

# SDMETRO

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NO. 5 VOL. XXXIV

## Women of Influence 2019

Diane Powers is one of the most recognized names in San Diego's business community and she is one of our 12 Women of Influence for 2019. Read her remarkable story and the story of the others in our report on Page 14

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Vanessa, Laura, Lisa, and Anita have completed the Certified Advisor of Personal Insurance (CAPI) Program at Wharton Executive Education. Jodie is expected to complete the program in December.



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**COVER STORY:  
Women of Influence 2019**

Meet our selection of Women of Influence in the San Diego region, individuals who have made lasting contributions to their profession and community. Diane Powers, owner of the Bazaar del Mundo Shops and Restaurant Group, is just one of the 12 outstanding women. **PAGE 14**



**Oz-Themed County Fair Celebrates Community**

It was here, but now it's gone — yet it made a lasting impression on the young and old. The San Diego County Fair, which originated in 1880, spent 27 days at the Del Mar Fairgrounds and lived up to its reputation as one of the biggest attractions on the West Coast and anywhere.



**How I Launched and Grew My Startup**

There is a heavy dose of uncertainty that comes along with launching a startup. But entrepreneur Sean Poor explains in this essay how he made a successful jump into business. One of his rules: You must be fearless.



**Higgs Fletcher & Mack Celebrates its 80th Year**

When Dutch Higgs and Ferd Fletcher combined forces to form Higgs & Fletcher in 1939, there was no way they could have imagined the legacy they would leave behind. Today, the firm, now known as Higgs Fletcher & Mack, is San Diego's longest standing home-grown law firm, nearly 80 attorneys strong.



**A Whirlwind Trip to Mérida**

Usually one of three reasons keep a person from traveling: time, money, or desire. But a new flight out of Tijuana is squashing all three excuses for anyone who has shelved Mexico's cultural center as nothing more than a pipedream. In March, Volaris launched a red eye to the Yucatán's capital of Mérida that departs on Saturdays and returns on Tuesdays. Are two days in the Yucatán worth the journey? We'd like to respond with a resounding, Claro, que sí!

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# SAN DIEGO SCENE



Rendering courtesy of RIDA Chula Vista.

## Port Commission action signals the start of the transformation of the Chula Vista waterfront

The Board of Port Commissioners unanimously granted project approval and authorized issuance of a Coastal Development Permit to RIDA Chula Vista LLC for development of a \$ 1 billion resort hotel and convention center on the Chula Vista bayfront, the centerpiece for a world-class destination offering acres of park, open space, recreation and cultural features for residents and visitors. The project has been described as the last great waterfront development opportunity in Southern California.

The Chula Vista Bayfront resort hotel and convention center will be operated by Gaylord Hotels, the large convention hotel brand of Marriott International. It will include: up to 1,600 hotel rooms; approximately 400,000 square feet of convention and meeting space (including pre-function space); retail and resort-level amenities such as: restaurant/bar/lounge facilities; recreational facilities; a spa; a pool with a lazy river; bike and boat rentals; and more.

The project cost is estimated to be approximately \$1.13 billion and is expected to have a tremendous regional economic impact, generating approximately \$1.3 billion. RIDA estimates approximately 10,000 jobs (both direct and indirect) will be created during the construction period, and once built, another \$475 million is anticipated to be generated per year with 1,500 permanent jobs created.

When complete, the public will enjoy more than 200 acres of parks, a shoreline promenade, walking trails, RV camping, shopping, dining and more. The master plan also establishes ecological buffers to protect wildlife habitat, species and other coastal resources.

“This is a great day for Chula Vista, the Port of San Diego and the region,” said Chula Vista Mayor Mary Casillas Salas. “We are thrilled the Port Commissioners approved the development permit for RIDA Development to construct our world-class hotel and convention center on the Chula Vista Bayfront. We look forward to the groundbreaking celebration in 2020.”

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Ronson J. Shamoun, Principal Attorney and CEO of RJS LAW, is an Adjunct Law Professor at the University of San Diego—School of Law where he teaches a Tax Practice and Penalties class. He was recently presented with the following awards:

- San Diego Metro Magazine- Best Attorney 2016
- San Diego Magazine- Top Attorney 2016
- San Diego Business Journal- Best of the Bar 2014, 2015 & 2016

- Martindale Hubbell's- AC Preeminent Rated 2014, 2015 & 2016
- San Diego Daily Transcript- Top Attorney 2014 & 2015
- San Diego Metro Magazine- 40 Under 40 - 2015

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## Dempsey Construction converts office complex into educational facility for autistic children

Dempsey Construction has completed the conversion of a former two-story office complex into The Children’s Workshop, an educational center for special needs and autistic children. The new Children’s Workshop facility is located at 9524 Kearny Villa Road in San Diego.

According to Dempsey Construction Project Manager Wes McNary, the scope of work consisted of the demolition of all existing interior improvements within the multi-story office building, followed by the construction of new improvements that included building system upgrades (MPE), classroom facilities featuring one-on-one classrooms, teaching cubes, administrative offices for faculty, independent training center, and occupational therapy space. In addition, the exterior building facade was renovated with new exterior metal awnings, new glazing and paint. A portion of the parking lot was converted into an outdoor playground, as well as accessibility upgrades, new hardscape and landscape improvements throughout. Project designer was Kevin De Freitas.



The former office complex was transformed into a center for special needs and autistic children.

