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CHOICE

2017



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The logo for Sumo Japanese Restaurant features the word "Sumo" in a large, stylized, red cursive font with a yellow underline. Below it, the words "Japanese Restaurant" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

# Sumo

Japanese Restaurant

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Ventura, CA 93003  
P. 805.650.1122



[octopusrestaurant.com](http://octopusrestaurant.com)



To our readers

# Amazing roster of options

Ventura County Star Readers,  
The results are in! Browse these pages to find your winners and favorites in this year's Ventura County Star Readers' Choice contest. We are honored to continue our 22-year tradition of surveying local residents on the best of the best of Ventura County. You, our readers, have chosen your top picks in 119 categories in Community, Food & Drink, Services and Shopping.

Winners in each category were chosen for East County (Moorpark, Newbury Park, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village) and West County (Camarillo, Fillmore, Oak View, Ojai, Oxnard, Piru, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Somis and Ventura). The next-highest vote recipients in each category, up to three (or more in a tie), were named Readers' Choice Favorites, listed alphabetically.

Also, check out our Critics' Choice featurettes, in which some of our experts choose their favorite spots around town. Thanks for voting!

Joann Groff-Gillett  
Editor, Readers' Choice

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# COMMUNITY



## COMMUNITY

VENTURA COUNTY  
STAR

## Beach

Full County Winner

**VENTURA PIER - SURFER'S POINT - SEASIDE PARK**

An abundance of good vibes can be found along the sand in Ventura. The beach — stretching from the pier, through Surfer's Point and including Seaside Park — is home to a great surf spot, dunes and a play area for children. Take a stroll down the Ventura Pier, extending into the Pacific since 1872, to fish, catch up on the history of the structure, or enjoy fresh food. With toes in the sand or feet in the water, it's hard to beat the proximity and charm of this pristine beachscape.

**Favorites**

- » Carpinteria
- » Ventura Harbor
- » Zuma Beach

## City

Full County Winner

**VENTURA**

As if being right on the beach isn't enough, Ventura has the restaurants, culture and shopping to rival any city twice its size, yet it still manages to keep a small-town feel.

Nearly every weekend brings a festival, running event or surf contest to town, and is it any wonder? The year-round average temperature is a perfect 70 degrees, and there are almost 300 days of sunshine. An estimated 110,000 people call Ventura home, with its open space, bike trails, hiking and historic sites.

Ventura. It really is the place to be.

**Favorites**

- » Camarillo
- » Oxnard
- » Thousand Oaks

**College/University**

East County Winner

**MOORPARK COLLEGE**

7075 Campus Road, Moorpark  
378-1400  
www.moorparkcollege.edu

Having been recognized by the Huffington Post as a "Top 5" community college in the United States, Moorpark College promotes a "student-centered philosophy" that stresses developing skills



RAY MEESE/THE STAR

Donna Meese, a member of the VCS Outdoors Team, takes a pause while riding in Sycamore Canyon, Point Mugu State Park.

**Critic's Choice: Donna's pick for favorite mountain biking area**

Donna Meese

Sycamore Canyon in Point Mugu State Park is a favorite go-to spot for mountain biking in Ventura County. It has a lot to offer fat-tire enthusiasts — trails for all skill levels, mountains and even ocean views.

Big Sycamore Canyon Fire Road, the main trail through the canyon, is great for beginners and can be accessed from either the PCH at Sycamore Canyon Campground or Rancho Sierra Vista in Newbury Park.

If starting in Newbury Park, there is a steep paved road descent into the canyon. The Sycamore Canyon

Fire Road is wide and mostly dirt with an occasional water crossing depending on the time of year.

For more skilled riders, there are options: Overlook, Backbone, Guadalupe, Sage, Sin Nombre and Two Foxes trails to name a few. While bikes are allowed on many of the trails, some forbid them — so respect the signs.

The wild parakeets like to serenade you as you start your ride. Keep an eye out, or ear out, for other wildlife: coyote, deer, rattlesnakes and even mountain lions live in the area. And remember to carry plenty of water, a flat kit and ... a picnic for a break at the ocean.

—Donna Meese

in critical thinking and communication; exposure to the values of diversity; and preparation for the challenges and responsibilities of life.

"The high cost of college and the restrictions on admissions to Cal State and UC schools have increased the need for community colleges as a highly cost-effective option for students," said Luis Sanchez, college president. "At Moorpark, we have been adding classes, new programs and expanded student support services to meet this need."

**Favorites**

- » California Lutheran University
- » CSUCI Extended University

» Pepperdine University - Westlake Graduate Campus

West County Winner

**VENTURA COLLEGE**

4667 Telegraph Road, Ventura  
289-6000  
www.venturacollege.edu

The focus at community colleges has moved from providing access to education to helping students complete certificates and degrees in a wide range of student support services, said Ventura College president Greg Gillespie. "Ventura College prioritizes student success by providing innovative,

affordable, high-quality instruction and services to support our students," he said. Services include counseling, tutoring, financial aid and the Ventura College Promise program. Funded by the Ventura College Foundation, Promise covers first-year enrollment fees at Ventura College for recent graduates from Ventura County high schools.

The college has also implemented new programs in agriculture, diesel technology and non-credit "workplace essentials."

**Favorites**

- » California Lutheran University - Oxnard Campus
- » CSU Channel Islands
- » Oxnard Community College



## Comedy Club/Nightclub

East County Winner

### **BORDERLINE BAR & GRILL**

99 Rolling Oaks Drive, Thousand Oaks  
446-4435

[www.borderlinebarandgrill.com](http://www.borderlinebarandgrill.com)

Borderline, best known for its country dancing, salsa and West Coast swing, has been a staple for live music and entertainment in the area since 1993. Nine years ago Hynes bought it and has since helped bring it back to life.

"This is a family-friendly place," Hynes said, adding that generations of dancers make up the crowds, and everyone has a great time. There are tables, good food and a large dance floor. Visit Borderline Bar and Grill for dancing every Wednesday through Saturday from 6 p.m. until 2 a.m.

### **Favorites**

- » Arena Sports Grill & Bar
- » Bogie's
- » The Canyon

West County Winner

### **COPPER BLUES ROCK PUB & KITCHEN**

591 Collection Blvd., Oxnard



STAR FILE PHOTO

**Thousands turn out for the Rotary Club of Thousand Oaks Chili Cook-off and Classic Car Show each year.**

457-5551  
[copperblueslive.com](http://copperblueslive.com)

A full-service restaurant, bar and concert venue, Copper Blues Rock Pub & Kitchen

has goals beyond simply feeding and entertaining Ventura County.

"We want to develop a new culture in Ventura County, as far as bringing in new bands that could have an impact on the

community," said manager Edgar Munoz. "We're diversifying and hosting Latino acts, as well as English-speaking ones." Copper Blues offers lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch, featuring classic bar fare with an elevated twist, and a full bar stocked with local beers and wines and house-made cocktail ingredients.

### **Favorites**

- » Levity Live
- » Sans Souci
- » Ventura Harbor Comedy Club

## Community Event

East County Winner

### **THOUSAND OAKS CHILI COOK-OFF & CLASSIC CAR SHOW**

1379 E. Janss Road, Thousand Oaks  
[www.chili-cook-off.com](http://www.chili-cook-off.com)

For 41 years, this International Chili Society-sanctioned event has drawn thousands of chili and car enthusiasts — and not simply to enjoy a great family-friendly outing.

"We are among the largest fundraisers in our area with a goal this year of \$100,000," said Marissa Buss, event chair. "Proceeds help support Rotary Club

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**MOORPARK COLLEGE  
VENTURA COLLEGE  
OXNARD COLLEGE**



**COMMUNITY**


activities, FOOD Share, Westminster Free Clinic, Make A Wish and more.” The Thousand Oaks Chili Cook-Off & Classic Car Show, held in April at Conejo Creek North Park, offers a free kid zone, local bands and more — “something for all ages of the family,” said Buss.

**Favorites**

- » Conejo Valley Days
- » Simi Valley Cajun & Blues Music Festival
- » Walk To End Alzheimer's

West County Winner

**VENTURA COUNTY MUSIC AWARDS**

Redlightdistrictshow.com  
www.venturacountymusicawards.com

Have a favorite reggae band in Ventura County? How about a favorite country band? Blues? Hip-hop? The Ventura County Music Awards is where you can drum up some interest for your favorites. The crew at Red Light District Show came up with the VCMA's as a way to promote local bands and work together with small businesses to build up the music scene in Ventura County. The public nominates favorites, then the top musicians in each genre are showcased at shows all summer long. Winners are announced in September.

**Favorites**

- » California Strawberry Festival
- » Casa Pacifica Angels Wine, Food & Brew Festival
- » Ventura County Fair

**Elected Official**

Full County Winner

**JULIA BROWNLEY**

379-1779  
www.juliabrownley.house.gov

With Naval Base Ventura County in her backyard, it makes sense that Julia Brownley is the ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health. Since being elected to represent Ventura County in Congress in 2012, Brownley has worked to improve access and care for local veterans. She was re-elected in 2014 and 2016, and since her appointment to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, she has worked to support the county's harbors, airports and other diverse transportation needs.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Amgen, a biotechnology company based in Newbury Park, was voted top employer with more than 50 employees.**

**Favorites**

- » Al Adam
- » Bob Huber
- » Geoff Dean

**Employer  
(over 50 employees)**

East County Winner

**AMGEN**

1 Amgen Center Drive, Thousand Oaks  
447-1000  
www.amgen.com

More than 5,000 people call Amgen their home away from home. The largest private employer in Ventura County, its Thousand Oaks headquarters is a hub of research and manufacturing of treatments for millions of seriously ill people every

year. The company, a pioneer in modern medicine, is committed to “unlocking the potential of biology” with diverse, ethical and highly accomplished employees.

**Favorites**

- » Costco
- » County of Ventura
- » Trader Joe's

**Employer  
(under 50 employees)**

East County Winner

**ROCKET FIZZ**

Several locations in Ventura County  
www.rocketfizz.com

Rocket Fizz is “all about having fun in a laid-back atmosphere,” according to Lori Jeries, manager at the Simi Valley store. “It's a great place to work because your get to listen to great music all day along while playing with toys, soda and candy,” Jeries added. “You get to try all the unique candies and drinks we have, and share your experiences with customers.” Rocket Fizz offers more than 70 kinds of fresh saltwater taffy, hundreds of candy choices (nostalgic and contemporary) and “old-school” toys and tins.

**Favorites**

- » Dougherty Laser Vision
- » Green Acres Farm Market & Catering
- » Zapparelli's Pizzeria

West County Winner

**FOX FINE JEWELRY**

560 E. Main Street, Ventura  
562-1800  
www.foxfinejewelry.com

How many businesses treat their employees to \$300 worth of clothing — apiece — from Patagonia? “It's not part of the routine,” said co-owner Debbie Fox, “but we want our employees to know they're appreciated. When you treat them with respect and they work as a team, it's better for everyone, including the customers.” Debbie and husband/co-owner George

year. The company, a pioneer in modern medicine, is committed to “unlocking the potential of biology” with diverse, ethical and highly accomplished employees.

**Favorites**

- » Costco
- » In-N-Out Burger
- » Trader Joe's

West County Winner

**PATAGONIA**

259 W. Santa Clara Street, Ventura  
643-8616  
www.patagonia.com

Who else but Patagonia — strategically placed between the ocean and mountains in west Ventura — maintains a “Let My People Go Surfing” policy? “It means hours are flexible when the surf



also believe in assigning their 10 employees areas of responsibility for which they have a special aptitude or interest.

"Someone who's very creative will handle case design," she said. "Someone who loves diamonds specializes in that area. But we all do some of everything."

#### **Favorites**

- » 24Hour HomeCare
- » Beauty Lounge Med Spa
- » Nothing Bundt Cakes

#### **Golf Course**

East County Winner

##### **MOORPARK COUNTRY CLUB**

11800 Championship Drive, Moorpark  
532-2834

[www.moorparkgolf.com](http://www.moorparkgolf.com)

Three distinct nine-hole courses — Canyon Crest, Ridgeline and Creekside — are among the reasons why Golf Magazine named Moorpark Country Club one of the top 10 places to play in Southern California.

This private club has high-end guest privileges and an active social schedule. The 20,800-square-foot clubhouse features



BOB BUTTITTA/THE STAR

**River Ridge Golf Club is the west county winner for golf course.**

an English country décor, and the banquet room and terrace can host up to 425 guests.

The golf professionals are PGA-certified and ready to help golfers at all levels improve their game, whether they need a full-swing analysis or tips in course

management.

#### **Favorites**

- » Los Robles Greens
- » Sherwood Country Club
- » Wood Ranch Golf Club

West County Winner

##### **RIVER RIDGE GOLF CLUB**

2401 W. Vineyard Ave., Oxnard  
983-4653

[www.riverridge-golfclub.com](http://www.riverridge-golfclub.com)

Ever tried FootGolf? River Ridge Golf Club was the first course in California to offer this combination of soccer and golf, and today 500 courses in 48 states offer the sport. It uses soccer balls on 21 larger holes. But if that doesn't suit you to a tee, standard golf is an exceptional experience at River Ridge, which offers a beautiful clubhouse, pro shop, catering facility and snack bar. There's a 50-station driving range and 36 holes on two courses: The Vineyard and The Victoria Lakes.

#### **Favorites**

- » Buenaventura Golf Course
- » Ojai Valley Inn Golf Course
- » Spanish Hills Golf

#### **Hike**

Full County Winner

##### **WILDWOOD PARK**

928 W. Avenida De Los Arboles,  
Thousand Oaks



*Ventura County*  
*Thanks for voting for us again*  
*River Ridge Golf Club*





**(805) 983-4653 • [www.riverridge-golfclub.com](http://www.riverridge-golfclub.com)**

36-Championship holes with magnificent greens, ocean views and 4 1/2 hour rounds.  
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## COMMUNITY

VENTURA COUNTY  
STAR

www.crpdpd.org

An escape from the urban surroundings, Wildwood Park boasts 14 hiking trails spanning 17 miles. Covering more than 1,700 acres, Wildwood has something for everyone at all levels of hiking, as well as picnic spots and a year-round waterfall. Native species of wildlife and plants can be spotted from along the trails, plus unique geologic formations from the area's ancient past. Bring water and sunscreen, especially in the summer when temps are warm.

**Favorites**

- » Arroyo Verde Park
- » Botanical Gardens In Ventura
- » Chumash Trail

**Local Artist**

Full County Winner

**DEEDEE HENRY**

d2firefly@gmail.com  
248-6660

www.facebook.com/dee2artdesigns

"I don't want to limit myself," said Ventura artist DeeDee Henry, whose mixed-media paintings of cityscapes,

beaches and more draw plaudits and generate conversation.

Like "Trademark of Despair" (acrylic-and-print on canvas with glow-in-the-dark accents), exhibited at the Buenaventura Art Association's open competition earlier this year.

"Trademark," an observation on the Trump administration, was Henry's first "political" statement, reflecting her desire not to be a "mainstream" artist.

"I like the mixed-media format," she said.

"I'll use old guitar strings or wood or newspaper I find in my neighborhood. Everything has value and potential — in art and in life."

**Favorites**

- » Dan Aguilar
- » David Velasquez
- » La Catrina (Paty Diaz)

**Local Band**

Full County Winner

**HARD SIX**

464-6276  
hardsix.echoechoplus.com

When Ventura-based Hard Six formed a decade ago, the local rockabilly music



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/GREG HAZARD

Cirith Ungol is Bill Locey's pick for "Most Unlikely Rock Stars."

**Critic's Choice: Most unlikely rock stars**

"Break up for 25 years" is not the usual answer to a question concerning which baby steps to take toward Rock Star 101, but that's exactly what Rob Garven said to a fan a few months back. Around since the sundowns were in black and white, members of the long dormant, sword and sorcery-flavored metalheads, Cirith Ungol, resurrected themselves last October with a show at the venerable Ventura Theatre after lying low for 25 years, sort of like Sauron on sabbatical between the end of "The Hobbit" and "The Fellowship of the Ring."

Named for a place in Middle Earth that even Gandalf with a swift steed and belly full of Red Bull would avoid, Cirith Ungol gave it up in the early '90s after a two-decade career that began in 1972, but the recent October wingding — a three day epic called Frost and Fire — was a smash hit, drawing metalheads from all over the world.

The soundtrack for patience, the well-rested boys in the band remain Tim Baker on vocals, Greg Lindstrom and Jim Barraza on guitars, Jarvis Leatherby on bass and Garven on the drums. All five of their albums are still in print on Metal Blade Records and the Michael Whelan album covers are a definite asset. Add it all up and here's what happened:

"Every month we're doing something," Garven said. "We're leaving at the end of April to play the Keep It True Festival in southern Germany. It's so highly anticipated that it sells out every year in 30 minutes. Then at the end of May, we're heading to Athens to play another sold out show, and later we'll be doing some bigger shows for over 50,000 people, but these first two shows are highly anticipated because we've never played over there. Then at the end of June, we're playing in Brooklyn at another festival, Defenders of the Old. We're headlining that show, too. About every single month we have something lined up. We're playing in Germany three more times this year, so there's some really good stuff happening with the band."

—Bill Locey

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scene was “kind of dead,” said Fuse, guitarist/lead vocalist for the three-man band. “We were just playing for fun. We never expected to draw such a large, large following.”

Indeed, fans throughout the west are flocking to see and hear Fuse, drummer Six and bassist Vogelcide at events like the Johnny Cash-inspired Roadshow Revival, where Fuse’s wife (singing June Carter’s parts) and son (on upright bass) participate.

“There’s a good family vibe to Hard Six, and that’s one reason I think we’ve been well received,” said Fuse.

#### Favorites

- » After The Smoke
- » Big Bad Voodoo Daddy
- » Dirty Rice

### Museum/Gallery

East County Winner

#### THE RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION & INSTITUTE

40 Presidential Drive, Simi Valley  
800-410-8354  
www.reaganlibrary.gov

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum is the most popular and recognizable museum in Ventura County. Visitors can easily spend the entire day at the museum, which illuminates the life of the nation’s 40th president.

“The museum is not just about Ronald Reagan — (it’s) about American history and the American presidency,” said Melissa Giller, chief marketing officer.

“There is something for everyone, of all political beliefs.”

The museum offers permanent exhibits, as well as featuring popular temporary exhibits.

#### Favorites

- » Stagecoach Inn Museum
- » Strathearn Historical Park
- » Thousand Oaks Art Gallery

West County Winner

#### MUSEUM OF VENTURA COUNTY

100 E. Main St., Ventura  
653-0323  
venturamuseum.org

Hundreds of people flocked to the newly redesigned Museum of Ventura County when it reopened in early 2017. The staff refreshed the exhibits and used its more than 31,000 historical artifacts to create more vibrant displays that appeal to



WENDY PIERRO/VC STAR

Zoey Pierro, daughter of VCS Outdoors Team ‘s Wendy Pierro, hikes in Simi.

### Critic’s Choice: Best hike for family fun



Wendy Pierro

My favorite family- and old-dog-friendly hike is at Corriganville Park. It’s tucked into the hills of east Simi, so it’s close to our house. There are a handful of trails, but we usually do the Loop Trail. It has one good hill so we know we are getting some exercise, but it’s easy enough for my 6-year-old daughter and our two old dogs.

We also usually hit the Interpretive Trail, which is mostly flat with lots of tree cover. It takes us about an hour (including snack, water and photo stops), but if you want a longer hike, run or walk, you can connect trails or just do some trail loops. There are benches along the way and placards on the trail that tell you about the history of the area and what films and TV shows were filmed there. To get there, go south on Kuehner Driver off the 118 freeway for about a mile. Turn left onto Smith Road until when it ends, turn left into the parking lot.

—Wendy Pierro

families.

There is also a new History Through the Trees courtyard, as well as the Evelyn and Howard Boroughs Garden, which is now adorned with glass and seashell lamps that look like jellyfish dangling from the ceiling. Each year more than 50,000 people, including 5,000 school children, take tours annually, exploring Chumash culture and early California history.

#### Favorites

- » Channel Islands Maritime Museum

- » Stoneworks Gallery
- » WWII Airplanes Museum At The Camarillo Airport

### Non-profit

Full County Winner

#### FOOD SHARE

4156 Southbank Road, Oxnard  
983-7100  
Foodshare.com

FOOD Share of Ventura is not just any food bank. What sets it apart is its commitment to educating the community, in addition to providing fresh, healthy food. Programs like CalFresh and Mobile Pantry, which make fresh food for affordable or struggling individuals and families and connect them with health resources, rely on community support to operate.

“Solving hunger is not something any one organization can tackle alone,” said Bonnie Atmore, FOOD Share president.

“Thanks to the dedication of our supporters, we’re closer than we’ve ever been to solving hunger. Now more than ever, we need the community to be part of that solution.”

#### Favorites

- » Assistance League Of Conejo Valley
- » Casa Pacifica
- » National Disaster Search Dog Foundation

### Park

East County Winner

#### WILDWOOD PARK

928 W. Avenida De Los Arboles, Thousand Oaks  
www.crp.d.org

Visitors come from miles around to Wildwood Park, the largest area of open space in Thousand Oaks. There are many ways to play and explore the park — by bike, on foot or on horseback. Dogs are welcome too, as long as they are on a leash and you clean up after them. The park boasts many species of plant and wildlife, multiple picnic areas and a year-round waterfall, Paradise Falls. Wildwood Park is open 7 a.m. to dusk year-round.

#### Favorites

- » Borchard Community Park
- » Chumash Park
- » Malibu Creek State Park

West County Winner

#### ARROYO VERDE PARK

5000 Foothill Road, Ventura  
www.cityofventura.net/parks

Arroyo Verde Park has something for everyone — a huge area for kids to play; awesome views of Ventura, the Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands; and hikes for the whole family (four-legged members included).

There are picnic sites, three group



**COMMUNITY**

barbecue areas and more than 130 acres of open space cut into the foothills. With two children's play areas and many trails ranging from moderate to challenging, there's much to explore.

Parking is free on weekdays and \$2 per hour or \$5 for the day on weekends and holidays.

**Favorites**

- » Channel Islands National Park
- » Marina Park
- » Oxnard Beach Park

**Place To Entertain Children**

East County Winner

**UNDERWOOD FAMILY FARMS**

3370 Sunset Valley Road, Moorpark  
529-3690  
5696 Los Angeles Ave., Somis  
386-4660  
[www.underwoodfamilyfarms.com](http://www.underwoodfamilyfarms.com)

Underwood Family Farms has a goal of sharing fresh produce with local children. In addition to seasonal pick-your-own fruit and vegetable events, the farm hosts an Easter Springtime Festival, featuring animal shows, wagon rides and more; and the popular Fall Harvest Festival, which includes wagon rides, a corn maze, pumpkin patch, animal shows and more. The farm also hosts children's birthday parties and has an animal center, educational farm tours and a summer farm camp for kids.

**Favorites**

- » America's Teaching Zoo At Moorpark College
- » Big Z Pizza
- » Sky High

West County Winner

**GOLF N' STUFF**

5555 Walker St., Ventura  
644-7148  
[golfnstuff.com](http://golfnstuff.com)

Its fairy-tale castle alongside the 101 Freeway has been a landmark for years, just as Golf N' Stuff has been a destination for families from all over the Ventura County area.

Two miniature golf courses, each with 18 holes, share space with bumper cars and bumper boats. A "Lit'l Indy" racetrack with Go-Karts is also a big draw.

With an arcade featuring more than 100 games, Golf N' Stuff is the ideal spot for a multi-generational family outing, a birthday party or an end-of-season team



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**The Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village was voted best place to stay in east county.**

get-together.

**Favorites**

- » Ballet Academy Ventura
- » Camarillo Library
- » Underwood Family Farms

**Place To Hold An Event**

East County Winner

**ALDABELLA WINERY**

31111 Via Colinas, Westlake Village  
818-991-9463  
[aldabellawinery.com](http://aldabellawinery.com)

For the Ventura County resident seeking a taste of wine country without the drive, Aldabella Winery is a go-to spot. "We are proud to provide superior entertainment, fantastic wines and first-rate food offerings to Westlake Village and the Conejo Valley," said owner and managing member Mark Englander. Visitors can expect to enjoy local and house-made wines, as well as special events like sushi pairings and chocolate pairings in the lounge or tasting room, which are located in the same 14,000-square-foot building as the winery's processing and bottling plant, storage facility and event space.

