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Dr. Lauren Lek



Danielle Humphries



Leah Rosenthal

## SAN DIEGO'S 2023 WOMEN *of* ACCOMPLISHMENT



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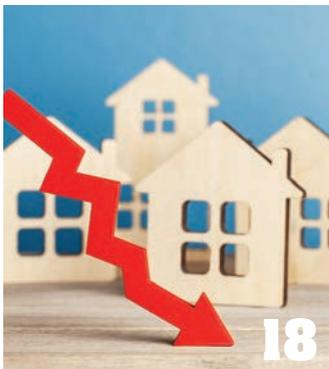
**Women of Accomplishment 2023**

Dr. Lauren Lek, head of School at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, headlines our Women of Inspiration and Accomplishment. She is a woman who is inspiring the next generation of women leaders.



**Electric Autonomous 'Robotaxis' Coming To San Diego"**

Electric Autonomous "Robotaxis" are coming to San Diego. Zoox, an autonomous mobility company, is opening a San Diego office this summer and says it will bring more than 100 new jobs to San Diego.



**New UC San Diego Model Predicts Housing Prices to Fall as Much as 18 Percent this Year**

A new UCSD model forecasting home prices based on consumer demand predicts that prices will decrease by 12 percent in San Diego this year and by 5 percent nationally. Prices in Phoenix are expected to drop by 18 percent this year.



**SoCal Road Trip to Switzerland: A Quest for Neutrality**

A fun California road trip from San Francisco to Ojai, in search of a Swiss passport! Read and follow the adventures of Marlise and Benjamin.

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# SAN DIEGO SCENE

Pink waves at Torrey Pines State Beach during the first dye release for the PiNC experiment, Jan. 20, 2023. (Photo: Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego)

## Pink dye experiment to reveal mysteries of coastal ocean dynamics | By Brittany Hook

An experiment at a San Diego beach is turning the seawater pink, temporarily, in the name of science. This winter, researchers at UC San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the University of Washington are leading a pink-hued dye experiment, titled Plumes in Nearshore Conditions, or PiNC, to study how small freshwater outflows interact with the surfzone.

Funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), the project is focused on the estuary and surrounding coastline at Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, located within Torrey Pines State Beach and Natural Reserve. The first of three dye releases began on Jan. 20, with the remaining releases taking place in early February 2023.

Rivers and estuaries play an important role in delivering freshwater and materials such as sediments and contaminants to the coastal ocean, but little is known about how these plumes of more buoyant, fresher water interact with the denser, saltier and often colder nearshore ocean environment, particularly as the plumes encounter breaking waves.

By releasing an environmentally safe pink dye in the mouth of the estuary, the PiNC research team can track the processes that take place when small-scale plumes of freshwater meet the surfzone.

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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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## Alaska Airlines beefs up its services in San Diego



Alaska Airlines is continuing to expand its foot print in San Diego.

The airline is adding new, daily nonstop flights between San Diego and both Washington Dulles (IAD) and Tampa (TPA). Service to Washington starts June 15 and service to Tampa on Oct. 5. Alaska is also adding new daily nonstop service to Eugene, Ore., (EUG) on June 15.

Neil Thwaites, Alaska's regional vice president for California, said, "our guests in San Diego asked for more nonstops to the East Coast and we're excited to add service to both the nation's capital and to Florida's vibrant Gulf Coast. With convenient daytime schedules, award-winning service and a premium product offering, guests will arrive refreshed and ready-to-go"

With the new routes, Alaska will now have 35 nonstop destinations from San Diego, the most nonstops of any airline. This includes flights to the Northeast, Northwest, throughout California, Mexico, Florida and to all four major islands of Hawaii.

All flights from San Diego offer three-class cabins. First Class and Premium Class enjoy early boarding and the most generous legroom of all domestic carriers.

The San Diego-Washington flight leaves Lindbergh Field at 8 a.m. with arrival in Washington Dulles at 4:10 p.m. The San Diego-Tampa flight leaves at 8:40 a.m. with arrival in Tampa at 4:25 p.m.