## Wearable cooling and heating patch could serve as personal thermostat and save energy

Engineers at the University of California San Diego have developed a wearable patch that could provide personalized cooling and heating at home, work, or on the go. The soft, stretchy patch cools or warms a user’s skin to a comfortable temperature and keeps it there as the ambient temperature changes. It is powered by a flexible, stretchable battery pack and can be embedded in clothing. Researchers say wearing it could help save energy on air conditioning and heating.

The work is published May 17 in the journal *Science Advances*.

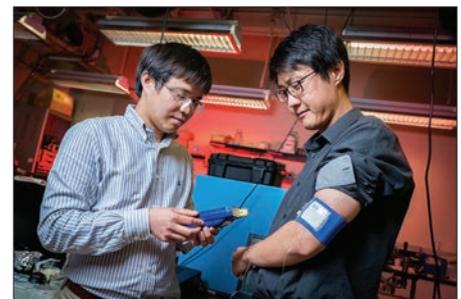
“This type of device can improve your personal thermal comfort whether you are commuting on a hot day or feeling too cold in your office,” said Renkun Chen, a professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering at UC San Diego who led the study.

The device, which is at the proof-of-

concept stage, could also save energy. “If wearing this device can make you feel comfortable within a wider temperature range, you won’t need to turn down the thermostat as much in the summer or crank up the heat as much in the winter,” Chen said. Keeping a building’s set temperature 12 degrees higher during the summer, for example, could cut cooling costs by about 70 percent, he noted.

There are a variety of personal cooling and heating devices on the market, but they are not the most convenient to wear or carry around. Some use a fan, and some need to be soaked or filled with fluid such as water.

Chen and a team of researchers at the UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering designed their device to be comfortable and convenient to wear. It’s flexible, lightweight and can be easily integrated into clothing.



Renkun Chen (left), measures the temperature of the prototype cooling/heating system worn by Sahngki Hong (right), the study’s first author. (Photos by David Baillot/UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering)

The patch is made of thermoelectric alloys—materials that use electricity to create a temperature difference and vice versa—sandwiched between stretchy elastomer sheets. The device physically cools or heats the skin to a temperature that the wearer chooses.

## San Diego testing drone delivery program

By Dave Schwab | [sdnews.com](http://sdnews.com)

Deliveries may soon be coming by way of drones. That is, if all goes well with a three-year testing program. The city of San Diego was selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct testing as part of the unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) Integration Pilot Program (IPP).

Working with several public and private sector partners, the city has been evaluating the feasibility of advanced UAS operations with numerous applications. Those include unmanned traffic management, night operations, flight over people, and flight beyond the visual line of sight.

And the myriad possibilities inherent in drone delivery don't end there. Uber is seriously exploring tapping the market for UAS with the creation of a new platform, Uber Elevate.

Even McDonald's in San Diego has gotten involved in exploring the potential of drone delivery. Starting in San Diego as soon as this summer, the fast-food giant could be delivering via drones.

McDonald's via Uber, however, won't be sending drones straight to people's doors. Rather, drones will be sent to designated "safe landing zones" where human couriers will pick up the food for transfer to residences. Uber has said it might also be possible for drones to be sent to parked Uber cars tagged with QR codes, which will then carry the goods to their final destinations.



The city of San Diego was selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct testing as part of the unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) Integration Pilot Program.

## Lisa Ordóñez named first woman dean at UC San Diego's business school

Lisa D. Ordóñez has been appointed the next dean of the University of California San Diego's Rady School of Management, effective Sept. 1. She currently serves as the vice dean of academic programs at University of Arizona's Eller School of Management. A first-generation college graduate, Ordóñez has been a dedicated contributor to programs that support student success and assist women and underrepresented minorities in reaching their career goals.



Lisa Ordóñez

As the successor to Robert Sullivan, who was appointed as the school's founding dean in 2003, Ordóñez is the first woman dean at the UC San Diego business school.

In her role as vice dean at the University of Arizona, Ordóñez manages an \$80 million budget;

oversees, develops and resources high quality academic and research programs; and guides departments in the recruitment and promotion of a diverse faculty. She co-chaired the campuswide process that created the University of Arizona's 2019 Strategic Plan, which includes more than 90 strategic goals and initiatives intended to guide the university's priorities for years to come.

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# Oz-Themed San Diego County Fair celebrates community

The 2019 San Diego County Fair in Del Mar attracted 1,531,199 visitors over its 27-day run, assuring its place as one of the top five fairs in the United States and Canada.

Although attendance this year was below the 1.561 million guests in 2018, fairgoers embraced the “Wonderful Wizard of Oz” theme, gorged on all kinds of food and confections, got their thrills on the many carnival rides and listened and danced to a litany of entertainers.

The only blemish on this year’s fair was the reported cases of Shiga toxin-producing E. Coli, reportedly related to the animal exhibits, and resulting in the death of a 2-year-old boy. “The investigation is ongoing, and even though the fair is over, there are likely more cases that will be reported,” said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., interim deputy county public health officer. “This isn’t unusual for a public health investigation. We have asked local doctors to be on the lookout for symptoms of STEC.”

The fair, which began in 1880 to bring San Diego County farmers together to share ideas, compete for the best pies and citrus fruits and challenge each other to horse races, continues to celebrate agriculture and community pride.

## 2019 STATS

### Food Facts:

Australian Battered Potatoes used 11,200 pounds of potatoes and 6,720 pints of oil to deep-fry their potato patties. They were covered in 192 gallons of ranch dressing, 40 cases of cheese sauce, 160 pounds of bacon and 120 pounds of sour cream.