**Favorites**

- » Four Seasons
- » The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute
- » Westlake Village Inn

West County Winner

**ADAGIO BELLA GARDENS**

2000 Solar Drive, Oxnard  
351-8346  
[Facebook.com/adagiobella.gardens.7](https://Facebook.com/adagiobella.gardens.7)

Adagio Bella Gardens, located at the Hilton Garden Inn, is a uniquely beautiful, Italian-inspired venue that is sure to be home to a lovely celebration. "What makes the Adagio Bella Gardens a special venue are the beautiful features, including the gorgeous vaulted ceilings, beautiful hand painted pillars, and the 12 double French doors that can be opened to provide a wonderful view of the pristine garden area," said Dolores Licon, director of sales at the Hilton. "These features make for a truly memorable event."

**Favorites**

- » Camarillo Ranch House
- » Limoneria Ranch
- » Ventura Beach Club

**Place To Stay**

East County Winner

**FOUR SEASONS**

Two Dole Drive, Westlake Village  
818-575-3000  
[www.fourseasons.com/westlakevillage](http://www.fourseasons.com/westlakevillage)

Boasting a 40,000-square-foot spa, the Four Seasons attracts guests from all over

California.

The luxury hotel offers 269 rooms, including 39 suites, plus indoor and outdoor pools, a wine tasting room, an outdoor lounge, Stir coffee bar and ONYX, featuring Japanese-influenced seafood creations.

At the California Health & Longevity Institute, a team of experts in the fields of nutrition, fitness and life strategies can provide customized wellness programs that suit guests' personal goals and interests. Gourmet cooking classes are offered as well.

**Favorites**

- » Best Western
- » Hyatt-Westlake Plaza
- » Westlake Village Inn

West County Winner

**OJAI VALLEY INN & SPA**

905 Country Club Road, Ojai  
855-697-8780  
[www.ojaisort.com](http://www.ojaisort.com)

Located on a sprawling 220 acres, Ojai Valley Inn & Spa is the only AAA five-diamond property in Ventura County, with one of its seven dining outlets, Olivella, receiving a four-diamond rating. "We have an award-winning 31,000-square-foot spa, world-class championship golf course and 303 rooms on our historic property," said Heather Dillon, director of public relations. Guest can stay in the original clubhouse, designed in 1923 by renowned architect Wallace Neff. There are also suites, mini-suites and pet-friendly accommodations on the property.

**Favorites**

- » Bella Capri
- » Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach
- » Embassy Suites Mandalay Bay

**Place To Take Visitors**

East County Winner

**THE RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION & INSTITUTE**

40 Presidential Drive, Simi Valley  
800-410-8354  
[www.reaganlibrary.gov](http://www.reaganlibrary.gov)

Locals like to bring out-of-town guests to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute. The museum touts an Oval Office replica and the actual Air Force One airliner used by President Reagan.





# SAINT BONAVENTURE HIGH SCHOOL

## Congratulations Ms. Monica Hiranandani on being nominated in the Teacher/Professor category!

Ms. Hiranandani has been an integral member of the SBHS faculty for 10 years, teaching AP US History and AP Government, serving as the Social Studies Department Chair and moderating Mock Trial.

*"I've had many teachers who hope for the best for me, some who challenge me to push myself, few who actually get me to push myself, and one who has done it all. Ms. Hiranandani, through her high expectations and vocational expertise, has cultivated a stronger student and an informed citizen out of me. The success of her students, both in the classroom and in life, attests to the exceptional quality of her instruction, example, and character. It has been a blessing to both learn from and call a friend Ms. Hiranandani!"*

- Lucas H., C/O 2017

*"Ms. H has pushed me to do things that I wouldn't have thought of accomplishing on my own. She teaches and challenges her students out of love. The most amazing thing is that she has made history fun, relatable, and memorable for me like no other teacher of mine has. Her influence has helped me to develop more self-confidence, and I know that this will help me in my future endeavors."*

- Asha S., C/O 2018

*"Ms. H has instilled in me a passion for gaining new knowledge and has helped me gain a deeper understanding of the material I am learning, rather than learning it at face value. She has helped me grow exponentially as a student, individual, and citizen by encouraging me to experience life outside of my comfort zone. Her extensive knowledge and passion for education is infectious, and you can't help but be inspired to be a better version of yourself when in her presence. Her intellect, mixed with her passion and compassion for her students does not go unnoticed. I am forever grateful to have been a student under the tutelage of Ms. H."*

- Anna D., C/O 2017

*"Ms. H is a teacher who sparks the interest of learning into her students. She brings an energetic, charismatic personality to her class each day. As a history teacher she does not simply teach facts but rather takes it a step forward and has her students think critically. I am glad I have been able to experience Ms. H's magnificent teaching ability and appreciate her uplifting and enthusiastic personality that she displays every day."*

- Lukas B., C/O 2018

*"Ms. H has been one of the most influential people in my life. I aspire to have a fragment of her magnanimity, courage, and valor. She is more than a teacher to her students, she is a mentor, a mother, a coach, and when she is called to be, she is a listening friend. I am so grateful for her leadership because I can sincerely say that I would not be close to the person I am today without her presence in my life."*

- Zach M., C/O 2017



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3167 Telegraph Road • Ventura, CA 93003 • (805) 648-6836  
[www.saintbonaventure.com](http://www.saintbonaventure.com)



**COMMUNITY**



“Visitors can climb on a (fake) horse to ride the hills of Rancho del Cielo with Ronald Reagan, deliver President Reagan’s inauguration speech through the use of teleprompters and even act in a movie with Ronald Reagan using green screen technology,” said Melissa Giller, the museum’s chief marketing officer.

**Favorites**

- » America’s Teaching Zoo At Moorpark College
- » Gardens Of The World
- » Underwood Family Farms

West County Winner

**ALOHA STEAKHOUSE**

364 S. California Street, Ventura  
652-1799  
www.alohasteakhouse.com

Locals know about the incredible views, and equally impressive food, at Aloha Steakhouse.

Thanks to social media, word of mouth and local businesses, so do plenty of Ventura County visitors.

“We treat everyone like family here, whether they are regular customers or first-time guests,” said Charnell Smith, co-partner. “And if they are newcomers, we always ask where they heard about us. It’s a tribute to our local business community and their willingness to refer people to find what they’re looking for.” Hotels, like the adjacent Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach and nearby Ventura Beach Marriott, “do a good job in letting guests know we’re here,” Smith added.

**Favorites**

- » Camarillo Premium Outlets
- » Channel Islands National Park
- » Downtown Ventura

**Radio Station**

Full County Winner

**RED LIGHT DISTRICT SHOW**

Redlightdistrictshow.com  
Red Light District Show brings local music, along with comedy and a focus on community, to listeners each week, according to CEO Timothy Amoroso. “Our community and the music scene has really flourished since we started this,” Amoroso said. “We have seen a lot of blossoming of different bands, and we’ve brought out the hidden gem that is the Ventura County music scene.” The project started eight years ago with an antenna. When the government shut



STAR FILE PHOTO

**A storm system arrives at Surfers Point in Ventura, named top surf spot in Ventura County.**

them down, the show moved online, and the rest is history.

**Favorites**

- » KCLU - 88.3
- » KHAY - 100.7
- » KVTA - 1590 AM

**Surf Spot**

Full County Winner

**C STREET - SURFER’S POINT - SEASIDE PARK**

Shoreline Drive, Ventura

This year-round surf spot along the coast in Ventura is no secret. Surfer’s Point at Seaside Park — also known as C Street — is a popular place to hang 10 because of the consistency of excellent breakers. The beach, located at the mouth of the Ventura River, faces south, so waves roll in from the west toward the pier. Kiteboarders and windsurfers are also known to frequent here and attract observers. C Street is the place to be for enthusiasts and spectators alike.

**Favorites**

- » County Line

- » Mondos
- » Ventura Harbor South Beach

**Teacher/Professor**

East County Winner

**AARON HERESCO**

California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks

As a professor of communications and media studies, Aaron Heresco believes his most important job is “to instill in students a sense of curiosity about the world. There is almost always more to a situation than meets the eye, and you have to dig deeper to find the reality,” he said. The Penn State graduate, who teaches everything from news writing to film theory, said especially enjoys nurturing students’ intellectual growth. “When they take the skills and elements of what they’ve learned, and put them together in a way they can use in whatever they do life, that’s very gratifying to me,” Heresco added.

**Favorites**

- » Ashley Tompkins - Westlake High School
- » Lynette Shifman - California Lutheran

- University
- » Alan Rose - Westlake High School

West County Winner

**ADRIENNE DENNY**

Adolfo Camarillo High School, Camarillo

For Adrienne Denny, teaching Spanish is simply a way to teach her students about the world. “It’s about opening the world up to these kids by sharing language, vocabulary, culture, customs — it’s about getting them excited to learn.” A graduate of Oxnard High School “where I had great teachers who inspired me,” Denny calls teaching the “best job in the world.” “I love what I do,” said Denny who, after 22 years at Camarillo High, now teaches the children of some of her former students. “These kids are so smart, and it’s the most awesome feeling to work with them.”

**Favorites**

- » Brian Roberts - Cape Charter School
- » Chloe Negrey - Camarillo Heights Stem Academy
- » Monica Hiranandani - St. Bonaventure High School





# ***FOOD & DRINK***



**FOOD & DRINK**VENTURA COUNTY  
**STAR****Bagel**

Full County Winner

**NOAH'S BAGELS**

Locations in Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, Ventura  
www.noahs.com

Noah Alper founded Noah's New York Bagels in 1989 with one store in Berkeley. Alper sold his chain of stores in 1996 to Einstein Bros. Bagels. Noah's serves its signature fresh-baked bagels, sandwiches and beverages, along with an array of sweets and snacks, at three locations in Ventura County.

Noah's also has a bagel club, which offers a free bagel and "shmear" with purchase upon signing up, and special offers throughout the year.

**East County Favorites**

- » Brent's Deli
- » Old New York Deli & Bakery Co.
- » Western Bagel

**West County Favorites**

- » Bagel Rock Coffee
- » Bread Basket Cake Company
- » Old New York Deli & Bakery Co.

**Bakery**

East County Winner

**CARRARA PASTRIES**

476 W. Los Angeles Ave., Moorpark  
552-4250  
28914 Roadside Drive, Agoura Hills  
818-661-9006  
www.carrarapastries.us

The Carraras don't keep their recipes a secret. Sharing is part of the Italian tradition, which is why Damiano and Massimiliano Carrara produced "Dolce Italia," their book of family recipes, including many of the delectable bakery items featured at Carrara Pastries. The Carraras continues to expand their array of bakery items, pastas, salads, panini and desserts that have helped bring them national acclaim — they appeared on Food Network — and an avid and loyal local following.

**Favorites**

- » Corner Bakery Cafe
- » Nothing Bundt Cakes
- » Sweet Arleen's

West County Winner



STAR FILE PHOTO

Stonehaus in Westlake Village took the top spot in east county's outdoor dining, bar and winery/wine bar categories.

**BREAD BASKET CAKE COMPANY**

83 E. Daily Drive, Camarillo  
482-1337  
www.breadbasketcake.com

Looking for an amazing treat to bring to the office or to put smiles on the faces of your family members? With 29 years in business, Bread Basket Cake Company is often the go-to place for delicious baked goods or a healthy sandwich or salad. Customers say the bakery goes above and beyond. Owners Gilbert and Paul Delagnes both have culinary backgrounds, so it was only natural for them to segue from delectable desserts to sandwiches crafted with freshly made bread.

"When you walk into the bakery, you see

the cases with muffins, cookies and cakes," said Paul Delagnes. "And we also have a little deli where you can get sandwiches made from bread we bake."

**Favorites**

- » Nothing Bundt Cakes
- » Royal Bakery
- » The Sugar Lab

**Bar**

East County Winner

**STONEHAUS**

32039 Agoura Road, Westlake Village  
818-483-1152  
www.the-stonehaus.com

Stonehaus, located next to Mediterraneo

at the Westlake Village Inn, touts its Italian ambience, boasting a Tuscan-style building and stone fireplaces and fountains. With both an intimate, indoor wine-tasting bar and a large outdoor space dotted with fire pits, Stonehaus offers areas for a cozy date or celebratory night with friends inside or out. Patrons can enjoy nearly 50 wines by the glass while noshing on lighter fare and enjoying live music on the weekends. If you visit in the evening, relax by the fire and enjoy the chic ambience of the Italian-style stone courtyard and private vineyard. Members of the exclusive Stonehaus Wine Club receive discounts, event invites and information about newly released wines.



**Favorites**

- » Cronie's Sports Grill
- » Lazy Dog Restaurant & Bar
- » Lure Fish House

West County Winner

**LURE FISH HOUSE**

Locations in Camarillo, Ventura, Westlake Village  
[www.lurefishhouse.com](http://www.lurefishhouse.com)

Seafood may be the focus of the menu at Lure Fish House, but the bar is a big draw, too.

With a wide selection of wines by the glass and the bottle, as well as specialty drinks, including a Blackberry Brumbel and a Ventura Limoncello Drop martini, the bar at Lure serves up the best cocktails and drinks to pair with any dish.

Owner David Cortina credits the bar's success to its upscale ambience without pretention. "You can be who you are in a nice place and it won't break the bank."

**Favorites**

- » Cronie's Sports Grill
- » Institution Ale Company
- » Yard House

**Barbecue**

Full County Winner

**WOOD RANCH BBQ & GRILL**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
[www.woodranch.com](http://www.woodranch.com)

Not only is Wood Ranch known for its barbecue, it's known for its local roots as Ofer Shemtov and Eric Andres started the popular restaurant chain in Moorpark in 1992 with the goal of serving a community with good food and a relaxing atmosphere. More than two decades and 15 locations later, Wood Ranch continues to serve the finest barbecue across Southern California.

"Wood Ranch strives to provide great food at a fair price and we think that creates great value," said Alejandro Benes, a partner with Wood Ranch. "Our team takes great pride in providing a great, warm, friendly environment and service that matches the food quality."

**East County Favorites**

- » Bandits Grill & Bar
- » Green Acres Farm Market & Catering
- » Red's BBQ & Grillery



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Eggs 'N' Things is the full county winner for breakfast.

**West County Favorites**

- » Bandits Grill & Bar
- » Just BBQ
- » Marshall's Bodacious BBQ

**Breakfast**

Full County Winner

**EGGS 'N' THINGS**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
[www.eggsthings.com](http://www.eggsthings.com)

Eggs 'N' Things has been serving up delicious meals at breakfast and lunch for more than 40 years with such favorites as the California omelet, French toast, and the traditional eggs and bacon. And no meal at this popular restaurant is complete without the famous Swedish pancakes with jelly, served complimentary with every breakfast. You can even order it as a full meal.

For early risers, Eggs 'N' Things offers an early bird special from 6-9 a.m. weekdays. For only \$6.75, pancakes and eggs, French toast or an omelet are made to order.

**Voted a "Best Business Lunch"**  
winner by readers of the Ventura County Star

Ready to book your wedding or event?  
Call us 805.983.7777



## FOOD & DRINK

VENTURA COUNTY  
**STAR**

### East County Favorites

- » Brent's Deli
- » Country Harvest Restaurant
- » Side Street Cafe

### West County Favorites

- » Allison's Country Cafe
- » Cafe Nouveau
- » Waypoint Cafe

### Brewery

East County Winner

#### FIGUEROA MOUNTAIN BREWING CO.

30770 Russell Ranch Road, Westlake Village  
818-874-1305  
www.figmtnbrew.com

Figueria Mountain Brewery is a family-owned and -operated establishment that combines high-quality craft beer and a chill vibe. "We have a great atmosphere here, with a great patio and live music every Saturday," said Ventura County Marketing Manager Chuck Teel. "Also, over 60 percent of the beers we serve are brewed on site in our Brite Tanks, so you are getting the freshest beer possible." In addition to the beers brewed on site, Fig Mountain Westlake brings in unique specialty brews that are brewed up in Buellton. Other tap rooms include Arroyo Grande, Los Olivos, Santa Barbara and Santa Maria.

### Favorites

- » Bj's Restaurant & Brewery
- » Enegren Brewing Company
- » Ladyface Ale Companie

West County Winner

#### INSTITUTION ALE COMPANY

3841 Mission Oaks Blvd., Camarillo  
482-3777  
www.institutionales.com

Institution Ale's tasting room, attached to its brewery, is a hot spot seven days a week.

Co-owner Shaun Smith said that's due to the friendly atmosphere and their rotating selection of beers, which he describes as "innovative takes on traditional American styles. We are striving to produce world class, independently crafted beer." There is indoor seating with five TVs and an outdoor patio area with a fire pit — first come, first served.

"Institution is fit for the beer fanatic and casual beer drinker alike," Smith said,



STAR FILE PHOTO

Roger Smith, right, poses with his sons Shaun, left, and Ryan of Institutional Ale Company, which won best brewery in west county.



STAR FILE PHOTO

Figueria Mountain Brewing Co. has a brewery and taproom in the Shoppes at Westlake Village center.

adding that more than 20 beers are on tap. Plus, enjoy their soft-baked pretzels and artisan-style flatbread pizza, boasting unique flavors and fresh, local ingredients.

### Favorites

- » Anacapa Brewing Company
- » Madewest Brewing Company
- » Topa Topa Brewing Company

### Brunch

East County Winner

#### EGGS 'N' THINGS

Locations throughout Ventura County  
www.eggsthings.com

If you're in the mood for variety in between breakfast and lunch, Eggs 'N' Things is a bustling place on the weekends, with groups of guests waiting for the chance to slip inside for a tasty brunch. And the fast and friendly service leaves everyone happy and full.



Since 1974, Eggs 'N' Things has served up brunch favorites, pleasing diners whether they are in the mood for a juicy burger, cheesy tuna melt or guest-favorite corned beef hash. Also, each guest is served a complimentary Swedish pancake with every breakfast order. You can't go wrong with that.

**Favorites**

- » Brent's Deli
- » Moorpark Country Club
- » The Cheesecake Factory

West County Winner

**CAFE NOUVEAU**

1497 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura  
648-1422  
cafenouveau.net

The hoards of people waiting outside of Café Nouveau in the mornings are a testament to its beloved brunch offerings. Located in a 1920's Spanish bungalow, the charming restaurant is sure to be filled with hungry and satisfied diners every time. The romantic and charming ambiance sets this Ventura staple apart from all others. Brunch items include a selection of pancakes, accompanied by homemade vanilla caramel syrup, Italian sausage frittata, eggs Benedict and the Quintessential Burger. And if you enjoy a mimosa with your brunch, you won't be disappointed.

**Favorites**

- » Mrs. Olson's Coffee Hut
- » Pete's Breakfast House
- » Waypoint Cafe

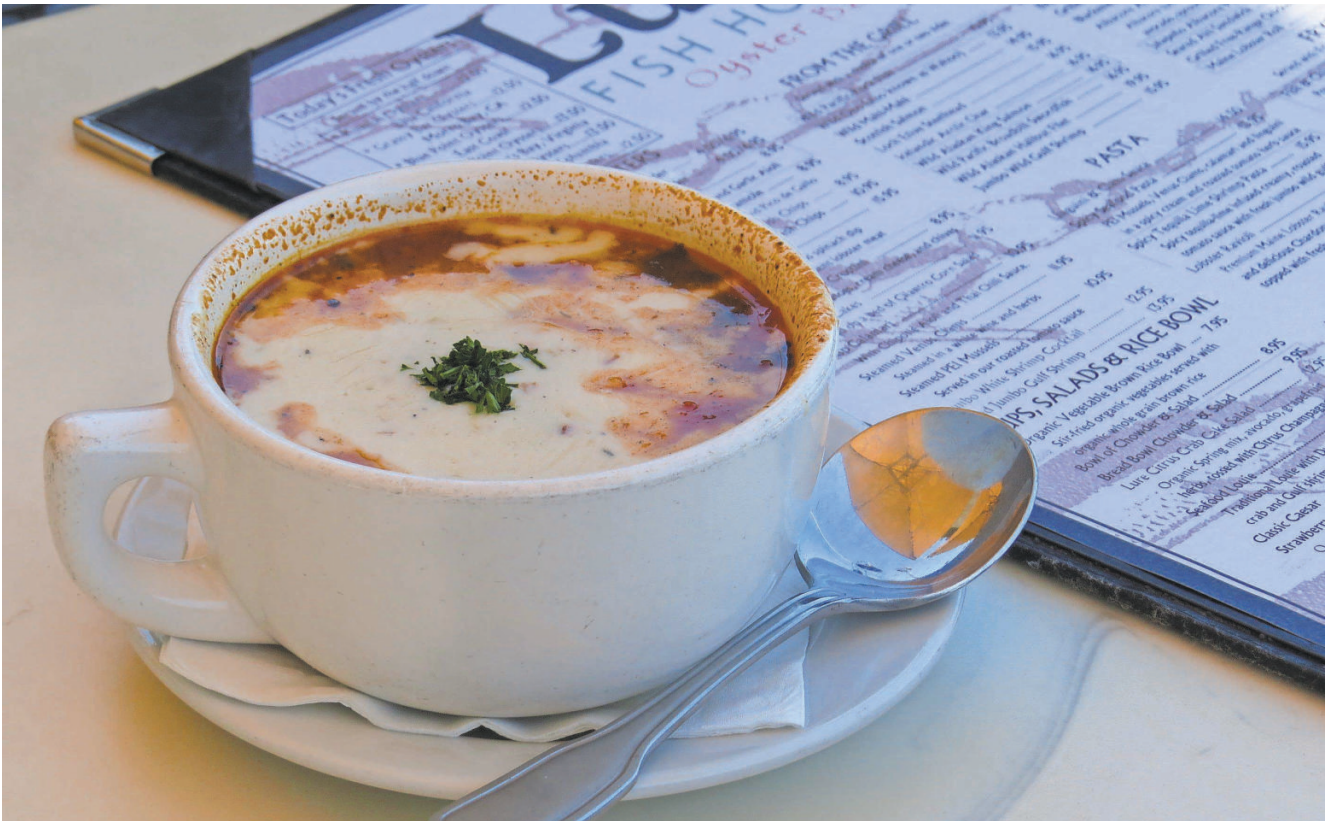
**Business Lunch**

Full County Winner

**LURE FISH HOUSE**

Locations in Camarillo, Ventura, Westlake Village

www.lurefishhouse.com  
If you're looking for the perfect location for a business lunch, Lure Fish House is the place to go. With delicious food providing something for everyone, a pleasant atmosphere and quick turnaround, how could you go wrong taking your clients or colleagues to Lure? You can't. "We have an upscale ambience without the tethers of an affected formality," said David Cortina who, along with his wife Patricia, owns Lure.



STAR FILE PHOTO

Lure Fish House, with three Ventura County locations, placed in several categories this year, including business lunch.

With an extensive lunch menu that includes everything from clam chowder to live Maine lobster, even the pickiest colleague or client will find something to enjoy.

**East County Favorites**

- » Presto Pasta
- » Toppers Pizza Place
- » Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill

**West County Favorites**

- » Adolfo Grill & Daily Bar
- » Tower Club
- » Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill

**Chinese Food**

East County Winner

**SESAME INN**

3327 W. Kimber Drive, Newbury Park  
499-2800  
sesameinn.wix.com

Discerning customers know whether a



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Chester's Asia Restaurant boasts Cantonese, Mandarin and other specials.

Chinese restaurant is authentic or not — and Sesame Inn is the real deal, as loyal customers have known since 2000. Its seemingly endless menu features numerous specialty items, including Triple Meat Kung Pao (shrimp, chicken and beef) and Mandarin-style Black Pepper Chicken. An assortment of "family dinners" for two or more and a large variety of health



**Thank You Ventura  
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**www.chestersasia.com**  
**805-482-6564**  
2216 PICKWICK DR., CAMARILLO

VC1562728



## FOOD & DRINK

VENTURA COUNTY  
**STAR**

options (like Steamed Lemon or Pineapple Chicken) augment the traditional choices that include Mu-Shu meats and seafood. Fresh vegetables, soups and appetizers are also on the menu, and Sesame Inn is ideal for celebrating special occasions.

### Favorites

- » Golden Dragon
- » P.F. Chang's China Bistro
- » Szechuwan Garden Restaurant

West County Winner

### CHESTER'S ASIA RESTAURANT

2216 Pickwick Drive, Camarillo  
482-6564  
www.chestersasia.com

Known as "a culinary gem in the heart of Camarillo," Chester's Asia is more than that. It's a business with deep roots in the community. With more than 50 years in business, Chester's Asia has customers that include several generations of families. Owner Keith Kwan's parents purchased the restaurant years ago from its original owner, Chester, who was a close friend. "Back then people only knew about chop suey," said Kwan. "Every Chinese restaurant had the same menu." Kwan credits his restaurant's longevity to its menu evolving with the times and offering delectable cuisine.