"We thank Alaska Airlines for the addition of these new routes and their continued partnership at San Diego International Airport," said Kimberly Becker, president and CEO of the San Diego Regional Airport Authority.

## Athletiverse comes to the rescue of college athletes



Name, image and likeness software company Athletiverse has emerged as an innovative new solution for college athletes looking to take advantage of their new revenue/sponsorship capabilities.

Since July 1, 2021, college athletes have been able to legally make money off their name, image and likeness after the Supreme Court's decision which ruled that college athletes should be given the right to profit from their collegiate endeavors.

Athletiverse was founded by 20-year-old Dominick Bullard, a junior at the University of San Diego. Bullard said the company plans to target the over 182 million college sports fan population and the over 32.5 million small businesses in need of locally targeted marketing.

With over 15,000 followers and over a million views on social media within the past five months, Athletiverse is quickly becoming a major player in the world of college sports. With over \$2 billion generated by college sports' top athletes in the first two years of NIL (name, image, likeness) Athletiverse is positioned to become a major player. Bullard is a seasoned college baseball player.

Darren Dummit recently joined the company as an adviser. He played a key role in negotiating a deal for USC's recent Heisman winner, Caleb Williams, with Hawkins Way Capital, a \$2 million real estate private equity fund in Beverly Hills.

## Genentech begins \$450 million expansion in Oceanside to make new drugs for rare diseases | By Chris Jennewein | Times of San Diego

Genentech has begun a \$450 million expansion of its biotech campus in Oceanside with a new facility that will produce complex drugs for rare diseases and personalized medicine.

The South San Francisco-based company plans “one of the most modern commercial-scale biotech manufacturing facilities in the world” able to simultaneously produce multiple medicines.

“As the founder of the biotechnology industry, Genentech pioneered the processes and technologies used to manufacture complex biologic medicines,” said CEO Alexander Hardy at the groundbreaking on Friday.

The new facility will be in addition to the seven existing buildings on a 60-acre site on Antibody Way. It will be operational in early 2025 and support 150 new positions.



Rendering of the Genentech property in Oceanside.

## Mitchell publishes electric vehicle collision report

Mitchell, an Enlyte company and leading technology and information provider for the property and casualty claims and collision repair industries, announced the availability of its latest trends publication: “Plugged-In: EV Collision Insights.” The new quarterly

report provides auto insurance and collision repair executives with up-to-date information on electric vehicle claims and market data. To access the report, visit [www.mitchell.com/plugged-in](http://www.mitchell.com/plugged-in). You can also subscribe to future issues by completing the web form.

## Aptera unveils ‘Launch’ edition of ultra-efficient solar vehicles

Carlsbad-based startup Aptera Motors has unveiled its inaugural Launch Edition, the first series of over 40,000 orders for a fleet of what they describe as “ultra-efficient vehicles that will bring solar mobility and freedom from the grid a reality.”

Aptera’s Launch Edition, a two-seater capable of going from 0 to 60 in four seconds, was created with “one purpose in mind — energy efficiency,” said Steve Fambro, Aptera co-founder and co-CEO. Equipped with proprietary solar technology, Fambro said Aptera’s Launch Edition will drive “up to 40 miles per day directly from the sun’s rays, making it possible to never plug in to charge again.” The company also announced this month that it is working on closing a Series B2 funding round.



Aptera's new Launch Edition. (Photo courtesy of Aptera)

## New migration data: 28 percent of San Diego apartment hunters looking to move away

Apartment List has published its latest Renter Migration Report, providing new data on where renters across the country are looking to move. At a time when housing affordability has transformed from a localized issue to a national crisis, these migration flows help explain why certain markets are booming.