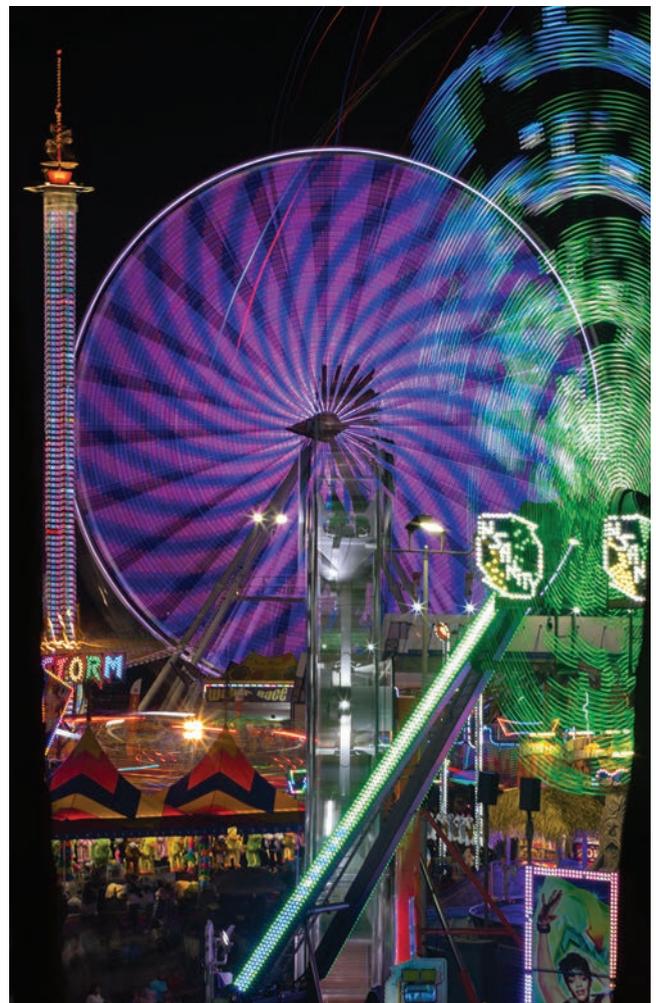
Bacon-A-Fair used more than 31,000 pounds of bacon in their various offerings. Their new delicacy – the pupusa – was a smashing success, as they sold an estimated 8,000 of the El Salvadorian cornmeal sandwiches.

Biggy’s Meat Market sold nearly 3,000 pounds of Big Ribs. Biggy’s used an estimated 800 pounds of Crunchy Flamin’ Hot Cheetos for their Cheetos Cheese Fries and Cheetos Cheese Tots, which were dunked into 100 gallons of cheese sauce.

Candy Factory used more than 400 pounds of gourmet candy and lollipops to create their new craft-made ice cream Mermaid, Unicorn and Orange Dream Floats.

Chicken Charlie introduced two new Oz-some items and both were winners. Hungry fairgoers enjoyed 8,000 of the new deep-fried balls of crème brûlée and 2,000 of the Buffalo Chicken Chimichanga. And, as Charlie puts it – he used “a truckload of oil” to deep-fry all of his specialties.

Country Fair Cinnamon Rolls used 15,000 pounds of cinnamon roll flour and three tons of cinnamon and sugar to make their



famous pastries. Those tasty rolls were covered with 1,500 pounds of cream cheese frosting and 500 pounds of walnuts.

Corn Star grilled an estimated 47,000 ears of corn.

Grinders used 780 pounds of pork and 2,340 pounds of pastrami as toppings for their French fries. They sold over 7,000 pounds of fries. Grinders also used 780 pounds of cheese and 520 pounds of turkey breast for their sandwiches.

Pignotti's Gourmet Italian brought back their highly-acclaimed Spaghetti Donuts and sold more than 1,400 of them. More than 800 Waffle Pizzas and 1,100 Mac N' Cheese Egg Rolls were enjoyed by fairgoers. Also popular were Pignotti's Lasagna Egg Rolls, (950 sold) and their Lasagna Nachos (2,800 orders were enjoyed.)

Pink's sold 6,000 pounds of hot dogs and 7,200 pounds of french fries.

The fair's Premier Food Service Restaurants featured the new "Emerald Farms Eatery" in the Flower and Garden Show presenting local, healthy and fresh foods. "The Original Cardiff Crack BBQ" was a new addition to the Paddock, and through a partnership with Seaside Market, more than 5,000 Tri Tip Sliders and Fully-Loaded Cardiff Crack Nachos were sold. The Sangria Wine Slushies have also been a hit. Thirsty patrons have consumed 90 barrels of the Fair's two official signature craft beers, the Ballast Point "Field of Poppies" and Mike Hess Brewing's "Wizard of Haze."

**Top Ten Rides**

1. Sky Ride; Ray Cammack Shows Inc.
2. The Big Wheel; Ray Cammack Shows Inc.
3. Crazy Mouse; S & J Entertainment

4. G-Force; Southern Cross Rides LLC
5. Rave Wave; Ray Cammack Shows Inc.
6. Fast Trax Slide; State Fair Spectaculars LLC
7. Magnum; Wood Entertainment
8. Alien Abduction; Ray Cammack Shows, Inc.
9. Olympic Bobsled; Helm & Sons
10. German Funhouse; Fun Attractions

**Exhibits**

- The Plant, Grow, Eat student agriculture program included 89 schools and 8,148 students.
- The School Tours program included 132 schools with 31,361 students.
- The Field Trip program reached 3,672 kids.
- The Planting with Pride program reached 1,362 seniors.