### Favorites

- » Golden China
- » Gourmet Oriental
- » Peking Inn Restaurant

### Coffee House

East County Winner

### STARBUCKS

Locations throughout Ventura County  
www.starbucks.com

There's no doubt Starbucks has become a way of life for many people, or, at the very least, part of their weekday morning routine as they make their way to work. From a single location to one on every corner, there's no problem finding a convenient location in Ventura County. And today it's not all about that tall, black coffee or a venti Caramel Cocoa Cluster Frappuccino, there are food items, from sous vide egg bites and hot breakfast sandwiches to salads and sandwiches, to fill up on.

### Favorites

- » Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf



STAR FILE PHOTO

**Brent's was voted the top deli in east county.**

- » Dr. Conkey's Candy & Coffee Co
- » Peet's Coffee & Tea
- » Ragamuffin Coffee Roasters

West County Winner

### COFFEE BEAN & TEA LEAF

Several locations in Ventura County  
www.coffeebean.com

With roots in Southern California that go back as far as 1963, the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf prides itself as the "oldest and largest privately held specialty coffee and tea retailer in the United States."

The company says it only selects the top 1 percent of Arabica beans and sources hand-plucked, whole leaf teas. Not only does the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf give you the opportunity to purchase one of its hand-brewed specialties, but you can also shop online, choosing from Mexico organic and Maui blend to vanilla hazelnut coffees and a wide selection of teas, including earl grey, lemon chamomile, and English and Scottish breakfast tea. And if you want your own Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf single-serve coffee machine or

tea press, they have those, too.

### Favorites

- » Palermo
- » Simone's Coffee & Tea
- » Starbucks

### Deli

East County Winner

### BRENT'S DELI

2799 Townsgate Road, Westlake Village  
557-1882  
www.brentsdeli.com



If you love a traditional New York-style deli, with its hot pastrami or corned beef sandwiches, beef-stuffed cabbage, and bagels and lox, Brent's Deli in Westlake Village is the place to go. Homemade matzo ball soup, generous sandwiches on double-baked rye bread and tasty black and white cookies are what keep customers coming back.

"As a family-owned business driven by consistency and high expectations of success, we are determined to provide our customers with the best experience and the best tasting food, time and time again," said Marc Hernandez, partner with Brent's Deli.

#### **Favorites**

- » Italia Deli & Bakery
- » Jersey Mike's Subs
- » Pickle's Deli & Restaurant

West County Winner

#### **DANNY'S DELI & GRILL**

3263 Telegraph Road, Ventura  
289-9200  
www.dannysdeli.com

If you enjoy sinking your teeth into fresh, homemade bread or delicious made-from-scratch soup, Danny's Deli & Grill is just what you're looking for. And as a bonus, you can order breakfast, lunch or dinner any time of day.

It's no surprise Danny's has won the hearts of readers another year.

"We are glad to see the hard work is appreciated," said owner Wendy Collings. Whether dining for the first time or a repeat patron, visitors can expect a high-quality meal from a diversified menu.

#### **Favorites**

- » Jersey Mike's Subs
- » Lombardo's Gourmet Deli
- » Old New York Deli & Bakery Co.

#### **Dessert**

East County Winner

#### **CARRARA PASTRIES**

476 W. Los Angeles Ave., Moorpark  
552-4250  
28914 Roadside Drive, Agoura Hills  
818-661-9006  
www.carrarapastries.us

Is there such a thing as healthy sweets? Absolutely at Carrara Pastries, where vegan peach cakes, fruit tarts and more are on the regular dessert menu.



STAR FILE PHOTO

**Moorpark-based pastry chef turned Food Network star Damiano Carrara of Carrara Pastries, winner of east county's best bakery and best dessert.**

Founded by Damiano and Massimiliano Carrara, Carrara Pastries offers authentic, homemade Italian desserts. The Carraras connect with the community in various ways. They have made gelato with local Girl Scout troops, led cooking and pizza-making classes, and raffled off 25-pound chocolate Easter eggs.

#### **Favorites**

- » Little Calf Creamery And Cafe
- » Nothing Bundt Cakes
- » The Cheesecake Factory


## Thank You

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VC-1581181



**FOOD & DRINK**



West County Winner

**BREAD BASKET CAKE**

83 E. Daily Drive, Camarillo  
482-1337  
www.breadbasketcake.com

Located in the bustling Las Posas Plaza, Bread Basket Cake Company is known in Ventura County circles and beyond, including among Hollywood A-listers, for its delectable desserts worthy of “food porn” status.

“We’ve provided desserts for events for the Oscars, Golden Globes and Emmys,” said co-owner Paul Delagnes. “We also work with a couple of hotels in Beverly Hills.”

One of Paul and Gilbert Delagnes’ most requested desserts are cakes made with their fruit basket filling, which is created with locally grown berries and French cream.

**Favorites**

- » McConnell’s Fine Ice Cream
- » Nothing Bundt Cakes
- » The Sugar Lab

**Dive Bar**

East County Winner

**PJ’S PUB & GRILL**

417 Avenida De Los Arboles, Thousand Oaks

492-4774  
www.pjspub2.com

If televisions, dartboards, pool tables and karaoke don’t draw you in, a full bar, one of the best burgers in town and appetizers that satisfy your hunger pangs surely will. PJ’s Pub and Grill has meshed the aesthetic of a friendly, neighborhood bar with state-of-the-art technology, including an app that features deals on food and drinks, and the one thing that seems to be quintessential to all pubs — karaoke. PJ’s customers rave about its friendly atmosphere, amazing fried pickles, outdoor patio and live music.

**Favorites**

- » Azar’s Sports Bar
- » Lucky Fool’s Pub
- » Outlaws Grill & Saloon

West County Winner

**THE RUDDER ROOM**

2929 Ocean Drive, Oxnard  
985-6096

The Rudder Room is a true Channel Islands Harbor staple, known for its authentic local feel and instant access to the warm sand of Hollywood Beach.

“We are a cash-only bar with deep tradition,” said Russ Parkes, a bartender at The Rudder Room for 14 years. “We have always been family run, and we are the best ocean-viewing bar in SoCal.”

**Critic’s Choice: Paying your respects**



**Lisa McKinnon**

Fans of street food, heavyweight boxing and real-life “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” stories should make a point of honoring the memory of William “Bill” Connell — aka the Hot Dog Man — with a visit to the Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve near the Ventura-Santa Barbara County line.

They should also bring some Red Vines along for the trip. But more about that in a minute.

Connell served in the Army during the Vietnam War and went on to compete as a heavyweight boxer, racking up a professional record of 14 wins — eight reportedly by knockout. He also worked as a bouncer at some of the same New Jersey clubs where Bruce Springsteen got his start, leading friends to claim that Connell was Weak Knees Willie in the song “Rosalita.”

This much is certain: After moving to California, Connell was inspired by the street vendors of his Jersey youth to launch All-American Surf Dog, which debuted just steps from the nature preserve’s dirt parking in the summer of 1992.

It was an instant hit. The location was ideal, for one thing. Decorated with American flags and a giant replica hot dog, the cart was visible from Highway 101. More than 20 years later, everything on the menu was \$3.50 or less. And Connell still greeted each patron with a free Red Vine so they’d have something to nibble on while he prepared their order.

He also crusaded for more than a decade to have California recognize its own constitutional provision exempting honorably discharged veterans working as vendors from having to pay sales tax. A bill was passed in 2014 to compensate Connell and his fellow veterans.

Connell was 61 when he died in his sleep in February 2016. A year later, members of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 218, Santa Barbara, gathered at the bluffs to dedicate a bronze plaque in his name. “No one ever left his hot dog stand hungry, whether they had money or not,” the plaque reads, in part.

It feels right to read the rest while chewing on a Red Vine.

— Lisa McKinnon



STAR FILE PHOTO

Scratch, voted top food truck in Ventura County, is pictured here serving up lunch on the Ventura College campus.

The traditions are real at the Rudd, like honoring those who have served with photos on the wall, hosting benefits for friends in need, and having a true “first call” at 6 a.m.

**Favorites**

- » El Rey Cantina
- » Sans Souci
- » Star Lounge

**Food Truck**

Full County Winner

**SCRATCH**

www.scratchventura.com

If the combination of smoked pork, chipotle peanut butter, strawberry jam and white cheddar doesn’t make your mouth water, the market salad with kale,

shaved carrots, cherry tomatoes, feta and red wine vinaigrette may make your heart sing.

These popular offerings at Scratch Food Truck keep people coming back for more, no matter where they are in Ventura County, earning Scratch the distinction of Readers’ Choice food truck winner. So, what’s the secret to their success? You may have guessed it by their name, Scratch.

“Since we make 95 percent of our ingredients ourselves, they all have unique flavors that stand out,” said chef and co-owner Tim Kilcoyne.

**Favorites**

- » Cousin’s Lobster Roll
- » Grilled Cheese Truck
- » In-N-Out Burger





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In-N-Out was voted best meal on a budget and best hamburger.

## Greek Food

East County Winner

### DAHPNE'S CALIFORNIA GREEK

1015 Broadbeck Lane, Newbury Park  
480-0449  
2667 Tapo Canyon Road, Simi Valley  
526-0450  
www.daphnes.biz

Daphne's California Greek prides itself on feeding the mind, body and soul. A refresh of its menu has led to fresh, high-quality and healthful food embodying California fresh with robust Mediterranean flavors. From fire-roasted vegetables and Moroccan carrot-walnut salad and Tabouli as sides to kabobs, falafels and Mediterranean salads, there's something for everyone at prices that won't break the bank. Plus, you can earn points for

every meal purchased through Daphne's Pita Points Reward Club and redeem meal discounts. And it's not all about the food, although it is delicious. Daphne's mission is to be part of the community, helping to support education, youth sports, healthful living and the arts.

#### Favorites

- » Ali Baba Restaurant
- » Greek House Restaurant
- » Mama's Hummus

West County Winner

### THE GREEK VENTURA

15836 Spinnaker Drive, Suite 101, Ventura  
650-5350  
www.thegreekventura.com

A staple at the Ventura Harbor for more than 20 years, The Greek not only serves delicious, authentic Greek specialties, but

gives you the full Mediterranean experience. And, of course, it's a family affair. All of Lynn and Makis Mikelatos' children work there in various roles, from servers, dancers and managers to even a graphic designer who has creative control over the menu's look. The menu includes delicious items such as the beef moussaka and gyros plate, as well as mouth-watering Lamb Souvlakia Kebob Platter, Poseidon Pasta and four-course family meals. Weekend evenings include live entertainment in the form of various Greek Island dances, as well as belly dancing.

#### Favorites

- » Baba's Kitchen Mediterranean Cuisine
- » Mama's Hummus
- » Stephen's Market & Grillhamburger

## Hamburger

Full County Winner

### IN-N-OUT BURGER

Locations throughout Ventura County  
www.in-n-out.com

If the lines at the drive-through are any indication of how beloved In-N-Out

Burger is in Ventura County, then you know it's got to be good. "Quality you can taste" has been In-N-Out Burger's motto for more than 65 years, and with the same burgers, fries and shakes since 1948, they've got the menu down to a science. The burger chain doesn't freeze, pre-package or microwave its food offerings, and is known for using fresh ingredients, including real ice cream for milkshakes. If you're looking for consistency in food and experience, In-N-Out-Burger has it down.

#### East County Favorites

- » Five Guys Burgers And Fries
- » Habit Burger Grill
- » Hook Burger Bistro

#### West County Favorites

- » Five Guys Burgers And Fries
- » Habit Burger Grill
- » Hook Burger Bistro

## Hot Dog

Full County Winner

### COSTCO

Locations throughout Ventura County  
www.costco.com

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www.yolandasmexicancafe.com



## FOOD &amp; DRINK

VENTURA COUNTY  
STAR

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

McConnell's is once again named best ice cream in west county.

When you think of Costco, you may think of bulk food items at discount prices. But what about lunch or a snack in between meals? Costco's hot dogs stand out above the rest, and satisfy shoppers squeezing in a meal or snack on the run. Still only \$1.50, this American classic includes an all-beef hot dog and soda. With that price, it's no surprise that customers keep coming back. "A big factor in why it's so popular is the quality of the hot dog and how it's made," said Agnes Vega, food court manager at the Oxnard location.

Vega also believes it's the simplicity and size that makes Costco's ballpark frank the top dog.

**East County Favorites**

- » Cupid's Hot Dogs
- » Dirty Dawgs
- » Dog Haus

**West County Favorites**

- » Danny's Deli & Grill

- » Five Guys Burgers And Fries
- » Hot Dog On A Stick
- » Wienerschnitzel

**Ice Cream/Yogurt Shop**

East County Winner

**BASKIN-ROBBINS**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
www.baskinrobbins.com

From "Here Comes the Fudge" to "Lunar Cheesecake," the naming of Baskin-Robbins' 1,300 flavors over the decades could become a game of trivia and lesson in history today.

"Lunar Cheesecake," for example, was named in honor of the NASA space mission that took place in the 1960s and the flavor was introduced after the astronauts returned safely.

The famous "31" flavors, refers to customers being able to enjoy a different flavor for each day of the month. The company also specializes in other desserts, like cakes and frozen drinks.

**Favorites**

- » Cold Stone Creamery
- » Little Calf Creamery And Cafe
- » Yogurtland

West County Winner

**MCCONNELL'S FINE ICE CREAM**

3241 E. Main St., Ventura  
650-6410  
www.mcconnells.com

If you're calling McConnell's Fine Ice Creams by its nickname, McC, then you know you're a regular, a part of the family.

Among the last family-owned ice cream shops, McConnell's has served high-quality, "old school" ice cream at its cozy Main Street location since Valentine's Day 2009.

"We are super-crazy when it comes to using quality ingredients and serving our customers in a clean and friendly environment," said owner Jimmy Young. From the relatively new Salted Caramel Chip and Sea Salt Cream and Cookies flavors to the traditional Dark Chocolate Chips and Nibs and Boysenberry Rose Milk Jam, there's surely something to keep you coming back and into the family's fold.

**Favorites**

- » Baskin-Robbins
- » Cold Stone Creamery
- » Surf'n Yogurt



LISA MCKINNON/THE STAR

A Detroit-style pizza with crispy, chewy cheese baked around the edges is on the menu at Parma Pizzeria Napoletana in Thousand Oaks. The business is owned by musician and pizzaiolo Mick Mahan, a longtime bassist for Pat Benatar.

**Critic's Choice: All about that bass pizza**

Lisa  
McKinnon

As the longtime bassist for Pat Benatar, Mick Mahan knows his music – and his pizza. Those twin passions come together at Parma Pizzeria Napoletana, the Thousand Oaks restaurant he and fellow pizzaiolo, or pizza maker, Jimmy Centofante opened early this year in the Heritage Shopping Center.

Mahan's love of pizza can be traced to Ohio, where he grew up with an Irish father and a Sicilian mother (for whom the restaurant is named). He honed that interest by studying different styles of pizza while on domestic and international tours.

At Parma Pizzeria, the result is a menu packed with tasty musical references. Neapolitan-style pizzas with names like Applewood Bacon Blues and The Rave (a blend of cheddar and mozzarella cheeses with Italian sausage, roasted red pepper, fresh basil

and ricotta) are baked in a 900-degree wood-burning dome oven.

The kitchen is also equipped with a 550-degree brick deck oven that produces thin-crust New York-style pizzas (sold whole or by the slice) and a rectangular, deep-dish style pizza known as the Detroit.

For the latter, white cheddar cheese is pressed around the edges of the pan, where it creates a crispy edge as the pizza bakes. A blend of mozzarella and Wisconsin brick cheeses goes on top, layered with tomato sauce and diners' choice of toppings. The Detroit comes with all of the above, plus smoked pepperoni under the cheese and cured pepperoni on top.

Mahan will unveil an Ohio-style pizza – similar to the Detroit, but with fewer bells and whistles – in late May, when he returns from a tour. I'm all fired up for that. (796 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., 370-1370, parmapiizzerianapoletana.com).

— Lisa McKinnon





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Himalaya serves up cuisine from Nepal, India and Tibet.

## Indian Food

Full County Winner

### HIMALAYA

35 W. Main St., Ventura  
643-0795  
720 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
409-1041  
[www.himalayacuisine.com](http://www.himalayacuisine.com)

Touted as an enchanting hidden gem, Himalaya Cuisine provides that perfect mix of familiar Indian dishes with complex spices and sauces as well as unusual offerings like the Tikka Masala Pizza. In a very short time, Himalaya has gained a loyal following at both locations in Ventura and Thousand Oaks. Its mission is to serve delicious, affordable food that guests will want to return to week after week. And by looking at the menu, Himalaya is staying true to that philosophy. From Sherpa Curry Chicken and Chicken Tikka Masala, both for \$14, to Fish Tikka and Lamb Sayquwa for \$15, and the very reasonable kids' menu, there's

something to please every age and budget.

### East County Favorites

- » Bollywood Cafe
- » Karma Indian Cuisine
- » Saffron

### West County Favorites

- » Cafe India
- » Curry Leaf
- » The Taj Cafe

## Italian Food

East County Winner

### PRESTO PASTA

Locations across Ventura County  
[prestopasta.com](http://prestopasta.com)

Presto Pasta has been in the news lately with the opening of a new location in Simi Valley. "We have been wanting to open in Simi Valley forever," Jeff Schuberg, who with his brother Ken, owns and operates Presto Pasta restaurants across Ventura County, told the Star's Lisa McKinnon. With its inexpensive pasta combo meals ranging from \$9.99 to \$11.49 and lunches

*We're honored.*

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## FOOD &amp; DRINK

VENTURA COUNTY  
STAR

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ottavio's has been serving Camarillo for over 40 years.

under \$6.99, Presto Pasta has been a popular destination, especially for the lunch crowd and families looking for a quick-yet-hearty meal. And if you have a sweet tooth, the Italian eatery can satisfy with its chocolate chunk brownies and freshly baked cookies.

**Favorites**

- » Buca Di Beppo
- » Cafe Firenze
- » Chi Chi's Pizza

West County Winner

**OTTAVIO'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT**

1620 Ventura Blvd., Camarillo  
482-3810  
www.ottavio.com

For 46 years, Ottavio's has been serving traditional-style Italian food in a family atmosphere and attracting a loyal following.

"People dress up and people come in casual — either way, you feel comfortable," said Julie Thomason, who co-owns the family business with her brother and mother.

Thomason said the rolls and the minestrone soup are what they are known for, but she has noticed that customers share positive feedback on social media about Ottavio's lasagna, Chicken Marsala and the Tortellini Silvana.

The draws also include kids eat free on Mondays and Tuesdays, Wine Wednesday

and early-bird specials from 3 to 6 p.m. Sunday through Thursday. And, of course, happy hour from 3 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**Favorites**

- » Cafe Fiore
- » Dominick's Italian Restaurant
- » Ferraro's Italian Restaurant

**Meal On A Budget**

Full County Winner

**IN-N-OUT BURGER**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
www.in-n-out.com

When funds are low, but you're looking for quality, fresh ingredients, what comes to mind? For most in Ventura County, it's In-N-Out Burger.

After more than 65 years in business offering burgers, fries and shakes, In-N-Out knows what people want and it delivers in quality and price.

While fresh burgers, fries and shakes are its claim to fame, there is grilled cheese for vegetarians and low-carb offerings, like its protein-style burger, available. It also has a secret menu viewable online.

Using fresh ingredients, In-N-Out is Ventura County's go-to burger joint for a meal on the cheap.

**East County Favorites**

- » Chick-fil-A
- » Costco



LISA MCKINNON/THE STAR

New tenants ranging from Gasolina Cafe of Woodland Hills to Taqueria el Tapatio of Camarillo have signed on to join The Annex, a public market-style space under construction at The Collection at RiverPark in Oxnard.

**Critic's Choice: Most anticipated opening**

Lisa  
McKinnon

When it opens later this year, The Annex at The Collection at RiverPark in Oxnard will either be Ventura County's answer to the Grand Central Market in Los Angeles (open since 1917 and still going strong) or the star-crossed Santa Barbara Public Market (open since 2014 and still finding its footing).

Either way, the project featuring restaurant counters and small retail shops easily wins my vote for Most Anticipated Opening. We've been waiting for it since before "late 2014," the date quoted on coming-soon banners seen at its originally announced address on Park View Court.

The Annex has since moved down the block, to the corner of Collection Boulevard and Park View Court near Copper Blues Rock Pub & Kitchen. A mid-to-late-summer opening is anticipated — and this time I'm pretty sure they mean it.

I think this because I can actually see (and hear) construction when I stop by to try and peek through the barricades. Also, developers of the 16,000-square-foot project have announced the names of several anticipated tenants.

They include such local food-and-beverage operations as Bottle & Pint, a Newbury Park-based craft-beer taproom and retailer; Love Pho, a family-owned Vietnamese restaurant with existing sites in Camarillo and Newbury Park; Ragamuffin Coffee Roasters of Newbury Park, Taqueria el Tapatio of Camarillo, and Scratch Sandwich Counter, a new spot from chef Tim Kilcoyne of Scratch food truck.

Also joining the mix of food vendors will be The Blend Superfood Bar of San Diego, Gasolina Café and Pancake of Woodland Hills, and Seoul Sausage Co. of Los Angeles. In addition, Southern California-based Afters Ice Cream will be located in The Collection but accessible from The Annex.

Whatever. Just open, already.

— Lisa McKinnon





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Bad Ass serves authentic street tacos, Mexican-style sandwiches, quesadillas and burritos.**

Presto Pasta

**West County Favorites**

- » Corrales Mexican Food
- » Costco
- » Presto Pasta

**Mexican Food**

Full County Winner

**YOLANDA'S MEXICAN CAFE**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
[www.yolandasmexicancafe.com](http://www.yolandasmexicancafe.com)  
With locations throughout Ventura County, Yolanda's serves up an exciting combination of old favorites and new, weekly dinner specials devised by a creative team of in-house chefs. Yolanda's has made diners happy since its founding in 1982.  
"We've always been a family-run restaurant that treats its employees and customers like family," said Mary Donlon, member of Yolanda's founding family.  
"Many employees have been with us since

Day 1, and customers enjoy seeing familiar faces just as we enjoy having customers return."

**East County Favorites**

- » Cisco's Mexican Restaurant
- » Los Agaves Mexican Grill
- » Sharky's Woodfired Mexican Grill

**West County Favorites**

- » Bobbi's Mexican Food
- » Casa De Soria
- » Corrales Mexican Food

**New Restaurant (opened after 1/1/16)**

East County Winner

**BAD ASS TACOS**

2951 Thousand Oaks Blvd, Thousand Oaks  
370-8226

Bad Ass Street Tacos — once known as the late-night pop-up at Meat Locker BBQ — has found a home on Thousand Oaks

Boulevard. Known for their authentic street tacos, Bad Ass Tacos now has a great location that offers more space, patio seating and great taco shop atmosphere. Not feeling tacos? Try their array of soft tacos, quesadillas, burritos, and tortas. Pop into the already popular spot, open Tuesdays-Sundays, and open until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays.

**Favorites**

- » Fusion Grill
- » Himalaya
- » Urban Plates

West County Winner

**BLVD BRGR CO.**

The day of its grand opening, after taking over the Panini Place vacancy on Ventura Boulevard in Old Town Camarillo, BLVD BRGR Co. sold out of a weekend's worth of supplies. Its popularity has persisted since opening in April 2016. Owners John Stewart and Vince Pillard (also owner of neighboring Twenty88 Restaurant & Martini Lounge) are focused on one thing — a delicious burger and a cold beer. Try the SCRIPION BRGR, which gets its spice from a house-made Chile Relleno stuffed with pepper jack cheese. Also on the menu are unique milkshakes

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**FOOD & DRINK**

 VENTURA COUNTY  
**STAR**

like the peanut butter-Nutella option with Cocoa Pebbles on the rim.