Key local insights from the report include:

- 28 percent of San Diego apartment hunters looked for homes outside the metro area in 2022. The most popular destinations were Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Francisco.
- In the other direction, 40 percent of renters looking for apartments in San Diego are searching from out-of-town. Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Francisco provided the most inbound search interest last year.
- The data show that long-distance movers -- those looking for apartments in a new metro or new state -- typically offer higher budgets than local renters, signaling how recent migration patterns have put upward pressure on rents.

## Former office and retail building in Vista to be converted into residential community

A real estate development company has purchased a mixed-use, two-story building at 1070 Santa Fe Ave. in Vista for \$6.7 million and intends to convert the former office retail space into a residential community. The purchaser is AMB SSF LLC. The seller was RLS Investments LLC.

The residential conversion is set to begin immediately, and the developer expects to complete the project in the near future, according to Jeff Abramson of Lee & Associates, who represented the seller. Peter Scepanovic and Corey McHenry of Colliers International represented the buyer.



Sony Electronics' limited-quantity aibo Strawberry Milk Edition (ERS-1000/P)

## Sony Electronics launches limited aibo Strawberry Milk Edition in the U.S.

Sony Electronics Inc. announced that the limited-quantity aibo Strawberry Milk Edition (ERS-1000/P) is now available for purchase in the United States directly from Sony. Originally released in Japan in late January 2022, the aibo Strawberry Milk Edition is the third color variation of the acclaimed aibo (ERS-1000) robotic “puppy” companion in the United States.

The aibo Strawberry Milk Edition features a vibrant pink color

body with white accents and performs an exclusive dance unique to Strawberry Milk Edition models. As with the current white aibo model, the aibo Strawberry Milk Edition comes with a three-year AI Cloud Plan, charging station including both charging stand and charging mat, AC adaptor, power cord and a special pink ball for playtime.

## Fairmont Hotels signs deal with Manchester Financial Group to develop 36-story glass tower hotel Downtown

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, part of world leading hospitality group Accor, and Manchester Financial Group announced the signing of definitive agreements for the development and management of a Fairmont hotel in Downtown San Diego.

Scheduled to open in 2027, Fairmont Manchester San Diego will occupy a prime location on the North Embarcadero of the San Diego Bay, directly across from the USS Midway Aircraft Museum, adjacent to the Cruise Ship Terminal, and within walking distance of the San Diego Convention Center and the famed Gaslamp Quarter. The hotel is part of a landmark development transforming San Diego's downtown waterfront with over five acres of green space and more than 1.7 million square feet of best-in-class offices, retail, restaurants, public art and entertainment.

The elegant 36-story glass tower will feature 1,160 rooms, including 69 suites and Fairmont Gold, the brand's distinctive hotel-within-a-hotel experience boasting VIP service, exclusive lounge and private reception desk. High-end amenities will include luxury spa and fitness facilities, rooftop pool, and more than 120,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting space, including two 20,000 square-foot ballrooms.



Rendering of Fairmont Manchester San Diego hotel. (Photos courtesy of Accor)



## HAHN LOESER CONGRATULATES

### Partner Danielle C. Humphries

and the entire 2023 group of *SD Metro* “Women of Inspiration and Accomplishment” as leaders who have made San Diego a better place to live and work.

As a leader within our firm and community, Danielle is a champion and a mentor for other women. She inspires those around her to be bold, to rise to the challenge, and to strive for excellence in everything they do.

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## Nicole Donnelly of San Diego named the new chairwoman of the Better Business Bureau

Nicole Donnelly of Miramar Kitchen & Bath in San Diego has been named the new chairwoman of the Better Business Bureau Serving the Pacific Southwest.

Donnelly has owned and operated Miramar Kitchen & Bath since 1991 and has been a BBB Accredited Business since its inception. Her company specializes in residential

bathroom and kitchen remodeling and has remodeled thousands of bathrooms and kitchens in San Diego.

She served on the board and then became president of the local chapter of NARI (National Association of the Remodeling Industry) and is on the Advisory Committee for SNAP (the Spay and Neuter Action Project) in San Diego. Nicole has worked at Miramar Kitchen & Bath with her husband, Martin, for almost 30 years.