**70th Annual Livestock Auction**

The auction raised \$482,776 for 4H and FFA youth, which included:

- 44 cattle at \$3.24/pound
- 180 hogs at \$4.19/pound
- 88 lambs at \$7.44/pound
- 43 goats at \$834/head

**Lost and found**

- 132 credit cards
- 69 ID's
- 138 wallets and purses
- 158 cell phones
- 181 articles of clothing
- 104 pairs of glasses
- 46 items of jewelry
- 89 sets of keys
- 155 miscellaneous items, including: 2 retainers, 3 strollers, one cane, a seat cushion, lots of backpacks and lunch bags, a box of stuffed animals and last, but not least, a Lyft scooter.



**Aneke, congratulations on receiving your "Women of Influence" award!**

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ENTREPRENEURS

# *How I Launched and Grew My Startup (And How You Can Too)*

By Sean Pour



**T**here is a heavy dose of uncertainty that comes along with launching a startup. In this world, there are no guarantees, no safety nets, and foolproof plans do not exist. That's exactly why you need to be fearless.

When the 2008 financial crisis happened I was just 14 years old—old enough, however, to be aware of the consequences this global event was imposing on the used car dealership my father owned. He immigrated to the United States with very little money, and my parents had to work their way from the bottom up. They'd been conscientious with their finances, and it saddened me that all of their efforts were leading to more worries about money. I decided I had to do something.

As a 14 year old, I may have lacked an extensive collection of life experiences, but there was one thing I already knew that my parents hadn't quite grasped the magnitude of: the power of the Internet. I created a website that would allow us to buy cars across the United States, which eventually grew into something beyond my imagination (sellmax.com).

No, my business wasn't conceived in a cozy meeting room with pre-selected co-founders and contributors—nor did I facilitate its birth by accepting any venture capital or meticulously planning out every step of my business' growth. I embarked on this journey with a crucial frame of mind: failure is not an option. As problems presented themselves, I learned how to fix them. Even when this required teaching myself HTML and PHP, researching marketing techniques and applying them, taking extra shifts at the car dealership and forgoing playing basketball with my friends—there was no roadblock that I considered permanent. I owe my success to the example my parents set for me: relentless work ethic and passion.

So you may be wondering, how exactly are you supposed to launch your own startup? There are a few things I'd like to suggest—and beware, this is not a simple pharmacy-filled prescription, all of these things need to come from within. First, a great idea comes from a place of passion. You likely won't need to search long and far to identify what that is for you. Just look around you—what gets you up in the morning? My fire was fueled by the lessons my father taught me about his business, and my determination to save what my family had worked so hard to build.

Second, you must be fearless. Obstacles and adversities are always around the corner, you need to learn how to face them, deal with them, and adapt to them until you can conquer them.

**A startup is called a startup because it is something that is starting, something that has the prospect of growing into something profitable, or even lucrative—but there are no guarantees.**

My business was a product of adverse circumstances. Your fire and your passion does not need to come from a place of love—loving an idea, a product, or an industry—it is just as likely, or even more likely to succeed from a place of discomfort. If there is something you have to fix, have to save, or need to stop, you will do whatever it takes to make it happen because you love what is at stake. For me, that was my family's wellbeing.

Thirdly, if you're determined to launch a startup, you have to be clever. Though no concept is guaranteed success, some are better than others. For example, you're thinking about creating a rideshare platform which has no employees but instead operates by recruiting independent contractors. Sound familiar? Yep, that's because it already exists as Uber. You want to enter a market that's either one or both of these things: underdeveloped and unsaturated.

Don't try to compete with Titans right off the bat—a startup is called a startup because it is something that is starting, something that has the prospect of growing into something profitable, or even lucrative—but there are no guarantees. You can't foresee the course your concept will take, but you can certainly place your business model in a position where it is more likely to take off.

Know your fire and use it as ammunition, be fearless, and choose a path less traveled. With those things in tow, you are ready to embark on the journey of launching your startup.



**Company Name:** SellMax (sellmax.com)

**Co-founder:** Sean Pour

**Launch Date:** 2014

"We started in San Diego, but we now purchase cars throughout the entire United States. So, instead of trading your car into a dealership or trying to sell it on Craigslist you can call our company. We aim to streamline the car selling process. We don't sell cars to the public, we only buy them." – Sean Pour

LAW

# H O M E G R O W N I C O N

## HIGGS FLETCHER & MACK CELEBRATES ITS 80TH YEAR

In 1938, Dutch Higgs and Ferd Fletcher, who met while representing clients on opposite sides of a lawsuit, became golfing friends before they ever worked side-by-side in a law Firm.

Higgs Fletcher & Mack added its stamp to San Diego's skyline with the addition of the firm's name atop the building at 401 W. A Street.



**W**hen they combined forces to form Higgs & Fletcher in 1939, there was no way they could have imagined the legacy they would leave behind. Now “80 years young,” the firm, now known as Higgs Fletcher & Mack (HFM), is San Diego’s longest standing home-grown law firm, nearly 80 attorneys strong and representing a myriad of individuals and businesses in San Diego and throughout California.

Over the past 80 years, the firm has grown and evolved, successfully adapting to the needs of its clients, and adhering to a simple set of core values to ensure client success and its own.