**Favorites**

- » Copper Blues Rock Pub & Kitchen
- » Cork Ventura
- » Wicked's Brew

**Outdoor Dining**

East County Winner

**STONEHAUS**

32039 Agoura Road, Westlake Village  
 818-483-1152  
[www.the-stonehaus.com](http://www.the-stonehaus.com)

Stonehaus takes California living to a new level. With both an intimate, indoor wine-tasting bar and a large outdoor space dotted with fire pits and an outdoor pizza oven, Stonehaus — located on the Westlake Village Inn property near Bogie's — offers areas for intimate conversations or a fun night out with pals. During the day, Stonehaus offers custom-roasted coffee and fresh-baked pastries, as well as paninis and salads. In the evening, it transitions into a wine bar and tasting room with an impressive charcuterie plate, pizza and other gourmet bites. It also offers an extensive breakfast menu, with "hearty" offerings, as well as healthy. Be sure to check out its calendar online as Stonehaus is constantly planning for unique and interesting experiences.

**Favorites**

- » Lazy Dog Restaurant & Bar
- » Lure Fish House
- » Neptune's Net

West County Winner

**CAFE NOUVEAU**

1497 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura  
 648-1422  
[cafenouveau.net](http://cafenouveau.net)

Tucked inside a quaint neighborhood in Ventura is one of the more unique and homey dining venues in the county. It's easy to ignore the sounds of the city when dining on Cafe Nouveau's outdoor patio. Surrounded by lush Mediterranean gardens and shade-bearing trees, the patio offers a relaxing setting to enjoy breakfast and lunch while under the warm California sun. At night, outdoor lights create a romantic atmosphere and heat lamps keep guests warm. No matter the meal, Cafe Nouveau's patio is the perfect setting to enjoy delicious



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Toppers Pizza Place is again the full county winner for both pizza and salad.**

food with friends, family, or even a four-legged companion.

**Favorites**

- » Andria's Seafood Restaurant And Market
- » Lure Fish House
- » Waypoint Cafe

**Pizza**

Full County Winner

**TOPPERS PIZZA PLACE**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
 385-4444  
[www.topperspizzaplace.com](http://www.topperspizzaplace.com)

Ventura County's own Toppers not only delivers pizza favorites, the local parlors also deliver new and innovative pies like the Carnitas Chipotle pie or the Hot Honey pie.

"We're a local company, and our menu

and restaurant items are catered to the local Ventura County community," said Vim Jonker, president of Toppers. "We're unique in that we make much more of our menu in house, from our dressings to many of our pizza ingredients, and frankly no one else does that."

**East County Favorites**

- » Ameci Pizza & Pasta
- » Chi Chi's Pizza





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Mastro's Steakhouse** is the east county winner for romantic dining and steak house.

Custom Pie  
» The East Coast Pizza Company

**West County Favorites**

- » Ojai Pizza
- » Pizzaman Dan's
- » Tony's Pizzeria

**Romantic Dining**

East County Winner

**MASTRO'S STEAKHOUSE**

2087 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
418-1811  
[www.mastrosrestaurants.com](http://www.mastrosrestaurants.com)

The cosmopolitan setting and quality service at Mastro's Steakhouse set the mood for any special occasion. "Mastro's' tailored white-glove service and elegant atmosphere offers our guests the perfect sense of comfort and elegance for an intimate dining experience," said Tim Whitlock, senior vice president of operations and COO of Mastro's Steakhouse. End the night on a sweet note with Mastro's Signature Warm Butter Cake — a popular favorite.

"We strive to ensure each visit to Mastro's provides guests with a guaranteed memorable menu and experience," said Whitlock.

**Favorites**

- » Barton's Steak & Seafood
- » Boccaccio's Restaurant
- » Cafe Firenze

West County Winner

**LURE FISH HOUSE**

Locations in Camarillo, Ventura, Westlake Village  
[www.Lurefishhouse.com](http://www.Lurefishhouse.com)

If you're looking for a lovely dinner in an upbeat and lively locale with romantic undertones, Lure Fish House has become the destination for many looking for casual elegance. "We're not your place to go for a super quiet, intimate night with formal table settings and white cloth," said owner David Cortina. "Lure has an upbeat, fun feel, which will enhance the atmosphere of a first date or even a double date with long-time friends."

Lure serves only the freshest seafood, sure to be a highlight of any date night, at a price that won't break the bank.

**Favorites**

- » Aloha Steakhouse
- » Cafe Fiore
- » Cafe Zack

**Salad**

Full County Winner

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**VC Star** • Readers' Choice "Winner - Pizza": Every year from 2000 to 2016  
**Ventura County Reporter** • Best of Ventura County "1st Place": 2008 to 2016  
**SCV Signal** • Best of SCV "Best Pizza": 2014 to 2016

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**FOOD & DRINK**



**East County Favorites**

- » Lure Fish House
- » The Cheesecake Factory
- » Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill

**West County Favorites**

- » Lure Fish House
- » Urbane Cafe
- » Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill

**Salsa**

Full County Winner

**YOLANDA'S MEXICAN CAFE**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
[www.yolandasmexicancafe.com](http://www.yolandasmexicancafe.com)

Salsa, served along with chips, is almost always the first item set before diners at Mexican restaurants. It usually sets the tone for the meal.

At Yolanda's, salsa starts with "fresh and local ingredients," said manager Mary Donlon, whose family began the popular chain in 1982.

"We make our salsa fresh daily," she said, "and of course, since ours is an old farming family, we are going to use local products. And our customers appreciate that."

**East County Favorites**

- » Baja Fresh Mexican Grill
- » Sharky's Woodfired Mexican Grill
- » Snapper Jack's Taco Shack

**West County Favorites**

- » Baja Fresh Mexican Grill
- » Casa De Soria
- » Snapper Jack's Taco Shack

**Sandwich**

Full County Winner

**JERSEY MIKE'S SUBS**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
[www.jerseymikes.com](http://www.jerseymikes.com)

At Jersey Mike's Subs locations, bread is baked fresh daily and meat is sliced while you wait.

But delicious sandwiches are only part of what Jersey Mike's does, says Dawn Rosin, marketing and catering manager for Ventura County.

"From Day 1, Jersey Mike's has had a commitment to giving back to the community," Rosin said. "We are very involved with the nonprofits in providing meals for volunteers or giving back to the schools. It's the philanthropy that's a company passion."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Yolanda's has locations in Oxnard, Ventura, Camarillo and Simi Valley. It is the full county winner for salsa.

**East County Favorites**

- » Brent's Deli
- » Italia Bakery & Deli
- » The Sandwich Spot

**West County Favorites**

- » Danny's Deli & Grill
- » Urbane Cafe
- » Ventura Sandwich Company

**Seafood**

Full County Winner

**LURE FISH HOUSE**

Locations in Camarillo, Ventura, Westlake Village  
[www.lurefishhouse.com](http://www.lurefishhouse.com)

If eating locally sourced food is important to you, you've got to respect Lure Fish House. They provide "locally caught seafood, organically grown local produce, and wines from local vineyards whenever possible," according to its website.

The popular restaurant is known for its mesquite charbroiled seafood, as well as



STAR FILE PHOTO

Micheal Robb, of Lure Fish House in downtown Ventura, serves an Oyster Sampler.



uniquely prepared creations by its chef. "Lure is a classic, straightforward fish house free of ... over sauced (food)," said owner David Cortina. "You get to taste the actual fish itself." "We cook this fish on our plancha grill simply seasoned with salt and grilled with butter," he said. "The nutritiously high-fat content of the steelhead crisps up beautifully, forming a delicious exterior coating while maintaining a succulent moist center."

**East County Favorites**

- » Aroha New Zealand Cuisine
- » Market Broiler
- » Snapper Jack's Taco Shack

**West County Favorites**

- » Andria's Seafood Restaurant And Market
- » Brophy Bros. Restaurant
- » Sea Fresh Restaurant

**Steak House**

East County Winner

**MASTRO'S STEAKHOUSE**

2087 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
418-1811  
www.mastrosrestaurants.com

Mastro's Steakhouse serves diners juicy steaks and fresh seafood prepared to perfection. Diners rave about the 18-ounce bone-in filet and the lobster mashed potatoes. The off-the-menu Tomahawk, a 33-ounce bone-in steak, is for diners with a large appetite. "Mastro's' dedication and attention to serving our guests sets us apart from the rest," said Tim Whitlock, senior vice president of operations and COO. "We pride ourselves on our world-class service, live entertainment and decadent cuisine, including indulgent, splurge-worthy steaks, seafood, desserts and decadent signature sides."

**Favorites**

- » Holdren's Steaks & Seafood
- » Larsen's Steakhouse
- » Wood Ranch Bbq & Grill

West County Winner

**WOOD RANCH BBQ & GRILL**

Locations in Camarillo, Moorpark, Ventura  
www.woodranch.com

Wood Ranch is a popular choice for dining in Camarillo, Moorpark and Ventura,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Wood Ranch placed in several categories, including catering, barbecue and steak house.

consistently offering award-winning steakhouse and barbecue fare that is reasonably priced. A varied menu includes signature sides and unique offerings such as its famous peanut coleslaw served alongside beef and certified Angus steaks, chops, chicken, pasta and ribs. For those requiring dietary management, gluten-free spices, rubs and sauces complement a gluten-free menu. Items such as pasta, vegan burgers, fresh fish and seafood, salads and more provide tasty dining alternatives.

**Favorites**

- » Aloha Steakhouse
- » Larsen's Grill
- » Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar

**Sushi**

Full County Winner

**SUMO JAPANESE RESTAURANT**

1714 Newbury Road, Newbury Park  
499-9977  
1730 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura  
650-1122  
www.octopusrestaurant.com





FOOD & DRINK



Sumo Japanese Restaurant uses the highest-quality fish to take its sushi to the next level. Sumo also offers one of the best happy hours in town. With drinks, appetizers and more than 20 rolls, happy hour at Sumo is the time to go for the best food at a great price.

Jeannie Hugh, manager at the Newbury Park location, explained that the restaurant’s popularity is “really word of mouth.” And along with loyal customers, the family-oriented restaurant has its loyal employees.

East County Favorites

- » Cho Cho San Restaurant
- » Sushi Oaks
- » Tomodachi Restaurant

West County Favorites

- » Anaba
- » I Love Sushi
- » Kyoto Sushi

Taco

East County Winner

BAD ASS TACOS

2951 Thousand Oaks Blvd, Thousand Oaks  
370-8226

Specializing in authentic, street-style tacos, Bad Ass Tacos are serving up the classics to the east county — and they are loving it. Bad Ass Street Tacos are known for using high-quality popular meats like pastor, short rib and lengua, plus a couple specialties, including cochinita pibil, featuring pork slow-roasted in a banana leaf and marinated in citrus, spices and ground annatto seeds; and lechón, slow-roasted pork marinated in house seasoning.

Top the fresh meats with housemade salsa, wrap it in two warm tortillas and you have one of the best street tacos around.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sumo Japanese Restaurant, with locations in Newbury Park and Ventura, is the full county winner for sushi restaurant.

Favorites

- » 3 Amigos
- » Snapper Jack’s Taco Shack
- » Yolanda’s Mexican Cafe

West County Winner

SNAPPER JACK’S TACO SHACK

Locations in Camarillo, Thousand Oaks  
and Ventura

[www.snapperjackstacoshack.com](http://www.snapperjackstacoshack.com)

There was a time that you would have to drive to Ensenada to get a good fish taco. Not anymore. Snapper Jack’s has provided



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VC-1587787



Ventura County residents with high-quality, tasty tacos. "We make our own batter for the fish," said Laura Plasmyer, owner of Snapper Jack's. "That combined with the fresh ingredients and the shack sauce is what does it."

In addition to fish, chicken, steak, shrimp and potato tacos, Snapper Jack's offers other "Cal-Mex" selections, including burritos, taquitos, quesadillas, nachos, enchiladas and salads.

#### **Favorites**

- » Beach House Tacos
- » Spencer Makenzie's Fish Company
- » Yolanda's Mexican Cafe

### **Thai Food**

East County Winner

#### **EXOTIC THAI CAFE**

2705 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
373-9231  
849 E. Ojai Ave., Ojai  
646-6618  
[www.exoticthairestaurant.com](http://www.exoticthairestaurant.com)

At Exotic Thai Cafe, a menu built from generations of family recipes and cooking skills has delighted Ventura County diners who enjoy food embracing "the heart of Thailand."

First opened in Agoura Hills more than 25 years ago, Exotic Thai now has locations in Ventura County and beyond, serving quality Thai food made with the freshest ingredients.

Among the most popular items are Pad Thai noodles, Tom Ga Kai with coconut milk soup with chicken and mushrooms, Thai Spicy Chicken and Karee Gai, which features yellow curry, chicken and potatoes.

Open daily, Exotic Thai offers dine-in and take-out service.

#### **Favorites**

- » Bangkok Avenue
- » Sawasdee Thai Food
- » White Elephant Thai Cuisine

West County Winner

#### **RICE BY MAMA**

491 E. Main St., Suite A, Ventura  
641-0238  
[ricebymama.com](http://ricebymama.com)

Family-owned and passionate about serving authentic Thai food, Rice by Mama is one of the hottest spots on Ventura's



STAR FILE PHOTO

Guests can sit inside, at the bar or on the patio at Rice by Mama, a Thai restaurant in downtown Ventura.

Main Street, often boasting a line out front before dinner.

The owner's mission is simple: "To cook food that we ourselves crave, served in an environment that is pleasurable and welcoming."

Dinner favorites, enjoyed on the large slab bar or the bustling patio, include drunken noodles, pad Thai, crying tiger (marinated steak) and a weekday lunch special available with beef, chicken, pork, shrimp, tofu or vegetables.

#### **Favorites**

- » Charn Thai Restaurant
- » Jasmine Thai Restaurant
- » Tipps Thai Cuisine

### **Wine Bar/Winery**

East County Winner

#### **STONEHAUS**

32039 Agoura Road, Westlake Village  
818-483-1152

[www.the-stonehaus.com](http://www.the-stonehaus.com)

Wine aficionados — and those still training their palates — love Stonehaus.

With more than 100 varietals of wine, from a sparkling Moscato to a bold Cabernet Sauvignon or a crisp Chardonnay, Stonehaus offers a wine experience for everyone.

Less than five years after opening at the Westlake Village Inn property, Stonehaus has become a popular gathering spot. The enoteca also has its own wine club, offering two levels that both provide a unique selection of wines from family-owned vineyards all over the world.

#### **Favorites**

- » Cafe Firenze
- » Sunland Vintage
- » Wades Wines

West County Winner

#### **THE CAVE AT VENTURA WINE CO.**

4435 McGrath St., Suite 301, Ventura  
642-9449  
[venturawineco.com](http://venturawineco.com)

If you're looking for a romantic setting and some of the finest wine in town, look no further than The Cave at Ventura Wine Co. It's considered Ventura's premier spot for a unique food- and wine-tasting experience.

The family-owned business has served Ventura County for more than 15 years, offering 40 wines by the ounce or glass. The first Tuesday of every month, regulars are rewarded, as The Cave changes its menu to provide a refreshed variety of flavors and pairing options. Beer and sake are also available, as well as made-to-order gift baskets and an exclusive monthly wine club.

#### **Favorites**

- » Cork Ventura
- » Grapes & Hops
- » Lure Fish House





# SERVICES



## Acupuncture

East County Winner

### ACUPUNCTURE & HERB CLINIC

1687 Erringer St, Suite 10, Simi Valley  
577-9938

Acupuncture, said Bing Lin, is no longer the frightening procedure it was once perceived to be — at least, not for his patients. “We believe in treating people well, by offering professional service and care in a clean and welcoming environment,” said Lin, whose Acupuncture and Herb Clinic has offered therapeutic relief for nearly 20 years. “My patients understand what acupuncture is, what it can do, and they respond well to their treatment here.” Patients praise Lin, an acupuncturist for nearly 30 years, for providing relief from pain and discomfort caused by anything from backaches and migraines to lactose intolerance.

#### Favorites

- » Bruce Pendleberry
- » Chang S. Park
- » David Lee Acupuncture

West County Winner

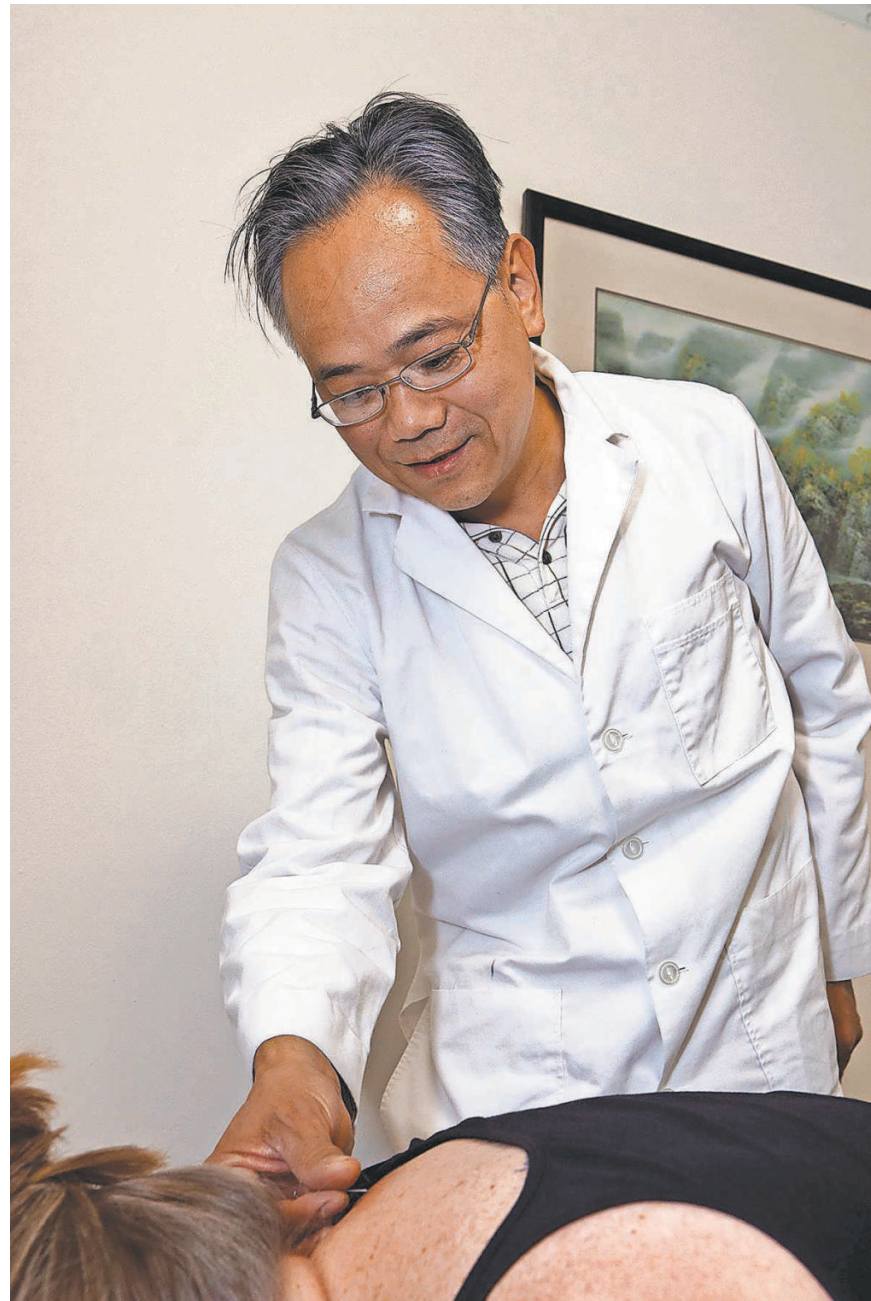
### DANNY LAI, DC, LAC

237 W. Seventh St., Oxnard  
240-2640  
www.drdannylai.com

People who get acupuncture swear by the practice, which stimulates movement of energy and allows healing to take place within the body. It's said to prevent illness by improving the overall functioning of one's immune system and organs. And those who swear by it also swear by Danny Lai, who has offered “honesty, integrity and fast results” through acupuncture and chiropractic treatments since 1997. “Most of my clients are open to acupuncture,” he said. “And those who aren't, become more comfortable once we've talked, they tell me what they need, and they understand that they don't have to be afraid of the needles we use. It's not a traumatic experience at all.” Featuring calming music and equipped with a host of Chinese herbal medicines, Lai's office offers NAET-Allergy natural solutions.

#### Favorites

- » Coastal Acupuncture Wellness Center
- » Kalani Total Health Center
- » TCR Acupuncture And Integrative Medicine



**Bing Lin, owner of the Acupuncture & Herb Clinic in Simi Valley, works with a patient suffering from back pain.**

PHOTOS BY DENNIS NISHI/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

## Auto Repair Shop

East County Winner

### RICK'S JAPANESE CAR CARE

37 Taylor Court, Thousand Oaks  
373-9895  
ricksjapanese.us

For 13 years, Rick's Japanese Car Care has specialized in providing mechanical service and repairs for all Japanese cars — and, in the process, providing peace of mind for their owners. “We treat our customers like they are family,” said owner Rick Campbell. “We know that for many people, coming to get

their car serviced is like going to the dentist, so we try to make every visit as painless as possible.” With hybrids becoming increasingly popular among car owners, Rick's has a completely certified staff of master technicians able to provide top-grade service for any and all hybrid service requirements.

#### Favorites

- » A & D Automotive
- » America's Tire
- » JBS Auto Services

West County Winner

### SOCAL AUTO BODY

511 Dawson Drive, Camarillo  
482-8300  
www.socalautobodycamarillo.com

As an auto body-and-paint establishment, SoCal Auto Body services all kinds of cars, trucks and SUVs involved in collisions. That also means servicing their owners, who admittedly arrive in less than the best frame of mind.

“So it's important to talk to them like you'd talk to your friends,” said owner Gary Reichenbach. “People want to be heard, so you need to have patience. Take the time to explain the process so that they understand what needs to happen to get their car looking and operating in the right way. Do what you need to do to make them happy.”

#### Favorites

- » Neighborhood Care Care
- » Ventura Radiator & Auto Repair
- » Williams Automotive

## Bank/Credit Union

East County Winner

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805-302-7300



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805-701-7694



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creating long-term relationships with our members built on trust for 79 years," John Roemer, senior vice president of marketing, said last year.

**Favorites**

- » Chase
- » Premier America Credit Union
- » Ventura County Credit Union

West County Winner

**VENTURA COUNTY CREDIT UNION**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
477-4000  
[www.vccuonline.net](http://www.vccuonline.net)

With a variety of loan products, with flexible terms, affordable rates and other options, the staff at Ventura County Credit Union works hard to find the best fit for every customer. They offer a variety of services to its members, from auto loans, personal loans, home loans and credit cards to lifestyle loans, and checking and savings accounts.

So, whether you want to save money for your wedding or borrow to pay for it, Ventura County Credit Union can help. And as a member, you will experience top-notch customer service, receive lower loan rates, get higher interest on deposits, lower fees, and you can pay bills online.

**Favorites**

- » Bank Of America
- » CBC Federal Credit Union
- » Chase
- » Premier America Federal Credit Union

**Barber Shop**

East County Winner

**A2Z CUTS PLUS**

2227 Michael Drive, Newbury Park  
375-9170  
[www.a2zcutsplus.com](http://www.a2zcutsplus.com)

They bill themselves as "family hair care extraordinaire" and nobody would argue with that. Newbury Park's A2Z Cuts Plus is a family barbershop that has served local families for the last nine years. Linda and Maurice Groux opened the business with the hopes of creating a family-oriented business, and they've done just that. "Whole families will come in and get haircuts," Maurice said. "We are proud to be a full-service salon that is now a part of the community."

Linda is a colorist that also specializes in Tea Tree scalp massages. A popular end-of-the-week treatment, The massage helps people to de-stress and it's said to



DENNIS NISHI/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

It's a busy day at the 1927 Barbershop & Shave Parlor, west county winner for barbershop.

stimulate hair growth.

**Favorites**

- » Joshua's Barber Shop
- » Mountain Gate Barber Shop
- » Supercuts

West County Winner

**1927 BARBERSHOP & SHAVE PARLOR**

1927 E. Main Street, Ventura  
667-9177  
5800 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 131, Camarillo  
383-7001  
[www.1927barbershop.com](http://www.1927barbershop.com)

Its name connects to its address, but it also suggests a time when life was, well, friendlier. That's what owner Josh Gates hopes to convey. "Whether it's for a slick haircut, a pompadour or just to drink coffee and hang out," said Gates, "we want to be a place where people can drop in, say hi and get to know each other." 1927 Barbershop, which recently opened a second location in Camarillo, offers classic men's stylings along with hot towel and straight razor shaves. "Our philosophy is, 'We need you, and we appreciate you coming into our shop,'" Gates added.