Nicole Donnelly

## Cybersecurity Lingo

**Editor's Note:** With an assist from Cheryl Winokur Munk, a reporter in West Orange, N.J., here's a dictionary of cybersecurity language.

**Attack Surface.** The sum of the different points bad actors can use to enter your systems.

**Backdoor.** A secret entry point established to circumvent normal security measures for access to software or a computer system.

**Bug Bounty.** Reward proffered by some organizations and developers to individuals who report as vulnerability or bug.

**Catfishing.** When a bad actor creates an online fictional persona for deceptive purposes.

**Clickjacking.** An attack that fools victims into clicking on a link that seems to take them to one place but instead routes them to an attacker's site

**Key Logger.** Software that records users keystrokes to collect passwords and high-value information.

**Multifactor Authentication (MFA) or Two-Factor Authentication (2FA).** A security approach that asks users to give at least two credentials, such as a password and biometric, to access organization's data or systems.

**Penetration Testing.** Also known as pen-testing. It's an attempt to evaluate how hack-proof a system is by trying to exploit it.

**Phishing.** When attackers send emails that purport to be from reputable parties to induce recipients to reveal personal information.

**Ransomware.** A type of malicious software attack that blocks access to a computer system until the victim pays a sum of money to unlock it.

**Social Engineering.** A cyberattack aimed at stealing user data where the attacker pretends to be a trusted individual or organization to trick the victim. Common techniques include phishing and smishing.

**Sockpuppet.** A fictional online identity user for deceptive purposes.

**Smishing.** When cybercriminals attempt to gather personal information by sending fraudulent messages via text messages or SMS.

**Zero-Day Exploit.** A software vulnerability that's either previously unknown or has no developed patch, leaving hackers free to do damage.

**Zero Trust.** Concept that says devices shouldn't be automatically trusted even if they have been verified previously.

## Wearable sensor uses ultrasound to provide cardiac imaging on the go

Engineers and physicians have developed a wearable ultrasound device that can assess both the structure and function of the human heart. The portable device, which is roughly the size of a postage stamp, can be worn for up to 24 hours and works even during strenuous exercise. The goal is to make ultrasound more accessible to a larger population, said Sheng Xu, a professor of nanoengineering at the University of California San Diego, who is leading the project. Currently, echocardiograms—ultrasound examinations for the heart—require highly trained technicians and bulky devices.

“The technology enables anybody to use ultrasound imaging on the go,” Xu said.

Thanks to custom AI algorithms, the device is capable of measuring how much blood the heart is pumping. This is important because the heart not pumping enough blood is at the root of most cardiovascular diseases. And issues with heart function often manifest only when the body is in motion.

The work is described in the Jan. 25 issue of the journal *Nature*.

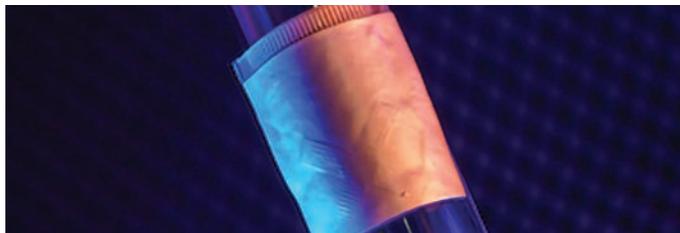


Photo by David Baillot, Jacobs School of Engineering, UCSD

## San Diego Angel Conference opens 2023 Angel Fund to accredited investors

One of the largest angel investment conferences in the country, the San Diego Angel Conference (SDAC) at University of San Diego, is opening its 2023 angel fund to accredited investors nationwide. The low investment threshold of \$7,000 and \$5,500 for additional units is ideal for first-time angel investors who gain knowledge on how to evaluate investment-worthy startups and conduct due diligence. Experienced angel investors expand their network and gain access to robust deal flow through a series of optional investor education workshops and events.

