: \$65
Information: casaromantica.org or 949.498.2139

ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS GALA 2018: "BIG TIME IN THE BIG EASY"

Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA) hosts its Gala 2018: "Big Time in the Big Easy," bringing a taste of New Orleans to Orange County. Gala is OCSA's largest, most prestigious fundraiser of the year, which raises funds to provide tuition-free arts programs to its students. AT this must-attend event, guests will be entertained by improvisational street performers and live jazz music while imbibing in cocktails and international cuisine.

Date: March 24, 5:30-8 p.m.; concert begins at 7:30
Location: Hotel Irvine, 17900 Jamboree Road, Irvine
Cost: Individual tickets on sale February 2018
Information: ocsarts.net/gala

CHARITY EVENTS



LADERA DERBY DAY

In benefit of Laura's House, a nonprofit based in Ladera Ranch that provides emergency shelter to women and children escaping domestic violence situations, Ladera Derby Day brings the essence of the Kentucky Derby to Ladera Ranch—all for a good cause. The fundraiser features a southern-style buffet with beer, wine and mint juleps; live horseracing and lawn game tournaments; derby hat contest with prizes; and a silent auction and opportunity drawings.

Date: May 5, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Location: Covenant Hills Village Clubhouse, 1 Covenant Hills Dr., Ladera Ranch

Cost: \$75 per person or \$140 per couple; buy tickets at laderalife.com before March 31 and receive \$5 off per person; use coupon code: Derby2018 for individual tickets and 2018Couple for couple's tickets.

Information: laderalife.com or 949.388.8300



MUSIC AND ARTS



"THE GRADUATE"

Based on the iconic novel by Charles Webb and the film in 1967, "The Graduate" is a cultural mainstay even today. Lovers of this film will surely want to see its stage adaptation as Golden Globe winner and Academy Award nominee Melanie Griffith stars in the iconic role of Mrs. Robinson in Laguna Playhouse's production. Follow the hilarious yet dark comedy of Benjamin as he navigates post-college life and an encounter with the seductive Mrs. Robinson set in California during the 1960s.

Date: Through - March 18

Location: Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach

Cost: Tickets start at \$86

Information: lagunaplayhouse.com or 949.497.2787

"VIDEO GAME ODYSSEY"

Kids will love this musical that follows the story of two adventurous children who find themselves transported inside their favorite video game. Escape with them to a magical world with music from beloved video games featuring the Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Pacific Symphony. Before the concert, get into the musical spirit by partaking in the interactive Musical Carnival in the concert hall lobby, where kids can test drive a musical instrument, meet the performers and enjoy musical arts and crafts activities. Recommended for children age 5-11.

Date: March 17

Location: Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa

Cost: Tickets start at \$15

Information: scr.org or 714.708.5555

"BAREFOOT IN THE PARK"

"Barefoot in the Park," Neil Simon's Tony Award winning classic, is a tale of two newlyweds who happen to find themselves in comical situations after a six-day honeymoon. An unexpected visit from the mother-in-law leads to a hilarious series of events that will leave audiences keeling over with laughter.

Date: March 30 - April 15

Location: Camino Real Playhouse, 31776 El Camino Real, San Juan Capistrano

Cost: Tickets start at \$22

Information: caminorealplayhouse.org or 949.489.8082