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[www.djscaliforniacatering.com](http://www.djscaliforniacatering.com)



## SERVICES

VENTURA COUNTY  
STAR**Favorites**

- » Brady's Barber Shop
- » Hank's Barber Shop
- » Smooth's Barbershop

**Car Wash**

East County Winner

**AGOURA HILLS HAND CAR WASH**

30245 Canwood St., Agoura Hills  
818-889-3334  
www.agourahillshandcarwash.com

Imagine a place where you can nosh on fresh food from a café while having your car washed and detailed. Well, it exists. Agoura Hills Hand Car Wash is "much more than just a car wash," said David Delrahim, owner for the last 20 years. "People come for our detailed cleaning services and elevated custom cleaning, but also for our other perks."

Peet's Coffee and Bellini Bistro offer those perks while you wait, whether it's a great cup of coffee or specialty drink, or fresh salad or handmade sandwich.

With reasonably priced car wash packages from \$18.99 to \$49.99 and an a la carte menu, you can't go wrong at Agoura Hills Hand Car Wash.

**Favorites**

- » California Speedwash
- » Simi Valley Car Wash
- » Thousand Oaks Car Wash

West County Winner

**THE AUTO SCRUBBER**

2076 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura  
643-6281

Since 1967, The Auto Scrubber has been providing top-of-the-line service to car owners from throughout Ventura County and beyond, with careful attention to detail.

"We have a lot of loyal customers," said



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Adam Helm's Food was the top vote getter for Catering Company in west county.**

manager A.J. David, "and we appreciate the fact that they keep coming back to us over the years."

The Auto Scrubber does hand washing and waxing to avoid mechanized brushes that can damage a vehicle's paint. The friendly staff also offers hand waxing and polishing as well as detailing on a variety of makes and models of automobiles, trucks, SUVs and even motor homes.

**Favorites**

- » Costco

- » Five Points Car Wash
- » Johnson Drive Hand Wash

**Catering Company**

East County Winner

**BILLY DZ BACKYARD BBQ**

765 N. Wendy Drive, Newbury Park  
498-7772, biilydzbbq.com

In addition to its family-friendly restaurant, Billy Dz Backyard BBQ is

welcomed in other people's backyards, with custom catering options for business and social gatherings.

"When people come to the restaurant, we want them to feel like they're right at home," said Bill Dobner, co-owner with wife Carey. "And we want them to enjoy our selections at their own home, too." Billy Dz specializes in meats that are smoked on-site, and offers six barbecue sauces reflecting regional tastes around the U.S. An assortment of meat plates, sandwiches and sides are available, as is delivery, set-up and full-service options.

**Favorites**

- » A Seasonable Table
- » Brent's Deli
- » Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill

West County Winner

**ADAM HELM'S FOOD**

908-892-7463, adamhelmsfood.com

When you buy from Adam Helm, "you buy the whole experience," said the Ventura-based chef who has prepared meals for the likes of Barbra Streisand, Lady Gaga, the Dalai Lama and more. Helm's food preparation services range from traditional (and non-traditional) cocktail parties to interactive, in-home cooking classes (that become parties) for families and/or small groups. He can prepare virtually any kind of meal or menu, always with fresh ingredients. "I customize each event, based on budget, need and purpose," he said. "I love the whole process of feeding people in a way that is healthy and enjoyable for everyone."

**Favorites**

- » DJ's California Catering
- » Presto Pasta
- » Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill

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VC-1581481





DENNIS NISHI/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Rhiannon Mikusky inspects one of several wall mounted traction units at Kalani Total Health Center.

## Chiropractor

East County Winner

### ADVANCED HEALTH & WELLNESS

1225 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
371-6144  
www.drcelela.com

Chiropractic doctors Greg Celaya and Richard Palmer receive a number of patients who come to Advanced Health & Wellness worried and upset that their injuries will preclude them from being active.

"So in addition to our expertise in treating injuries," said Celaya, "we give them care and compassion. We address each patient's whole health picture, so they can recover from their ailments and continue to be physically active."

This "functional medicine" approach is actually a "patient-centered" approach, said Celaya. "We help patients understand their genetics, lifestyle, environment — all of which affects their health. It takes time, but the results are very beneficial."

### Favorites

- » Advanced Chiropractic Rehabilitation
- » Ed Green
- » Goodman Family Chiropractors

West County Winner

### KALANI TOTAL HEALTH CENTER

2901 N. Ventura Road, Suite 220, Oxnard  
604-0881  
www.drkalani.com

At Kalani Total Health Center, chiropractor Kalani Jose counts movie stars, religious leaders and professional athletes among his clients. All his clients, from every walk of life and across the age spectrum, appreciate the loving, relaxed atmosphere at the clinic, where Jose and his staff provide chiropractic service to treat spine and posture problems. The staff, which includes Medical Director Preeti Chopra and Allan Laird, also a chiropractor, takes pride in helping people get healthy, and educating them on how to stay healthy.

### Favorites

- » Active Health Center - Mousseli Chiropractic
- » Bates Family Chiropractic
- » Jensen Chiropractic Sports Center

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STAR FILE PHOTO

First-graders participate in a cupcake walk fundraising event at Ascension Lutheran School in Thousand Oaks.

**Day Care**

East County Winner

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN SCHOOL**

1600 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks  
381-9081  
alschool.org

Even though it doubled its capacity a year and a half ago, the Early Childhood Center at Ascension Lutheran School still has a waiting list, with families throughout the Conejo Valley and beyond attracted by the facility's recreational and educational programs for children ranging from infants to 5 years old.

"We're a certified Nature Explore School," said Pam Musburger, director, "which means we offer a lot of outdoor learning opportunities for our kids — science, art, math and more."

Ascension's 107 Early Childhood students come from "all faiths, all backgrounds," Musburger added. "We welcome everyone, and that really enriches our environment."

**Favorites**

- » Christian Church Of Thousand Oaks
- » Hummingbird Preschool
- » Kids 'N Things
- » Merritt Family Childcare

West County Winner

**A PLACE TO GROW**

Montgomery and Aliso streets, Ojai  
640-4300, ext. 1091  
www.ojaiusd.org

What's special about A Place to Grow? "Every child is unique," said Sherrie Damas, director of A Place to Grow, part of the Ojai Unified School District. "And all children learn in their own way. We seek to give them the best opportunities to do so."

And that means that all children, ages 3-5, including special needs youth, are involved in the play-based, outdoor classroom activities, with older children often helping the younger kids learn what to do. "That builds the older kids' self-esteem, without them realizing it," added Damas.

A Place to Grow offers morning preschool and before- and after-school care, concurrent with the district's calendar.

**Favorites**

- » Bible Fellowship Preschool
- » Children's World Nursery School
- » Pacific Camp Family Resource



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Justin Sycamore is the favorite dentist in the east county.

**Dentist**

East County Winner

**JUSTIN SYCAMORE**

777 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
777-0050  
sycamore.dental

Dr. Justin Sycamore is primarily known as a cosmetic dentist, but offers a variety of dental procedures, from root canals and emergency services to veneers and implants. He uses state-of-the-art technology and ensures everyone feels welcome and well taken care of.

"I like talking to kids," he said, "and once they relate to you, they're very cooperative. And they enjoy our kids' room that offers artistic activities while they wait."

Sycamore, who has deep roots in Ventura County, believes in being direct and honest with his patients. "We are a family office that treats its patients like they were our own family," he said.

**Favorites**

- » 805 Dentist - Car Radfar
- » Ean Kleiger
- » Oak Park Dentistry For Children
- » Zachary Potts

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**DENTIST!** *Thank You*



Dr. Ruth Shifman and her staff would like to thank their patients and families for their continued support.

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**SERVICES**

VENTURA COUNTY  
**STAR**

West County Winner

**CAMARILLO SMILES**

92 Palm Drive, Camarillo  
388-5700  
www.camarillosmiles.com

After 27 years, Camarillo Smiles strives to maintain a “small-town feel” while providing quality dental service to patients of all ages, said Lisa Gillespie, practice manager.

“Patients can sometimes get lost in the system of a large dental practice,” said Gillespie. “So Dr. Michael Czubiak (founder) and his team of dentists, hygienists and assistants build strong, personable relationships with their patients, which is what a family practice is all about.”

The Camarillo Smiles staff also believes in educating themselves to be “on the cutting edge” of dental medicine, and in focusing on the whole health picture of each patient.

**Favorites**

- » Ruth Shifman
- » Sunny Smiles
- » Ventura Center For Dental Health

**Dry Cleaner**

East County Winner

**CREEKSIDE CLEANERS**

525 New Los Angeles Ave., Suite C,  
Moorpark  
523-1788  
www.moorparkalterations.com

“The customer comes first, always,” said Suanne Kawazoe, co-partner of Creekside Cleaners. “We want our customers to know we appreciate their business, and so we treat them as we would want them to treat us.”

At Creekside, that means attention to detail and “delivering what you promise,” added Kawazoe, whether it be dry cleaning, repairs and alterations, or pickup and delivery service.

With proms, weddings and graduations filling the spring calendar, “we do tons of alterations. And we are very grateful, because we have loyal customers who spread the word about our work, which helps make us successful.”

**Favorites**

- » A&T Cleaners
- » Beckman Cleaners
- » North Ranch Cleaners



STAR FILE PHOTO

**Viridiana Hernandez, a clerk at Persnickity Dry Cleaners in Ventura, starts putting clothes in order. The company also fixes shoes.**

» Young's Cleaners

West County Winner

**PERSNICKITY CLEANERS**

1171 S. Victoria Ave., Suite D, Ventura  
644-1171  
persnickity.com

When a business gives the community as much respect as it does its paying customers, then you know it can be trusted to do right by everyone. Persnickity Cleaners’ co-owners, David and Francine Redmond, take pride not just in having built their venture into a customer-service-oriented — and eco-friendly — dry cleaning business, but in being actively involved in the community.

“We offer a ‘Coats for Kids’ and Spring Prom Drive by cleaning and supplying donated items to youth who can’t afford them,” says David Redmond. Persnickity also donates cleaned items to Catholic Charities and St. Vincent de Paul Society, seeking “to give back to the community as much as possible,” he said.

**Favorites**

- » Camarillo Cleaners
- » Classic Cleaners
- » Four Seasons Cleaners
- » Royal Cleaners

**Family Doctor/Surgeon**

East County Winner

**GLENN D. COHEN**

696 Hampshire Road, Suite 180, Westlake Village  
370-6877  
www.handsurgeon.org

When a doctor has hundreds of glowing reviews thanking him for spectacular care, even from fellow doctors, then you know you’ve got a winner. A simple but patient-appreciated philosophy guides Dr. Glenn Cohen in his orthopedic practice that focuses on hand, wrist and elbow issues.

“We treat everyone as if they were members of our family,” said Cohen. “Astute patients ask, ‘What would you do if this was your spouse, your child?’ That sets the tone, and we work hard to make every experience something positive, with a caring staff and pleasant environment.” Cohen also believes in a “conservative approach” to treatment which means avoiding surgery wherever possible.

**Favorites**

- » Arroyo Oaks Medical Group
- » Identity Medical Group
- » Kaiser Permanente



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Michael Mansfield and his mother, Debra Mansfield, are the owners of The Lynd Group LLC in Ventura.

West County Winner

#### PRIMARY MEDICAL GROUP

Several locations in Ventura County  
642-1430  
www.primarymedical.net

Specializing in family and internal medicine, pediatrics and endocrinology, with family-friendly offices in Ventura County, Primary Medical Group has provided top-quality medical care since 1994.

Its staff of about 100 includes more than a dozen physicians, nurse practitioners, a physician's assistant and a dietician. Providers pay special attention to preventive care and regular monitoring, especially for chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease.

All offices accept new patients and most insurance plans, including HMOs with SeaView IPA, PPOs, Medicare and Covered California plans with Blue Shield and Anthem Blue Cross.

#### Favorites

- » Identity Medical Group
- » Kaiser Permanente
- » Ventura Orthopedics

#### Financial Planning

East County Winner

#### ADAM AND REMMENG INVESTMENT GROUP OF WELLS FARGO ADVISORS

2829 Townsgate Road, Suite 200, Westlake Village

818-370-0813

www.adamremmengainvestmentgroup.wfadv.com

With longer life expectancies, especially among Baby Boomers, solid financial planning is a must, says Al Adam, managing director of Adam and Remmenga.

"Most of our clients are moving from the accumulation to the distribution phases of their financial lives," said Adam. "And their main concern is, 'Do I have enough money to make it through the rest of my life?' Our purpose is to give them peace of mind by ensuring they have the money there when they need it."

Adam and partner Joel Remmenga work closely with clients to "envision their financial future, and help make that happen."

#### Favorites

- » Edward Jones
- » Logix Federal Credit Union
- » Ventura County Credit Union

West County Winner

#### THE LYND GROUP

801 S. Victoria Ave., Suite 105, Ventura  
500-7035  
thelyndgroup.com

For Michael Mansfield, making money is not the focus of The Lynd Group, which he operates with his mother Debra.

"Our focus is on helping people," said Mansfield. "Many financial planners focus on pushing products and talking about

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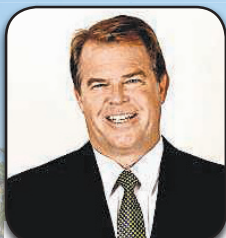




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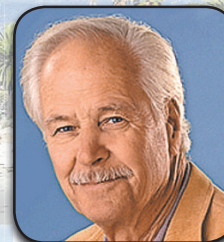
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## SERVICES



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**A boot camp class does a jump rope circuit at Hard Charger Training Center in Thousand Oaks, east county winner for fitness center.**

investment opportunities right off the bat. We emphasize the big picture; we want to learn from you what your goals are, help you understand what your purpose is, and then talk about where to put your money and why."

That process, admittedly, takes time, said Mansfield, "but that's how we best serve our clients. And that approach has brought us many referrals."

## Favorites

- » Acosta Wealth Management
- » Carey & Hanna Tax & Wealth Planners
- » Ventura County Credit Union

## Fitness Center/services

### East County Winner

## HARD CHARGER TRAINING CENTER

378 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks

www.hardchargertrainingcenter.com  
818-538-6447

Hard Charger Training Center, owned by Miguel and Nina Juarez, opened in 2013 in one giant room that Miguel uses for boot camp and one-on-one training.

Marine Miguel, as he is known as, is “the real deal,” his wife Nina said. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2001, served in Iraq, and became a personal trainer when he returned home. He applies Marine values of honor, courage and commitment to his clients. “The results of clients are his results,” Nina said.

## Favorites

- » 24 Hour Fitness
- » Gold's Gym
- » The Village With Gus Gates

## West County Winner

## 24 HOUR FITNESS

Locations throughout Ventura County  
www.24hourfitness.com

Exercise enthusiasts at all fitness levels consider 24 Hour Fitness their favorite go-to place to get in shape. The gyms offer offers studio classes, including martial arts, barre, yoga, and cycle and dance classes, all led by professionals in the fitness industry. Trainers are also available for private sessions, as are health and fitness consultations.

Many of the Ventura County clubs offer first-class amenities like lap pools, saunas, steam rooms and towel service, as well as a kids club where children up to 12 years old can hang during their parents' sweat session.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

John of Italy won in the category of services-hair salon in east county.

## Favorites

- » Fit N' Fine Fitness
- » Fitness 19
- » L.A. Fitness

## Hair Salon

East County Winner

## JOHN OF ITALY

2772 Townsgate Road, Westlake Village  
497-0333  
johnnofitaly.com

Clients at John of Italy have high expectations and they're never disappointed. For three decades, the native Italian husband-wife duo of John and Tina Spina have made their full-service salon and spa a county icon with longtime clients and first-time customers alike. They offer a large selection of professional haircare, skincare and makeup, plus many gift ideas like jewelry and candles, and gift certificates.

So, whether you're considering a new look, a refresh or want a beautiful look for prom or your wedding, the team at John of Italy can make it happen.

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**Favorites**

- » Canyon Salon
- » Cleo Hair Salon
- » Jamie's Hair Design
- » To Salon Suites

West County Winner

**SJ STUDIO SALON & SPA**

2200 Outlet Center Drive, Suite 460,  
Oxnard, 485-7800  
www.sjstudiosalon.com

SJ Studio Salon and Spa's "stylists have taken their talents to transform clients into the newest and most fashionable trends," according to co-owner Sonia Lozano. "We have earned a reputation for being a trusted salon in Ventura County and beyond. SJ Studio stylists have transformed the original balyage/ombre by bumping it with Babylights, giving your existing style a fresh, vibrant new look." Lozano added that believes that hair is a woman's "main event." "We'll turn the 'blah' cuts into insanely Instagrammable styles," she said.

**Favorites**

- » Cabelos Salon
- » Luxe Salon & Day Spa
- » Silver Strand Salon



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Los Robles Hospital is in Thousand Oaks.

**Hospital**

East County Winner

**LOS ROBLES HOSPITAL**

215 W. Janss Road, Thousand Oaks  
497-2727  
www.losrobleshospital.com

When you visit Los Robles Hospital and Medical Center's website, you can learn the average wait time in the emergency room. On a recent day, it was just six minutes. Not bad, right?

A Level II trauma center with 404 beds for acute care, it's rated "Emergency Department Approved for Pediatrics," and has a team of more than 1,600 talented healthcare professionals, including 600 board-certified physicians representing more than 50 specialties. The community expects and receives a compassionate, patient-centered approach to healthcare delivery at Los Robles.

**Favorites**

- » Kaiser Permanente

- » Los Robles Surgicenter
- » Simi Valley Hospital

West County Winner

**COMMUNITY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

147 N. Brent St., Ventura  
652-5011, cmhshealth.org

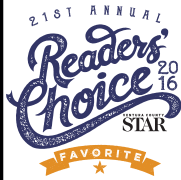
With a century-long history, Community Memorial Hospital is today a state-of-the-art regional hospital and health center. And since it is a community-owned, not-for-profit organization, its focus can be on its patients.

"We depend on — and answer to — the communities we serve," said Michael Ellingson, vice president of marketing and development, adding that the "nurses, staff, volunteers and physicians strive to provide the best care possible."

The award-winning hospital has developed a team of internists and family practice physicians that work together with specialists to provide an array of medical services.

**Favorites**

- » St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital
- » St John's Regional Medical Center
- » Ventura County Medical Center



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## SERVICES

VENTURA COUNTY  
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### Insurance

East County Winner

#### AAA INSURANCE

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It used to be that the Automobile Club of Southern California offered only affordable, quality car insurance to its members through the Interinsurance Exchange of the Automobile Club. Today, it offers homeowner, life and small-business policies as well, in addition to a variety of specialty insurance policies. AAA will insure collector cars and watercraft. And if you want to drive your car into Mexico, AAA will provide insurance for that, too. In 2012, the International Exchange celebrated its 100th year serving Southern California.

#### Favorites

- » Farmers Insurance Group
- » Jeana McFarland - Farmers Insurance
- » State Farm Insurance

West County Winner

#### RAY GONZALES - STATE FARM

2711 S. Rose Ave., Suite D101, Oxnard  
240-3100  
www.sfteam1.com

An insurance agent can be needed at the most unlikely, even inopportune times. No matter, said Ray Gonzalez.

"My team and I are accessible day or night, whether a client has a question or has had an accident," said the State Farm agent. "We don't disappear on them." Gonzalez and his team take care to educate their clients on both the language and the scope of their policies (whether for home, vehicle or life), and to do it



Medical Director Paul Dougherty uses a slit lamp to look for any signs of disease.

DENNIS NISHI/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

quickly, and in layman's terms.

"By helping them understand what they have," Gonzalez said, "we help them feel more secure about the future."

#### Favorites

- » AAA Insurance
- » Farmers Insurance Group
- » State Farm Insurance

### LASIK Surgeon

Full County Winner

#### DOUGHERTY LASER VISION

1821 E. Daily Drive, Camarillo  
4353 Park Terrace Drive, Suite 150,  
Westlake Village  
987-5300

www.doughertylaservision.com

Dougherty Laser Vision has been bringing the benefits of laser eye surgery to patients in Camarillo and Westlake Village for more than a decade.

Dr. Paul Dougherty has performed over 23,000 laser vision procedures. Today, he uses a high-frequency laser that operates

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818.424.5990



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Thousand Oaks  
818.917.1891



**Debbie Blumenthal**  
North Ranch  
818.597.4518



**Brenda Hagen**  
North Ranch  
818.581.7212



**John & Shawn Baker**  
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805.233.1725



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Thousand Oaks  
805.405.7573



**Craig Peterson**  
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805.358.5012



**Sherri Sweeney**  
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805.402.6135



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805.320.0274



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Thousand Oaks/Oxnard  
805.377.7681



**Carrie Stanton**  
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Camarillo  
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805.901.9662



**Tony Conti**  
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805.218.4042



**Mary Ann Scott**  
Thousand Oaks  
818.489.9588



**Lisa DiNonno**  
Thousand Oaks  
805.266.4455



**Roe Calautti**  
Thousand Oaks  
818.427.5207



**Carrie Reinhart**  
Camarillo  
805.469.4663



**Kathy Fontana &  
Marlene Arimura-Mortimer**  
Thousand Oaks  
805.479.0343



**Keli Griffin**  
Thousand Oaks  
805.794.1512



**Rose Milano**  
Thousand Oaks  
805.601.8694



**Michelle Nash**  
Thousand Oaks  
805.908.1674



**Linda Stanton**  
Thousand Oaks  
805.368.6574

[WWW.BHHSCALHOMES.COM](http://WWW.BHHSCALHOMES.COM)

**Thousand Oaks Office**  
805.496.0555  
2860 Thousand Oaks Blvd.  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

**North Ranch Office**  
818.879.2900  
1155 Lindero Canyon Rd.  
Westlake Village, CA 91362

**Camarillo Office**  
805.987.3734  
350 N. Lantana, G-1  
Camarillo, CA 93010

**Oxnard Office**  
805.984.8660  
1601 S. Victoria Ave., Suite 250  
Oxnard, CA 930305

**Moorpark Annex**  
805.267.2700  
19 W. Los Angeles Ave.  
Moorpark, CA 93021



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with a beam that is 100 times less intense than that of the first-generation lasers. “We focus on surgery and excellence — and we always put patients and our affiliate optometric network above profit,” he said.

**East County Favorites**

- » Franz Michel
- » John Davidson
- » Lynn Eye Medical Group

**West County Favorites**

- » Franz Michel
- » John Davidson
- » Shapiro Laser Eye Center

**Law Office**

East County Winner

**RICHARD ROSS ASSOCIATES**

2801 Townsgate Road, Suite 217, Westlake Village  
1000 Town Center Drive, Suite 300, Oxnard  
410-3407

[www.richardrossassociates.com](http://www.richardrossassociates.com)

For more than 30 years, Richard Ross has practiced law, handling each of his client’s cases himself with the support of a skilled legal staff.

“By choosing Richard Ross Associates, you will receive personalized counsel and representation of one of the most skilled and experienced family law attorneys in the county,” said Denise Ross, who oversees the business administration and marketing of the firm. “Few family law attorneys have the same amount of experience and level of skill.”

**Favorites**

- » Howard Blau Law
- » Law Office of Christina Chaffer
- » Terri Hilliard PC

West County Winner

**Grennier Law**

5700 Ralston St., Ventura  
643-3900  
336 South A St., Oxnard  
483-4027  
[grennierlaw.com](http://grennierlaw.com)

Helping personal injury and bankruptcy clients get the results they need — stress-free — is the goal of Grennier Law PC.

“For our personal injury clients, our goal is to be sure you take care of yourself first and let us handle claims,” said Christine Grennier, operations manager. “And our bankruptcy clients are so appreciative that

we make this process very painless and smooth, giving them a fresh start on their new chapter in life.

“We give them back their peace of mind.”

**Favorites**

- » Andrew Mansfield
- » Ferguson Case Orr Paterson
- » Howard Blau Law
- » Schneiders & Associates LLP

**Massage**

East County Winner

**THE SPA AT FOUR SEASONS HOTEL WESTLAKE VILLAGE**

2 Dole Drive, Westlake Village  
818-575-3000

[www.fourseasons.com/westlakevillage](http://www.fourseasons.com/westlakevillage)

From the tranquility massage, custom-blended aromatherapy and advanced therapeutic to Thai, maternity, couples and sports, the Four Seasons Hotel’s spa offers a sea of tranquility and relaxation to those visiting its Westlake Village location.