The firm’s guiding principles include adopting their clients’ issues and challenges as their own, engaging in their clients’ success through creative problem solving, and always being prepared, loyal, honest, responsive and above all, professional.

“Every attorney who has worked at Higgs, Fletcher & Mack has truly made a mark on the firm and is a part of our legacy,” said Steve Cologne, HFM’s managing partner. “Without a doubt, our success has been predicated by the strong foundation and core values the firm’s founders established, the hard-working attorneys who comprise HFM, and all of the clients over the years who have trusted us to represent their best interests and serve as their counsel.”

As HFM honors its 80th anniversary, it is introducing some significant changes – a new logo, a complete remodel of its office suites, a new modernized website, and perhaps most significantly, it has added its stamp to San Diego’s skyline with the addition of the firm’s name atop the building at 401 W. A Street.

“While we work well beyond San Diego, we know that HFM will always be a vital part of San Diego’s business community,” said Cologne. “As the city has evolved, so have our practices. We have been fortunate to work with some of the individuals, businesses, and other entities that make this city thrive, and we aim to continue to do so in the decades to come.”

Another key indicator of the HFM’s success is the number of long-standing attorneys who have been practicing at HFM for over 25 years, and a plethora of newer attorneys committed to making HFM their professional home. As the firm looks towards the future, its succession plans are its highest priorities.

“HFM got to the place it is in today because of the sharp and diligent attorneys who comprise the firm, and without a doubt, our attorneys will be the key to ensuring our future success,” said Cologne. “I am proud to say that our firm is full of talented professionals who will not only continue to elevate the firm, but also the practice of law.”

**“As San Diego has evolved, so have our practices. We have been fortunate to work with some of the individuals, businesses, and other entities that make this city thrive, and we aim to continue to do so in the decades to come.”**

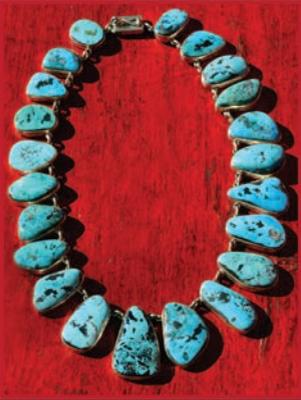
**– STEVE COLOGNE, HFM’S MANAGING PARTNER**

# UNIQUE

## IN ALL THE WORLD



**DIANE POWERS**  
has been selected as  
one of the **WOMEN  
OF INFLUENCE IN  
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# Women of Influence 2019

Meet our selection of Women of Influence in the San Diego region

## Anneke Stender

Anneke Stender is a co-owner of TAG, a company that provides an array of outsourced accounting services and software solutions to help companies and individuals achieve their business goals. She has made her mark in the accounting and financial world for high-net worth families, their businesses, foundations and family offices. She is a trusted resource for her clients, some of whom are the most prominent family offices and the wealthiest families in the country. She understands their unique needs and has created back-office accounting and bill pay services to help them stay organized and gain financial peace of mind. Stender started her career in 2003 as the controller of TAG. Back then TAG was known as The Accounting Group with only seven employees. Today, TAG has grown to over 50 employees with four office locations and serving clients nationwide. In 2008, Stender saw a gap in the marketplace for back-office accounting and personal reporting services for CEOs who had sold their businesses or retired and no longer had corporate accounting to help with their day-to-day financial tasks. Stender created a bill pay division, complete with a client setup process with the appropriate checks and balances, while also having bank-level security and technology in place. She is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of San Diego State University with a degree in finance.



## Nancy Sasaki

Nancy Sasaki is the chief executive officer of the United Way of San Diego County. United Way plays a unique role in the San Diego community, bringing people and resources together to spark breakthrough action to elevate every child and family toward a brighter future. Sasaki has clarified and strengthened United Way's messaging and identity through the creation and implementation of a community listening project with online surveys and webinars, and held nine salons and interviews with key community leaders. Networking within the community is a priority for Sasaki, as seen in "Nancy's Blog," her monthly update on United Way's website. She connects daily with philanthropic leaders and decision makers countywide to open doors and start conversations for collaboration and new initiatives for the organization. She is a board member of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless San Diego. She also devotes time and resources to 2-1-1- San Diego, a resource and information hub that connects people with community, health and disaster services. Sasaki has worked alongside the local refugee community to implement major grants and is a founding member of the San Diego Impact Investors Network, an organization that brings capital to solve the region's most pressing challenges using evidence-based practices. Prior to United Way, Sasaki served as an executive director of Alliance Healthcare Foundation. She earned both her undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of Texas.



## Sandra Brower

Sandra Brower is a partner at Higgs Fletcher & Mack. She has earned her reputation as a legal expert in the field of real estate litigation through a long career of winning cases, including several landmark cases that resulted in published appellate opinions. In a landmark deal for Petco Park, she represented several property and business owners in the Redevelopment Agency of the city of San Diego's eminent domain actions to acquire land for San Diego's premier ballpark, including the largest property owner in the stadium's footprint. She also successfully represented condemning agencies, including the San Diego Community College District in acquiring two blocks Downtown for the expansion of its City College campus, and the San Diego Unified School District in over 100 eminent domain actions to acquire properties for over 20 new school sites. Though her primary expertise is in eminent domain, Brower's practice includes all areas of real estate law, including land use and planning, environmental, contract disputes, broker liability, construction defects, homeowners associations, title and boundary disputes, and title insurance matters. She is actively involved in the Coronado Chamber of Commerce, the Real Property and Civil Litigation Sections of the San Diego County Bar Association, Lawyers Club of San Diego and the Rotary Club of Coronado. She is a San Diego Super Lawyer and has been honored as one of SD METRO Magazine's Best Attorneys.



