



The Carmel Pine Cone

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YOUR SOURCE FOR LOCAL NEWS, ARTS AND OPINION SINCE 1915

THIS WEEK

SENIOR LIVING • ENTERTAINMENT
RESTAURANTS • EVENTS • ART

Food & Wine

DECEMBER 3-9, 2010

Carmel • Pebble Beach • Carmel Valley & The Monterey Peninsula

Plein Aire painters look east for inspiration

By CHRIS COUNTS

PLEIN AIRE painters are famously drawn to our spectacular coastline, which reveals its many moods on countless canvases. But a new exhibit forsakes this popular source of creative inspiration and showcases another muse for local painters, the golden rolling hills of inland Monterey County. Presenting work by the Monterey Bay Plein Aire Painters

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Unconventional 'Christmas Ballet' now a holiday tradition

By CHRIS COUNTS

AWARD-WINNING Choreographer Michael Smuin passed away in 2007, but one of his signature works, "The Christmas Ballet," lives on.

Smuin Ballet will present "The Christmas Ballet" when the unconventional but acclaimed San Francisco ballet company brings its annual holiday program to Sunset Center Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 3-5.

"Michael created 'The Christmas Ballet' from scratch," explained Amy Seiwert, Smuin Ballet's choreographer-in-residence. "He made the framework for it, and then he added or changed sections of it every year. It's a beautiful, intimate and absolutely entertaining piece."

Also featured in this year's holiday program will be two new pieces. The first, which was choreographed by Seiwert, is set to the music of "Carol of the Bells," a choral work created by Ukrainian composer Mykola Dmytrovych and performed by the New York Philharmonic under the supervision of conductor Leonard Bernstein.

"I wanted to do a large group number," explained Seiwert, who conceded she's more comfortable choreographing smaller pieces. "And this one has 10 dancers in it, which is a lot for us because we are a small company." She described the piece as "big and sweeping, like a huge brush stroke."

The other new selection is a ballet set to "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," a popular holiday song written by Eddie Pola and George Wyle. The piece was choreographed by ballet master Amy London.

"Her piece is brilliant," said Seiwert of London's work. "It's absolutely delightful. It's fun, it's charming and it will make you smile."

Friday and Sunday performances begin at 8 p.m., while

Saturday's matinee starts at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$49 and \$59.

Next weekend — Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 10-12 — Dance Kids of Monterey will stage three performances of the holiday favorite, "Nutcracker." Friday and Saturday

See **BALLET** page 21A



PHOTO/SMUIN BALLET

Smuin Ballet returns to Sunset Center this weekend to present the latest incarnation of its holiday program.

An exhibit of plein aire paintings depicting the hills and valleys of inland Monterey County opens Sunday.

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Association, "Fences" opens Sunday, Dec. 5, at the Corral de Tierra Country Club.

The theme, "Fences," is a reference to the numerous fences, gates and corrals that dot what many call Steinbeck Country. While such barriers appear to constrain the landscape, the artists see them as complementing the land's natural features and adding to the composition of a piece.

About 70 paintings — created by more than 40 artists — will be displayed in the show. Carmel artists participating in the event include Lilli-Anne Price, Sybil Johnson, Maria Boisvert, Pat Huber, Rowan Wolnich, Patty Biederman, Cornelia Emery and Cyndra Bradford. While the exhibit is mostly composed of oil paintings, a selection of watercolors will also be included.

While most of the artists live locally, some come from as far away as the San Francisco Bay Area to paint Monterey County's scenery.

The painting group, which was formed seven years ago and now features more than 140 members, hosts regular outings throughout the county. The group's next gathering will be a

ART ROUNDUP

"paint-out" Dec. 11 at Carmel Mission.

"We'll paint for the day and then we'll critique our work afterward," Boisvert explained.

The group's membership is taking off, in part because so many Baby Boomers are now embracing painting, regardless of their skill or experience.

"People are really coming out of the woodwork," Boisvert observed. "We have a lot of really talented people out there who have a lot to offer."

Corral de Tierra Country Club, which is located at 81 Corral de Tierra Road, will host a reception at 4 p.m. The show will be on display through the end of March.

■ The art of drinking

Bringing together three irresistible subjects — art, history and drinking — artist Mark Tanous will unveil a fascinating exhibit Saturday, Dec. 4, at an unusual but very appropriate venue, Jack London's.

"Tropic of Decanter" showcases a collection of handmade ceramic liquor vessels created by local artist Mark Tanous.

"Before there was glass, people held their hootch in ceramic vessels," Tanous explained. "I've gone back to that tradition and created individual bottles around themes like heartbreak and romance."

If Tanous' creations look like something that was dredged up from an ancient Roman or Greek shipwreck, that's understandable. The artist has traveled extensively in the Middle East and is well versed in the art and culture of the region.

"Each one comes with a story," said Tanous, who works as a lab technician firing pottery at Monterey Peninsula College.

Tanous is thrilled to present his collection at Jack London's, even though it's hardly a conventional art gallery.

"It's a perfect fit," he added. "I'm a longtime fan of Jack's."

The bar and restaurant, which is located on the west side of Dolores between Fifth and Sixth, will host a reception from 5 to 8 p.m. For more information, call (831) 624-2336

or visit www.jacklondon.com.

■ Bigger isn't always better

If you're seeking the perfect pint-sized gift to stuff in somebody's stocking, look no further than the Carmel Art Association's 83rd annual Miniature Show, which opens Saturday.

See **ART** page 23A

Give the Gift of Entertainment



MIXED NUTZ!

The Nutcracker Remixed
December 28 & 29 • 7pm

Tandy Beal's imaginative and eclectic version of the original featuring the famed a capella group, So Vo So.



DIABOLO

January 12 • 8pm

Gasp at the daring feats of flying, leaping and twirling from this highly-acclaimed dance troupe!



RITA MORENO

January 29 • 8pm

From West Side Story to the Presidential Medal of Freedom, this legendary spitfire dazzles with songs and stories!



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San Carlos Street at Ninth Avenue • Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA

Carmel reads
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UPCOMING EVENTS
at
rana creek

Saturday, December 4 @ 1pm

Native Healing Gardens
with Margot Grych, Environmental Horticulturalist

Retail Customers – Save 10% on purchases

RANA CREEK NURSERY IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Tuesday - Saturday, 8am - 4pm

rana creek nursery
35351 E. Carmel Valley Road at the 19.2 Mile Marker
For More Information, please call 831.659.2830
email: nursery@ranacreek.com
or visit our website at www.ranacreeknursery.com

HOLIDAY FUN