At 40,000 square feet, this location is home of the largest Four Seasons spa in the world with 28 spa treatment rooms, lush gardens and numerous available services ranging from dermatology to alternative medicine. Take a dip in the adult-only Serenity pool or relax with friends while visiting the Yamaguchi salon for any hair, nail or make-up needs. Offering 30 face and body treatments, 12 types of massages and other world-class amenities, this luxurious retreat is designed to refresh the body, mind and soul.

**Favorites**

- » Body By Design Wellness and Massage Clinic
- » Elements Therapeutic Massage
- » Massage Envy

West County Winner

**MASSAGE PLACE**

Locations throughout Ventura and Oxnard  
[www.themassageplace-ca.com](http://www.themassageplace-ca.com)

When you’re looking to unwind after a long week at work or a hard workout, Massage Place is the place to go for pampering at an affordable price. With an hourlong massage priced at \$47 and 90 minutes for just \$20 more, why not indulge?

“It’s a professional massage at very affordable prices. That’s probably what makes us most special,” said operator



Bonnie Vise. "You can get any type of professional massage."

The skilled therapists specialize in Swedish, deep tissue, shiatsu, prenatal massage and hot stone, and can help with sports injuries, arthritis relief, carpal tunnel syndrome, chronic pain and myofascial release, among other specialties.

"It's a clean and safe environment. We have a friendly staff. We just have a following that has been coming for years," she said.

**Favorites**

- » Kalani Total Health Center
- » Massage Envoy
- » Ojai Valley Inn & Spa

**Medical Spa**

East County Winner

**BODY BY DESIGN WELLNESS AND MASSAGE CLINIC**

530 New Los Angeles Ave., Moorpark  
3625 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Westlake Village  
Body-by-design.com

Body By Design provides people with the tools they need to be free of pain, symptoms and medication — anytime and anywhere.

Licensed massage professionals evaluate a client's needs and come up with a customized massage that could be a mix of Swedish and deep tissue, or possibly myofascial release and hot stones.

Other services include aromatherapy, exfoliating treatments, foot wraps and cellulite reduction therapy.

Health, life and business coaching and wellness plans are also offered.

**Favorites**

- » Alamo Hills Advanced Aesthetics & Laser Center
- » Aviante Health And Wellness Center
- » Euodia Salon & Spa

West County Winner

**BEAUTY LOUNGE MED SPA**

2475 Ventura Blvd., Camarillo  
991-0202  
beautyloungemedspa.com

Beauty Lounge Med Spa offers the latest non-surgical techniques to perfect the skin, tighten the body and take beauty to new levels.

"Our founders, Dr. K.M. and Veronica Tamaru, believe in combining the best non-surgical solutions available with the newest and latest technical advances in

beauty," said Marketing Director Jody Kolasinski.

Among the newer and most popular treatments are the Juvederm/Voluma injectable gels for shaping and contouring the mid and lower facial regions; Kybella injections, for eliminating double-chins and improving jawlines; and Vitafusion nutrient and mineral therapy, administered intravenously, to promote energy and good health.

**Favorites**

- » Beyond Aesthetics
- » Coastal Skin Care Inc
- » Pacifica Institute of Cosmetic & Reconstructive Surgery
- » Plush Med-spa

**Mortgage Company**

East County Winner

**LOGIX FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
www.logixbanking.com

First-time homebuyer? Looking to move up? Downsizing? Logix Federal Credit Union offers all types of mortgages to fit a homebuyer's needs, from fixed-rate and adjustable mortgages to jumbo loans.

The staff at Logix will review the benefits of different types and help you figure out what you need to do to get that new roof over your head.

Not sure you have enough for a down payment? They'll help you figure that out.

Don't know if you want a 10-year, 15-year or 30-year loan? They'll help with that, too.

**Favorites**

- » Caliber Home Loans
- » California Premiere Lending
- » Ventura County Credit Union

West County Winner

**LANDMARK FINANCIAL**

1280 S. Victoria Ave., No. 180, Ventura  
650-4999  
www.landmarklender.com

Since 1995, the brother-and-sister team of Dan O'Brien and Pat Borton has owned Landmark Financial, helping commercial and residential clients with their mortgages.

"We've been very successful and we've been very blessed," said Pat Borton. "And it's because we truly believe in doing what's best for each borrower."

While the most popular loan is still the conventional 30-year-fixed rate, their



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Jamie Jenkins  
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dermal infusion  
at the Beauty  
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clients can also opt for FHA and VA loans, new purchases or refinances, or reverse mortgages for those 62 and older.

**Favorites**

- » California Premiere Lending
- » Guild Mortgage Company
- » Mortgage Couch
- » Ventura County Credit Union

**Moving Company**

East County Winner

**ATTENTION 2 DETAIL MOVING COMPANY**

45 W. Easy St., Simi Valley  
844-668-3223  
www.attentiontodetailmoving.com

Attention 2 Detail provides local moving services based on military-style training. Everything centers around PLAN: Prepare for all aspects of the move. Listen to the needs of customers. Approach every situation with a positive attitude. Notice any opportunity to improve the experience.

The numbers speak for themselves. Since a group of friends formed the company in 2001, Attention 2 Detail has carried out



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Top Nails is the Readers' Choice winner for nail salon in east county.**

more than 4,200 residential moves, 300 commercial moves and 540 long-distance moves. That's a total of more than 32,500 boxes packed.

**Favorites**

- » Best Move - The Better Movers
- » Conejo Valley Moving & Storage

» Dynamic Delivery

West County Winner

**SKINNY WIMP MOVING CO.**

1151 Avenida Acaso, Camarillo  
855-313-5518  
www.skinnywimpmoving.com

Whether you're moving to a new home in Ventura County, or your company is relocating from one city to another, Skinny Wimp Moving Co. is there for you.

Lance Clauson started the company four years ago, determined to create a business model that produced the best movers with the best attitude and work ethic.

"We've been told we do in four hours what other moving companies take seven hours to do," Clauson said.

The company provides boxes and other materials needed for a successful move.

**Favorites**

- » Hilford Moving & Storage
- » Meathead Movers
- » Pods

**Nail Salon**

East County Winner

**TOP NAILS**

2338 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
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DENNIS NISHI/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

**Kristopher Skromme, owner of Two Trees Optometry, uses a mobile phone camera to take pictures of the eye during an exam.**

a priority for Top Nails' owner Steve Nguyen and his 20-plus manicurists. That's why he pays for his staff to attend nail industry classes and conferences. But his top priority is making sure each client gets the best possible service. "I always make sure customers feel comfortable and that they are happy with their service," said Nguyen. "I remember customers' names and update our salon with new chairs and beautiful flowers."

#### Favorites

- » Elegant Nails
- » Jazzy Nails & Spa
- » Nails By Rose

West County Winner

#### **SJ STUDIO SALON AND SPA**

2200 Outlet Center Drive, Suite 460,  
Oxnard  
485-7800  
www.sjstudiosalon.com

Sonia and Jeanette Lozano, "two sisters with a passion and an L.A. inspired vision," according to Sonia, opened SJ Studio Salon and Spa in January of 2006. "Ten-and-a-half years later, SJ Studio is known for amazing, innovative stylists, estheticians and manicurists," Sonia said. "Everyone receives the ultimate experience with SJ Studio's portfolio of leading and trusted brands, which include Wella, Redken, Schwarzkopf, Olaplex, PeterThomasRoth, Dermalogica, Ayur Medic, Norvell Tan, MAC and airbrush makeup Dinair."

#### Favorites

- » Dani's Manis
- » Jessica Nail & Spa
- » Top Nails

#### Optometrist

East County Winner

#### **COSTCO**

Locations in Oxnard, Simi Valley and Westlake Village  
www.costco.com/optical.html

How are those sunglasses fitting you? Time for a new pair? Those contact lenses irritating you?

Consider a trip to Costco.

Costco Optical has a staff of trained opticians who can help you see better and look better. With their expertise, you can select from a wide range of brand-name designer frames and try out the latest technology in high-definition lenses. Tired of glare? Try some polarized lenses that block UVA and UVB radiation while helping you see more clearly. Also, check out the latest in anti-reflective lenses.

#### Favorites

- » Agape Learning & Optometry Center
- » All Eyecare Optometry
- » Dougherty Laser Vision
- » Nelson Murata Optometric

West County Winner

#### **TWO TREES OPTOMETRY**

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## SERVICES

VENTURA COUNTY  
STAR

www.twotreesoptometry.com

For more than half a century, Two Trees Optometry has been providing top-notch vision care and eyewear to Ventura County clients.

"We are dedicated to providing the highest level of optometric services," said Dr. Kristopher Skromme, who has been with the practice for more than six years and recently purchased it. "We offer advanced testing and iPhone imaging." The office has a contact lens department and an eyewear dispensary that carries a vast selection from all the major designers.

**Favorites**

- » Donald Steensma
- » Family Vision Center
- » Ventura Optometric Vision Care

**Pediatrician**

East County Winner

**CONEJO CHILDREN'S MEDICAL GROUP**

558 N. Ventu Park Road, Suite D, Thousand Oaks  
499-5525

www.conejochildrens.com

Children come first at Conejo Children's



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Conejo Children's Medical Group is the east county winner for pediatrician.

Medical Group.

"Our staff is dedicated to providing care with the old-fashioned medical ethic: putting the needs of the patient first," said Conejo Children's Medical Group founder Dr. Donna Pachorek, with

agreement from Dr. Nathalie Rubin, Dr. Elizabeth Vallance and Dr. Michael Melman. "We value every child as if they were our own. We know that every child is part of a family, and we try to involve the family in everything we do. Our patients

are not just names and numbers in a chart, but children we have the privilege to care for and watch grow up."

**Favorites**

- » Community Pediatrics
- » Los Robles Pediatric Medical Group
- » Rolling Oaks Pediatrics

West County Winner

**COASTAL PEDIATRIC MEDICAL GROUP**

451 W. Gonzales Road, Suite 340, Oxnard  
983-3900

100 N. Brent St., Suite 102, Ventura  
643-9271

www.coastalpedcs.com

Coastal Pediatric Medical Group is dedicated to providing compassionate, comprehensive medical care to children from birth through age 21. There are four physicians on staff: Dr. Robert Fostakowsky, Dr. David Blank, Dr. Ben Pecht and Dr. Heather Nichols. Judy Driscoll is the nurse practitioner. All are devoted to meeting the individual needs of their patients.

There's no question that raising children and helping them become healthy adults can be a challenge. Coastal Pediatric Medical Group is here to help.



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Shelby Bishop

VC-1573218





DENNIS NISHI/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

**Dan Junge is a technician at Aaction Pest Control, which was a top vote-getter in the pest control category.**

**Favorites**

- » Carey Chronis
- » Pleasant Valley Pediatrics
- » Surfside Pediatrics

**Pest Control**

East County Winner

**AACTION PEST CONTROL**

1182 Lundry Drive, Simi Valley  
522-4242  
www.aactionpc.net

Termites, ants, roaches, spiders and mice. You may not mind seeing them outdoors in their own environment, but not in your home or business. AAction Pest Control offers convenient and effective pest management solutions.

"One of the best ways to avoid a pest problem in Simi Valley is to take preventative action, which includes keeping your property clean and hiring a professional to conduct seasonal property inspections," its website states.

**Favorites**

- » Grayson Termite & Pest Control
- » J&J Termite & Pest Control
- » Sentry Termite & Pest Control

West County Winner

**CAL TERMITE & PEST CONTROL**

217 Goodyear Ave., No. 121, Ventura  
765-6482  
www.caltermite.com

A termite infestation is the last thing you want to worry about when putting your home on the market and it's probably something potential buyers are wary of, so it makes perfect sense that Cal Termite



STAR FILE PHOTO  
**Dr. Don Bolt and his daughters, Kimmy, from left, Brooke and Erika, have their photo taken in 2015 by Peter Lars, owner of Cornerstone Photography.**

and Pest Control would offer an Escrow Clearance package. And they make it easy on your pocketbook by deferring payment until you close escrow. From termites, spiders and ants to rats and mice, this family-owned business can provide peace of mind whether you're a new homeowner or have been settled for a while and have an infestation problem. "We really strive to give excellent customer service and the highest quality work in the industry," said manager James Jolly. "Customer satisfaction is our No. 1 goal."

**Favorites**

- » Eric The Bug Guy
- » O'Connor Pest Control
- » Shoreline Pest Control
- » Ventura Pest Control

**Photographer**

East County Winner

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state-of-the-art, 10,000-square-foot studio or off-site within a 50-mile radius, the photo you'll get back from Cornerstone Photography promises to be stunning. From booking to the finished product, Cornerstone shoots for a stellar experience, providing the highest quality photos at the most affordable price. Treating clients "like kings and queens" is the company's motto, according to owner Peter Lars. Cornerstone Photography is also the school photographer of choice, snapping school pictures of some 80,000 elementary school kids in Ventura and Los Angeles counties every year.

**Favorites**

- » Alex Neumann Photography
- » Cindy Graham Photography
- » Denise Butler Photography

West County Winner

**MELGAR PHOTO STUDIO**

951 E. Main St., Santa Paula  
727-0449

Whether you're looking for a photographer to document an event, shoot graduation portraits or family photos, the professional staff at Melgar Photo Studio have the expertise.



DENNIS NISHI/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

**It's social time at Send Rover on Over pet boarding in Ventura.**

For Jose Luis Melgar, photographing weddings, quinceaneras, baptisms and anniversaries is more than a job. "I love interacting with people," said the owner of Melgar Photo Studio, "and in my

work, I get to be with people on the most important days of their lives." A photographer for more than 20 years, Melgar spends time with clients well before their special event, so they can get

know each other. His staff builds a rapport that translates into the finished product, "They start as clients, and they end up as friends," he said.

**Favorites**

- » Joseph Kennalty
- » Photo Bombed Photo Booths
- » Stephanie Hogue Photography

**Place To Board Your Pet**

East County Winner

**CONEJO VALLEY VETERINARY HOSPITAL**

3580 Willow Lane, Thousand Oaks  
495-4671  
www.conejovet.com

It's hard to leave your pets when you go on vacation, but Conejo Valley Veterinary Hospital makes it easier on you. Whether it is an overnight stay, long-term boarding or doggie day care, Conejo Valley Veterinary Hospital provides a comfortable and safe home away from home for your pet. Conejo Valley Vet is a full-service veterinary hospital, open seven days a week and 24 hours a day, providing the extra security of knowing there is always a veterinarian on duty in case of emergency. Caring staff members have been trained to recognize and treat stress and behavioral issues. With five to six walks per day, your pet will never feel bored or ignored.

**Favorites**

- » Barkley Pet Hotel & Day Spa
- » Send Rover On Over
- » Westlake Pet Motel

West County Winner

**SEND ROVER ON OVER**

1255 Callens Road, Suite E, Ventura  
650-3294  
www.sendroveronover.com

Valeri Stallings, certified professional dog trainer and behavior consultant, is the founder and owner of Send Rover On Over, which opened in 2003 and now has locations in Ventura and Simi Valley. It offers doggie day care, a cage-free boarding facility, grooming shop and training center. Dogs spending the night get to sleep in a big room with up to 10 other dogs and one person. "Dogs come home tired, happy, healthy and a lot less anxious than from other situations while their parents are away,"

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**Kristina Brewer**

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VC-1579902





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**SJ Studio Salon & Spa** is west county's winner for nail salon, hair salon and place to get waxed.

Stallings said.

**Favorites**

- » Anacapa Animal Hospital
- » Inglis Pet Hotel
- » Kittyland Resort & Spa

**Place To Get Waxed**

East County Winner

**EUROPEAN WAX CENTER**

2748 Seaglass Way, Oxnard  
983-4500  
2871 Agoura Road, Thousand Oaks  
248-7420  
[www.waxcenter.com](http://www.waxcenter.com)

European Wax Center, founded 10 years ago, features the "4 Steps to Gorgeous" process, which is an exclusive waxing technique invented specifically for the center. It involves preparing the epidermis before and after each treatment to help ensure the most comfortable experience for clients.

Specialists provide waxing services for virtually every part of the body, including arms, back, stomach and legs, as well as lips, neck, nose and sideburns.

At the European Wax Center, first-time guests can choose a complimentary service, including a brow, underarm or bikini wax for women, or a brow, ear or nose wax for men.

**Favorites**

- » Arlene's Skin Care & Electrolysis Spa
- » Naulin Aesthetics
- » The Sweetest Skin Co.
- » The Waxing Goddess

West County Winner

**SJ STUDIO SALON & SPA**

2200 Outlet Center Drive, Suite 460,  
Oxnard  
485-7800  
[www.sjstudiosalon.com](http://www.sjstudiosalon.com)

SJ Studio Salon and Spa estheticians are leaders in the eyebrow shaping phenomena, according to co-owner Sonia Lozano.

"We use five different levels of wax and threading/tweezing to achieve that perfectly arched, full brow," Lozano said. And the appointment doesn't end there, but with a lesson for how to keep your brows looking great in between appointments.

"We not only transform your brows, but teach you how to self-achieve with the hottest fillers by Anastasia and The Balm.

**Favorites**

- » Cara Mia
- » European Wax Center
- » Luxe Salon And Day Spa
- » Plush Med-spa



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**SERVICES**

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Max, the Maltipoo, is a regular customer at Aloha Dog Grooming in Ventura.



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East County Winner

**CONEJO VALLEY VETERINARY HOSPITAL**

3580 Willow Lane, Thousand Oaks  
495-4671  
[www.conejovet.com](http://www.conejovet.com)

At Conejo Valley Veterinary Hospital, experienced groomers go beyond the call of duty to ensure your dog or cat enjoys the ultimate spa experience. Their goal is to make grooming enjoyable and relaxing, and they are trained to recognize and respond to signs of stress or behavioral issues.

Your pet can luxuriate in a blueberry facial — a calming and tear-free shampoo experience — as part of its spa treatment. Aromatherapy is also employed while your pet is being pampered, guaranteed to calm them down and mellow them out.

**Favorites**

- » A Doggies Tail
- » Barkley Pet Hotel & Day Spa
- » Indiana Bones & The Temple Of Groom

West County Winner

**ALOHA DOG GROOMING**

1076 E. Front St., Ventura  
643-4852

Browsing the Facebook reviews for Aloha Dog Grooming, one sees that their customers are very satisfied. “They take such good care of my dogs,” reads one. “There is no better place, anywhere to take your pet,” reads another. As the owner of Aloha Dog Grooming for nine years, Tina Baselice’s goal is to get people’s pets in and out of her shop as quickly as possible for minimal discomfort, and leaving satisfied. “We try to schedule like a hairdresser,” she said. Most sessions take about two to three hours, and Baselice’s four groomers are also trained to do complicated show-style haircuts.

**Favorites**

- » Barke and Bathe Pet Salon
- » Dee Dee’s Dog Spot
- » Vickie’s Pampered Pet

**Plastic Surgeon**

East County Winner

**LEILIE JAVAN, M.D.**

381-9800

425 Haaland Drive, Suite 203, Thousand Oaks  
[www.drjavan.com](http://www.drjavan.com)

Board-certified plastic surgeon Dr. Leilie Javan is a staff member at a number of local surgical centers. When she began her practice, she did reconstructions for numerous breast cancer patients. Javan currently performs breast augmentations, lifts, reductions, laser-assisted liposuction and tummy tucks. She also provides nonsurgical, in-office procedures such as injectables, including Botox and fillers. According to her website, she believes in “natural-looking results.”

**Favorites**

- » Andrew Kaufman, Center For Dermatology
- » Beverly Hills Physician
- » Georgeanna Huang MD
- » Michael R. Schwartz Inc
- » Tansavatdi Cosmetic & Reconstructive Surgery - Kristina Tansavatdi

West County Winner

**PACIFICA INSTITUTE OF COSMETIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY**

2460 N. Ponderosa Drive, Suite A-117, Camarillo  
484-2855  
[www.pacifica-institute.com](http://www.pacifica-institute.com)

The practice of board-certified plastic surgeons Dr. Daniel Kolder and Dr. Robert Improta is a “practice based on the foundation that represents the highest standard of quality patient care and safety,” Kolder said. The doctors perform procedures in a safe, comfortable, licensed facility in Camarillo. Kolder said he joined Pacifica Institute more than five years ago to work with Improta. “Our practice offers many surgical and non-surgical treatment options to address every patient’s individual needs,” Kolder said.

**Favorites**

- » Arthur E. Flynn, MD
- » Bern Samuel MD
- » Pickart Plastic Surgery Inc

**Property Management**

East County Winner

**CENTURY 21 TROOP REAL ESTATE**

Locations in Camarillo, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Ventura, Westlake Village  
[www.c21troop.com](http://www.c21troop.com)





CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Century 21 Troop Real Estate is the top real estate company in west county.

Century 21 Troop Real Estate's property management division strives to deliver the best service to both tenants and owners. "Our mantra is 'service to the client above all else,'" said CEO Brian Troop. "We're all about repeat and referral clients, that's how we've built our business and how

we're able to be successful." As the owner of several rental properties, Troop knows the importance of having professional management in place. From background checks on tenants to fixing water heaters, Troop Property Management strives to be a full-service

company that is fair to both owners and residents.

**Favorites**

- » Berkshire Hathaway Homeservices
- » Emmons Co
- » Keller Williams Realty

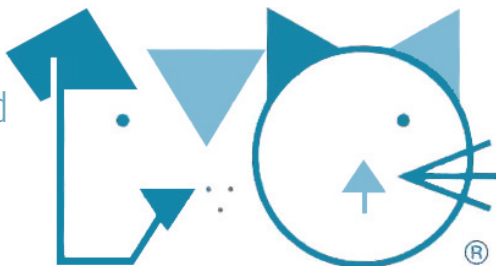
West County Winner

**TROOP PREMIER**

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c21troop.com/selling/property-management

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NMLS ID 473169



**Martin Litwin**  
350 N. Lantana St.  
Camarillo, CA 93010  
**Office: 805.312.3359**  
**Cell: 805.383.0100**  
mlitwin1@gmail.com  
NMLS ID 698626



## SERVICES

VENTURA COUNTY  
**STAR**

The staff at Troop Real Estate's Property Management division works closely with property owners and tenants to ensure a smooth process and good relationships. Founded in 1987, the property management team embraces to the vision of the real estate company's original CEO, Brian Troop, developing a strong reputation that provides professional services in Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

Embracing the vision of Troop Real Estate's founder and CEO, Brian Troop, the Premier Property Management team has developed a sound reputation and provides professional services in Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

### Favorites

- » California Oaks Property Management
- » Community Property Management
- » Remax Gold Coast Property Management

### Real Estate Company

East County Winner

#### BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES CALIFORNIA REALTY

Locations in Camarillo, Oxnard, Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village



STAR FILE PHOTO

People attend an event held at University Village Thousand Oaks.

[www.bhhscahomes.com](http://www.bhhscahomes.com)

Ventura County's longest-established real estate brokerage, started by still-owner Bob Majorino almost 40 years ago, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices

California Realty is widely regarded as a top-notch business around town. Whether you are considering buying or selling a home, the staff at BHHS is eager to help make the process as painless as possible, offering personal attention, as well as access to the information that will allow you to make informed decisions. With several locations in Ventura County, the support of an agent is never far away.

### Favorites

- » Aviara Real Estate
- » Century 21 Troop Real Estate
- » Dilbeck Real Estate

West County Winner

#### CENTURY 21 TROOP REAL ESTATE

Locations in Camarillo, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Ventura, Westlake Village

[www.c21troop.com](http://www.c21troop.com)

Over the past 10 years, Troop Real Estate has been the top producing real estate company in Ventura County.

"In addition to that, the reason we have been so successful is we have embedded ourselves in the local community, with thinks like our annual Turkey-A-Thon," said CEO Brian Troop, making reference to the yearly project that provides Thanksgiving meals to thousands of local families.

With its partnership with Century 21 Everest Realty Group now over a year old, Troop is expanding its reach across the globe.

"What's exciting about that is we are now affiliated with, and part of, the No. 1 Century 21 company in the world."

### Favorites

- » Berkshire Hathaway Homeservices California Properties
- » Berkshire Hathaway Homeservices California Realty
- » RE/MAX Gold Coast Realtors

### Senior Living Facilities

East County Winner

#### UNIVERSITY VILLAGE THOUSAND OAKS

3415 Campus Drive, Thousand Oaks  
241-3300  
[www.uvto.com](http://www.uvto.com)

University Village Thousand Oaks offers services such as housekeeping, meals and classes to its 500 residents age 60 and older who live independently in an apartment or villa on the 65 beautiful acres.