## Michelle Jacko

Michelle Jacko is founder, CEO and managing partner of the Jacko Law Group and Core Compliance & Legal Services. She has developed a business model structured around the success of her team.

She specializes in investment adviser, broker-dealer and fund regulatory compliance matters, internal control development, regulatory examinations and operational risk management. Her consultation practice is focused on the areas of mock examinations, annual revenues, policies and procedures development. She is very involved with Autism Tree Foundation, an organization which focuses on advocacy. Core Compliance now offers multi-level packages for firms to partner alongside Core Compliance throughout the year. It is a comprehensive engagement to maintain and manage a firm's compliance program needs through various levels of service, which is determined by the company's business model, complexity and budget. She is the co-founder of the Southern California Compliance Group and also is a FINRA arbitrator.



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## Parisa Weiss

Parisa Weiss is a shareholder at Seltzer Caplan McMahon and Vitek. With a passion for community service and a successful career at Seltzer Caplan, her impact is significant. Day in and day out, she safeguards client legacies, educates colleagues, promotes the firm and serves the community's most vulnerable populations. With 15 years of experience, she has taken the legal industry by storm and has emerged as a leader within Seltzer Caplan. She serves as supervisor for the summer law clerks and mentors associates on an ongoing basis. She represents both individuals and businesses in estate planning, trust administration, probate administration and probate conservatorships, four areas of law often laden with high-financial stakes, interpersonal relationships, family dynamics and emotionally-charged decisions. Weiss is well versed in all aspects of estate planning and administration, including the management of trusts, charitable gift giving, retirement, health care and disability planning, estate, gift and income taxes and trust and estate litigation. She is heavily involved with the San Diego Volunteer Lawyers Program, working to better the lives of thousands of women, children and men throughout San Diego County. The program is the oldest pro bono legal services program that provides San Diego's indigent and disadvantaged populations, including the homeless, victims of domestic violence and abuse, veterans, immigrants and more, with resources and equal access to the justice system. She is a member of the Iranian-American Bar Association and is a volunteer with the American Civil Liberties Union.



## Diane Powers



Diane Powers is the owner of the Bazaar del Mundo Shops and Restaurant Group. She is one of the most recognized names in San Diego's business community. For more than 40 years, Powers has been delighting San Diegans and visitors alike with vibrant dining and shopping experiences. Between her Bazaar del Mundo Shops in Old Town and her four fine dining Mexican restaurants throughout the county, she has built an empire focused on bringing an authentic slice of Mexico and Latin America to San Diego. She has fostered ongoing relationships with dozens of Latin and Native American artists, bringing them to San Diego each year to showcase their generational traditions and customs to the public. She is chair of the design committee of the Old Town Chamber of Commerce and is on the San Diego Restaurant Association Board. She is widely praised for her work to revitalize Old Town and to bolster the area long after she lost her lease inside the state park. She conceived and produced a "Cinco de Mayo" festival within the Bazaar del Mundo and the Old Town San Diego Historic Park. The event draws thousands of visitors to the community and deeply benefits both the state park and the Old Town merchants. Powers has received a Living Legacy Award from the Women's International Center and has been named a Working Woman 500 by the national Working Woman Magazine. She also has been inducted into the San Diego Convention and Visitors Hall of Fame.

## Tiffany English

Tiffany English, principal at Ware Malcomb, is responsible for business development and managing the firm's San Diego office, and overseeing its work in Phoenix and Latin America. English has been involved in the industry since 1996 and her experience includes interior architecture, planning, design and management. She is the first female designer to become principal at Ware Malcomb (in 2013). For more than five years, she has participated in the firm's mentorship program. English is an active community volunteer, involved with YMCA Magdalena Ecke, serving on its board of directors.



## Crystal Culhane



Crystal Culhane, an associate in the San Diego office of Fish & Richardson, focuses her legal practice on various aspects of intellectual property law for clients in the chemistry, pharmaceutical, biotechnology, nanotechnology and medical device industries. On earning her doctorate degree in chemistry, Culhane sought a career outside the lab where she could utilize her science background. Today she works with clients from the ground up during the development of products, patents and patent strategies to proactively safeguard their intellectual property assets. Culhane is actively involved member of Athena San Diego, a vibrant professional development organization for women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-related fields.

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
United Way of San Diego County  
CEO Nancy Sasaki

for being selected as one  
of the **Women of Influence**  
in San Diego.

United Way of San Diego County

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## Jennifer Glaser

Jennifer Glaser, a tax partner at Lavine, Lofgren, Morris & Engelberg, began her career there in 2004 and has more than 14 years of experience providing tax compliance and planning services to corporations, partnerships, individuals, trusts and nonprofits. Her clients are involved in many industries, including real estate, professional services and hospitality. While a senior at University of San Diego, Glaser was accepted as an intern at the law firm, an experience that granted her the opportunity to see close-up how the tax business works. Jennifer dove right in and her drive, determination and work ethic earned her a full-time position with the firm upon graduation.