The University of San Diego Knauss School of Business Free Enterprise Institute program helps to drive deal flow and mentor and support startups, with over \$4.1 million awarded directly over four years. Investors gain a valuable network and benefit from knowledge shared among the group as they participate in fund decision-making.



DR. LAUREN LEK, HEAD OF SCHOOL  
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Students Valentina Gutierrez '22 and Anya Apodaca '22

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# SAN DIEGO'S 2023 WOMEN *of* ACCOMPLISHMENT



## DR. LAUREN LEK

There is no greater illustration of a woman of inspiration than a woman who inspires the next generation of women leaders. Here in San Diego, the woman who embodies that is Dr. Lauren Lek, who is the leader at the helm of Academy of Our Lady of Peace (“OLP Academy”), the oldest high school and only remaining all women’s institution in San Diego. Her focus is on providing a transformative and accessible education for young women. The mission of the OLP Academy is to “empower young women in an innovative learning environment, fostering community and forming leaders dedicated to loving the dear neighbor without distinction.” As the premier college preparatory high school, OLP Academy gives its students the confidence and skills to take on anything they can dream of. Dr. Lek is an accomplished educational administrator. She completed her doctoral degree from Pepperdine University in Educational Technology Leadership. When the pandemic hit, the Academy was the first high school to open and maintain COVID standards that consistently exceeded requirements and during the pandemic, Dr. Lek personally delivered groceries and sustenance to both employees and students alike. Under her guidance, the Academy has increased access to STEM courses which now including Engineering Design, Biotechnology, Architecture, Entrepreneurship, and AP Computer Science. This year, OLP Academy will celebrate its ninth annual Women’s Symposium.



## DANIELLE C. HUMPHRIES

Danielle Humphries is a partner at Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP and is chair of the firm’s San Diego Trusts NS Estates Practice Group. She has earned a stellar reputation as a trusted legal adviser with experience, insight and sophistication. She serves as a general counsel for families, managing a multitude of legal issues, including trusts and estate-related concerns, wealth preservation and protection, philanthropic giving and tax planning. She has extensive experience representing fiduciaries and beneficiaries in complex trust and estate administration and litigation. She represents her fiduciary clients, both individuals as well as corporate, in matters including risk mitigation and duties and responsibilities in the administration of trusts and estates. She is an extraordinary role model and advocate for gender parity within the legal industry. Humphries is a steering committee member of the firm’s Women’s Leadership Initiative and is looked to as a mentor by women lawyers. She is a member of the Gift Planning Advisory Council of Scripps Health Foundation and is actively involved with Promises2Kids. She has won a San Diego Super Lawyers’ Rising Star designation and has been named a Best Lawyer in America for litigation-trusts and estates. Humphries is a graduate of the University of San Diego School of Law. This year, OLP Academy will celebrate its ninth annual Women’s Symposium.

## LEAH ROSENTHAL

Since joining the La Jolla Music Society 15 years ago, Leah Rosenthal has developed the artistic offerings of the company and guided its vision and mission with a strong hand. The company has more than doubled its concerts and events, to more than 70 a year, in addition to a month-long annual summer chamber music festival. Under her leadership new series developed include ConRad Kids series, ProtoStar Innovative Series and Speaker Series. She also guided the artistic programming of La Jolla Music Society during a major period of transition into its new state-of-the-art Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center. Critics, audiences and performers alike rave at the artistic quality and entertainment value of the concerts and events she programs at The Conrad, including Yo-Yo Ma, Midori, Lang Lang and jazz artists like Wynton Marsalis and the Monterey Jazz Festival. Rosenthal is an alumnus of Boston University and Columbia College in Chicago.



**THE CONRAD**  
Home of La Jolla Music Society

The Board of Directors, staff and artists of La Jolla Music Society are proud of Artistic Director **Leah Rosenthal** for her selection as one of **San Diego Metropolitan's 2023 Women of Inspiration and Accomplishment.**

A well-deserved honor after 15 years of bringing the finest artists in the world to San Diego. From global superstars like Yo-Yo Ma and Gil Shaham to emerging artists on the brink of stellar careers, Leah's programming spans a broad range and has earned the respect of our audience members.