"After paying a repayable entrance fee and a monthly service fee, residents can live the rest of their lives here in long-term care at Oakview, our adjacent facility," said Ernie Sandlin, director of marketing.

*With grateful hearts.*



**Anacapa**   
Animal Hospital

[anacapavet.com](http://anacapavet.com) (805) 644-5521



VC-157828





What's a holiday party without some holiday music? Residents enjoy the entertainment at the Leisure Village Holiday celebration.

"The biggest common denominator of our residents is that they are planners."

**Favorites**

- » Atria Hillcrest
- » Belmont Village
- » Sunrise Of Westlake Village

West County Winner

**LEISURE VILLAGE**

200 Leisure Village Drive  
484-2861  
[www.leisurevillage.org](http://www.leisurevillage.org)

Leisure Village is a popular living choice for active seniors age 55 and older, with its many activities and clubs. It's a gated community and has a security team that's also trained as first responders for emergencies.

Leisure Village consists of 2,136 homes, including single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes on 415 acres. Other amenities include a recreation center, clubhouse, tennis courts and a new fitness center and pool.

**Favorites**

- » Cypress Place Senior Living
- » The Gables
- » Victoria Care Center

**Senior Resources**

East County Winner

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[www.thousandoaks-426.comfortkeepers.com/](http://www.thousandoaks-426.comfortkeepers.com/)

Comfort Keepers, known for its compassionate, certified nurse aids and caregivers, offers a range of services, including nutritious meal preparation, light housekeeping, running errands, medication reminders, fall prevention and personal care assistance.

Husband and wife Andy and Ellen Smith founded their Comfort Keepers In-Home Care office in December 2002. They were inspired by their parents' experience with caregivers and make it their mission to treat clients like family.

**Favorites**

- » Goebel Senior Adult Center
- » Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurses Association
- » Senior Concerns

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**805-643-9271**

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Its people, passion and performance are key in making 24Hr HomeCare among the nation's largest in-home care companies, serving thousands of clients through 13 locations, including Oxnard.

In order to help senior individuals lead full, healthy and active lifestyles, 24Hr HomeCare creates customized plans, implemented by caregivers who receive ongoing education to serve individuals with a variety of medical conditions — from Alzheimer's and dementia to COPD and diabetes.

The company offers free in-home consultations, no minimum hourly requirement for services employed, and a guarantee that "a qualified caregiver will be at your home within three hours of your initial request."

**Favorites**

- » Camarillo Healthcare District
- » Comfort Keepers In-home Care
- » Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurses Association



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

24Hr HomeCare was the top vote-getter for senior resources in west county.

**VetSurg** 



Ian Gordon Holsworth

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DENNIS NISHI/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Jeff Johnson, owner of Dire Wolf Tattoo, gets ready to work on a customer.

### Tattoo Parlor

East County Winner

#### DIRE WOLF TATTOO & FINE ART

3041 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
379-2423  
www.direwolftattoo.com

Four tattoo artists and their work adorn the Dire Wolf Tattoo & Fine Art website, and it's a sight to behold. Besides having unbelievable artistic talent in common, the four share the same hometown roots. They all grew up in Ventura County, and ventured off — to Los Angeles or abroad — to perfect their craft before returning home to offer a new kind of tattoo shop. Owner Jeff Johnson said he set out to make the average person feel more comfortable getting a tattoo, unlike the tattoo parlors he remembers in the 1990s that were cold and impersonal. What sets his business apart from others, he said, is that they have made it a warm and welcoming place.

#### Favorites

- » Charlie's House of Tattoo
- » Clear Vision Tattoo
- » Simi Valley Tattoo
- » Tattoo Room

West County Winner

#### HABITATTOO

2300 Ladera Road, Ojai  
612-6780  
@habitattoo805

For 10 years, Habitatattoo owner Dan Aguilar has offered custom tattoos, ranging from flowers to skulls, for men and women.

"Lately I've had more requests for hip and rib tattoos, especially from women who have scars from surgeries that they'd like to disguise," Aguilar said. "It's a cosmetic thing that helps the customer feel better." A portrait and landscape artist, Aguilar enjoys talking with his clients to learn what is important to them, and "incorporating who they are inside of the tattoo. It's a very personal kind of art, and the more you personalize it, the better they like it."

#### Favorites

- » Bone Deep Tattoo
- » Jimi's Tattoo & Body Piercing
- » White Lotus Body Arts



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# THANK YOU

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www.affirmativeescrow.com

Affirmative Escrow is known for its experienced team of professionals and competitive pricing. The business offers the most recent, technologically advanced escrow processing platform to process transactions. Since 2001, Affirmative Escrow has offered commercial, residential, resale and refinance escrow services to clients throughout Ventura County, Los Angeles County and beyond. Above all, Affirmative Escrow offers a superior level of service that sets the business apart from the competition, said Brynne DesMarteau-Bradbrook, general manager.

Favorites

- » All Valley Escrow
- » Consumer's Title Company of California
- » First American Title



CONTRIBUTED  
PHOTO  
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company in  
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Resident since 2011

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THOUSAND OAKS  
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CONTRIBUTED  
PHOTO  
**Manuel  
Apodaca** uses  
the mock roof  
at Moorpark  
College to  
practice his  
solar power  
installation  
skills.



West County Winner

**ALL VALLEY ESCROW**

2301 Daily Drive, Suite 301, Camarillo  
494-1027  
[www.allvalleyescrow.com](http://www.allvalleyescrow.com)

Having earned the highest rating offered by the state Department of Business Oversight, All Valley Escrow works to simplify the escrow process that can be overwhelming for clients, said general manager Kim Keith. "With our Concierge Service, a representative comes to your home or office to go over what the escrow process is all about," she said. "There are tax, property and deed issues that can be intimidating, and it gets more complicated each year as new guidelines are approved. By providing a human face to help with the paperwork, it makes the process much less stressful for our clients."

**Favorites**

- » Chicago Title Co
- » Fidelity National Title
- » First American Title
- » Lawyers Title

**Trade School**

East County winner

**MOORPARK COLLEGE**

7075 Campus Road, Moorpark  
378-1400  
[www.moorparkcollege.edu](http://www.moorparkcollege.edu)

The definition of "trade school" has evolved into a broad range of disciplines that — at Moorpark College — encompasses such diverse fields as exotic animal training and management, radiation technology, nursing, biotechnology, computer science and game design.

"One of our critical functions is to prepare students to transfer to excellent universities," said Moorpark College President Luiz Sanchez. "But we also recognize that our career and technical education programs do not always require transferring to a university. Many of our CTE programs prepare students for excellent careers after obtaining an associate's degree or certificate in two years or less."

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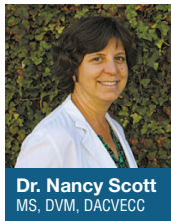
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2:00 pm to midnight

Sundays  
6:00 am to midnight



**Dr. Sarah Gray**  
DVM, DACVECC



**Dr. Nancy Scott**  
MS, DVM, DACVECC





**SERVICES**

**Favorites**

- » Advanced School of Massage Therapy
- » Conejo Valley Adult School
- » Simi Valley Adult School

West County Winner

**VENTURA ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

5200 Valentine Road, Ventura  
289-7925  
[www.adultedventura.edu](http://www.adultedventura.edu)

With classes at convenient times for working adults, Ventura Adult and Continuing Education provides an opportunity for adults who need to finish their high school education or learn new skills in a different field to do so. VACE also offers classes through the Arc of Ventura County for adults with disabilities, as well as ESL and lifelong learning classes. Programs include business and accounting, computer drafting, design, systems and graphics, plus medical office staff.

**Favorites**

- » California Academy of Dental
- » ITT Technical Institute
- » LU Ross Academy



STAR FILE PHOTO  
Instructor Larisa Robles, right, demonstrates the cold-plate method for testing jelly set point for students Karen Dilwith and daughter-in-law Breonna Goodwin during a canning class offered by Ventura Adult and Continuing Education, or VACE.

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## Veterinarian

East County Winner

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When your pet is in distress in the middle of the night, it's good to know there's a place you can go for help. Conejo Valley Veterinary Hospital's motto is "Anytime you need us." And they're true to their word.

Established in 1958, Conejo Valley Veterinary Hospital is a full-service veterinary hospital, open seven days a week and 24 hours a day for emergency pet care.

With 20 doctors on staff to treat dogs, cats and exotic pets in a state-of-the-art facility, Conejo Valley Veterinary Hospital provides complete veterinary care, including laser therapy. With an in-house lab and X-ray facilities onsite, it's a one-stop location for all your pet's healthcare needs.



STAR FILE PHOTO

Todd Hughes, left, speaks with his employees at Conejo Valley Veterinary Hospital located in Thousand Oaks.

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SERVICES

**Favorites**

- » Agoura Animal Clinic
- » Park Animal Hospital
- » Valley Veterinary Clinic

West County Winner

**OHANA PET HOSPITAL**

4547 Telephone Road Suite A, Ventura  
658-7387  
www.ohanapethospital.com

Ohana Pet Hospital staff connects to patients and their owners on a personal and compassionate level by establishing a strong relationship.

“Ohana” is Hawaiian for family, and the doctors and staff at Ohana Pet Hospital proudly stand behind their name.

The doctors at Ohana provide a full range of services, from ear cleaning and vaccines to emergency care. With a holistic vet on staff, Ohana also provides acupuncture treatments and holistic pet care.

**Favorites**

- » Adobe Animal Hospital
- » Anacapa Animal Hospital
- » East Ventura Animal Hospital



CONTRIBUTED  
PHOTO

**Natalie Oliveras**  
of Ohana Pet  
Hospital hangs  
out with a  
patient.



**Livingston Memorial**  
Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice  
est. 1947

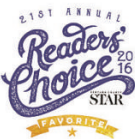


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*Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the readers of the Ventura County Star for entrusting Livingston with their home health and hospice needs, as well as for their votes for the 2017 “Readers’ Choice” Senior Resources Award in both East and West Ventura County. We have been making house calls and serving residents of all ages since 1947, regardless of their ability to pay.*

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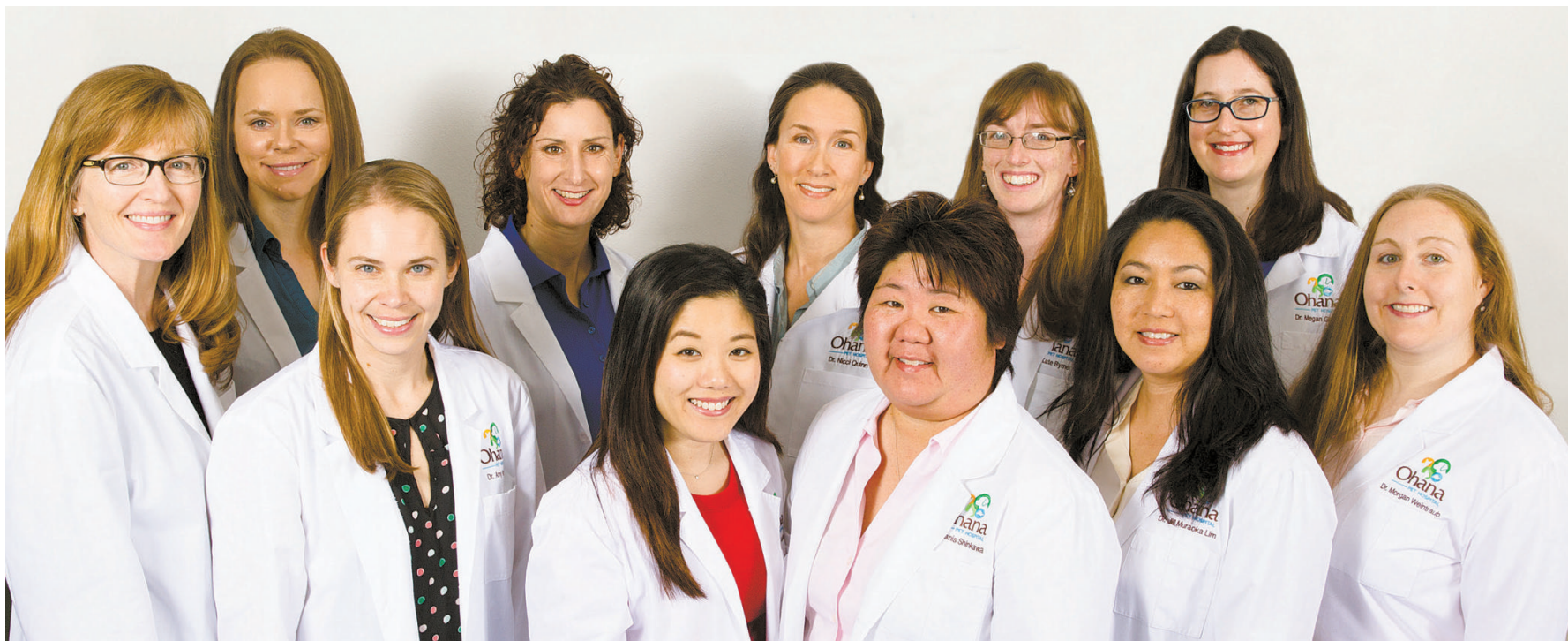
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# SHOPPING



## Bicycle shop

East County Winner

### MICHAEL'S BICYCLES

2257 Michael Drive, Newbury Park  
498-6633  
www.michaelsbicycles.com

Michael's Bicycles has a staff of experts to help guide customers — first timers and veteran cyclists alike — to the items that best suit their needs, from mountain or road biking to cruising through the neighborhood. The Newbury Park store, which has been around since 1984, offers a large selection of bikes, accessories and clothing. Michael's is the area's exclusive distributor for several top-rated lines of bicycles, will repair any bicycle and offers free, lifetime tuneups to those who purchase bikes from Michael's.

#### Favorites

- » 805 Bicycles
- » Newbury Park Bicycle Shop
- » Rick's Bicycle Shop

West County Winner

### BILL'S BIKE SHOP

2370 Las Posas Road, Unit A, Camarillo  
484-1203  
www.billsbikeshop.net

Bill's Bike Shop started in 1974 as a shop for road bike racers, said Mark Eaton, who has owned the shop since 1986. As the industry changed, the shop morphed into selling everything from first bikes for children to professional road and mountain bikes.

The shop is a Specialized dealer and a Campagnolo Pro Shop, working with top-of-the-line "Campy" components and accessories.

"Road cycling is attractive to a wide range of people ... A lot of people are into road cycling," Eaton said.

#### Favorites

- » Mob Shop
- » Open Air Bicycles
- » Performance Bicycles
- » Trek Bikes Of Ventura

## Bookstore

Full County Winner

### BARNES & NOBLE

4820 Telephone Road, Ventura  
339-0990  
160 S. Westlake Blvd., Thousand Oaks



KAREN QUINCY LOBERG/THE STAR

Michael Mitchell, left, and Mason Miller are both mechanics at Michael's Bicycles.

446-2820  
www.barnesandnoble.com

Looking for this summer's beach reads? Or need to grab the next great biography? Barnes & Noble is a book superstore with locations in both east and west county that offers a big selection for bestsellers and new releases, from mystery and drama to history and business. And don't just think books. If it's a gift you're looking for — book or not — you'll likely find it at Barnes & Noble. The store carries toys, games, journals, tumblers, jewelry, hair accessories, CDs, DVDs, notecards, T-shirts and even "cat lady" pins. For collectors, there are a wide array of finds, as well.

The website is chock full of must-haves, sales items, textbooks, Nook Books and more. And you only have to spend \$25 to

get free shipping.

#### East County Favorites

- » 5 Dollar Or Less Bookstore
- » Family Christian Book Store
- » The Open Book

#### West County Favorites

- » Bart's Books
- » Hypno Comics And Games
- » Mrs. Figs' Bookworm

## Car Dealer - New

East County Winner

### RUSNAK BMW

3645 Auto Mall Drive, Thousand Oaks  
888-396-4013  
www.rusnakbmw.com

Rusnak BMW — part of the Rusnak group of auto dealers, family-owned for half a

century — offers its customers "a friendly, low-pressure environment with a well-trained staff who knows the product," said Al Lemoine, Rusnak BMW general manager. "The Rusnak organization believes in treating its customers with respect, courtesy and professionalism. And that leads to repeat business and referrals."

In addition to offering the largest BMW inventory in the region, Rusnak BMW supports the local community by sponsoring youth sports teams, golf tournaments and charity fundraisers. "We like to help our neighbors wherever we can," said Lemoine.

#### Favorites

- » Honda Of Thousand Oaks
- » Lexus Of Thousand Oaks
- » Silver Star Mercedes-Benz



## SHOPPING

VENTURA COUNTY  
STAR

West County Winner

**DCH TOYOTA OF OXNARD**

1631 Auto Center Drive, Oxnard  
988-7900  
www.toyotaofoxnard.com

DCH Toyota of Oxnard has been in business for 26 years, with several employees having worked there since the beginning. The dealership prides itself on matching Toyota's brand popularity with the company's commitment to the community. It sells new and used Toyotas, plus a variety of other makes.

"DCH means 'delivering customer happiness,' so we try to do that every day," said General Manager John Hautman. "Customers can do the whole transaction online, or they can come in and test drive."

**Favorites**

- » Alexander Buick GMC Cadillac
- » Crown Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram
- » Paradise Chevrolet

**Car Dealer - Used**

East County Winner

**ALLEN MOTORS**

2594 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
496-1370  
www.allenautomotivegroup.com

Spending hours at a dealership trying to buy a car is not an option for customers at Allen Motors, said Jim Allen, president. "We want your experience buying a car to be pleasant, welcoming and comfortable," he said. "My staff and myself are each able to handle every part of your transaction, from showing you the car to handling the paperwork and financing, without having to deal with layers of management." The 24-year-old car dealership offers a



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Thousand Oaks Certified Farmers Market is the most popular in east county.

full-service repair and body shop, and takes pride in "selling quality cars that we prepare and inspect thoroughly," Allen added.

**Favorites**

- » First Honda Simi Valley
- » Rusnak BMW Certified Pre-owned Vehicles
- » Silverstar A.g. Mercedes

West County Winner

**CARMAX**

2001 Lockwood St., Oxnard  
288-8005  
www.carmax.com

CarMax delivers low prices and quality vehicles, with a massive selection every day. With friendly customer service agents, one of the goals at CarMax is to redefine the car-buying process. It has done that by offering a "no-haggle, no-hassle" experience. The company describes it as "the honest and transparent car-buying experience customers want and deserve." And not only does CarMax have a wide variety of autos on one lot, it also works with multiple financial institutions. So any way you look at it, you're in the driver's seat.

**Favorites**

- » Crown Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram
- » DCH Toyota
- » Paradise Chevrolet

**Farmers Market**

East County Winner

**THOUSAND OAKS CERTIFIED FARMERS' MARKET**

The Oaks, 350 West Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks  
529-6266  
www.vccfarmersmarkets.com

In operation at The Oaks for over 20 years, the Thousand Oaks Certified Farmers Market brings the freshest California produce to the Conejo Valley. From vine ripened fruits and vegetables to honey, eggs, nuts, olive oils, juices, flowers and more, the market offers an outdoor shopping experience and an opportunity to discover new tastes. Each week the market also features cooked food vendors so you can pick up a warm meal on the way home or enjoy a tasty treat while you shop. The market is open almost year-round on Thursdays from 1:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the east end

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parking lot of The Oaks shopping center.

**Favorites**

- » Moorpark Farmers Market
- » Underwood Family Farms
- » Westlake Village Farmers' Market

West County Winner

**CHANNEL ISLANDS HARBOR FARMERS MARKET**

3350 S. Harbor Blvd., Oxnard  
818-591-8161  
[www.rawinspiration.org/  
channel-islands-farmers-market.html](http://www.rawinspiration.org/channel-islands-farmers-market.html)

Channel Islands Harbor is home to a farmers market every Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. that features a wide selection of fresh-picked flowers, fruit and vegetables. The market also boasts baked goods, garden supplies, arts and crafts, raw honey, vegan and gluten-free cookies, jewelry and hair accessories. This waterside shopping experience, adjacent to Marine Emporium Landing Shopping Center, also features live music, entertainment, and seasonal events like a Parade of Lights during the holidays.

**Favorites**

- » Camarillo Hospice Certified Farmers
- » Ojai Certified Farmers' Market
- » VC Certified Farmers Markets - Ventura Midtown & Downtown

**Flooring Store**

Full County Winner

**FLOORING 101**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
[flooring101.com](http://flooring101.com)

Flooring 101 has operated for more than four decades. The family-owned business offers Ventura County's largest inventory of products, including hardwood flooring, tile, laminate and stone, as well as Stainmaster carpets. Flooring 101 uses its own qualified installers and stands behind every installation. The company makes bulk purchases, so when they get a good buy, the savings is passed on to customers. Flooring 101 also gives back to the community, donating to local churches and cancer-awareness organizations.

**East County Favorites**

- » A1 Flooring
- » Home Depot
- » Tile City

**West County Favorites**

- » Aaa Flooring Source Inc



STAR FILE PHOTO

**Sweet Peas is the west county winner for florist.**

- » Channel Islands Floorcoverings
- » Isensee Floor Covering
- » Prosource Wholesale Floor

**Florist**

East County Winner

**ANGELA'S FLORIST AND GIFT SHOP**

2329 Michael Drive, Newbury Park  
498-6696  
[www.angelasflorist.com](http://www.angelasflorist.com)

Although she just acquired Angela's in January, owner Shannon Realizvasquez has nearly 20 years experience in the "hometown florist" retail business, like the one her parents operated in La Crescenta. "We know Angela's has a great history of more than 30 years of service to the community," she said, "and I want to maintain that tradition. We want to be the florist who has everything you need." Personalized customer service is important to Realizvasquez. "Many outlets, including grocery stores, sell flowers and related items. But they can't give you the kind of service we can, including delivery and customized orders."

**Favorites**

- » Costco
- » Flowers By Maria
- » Michael's Flowers

West County Winner

**SWEET PEAS FLOWERS & GIFTS**

2855 Johnson Drive, Suite Q, Ventura  
644-9992

[www.sweetpeasflowersandgifts.net](http://www.sweetpeasflowersandgifts.net)

The owner of Sweet Peas Flowers & Gifts takes pride in knowing she's there for her community, whether it's for a celebration or for the sad times in life. "This is my home; these are my people," owner Kasey Kruft said. "We give them quality products not only when they have babies and celebrations, but when they have someone that passes away. I think that art of giving and bringing kindness is what we do, and extending that through flowers is a beautiful thing."

**Favorites**

- » Bernardo's Flowers
- » Passion Flowers & Gifts
- » The Growing Co.

**Furniture Store**

East County Winner

**REEDS FURNITURE**

28401 Canwood St., Agoura  
818-597-7800  
[www.reedsfurniture.com](http://www.reedsfurniture.com)

Family owned and operated since 1960 and serving four generations of furniture shoppers, Reeds is all about "inspiring

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VC-1583475



**SHOPPING**VENTURA COUNTY  
**STAR**

beautiful lives" through quality furniture at excellent value — and equally important — through a knowledgeable staff of "Inspiration Ambassadors" who collectively have over 200 years of experience.

Reeds' large Agoura showroom (as well as its Oxnard location) offers a variety of fine furniture pieces imported from around the world as well as furniture "made in California," and provides installation and assembly whether furniture is delivered or picked up at the store. If necessary, an experienced staff will service your furniture in your home.

**Favorites**

- » Ethan Allen
- » Granada Oak Furniture
- » The Sleepe Shoppe

West County Winner

**ASHLEY FURNITURE HOMESTORE**

1721 E. Ventura Blvd., Oxnard  
981-0284  
ashleyfurniturehomestore.com

Does your home need a makeover?

Ashley Furniture HomeStore in Oxnard offers a wide range of items, from lamps and artwork to dishes and rugs. It's the place to go for a look that's both durable and affordable.

From design to delivery, Ashley Furniture HomeStore controls the process, from furniture designers to production teams to its own fleet of trucks to deliver pieces to each store.

An on-site design consultant is also available to help customers determine the best selections for their home.

**Favorites**

- » For Your Home Furniture
- » La-z-boy Furniture Galleries
- » Urban Home



STAR FILE PHOTO

Samantha Serna rings up Betty Murphy's haul at Lassens Health Foods.