## Carolina Bravo-Karimi

Carolina Bravo-Karimi is the first Latina partner at Wilson Turner Kosmo, a member of the firm's Employment Law group that represents employers in a range of employment disputes. Fluent in four languages (including Farsi, Italian and Spanish), she is a highly sought after workplace investigator, particularly in cases involving Spanish-speaking and multicultural employees. She is a frequent speaker, sharing her unique perspective on workplace dynamics, sexual harassment and unconscious bias. Recently, Carolina has participated in panels on workplace conduct during politically divisive times, equal pay and numerous panels inspired by the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements.



## Fernanda Coelho

Fernanda Coelho is the founder of Match Your Need, pairing people and nonprofit organizations in need with San Diegans who have the time or resources to help them. The concept is simple: We all have needs, and we all have something to give. Tapping into this truth, Coelho founded the social-impact technology startup in 2018 and has quickly affected positive outcomes throughout San Diego County, with over 400 matches to date. Coelho is a business executive with more than 20 years of experience in management consulting, venture investing and business operations.

## Bre'an Fox

Bre'an Fox, principal and senior designer at FS Design Group, launched the firm in the early '90s as a one-stop planning, design, management and relocation company that now employs seven people. She has been at the top of San Diego's commercial real estate trade for more than three decades, focusing her talents on creating spaces that reflect company brands, support of their culture, optimize functionality and inspire their staff. She has led her firm to customize spaces for some of San Diego's titans of industry, including Allen Matkins, Daybreak Game Company, UC San Diego, Kilroy Realty CRUZAN and Emmes Real Estate.



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# A Whirlwind Trip to Mérida

Are two days in the Yucatán worth the journey? Claro, que si!

By Marlise Kast-Myers | Photos by Benjamin Myers [www.marlisekast.com](http://www.marlisekast.com)

Usually one of three reasons keep a person from traveling: time, money, or desire. But a new flight out of Tijuana is squashing all three excuses for anyone who has shelved Mexico's cultural center as nothing more than a pipedream.

In March, Volaris launched a red eye to the Yucatán's capital of Mérida that departs on Saturdays and returns on Tuesdays. The benefit of sleepwalking through the terminal is that flights start at MX\$699 pesos, which translates to a whopping \$35 USD — less than a night out in San Diego.

As of late, my husband, Benjamin and I have made a habit of snagging these “too good to be true” deals to Mexico — first La Paz, then Ixtapa, and now Mérida — all within the year. This is where wisdom eclipses wealth.

Ignore LAX and San Diego International Airport, and instead head straight to CBX (Cross Border Express). Opened in 2015, this pedestrian bridge connects San Diego to the Tijuana International Airport, with such perks as secured parking, no border waits, and a Starbucks to bid you farewell.

We're not the only ones in on the secret. Travel traction of 6,500 daily CBX passengers has led Tijuana International

Airport to open the skies to 35 destinations in Mexico and direct flights to China. It just completed a \$95.5 million renovation, giving the TJ airport a major facelift that puts SAN to the test.

All that being said, only one question remains: Are two days in the Yucatán worth the journey? We'd like to respond with a resounding, Claro, que si!

And here's why.

Sunday morning, 6:10 a.m. (yes, ouch!) arrive in Mérida and transfer to your hotel.

The Yucatán's capital is ready for you, with over 300 restaurants and 6,000 hotel rooms to choose from, including our personal favorites at Casa Azul, Roses & Xocolate, and Casa Lecanda.

For the refined traveler, these elegant palaces-turned-boutique hotels along Paseo de Montejo are a symbol of the splendor of the Henequen (sisal) era. Muted neoclassical facades hide historic perfection behind stone walls boasting central patios, marble arches, French tiles, and poolside hammocks.

Due to the brevity of our trip, and our packed itinerary, this





time we opted for the budget-friendly El Castellano by Gamma (rooms from \$50). In the heart of the city, this spacious property caters to jetlagged travelers with uber-early check-in and hearty Yucatecan breakfasts. From here, Mérida's Historic Center is steps away, with museums, galleries, theaters, shops, parks, and the 16th century Cathedral San Ildefonso.

But first things first: A nap, shower, and shuttle to the ancient city of Uxmal. Located 50 miles from Mérida, this UNESCO World Heritage site is the first stop on the famous Ruta Puuc connecting several Mayan archeological zones.

While travelers often opt for the mighty Chichen Itzá, we must say, we fell madly in love with Uxmal. Considered one of the most important archaeological sites of Mayan culture, this pre-Colombian city has massive stone structures jutting from jungle treetops. In their ornate carvings, temple ruins tell tales of fertility and power that ruled the kingdom.

For panoramic views without borders, we climbed the 115-foot Great Pyramid on the south side of the Governor's Palace. By noon, we had toured Uxmal's eight structures and climbed the most distinctive Mayan ruin on the Yucatán Peninsula.

From Uxmal, we headed straight to Cenotes Hacienda Mucuyché. Opened in 2017, this fresh-water sinkhole is just one of 1,500 sacred pools across the Yucatán. For a small fee, you can plunge, swim, snorkel, and dive into these underwater caves framed by

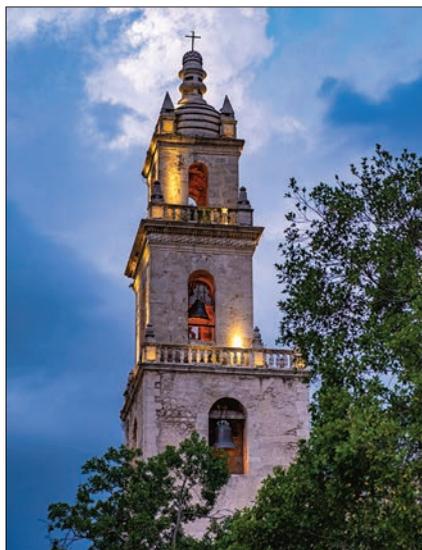
impressive limestone formations.