**Congratulations, Leah!**

TheConrad.org

## LISA PAUL-HILL

Lisa Paul-Hill is president and CEO of Wheelhouse Credit Union. During her tenure she has directed the credit union to many incredible milestones including 62 percent growth in assets, loan growth at an astonishing 85 percent and 64 percent in membership growth, which grants more San Diegans access to some of San Diego's best banking products. Wheelhouse celebrated a record-breaking \$12 million month in Solar & Energy Efficient financing in November 2022. Financing Solar & Energy Efficient projects help remove barriers to clean renewable energy for single-family homeowners and aligns with the City of San Diego's binding commitment to switch to 100 percent renewable clean energy. She is currently vice chair of the Make-A-Wish San Diego Board of Directors and leads the Make-A-Wish Trailblaze Challenge, a single day, 28 mile-long endurance hike along the Pacific Crest Trail serving as a fund raiser that both physically and emotionally challenges participants. Wheelhouse also supports I Love A Clean San Diego, San Diego Zoo Global Alliance, Rady's Children's Hospital and the Water Conservative Garden. Paul-Hill has received the Make-A-Wish San Diego Power of One Award. She is a graduate of the University of San Diego.



Coming in our March issue:

OUR GUIDE TO  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S  
**TOP  
ATTORNEYS  
2023**

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## WOMEN OF ACCOMPLISHMENT



### TERESA CAMPBELL

Teresa Campbell is chief executive officer of San Diego County Credit Union (“SDCCU”). She is a dedicated, influential and innovative leader. SDCCU’s impressive blend of products and services are leading the way for overall credit union success. In her more than 11 years as CEO, Campbell has more than doubled the credit union’s membership from 204,000 in August 2010 to over 455,000 and, as a result, SDCCU’s assets have grown from \$5 billion to \$11.5 billion today. SDCCU’s net worth remains outstanding at 14 percent which is double the seven percent minimum capital level for “well capitalized credit unions” established by the National Credit Union Administration. Campbell oversees SDCCU’s guiding principle of, “people come first and profits second” and remains at the forefront of the company’s philosophy. SDCCU’s extraordinary involvement in the San Diego community is a direct reflection of Campbell’s dedication to making a difference. The credit union supports many nonprofit organizations, is a proud supporter of education, and is focused on making a difference in local schools. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland with an MBA from the Johns Hopkins University.



### DEBRA ROSEN

Debra Rosen is president and CEO of the North San Diego Business Chamber. She has been credited with the turnaround of the chamber through the development and implementation of strategic revenue strategies, restoring program profitability, and winning market share in competitive regions. She has been the chamber’s president for 14 years. She managed the chamber out of massive debt and it is now recognized as one of the few 5-Star US Chamber accredited organizations in California and the only US Chamber accredited organization in San Diego. Her management team paid off enormous debt that had carried liens against the chamber, increased member retention to a consistent 87 percent and member engagement to 93 percent annually. She started San Diego Women’s Week which has grown to be a major event in San Diego. She is a graduate of San Diego State University.



### JENNIFER NELSON

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CONGRATULATIONS  
**LISA PAUL-HILL**  
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From all of us at Wheelhouse Credit Union, thank you  
for your tireless leadership and dedication.



Founded in 1934, Wheelhouse Credit Union has been providing  
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before the Coronado Bridge became a local landmark. From then  
on, we have been continuously committed to helping our  
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**Debra Rosen**  
NORTH SAN DIEGO BUSINESS  
CHAMBER PRESIDENT AND CEO  
on being named one  
of San Diego's 2023  
**WOMEN  
of  
INSPIRATION**

# ELECTRIC AUTONOMOUS 'ROBOTAXIS' COMING TO SAN DIEGO

## Zoox Inc. says it will bring 100 new jobs to the region

Imagine Uber or Lyft without the driver. You'll get an electric robotaxi, a new ride-hailing vehicle by Zoox Inc., an autonomous mobility company that is opening a San Diego office this summer and says it will bring more than 100 new jobs to the region.