**Grocery Store**

Full County Winner

**TRADER JOE'S**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
www.traderjoes.com

For half a century, Trader Joe's has stocked its shelves with healthy and fresh

products. Today, the company offers more than 3,000 unique grocery items from around the world.

If you're looking to meet special dietary needs, Trader Joe's makes it easy. The website lists the gluten-free, kosher and vegan products it carries. And once you reach the store, you'll be shopping in a relaxed, fun environment, where the walls are lined with cedar and the crew wears Hawaiian shirts.

**East County Favorites**

- » Gelson's
- » Sprouts
- » Whole Foods

**West County Favorites**

- » Ralphs
- » Vons
- » Winco

**Health Food Store**

Full County Winner

**LASSENS**

Locations in Ventura, Oxnard, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks  
www.lassens.com

Offering healthy food and all-natural body care products isn't trendy at Lassens. Because that's what the store has been all about for 46 years.

"More and more people these days want food with less preservatives and no processing, which is great," said Raymond Martherus, marketing director for Lassens' 12 stores, four of which are in Ventura County). "But that's old hat to the customers who have been with us for generations. They know they'll always find 100 percent organic produce and all-natural supplements and body care items here, regardless of what the current fads might be. That's why Lassens has a loyal following."



# Thank You

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# Hardware Store



M-F 6.30am-9pm • Sat 7.30am-9pm • Sun 7.30-8pm  
**698 Mobil, Suite A, Camarillo • (805) 388-1067**





STAR FILE PHOTO

George Thompson Diamond Co. is the west county winner, once again, for jewelry store.

#### East County Favorites

- » Sprouts
- » Trader Joe's
- » Whole Foods

#### West County Favorites

- » Rainbow Bridge
- » Sprouts
- » Trader Joe's

#### Home Improvement/ Hardware Store

East County Winner

##### HOME DEPOT

Locations in Camarillo, Oxnard, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks  
www.homedepot.com

Home Depot is a one-stop shop for all the DIYers. The store boasts, not only the products you need to get the job done, but a knowledgeable staff to support their customers.

Home Depot stores are all over the world. Visitors can find more than 25,000 individual products to help them accomplish any DIY project from tile laying to gardening

#### Favorites

- » Do It Center
- » Lowe's
- » Orchard Supply Hardware

West County Winner

##### LOWE'S

Locations in Oxnard, Simi Valley, Ventura  
www.lowes.com

Lowe's operates thousands of stores across North America, offering experience and savings for its customers.

In addition to offering thousands of items, the professionals at Lowe's offer installation services, demos or quick answers to any DIY question, making them a one-stop shop for any home improvement project.

The company also supports the communities it works in, focusing on public education and community improvement projects.

#### Favorites

- » Ace Hardware
- » B & B Do It Center
- » Home Depot

#### Jewelry Store

East County Winner

##### ALBERT'S JEWELRY DESIGNS

2024 E. Avenida de los Arboles, Thousand Oaks  
493-1338  
www.albertsjewelrydesigns.com

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1969 ERRINGER RD.

VENTURA  
(805) 765-6852  
4051 E. MAIN ST.



## SHOPPING

For more than 25 years, Albert's Jewelry Designs has followed simple rules to become a popular stop for jewelry buyers from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara. "Give people personal, old-fashioned service, and treat them the way you want to be treated," said co-owner Lisa Vartanian, whose husband, Albert, has spent most of his life making and designing jewelry. They enjoy dealing with customers directly — another "old-fashioned" touch. "We also don't force sales on people," Lisa added. "We listen to them, we respect what they want, we offer same-day service, and as a result we get a lot of repeat business."

**Favorites**

- » Ben Bridge Jeweler
- » Costco
- » Gold N Heart Jewelers
- » McClave Jewelers

West County Winner

**GEORGE THOMPSON DIAMOND CO.**

309 W. Ventura Blvd. Suite D, Camarillo  
388-5750  
www.georgethompson.com

With Thailand being the world's leading

jewelry manufacturer, George Thompson knows how important it is to have a full-time design/production staff there. "That's where we get the best quality, which allows us to make every single ring unique for our customers," he says. "And every woman wants something no one else has." Thanks to modern technology, including Skype, "I can see what we're doing over there every day," Thompson said. "It allows us to stay current and give our customers the best possible service."

**Favorites**

- » Fox Fine Jewelry
- » Jewelry Couture By Sehati
- » Van Gundy & Sons Jewelers

**Lingerie Store**

East County Winner

**VICTORIA'S SECRET**

Locations in Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Ventura  
www.victoriassecret.com

Victoria's Secret, a business of Limited Brands, boasts more than 1,000 lingerie stores that specialize in everything from pajamas and nighties to bras, sweats and



DAVID YAMAMOTO/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Isabella Garcia shows her favorite strawberry during a field trip to Underwood Family Farms in Moorpark.

workout gear. The specialty retailer also carries its own line of beauty products, including lotions, fragrances and cosmetics.

Victoria's Secret has three stores in Ventura County, including locations in the Simi Valley Town Center and The Oaks and Pacific View malls, in Thousand Oaks and Ventura, respectively.

**Favorites**

- » A Private Affair
- » Bare Necessities By Cindy
- » Kate & Lace

West County Winner

**APHRODITE'S LINGERIE & GIFT GALLERY**

477 E. Main St., Ventura  
652-0082  
www.aphroditesonline.com

Whether shopping for lingerie for a special occasion or everyday use, Aphrodite's Lingerie & Gift Gallery is the place to go. The store specializes in bra fittings and is known by the hashtag #YourBoobsAreOurBusiness. A huge variety of styles and vendors keep customers coming back. In reviews, customers praise the store for its personal service and liken the business to boutique lingerie shops in Paris. And there is a wide selection to choose

from, whether you're feeling like a sexy temptress, want to look cute or sophisticated, or looking to purchase everyday wear.

**Favorites**

- » Diva The Passion Boutique
- » Trystology
- » Victoria's Secret

**Locally Grown Produce**

Full County Winner

**UNDERWOOD FAMILY FARMS STRAWBERRIES**

3370 Sunset Valley Road, Moorpark  
529-3690  
5696 Los Angeles Ave., Somis  
386-4660  
www.underwoodfamilyfarms.com

Underwood Family Farms has been selling produce directly to the public via roadside market for over 30 years. There was such demand for high-quality fruits and vegetables that the farm expanded over time, and now has a location in Somis. Take the family pick your own strawberries March through July at the Moorpark location and March through August at the Somis location. Don't want to get your hands dirty? No problem — grab some strawberries and an array of other fresh fruits and veggies for sale at



the on-site Farm Market.

**Favorites**

- » McGrath Family Farms Strawberries
- » Ojai Pixie Tangerines
- » Terry Farms Strawberries

**Locally Made Product**

Full County Winner

**OJAI OLIVE OIL**

1811 Ladera Ridge Road, Ojai  
646-5964  
www.ojaioliveoil.com

Founded in 1999, Ojai Olive Oil Company offers organic extra-virgin olive oils, organic infused olive oils, olive oil skincare, balsamic vinegars and more. In addition to having a booth at the Ojai Farmers Market, Ojai Olive Oil sells its products online and offers tours and tastings at its location on the Asquith Ranch in Ojai.

According to the company's website, the olives are picked from the ranch's trees by hand and milled on site. The oil is sold fresh from the barrel within days.

**Favorites**

- » Herzog Wine Cellars
- » Perfectly Pretty Tots
- » Surf Brewery Mondos Blonde Ale

**Mattress Store**

Full County Winner

**SLEEP SHOPPE**

Locations throughout Ventura County  
Shopthesleepshoppe.com

The Sleep Shoppe has been helping Ventura County residents get a better night's sleep for nearly 30 years. Owner Fred Kunke's goal is to make the buying process stress-free — whether you're shopping for a new mattress or a state-of-the-art adjustable system. The friendly and helpful staff is there to do just that, as well as offer advice on pillows, bedding and other accessories. Each store offers free coffee in a relaxing station, giving shoppers a private area to discuss their options in a comfortable, quiet space.

**East County Favorites**

- » American Mattress Man
- » Costco
- » Sit 'N Sleep

**West County Favorites**

- » American Mattress Man
- » Camarillo Mattress



DENNIS NISHI/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

**"Big" Jim Tietz, founder of My Garage, shows a customer new Harley seat covers.**

» Sit 'N Sleep

**Nursery/Garden Shop**

East County Winner

**ARMSTRONG GARDEN CENTER**

50 Taylor Court, Thousand Oaks  
497-9223  
www.armstronggarden.com

Homeowners who take pride in their yards and those practicing small-space gardening shop Armstrong Garden Centers. With more than a century in business, the Thousand Oaks business has perfected the plant-buying process, and is happy to share their tips and tricks for keeping landscapes looking beautiful. Their motto is "We help customers garden without guesswork."

Armstrong Garden Center can help turn any black thumb into a green thumb.

**Favorites**

- » Elegant Gardens
- » Home Depot
- » Nordic Landscape Supply

West County Winner

**GREEN THUMB NURSERY**

1899 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura  
666-1424  
www.greenthumb.com

From its huge garden center that can satisfy all your gardening and landscaping needs to its indoor plant selection and home décor, Green Thumb offers the widest range of retail plant material in Ventura County, including landscape plants, water-wise varieties, bedding plants, fruit trees and exotics. Other products include bird baths and garden benches, as well as fertilizers and potting soils.

People who work there sum up the business' success to their commitment to provide the best service possible. This includes helping customers find the best selection to suit their gardening or landscaping needs to providing gardening classes and events that help them become the best gardener they can be.

**Favorites**

- » B & B Do It Center
- » Baron Brothers Nursery
- » Home Depot

**Powersports Dealer**

East County Winner

**THOUSAND OAKS POWERSPORTS**

1250 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
497-3765  
www.thousandoakspowersports.com

A family-owned-and-operated business since 1969, Thousand Oaks Powersports takes pride in offering customers the very best experience with its large selection of parts and inventory. Employees are known to go above and beyond and take their job seriously, providing the best knowledge and enthusiasm to customers. Whether you're looking for a Kawasaki, Aprilia or Triumph, Thousand Oaks Powersports has got the bike for you. Shop inventory – new or pre-owned – online, visit the showroom or schedule a test drive. Shop for apparel, parts or schedule a service appointment, whatever you're looking to do that's powersports related, Thousand Oaks Powersports can help.

**Favorites**

- » Bmw Motorcycles Of Ventura
- » Simi Valley Harley Davidson
- » Tri-county Powersports

West County Winner

**MY GARAGE VENTURA**

1559 Palms Drive, Ventura  
983-6400  
www.mygarageventura.com

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**SHOPPING**VENTURA COUNTY  
**STAR**

My Garage Ventura specializes in Harleys, but you'll find parts, service, customization, apparel and even slick audio systems that will elevate any brand of motorcycle. And as a family-owned business, My Garage prides itself on trust, loyalty, friendship and its knowledgeable staff, who treat customers like family. "I might be the owner, but I have a boss, and the customer is the boss," said Jim Tietz, who bought My Garage through his and his father's company, Tri County Motor Worx, in 2013.

"My thing is we strive and ultimately deliver because I am proud of what we do and I take my job seriously. We make our customers happy," Tietz said. "I treat everyone's motorcycle like it's mine and I treat my customers like I want to be treated."

And because he treats his customers right, resulting in returning business and new, My Garage Ventura is growing. Teitz is in the process of purchasing a new building, going from 3,500 square feet to 5,000.

**Favorites**

- » Cal Coast Motorsports
- » Mark's Customs
- » Ventura Harley Davidson

**Surf Shop**

East County Winner

**VAL SURF**

3055 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
497-1166  
[www.valsurf.com](http://www.valsurf.com)

For nearly three decades, Val Surf has been home to native surfers, snowboarders and skate boarders in the Thousand Oaks. The business sponsors local pros in skate, surf and snow, expanding from a small store in North Hollywood to a nationwide brand synonymous with quality in the market for extreme sports.

Manager Norm Niegas has been with Val Surf since the 1990s.

"We're one of the last specialty shops in the area, if not the last specialty shop," he said. "It's impressive and considering the bad seasons for snow that have come up, our business has been incredible. We just take care of the customer and make sure we have what they need."

**Favorites**

- » Play It Again Sports
- » Tilly's



DAVID YAMAMOTO/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

**The Assistance League of Conejo Valley Thrift Shop is the winner for east county's best thrift shop.**

West County Winner

**VENTURA SURF SHOP**

88 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura  
643-1062

Located near Surfers Point, Ventura Surf Shop has primo real estate where you can pick up your new surfboard, wax it up and ride the perfect wave. This is something locals have been enjoying since Ventura Surf Shop opened in 1961. The store has kept up with changes in technology while keeping the deep surf traditions intact. Rob Hubina, manager and son of the owner, Bill Hubina, finds it easy to help people with finding what they need. "We try to put people on surfboards that are right for them," he said. "I just love working here because I get to share what makes me happy with other people."

**Favorites**

- » Patagonia Ocean Division
- » Revolution Surf Co
- » Rip Curl

**Thrift Store**

East County Winner

**ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF CONEJO VALLEY THRIFT SHOP**

2853 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
379-5400

[www.alconejovalley.org/thrift-shop.html](http://www.alconejovalley.org/thrift-shop.html)

Nearly two years ago, the Assistance League of Conejo Valley moved its thrift shop, in operation since 2012, to a larger location on Thousand Oaks Boulevard. The move has been a success, with shoppers enjoying the larger quarters for all the items on the shelves, from jewelry to small household items.

Carol Mullen, the co-manager with Jill Horan, said people think of it as the "boutique thrift shop of the Conejo Valley."

"Once they come, they always return with a friend," she said.

**Favorites**

- » Goodwill
- » Merry Hall Tree Thrift Shop
- » Salvation Army

West County Winner

**THE ARC FOUNDATION OF VENTURA COUNTY THRIFT STORE**

265 E. Main St., Ventura  
625 N. Oxnard Blvd., Oxnard  
800-228-1413

[www.arcfoundationvc.org](http://www.arcfoundationvc.org)

All proceeds from the two Arc Foundation thrift stores in Ventura County go to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In addition, donations are tax-deductible.

At the thrift stores, shoppers can find new and slightly used items ranging from clothes and shoes to books, CDs and DVDs,

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BRENNAN WHITMORE/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Adrian Cortez, bargaining manager for America's Tire in Camarillo, works on a customer's new set of tires.

small appliances and electronics. Furniture, linens and sporting equipment also can be found.

The Arc Foundation of Ventura County was established in 1989.

**Favorites**

- » Coalition Thrift Store
- » Goodwill
- » Sparc Second Chance Store

**Tire Store**

Full County Winner

**AMERICA'S TIRE**

Locations across Ventura County

[www.americastire.com](http://www.americastire.com)

America's Tire, which specializes in selling tires and wheels, prides itself on its dedication to personalized customer service.

"We carry every major name brand," said Simi Valley manager Rich Campos. "So customers can check online to see what we have in stock, then call us to reserve them."

While most people call for an appointment, about 30 percent of its customers will come in for assistance. America's Tire also offers free air checks, free tire rotation and free tire repair.

Shop for tires by vehicle, brand, tire type or vehicle type. There are scores to choose from. Also handy is America's Tire website, where you'll find "Tips & Guides," providing information on tire pressure, the life of a tire, wheel alignment, wheel size how-to guides on changing a tire and cleaning

**East County Favorites**

- » Big Brand Tires
- » Jim's Tire Center
- » Tire Man

**West County Favorites**

- » Associated Tires Brakes & Alignment
- » Big Brand Tire

» Costco Tire Center

**Vape Shop**

East County Winner

**VAPOR CONNECTION**

2219 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks  
244-5099

330 Lantana Street, Suite 28, Camarillo  
484-8410

[vaporconnection.com](http://vaporconnection.com)

Vapor Connection offers a wide variety of flavors and vapes at two convenient locations in Ventura County, opening one



## SHOPPING

of the first vapor lounges in the area in 2013. "We provide excellent customer service and we want to help people with what they want," said Camarillo store manager Dylan Chiarella. "We have a saying here, that anyone from 18-80 who didn't think they could quit smoking has found something here that has been life changing."

**Favorites**

- » Cloud 10 Vape Bar
- » Smoke & Vape
- » V Spot Vapor

West County Winner

**VAPOR CONNOISSEUR**

2020 E. Main St., Ventura  
667-9076

Vapor Connoisseur bills itself as an industry leader in innovation and private label production. With a goal of educating consumers, it has been offering electronic cigarette and vaporizer products since its opening not too long ago.

"Our team is constantly engineering and testing new ways to revolutionize the electronic cigarette industry. We love what we do and stand behind the products we offer and manufacture," a note to customers states on its website.

**Favorites**

- » Beach Vapes
- » Luna Vapes
- » Vape Caviar

**Windows & Doors Store**

East County Winner

**AGOURA SASH & DOOR**

2301 Townsgate Road, Westlake Village  
449-2840  
www.agourasash.com

The team at Agoura Sash & Door has spent the last 25 years building relationships with contractors, developers and suppliers in Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles counties. The result has been providing the best opportunities for its clients. Visit its Westlake Village showroom to check out Agoura Sash & Door's wide variety of windows, doors, hardware, mouldings and skylights. And talk to the anyone on the expert team for help with architectural and design services.

**Favorites**

- » American Vision Windows Inc
- » Milgard Manufacturing Inc
- » My Window Solutions



ANTHONY  
PLASCENCIA/  
THE STAR

**Dwayne Harris,**  
right, of Fuller  
Paint and Glass,  
guides a pane  
as a team of  
workers installs  
a stained-glass  
window at Holy  
Cross School in  
Ventura.

West County Winner

**FULLER PAINT AND GLASS**

1870 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura  
648-3003  
www.fullerpaintandglass.com

They bill themselves as Ventura's premiere paint and glass shop, and there's no question as to why. Fuller Paint and Glass has more than 45 years of experience in the business. And considering it's family owned, customers can count on friendly service. So whether you're shopping for paint to transform your living space or new shower doors as part of a bathroom remodel, the options are plentiful. Fuller Paint and Glass offers professional glass installers, who specialize in residential glass projects, and they take pride in their work, whether installing new or making an insulated glass repair. Its glass selections range from shower doors, custom glass mirrors, wardrobes and tabletops to windows and screens. They carry a full line from Cardinal Shower Enclosures and Contractor's Wardrobe.

**Favorites**

- » All About Glass & Mirror
- » The Door Outlet
- » West Coast Sash & Door Inc

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# RICHARD ROSS

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*Family law with a heart.*

*Richard Ross is a Certified Family Law Specialist handling all aspects of divorce, custody, visitation, and support matters in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties.*

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WITHOUT US.**

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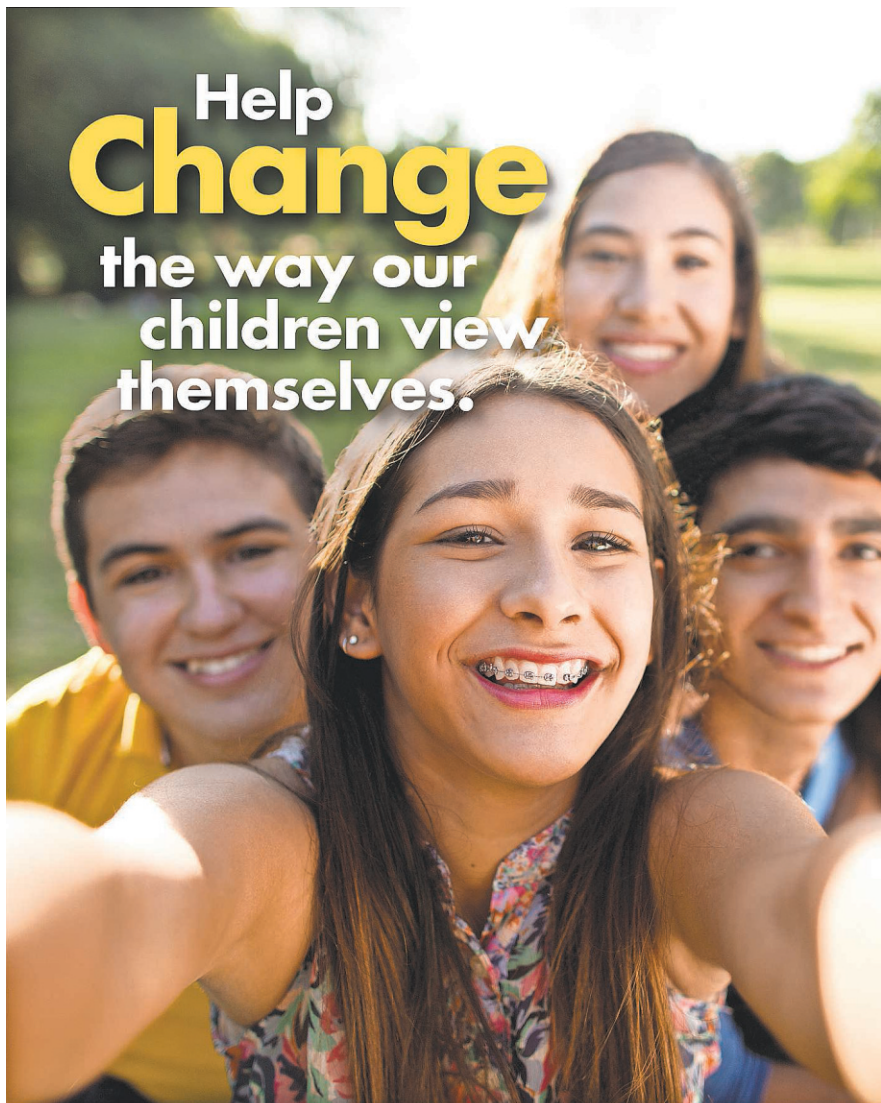
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breweries! We look forward  
to crowning the new 2017  
"Yummie Top Chefs" and  
"Best in Fest" brewery winners!**

### 2016 "Yummie Top Chef" Award Winners

#### Savory Winners

**1st Place**  
Chef Alex Castillo



**2nd Place**  
University Village  
Thousand Oaks Team



**3rd Place**  
Chef Bernardo Rodriguez  
Ojai Beverage Company



#### Sweet Winners

**1st Place**  
University Village  
Thousand Oaks Team



**2nd Place**  
Chef Alex Montoya



**3rd Place**  
Patty Brown

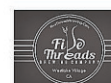


### 2016 "Best in Fest" Winners

**1st Place**

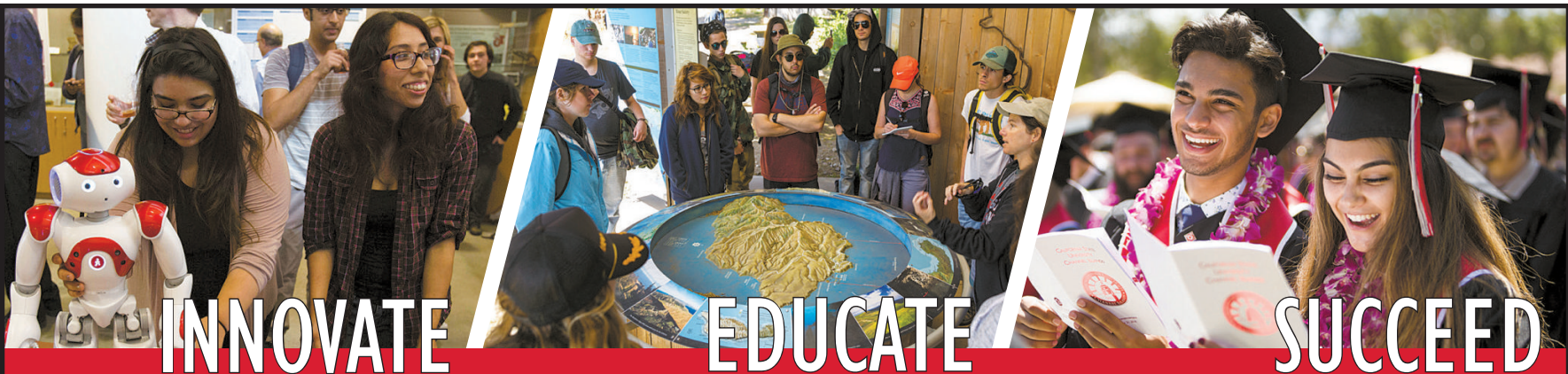


Honorable Mentions



[www.cpwinefoodbrewfest.com](http://www.cpwinefoodbrewfest.com)





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