In our half dozen visits to this Mexican state, we've had plenty of exposure to these majestic pools, but none quite like Cenotes Mucuyché. Here we floated through caves, drifted in canals, passed beneath waterfalls, and then — for the finale — entered a dark chamber lit only by stalactite prisms. The grotto was silent, other than the sound of water dripping from icicle-like formations tapered inches above our heads.

As part of the cenote experience, guests have access to the abandoned hacienda once belonging to the Peon family. Recently purchased by the Xcaret Group, this slice of history dates back to the 18th century when the hacienda reigned in henequen, and Empress Carlotta bathed in the cenote. Triggering images of the Mexican Empire are the barren chapel, pavilion, and distillery.

After lunch at Cenotes Mucuyché, we returned to Mérida for a city tour of the Historical Center — Mexico's second largest after Mexico City. Every evening at 9:30 p.m., free walking tours are hosted by guides who narrate Mérida's rich heritage, starting with the Cathedral. Built in 1563, it's one of the oldest chapels in the Americas and one of most important in Mexico.

Clearly locals know this, especially



during Mass when we found a good percentage of Mérida's 1.5 million residents roaming the main square. Sunday isn't just about taking communion however; it's a day when the zocalo transforms into a festival of music, crafts, food, and an evening vaqueria (traditional Yucatecan dancers in costume).

Fronting the Cathedral is Independence Park where vendors sell everything from cotton candy and snow cones to paper fans and shoe shines. It's here that locals routinely unite in a time of cultural celebration — singing, dancing, and roaming the lively streets in search of Mérida moments.

On this boisterous square sits the Governor's Palace, a quiet spot where we rested beside floor-to-ceiling murals by Fernando Castro Pacheco. His impressive, yet dark works of art, detail the near 500-year history of Mérida.

Our city tour passed cafes, shops, bars, and concluded at the famed Teatro José Peón Contreras, home to the Symphony Orchestra of Yucatán. With just enough time to window shop before dinner, we admired top Yucatecan "must haves" including sisal bags, guayabera shirts, woven hammocks, and fiery habanero sauce from the original source.

That evening we dined at the Museum of Yucatecan Gastronomy, a restaurant devoted to preserving traditional Yucatecan and Mayan cuisine. The dining experience starts with a gastronomy tour through a replica of a Mayan village where we sampled handmade tortillas, spices,

## TRAVEL

nuts, and herbs. This traditional eatery is one of the only restaurants in Mérida to cook regional dishes in an underground pibil oven.

Among the pre-Hispanic recipes we sampled were Poc Chuc (pork marinated in sour orange and achiote sauce), Sopa de Lima (chicken broth with tortilla strips and citrus), Pavo Relleno Negro (turkey in charred chilies and spices), and Cochinita Pibil (slow-roasted pork dish). During dinner, I turned to my husband and asked, “Have we only been here a day?”

One down and one more day to experience, we awoke on Monday and headed straight for Celestún, the hub of Mexico’s ecotourism. Just 55 miles from Mérida, this sleepy fishing village is home to white-sandy beaches, turquoise waters, and a wealth of wildlife. Like a scene straight out of National Geographic, our boat cruised thick mangroves, cutting through narrow channels where 234 species of mammals roamed. Crocodiles and birds were among those we spotted, including one of the world’s largest

flamingo colonies.

In peak season (November–April), it’s common to see flocks of 5,000 flamingos huddled in packs. After a quick dip in a refreshing cenote, we headed to Hotel Xixim for an afternoon of swimming, snorkeling, and lounging. Along the bumpy road are salt flats where we collected natural salt crystals to season our fries back home.

The hotel is far removed from civilization but worth the effort, rewarding each guest with sugary-white sands and water five shades of blue. If budget and time allow, Xixim has 32 bungalows (from \$200) where you can unplug and enjoy yoga, massages, healthy cuisine, and local tours.

After a day on (and in) the water, we de-pruned our bodies over a swanky dinner at Hotel NH Collection Mérida. Located at Paseo 60, this contemporary hotel is worth a visit for those who want to be in the heart of coolness. Shrimp cocktail, an ahi tower, and other seafood smalls paired oh-too-well with rich blends from Valle de Guadalupe.

Following dinner, we strolled Paseo 60, back-dropped by live music and head-turning fashions at trendy boutiques. It’s here that Mérida’s top chefs are opening micro-visions of their successful eateries.

En route to our hotel, we stopped by the illuminated Monumento a la Patria by sculptor Romulo Rozo. This city icon on Paseo de Montejo is a symbol of harmony, history, and tradition of Mexico. Dwarfed in its presence, we were overcome by a humbled reverence for the beauty and power of this magical homeland.

On the 6 a.m. return flight to TJ (again, ouch), we thought about all we experienced in the course of two days. The trip didn’t break the bank, nor did it cost more than a “sick day.”

For those who can handle a little sleep deprivation, only one question remains: ¿Por Qué No?!

For more information, visit [Yucatán.travel / crossboarderexpress.com / volaris.com](http://Yucatán.travel/crossboarderexpress.com/volaris.com)





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