"San Diego offers an array of technical talent that will help us reach our mission and bring our autonomous robotaxi to public roads," said Ravi Gopalan, Zoox senior director of firmware, systems integration and QA. "Zoox will be one of the first autonomous robotaxi companies in San Diego, and we will be able to offer talent in San Diego the opportunity to help solve one of the most technically-advanced challenges of our generation."

Zoox was acquired by Amazon in 2020, becoming an independent subsidiary. Its association with the giant company is sure to bolster its status in the ride-hailing industry.

Jesse Levinson co-founded Zoox in 2014 and is the company's chief technical officer.

He graduated summa cum laude from Princeton University and completed his Computer Science Ph.D. and Postdoc under Sebastian Thrun at Stanford University, where he developed algorithms for the \$1 million-winning entry in the 2007 DARPA Urban Challenge and went on to lead the self-driving car team for five years.

Aicha Evans joined the company in February 2019 and is the chief executive officer. She came from Intel Corporation, where she was senior vice president and chief strategy officer. Evans ran Intel's wireless efforts and oversaw a global team of 7,000 engineers.

The company says its electric autonomous vehicle is designed for dense, urban environments, the first in the industry to showcase a driving, purpose-built robotaxi capable of operating up to 75

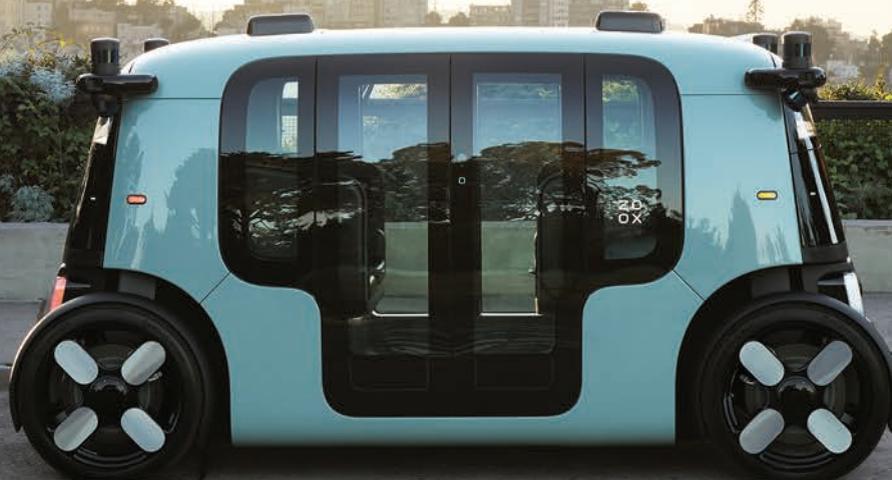
miles per hour.

Designed and manufactured in the U.S., Zoox is the only vehicle to offer bidirectional driving capabilities and four-wheel steering, which enables maneuvering through compact spaces and changing directions without the need to reverse.

At 11.8 feet long, the vehicle has one of the smallest footprints in the automotive industry. It features a four-seat, face-to-face symmetrical seating configuration that eliminates the steering wheel and bench seating seen in conventional car designs. The vehicle also features a 133 kWh battery, one of the largest available in electric vehicles today, allowing it to operate for up to 16 continuous hours on a single charge.

"Revealing our functioning and driving vehicle is an exciting milestone in our company's history and marks an important step on our journey

Vehicle on display in San Francisco





Aicha Evans, CEO



Jessie Levinson, co-founder and CTO

towards deploying an autonomous ride-hailing service,” said Evans. “We are transforming the rider experience to provide superior mobility-as-a-service for cities. And as we see the alarming statistics around carbon emissions and traffic accidents, it’s more important than ever that we build a sustainable, safe solution that allows riders to get from point A to point B.”

A company report says the vehicle design has more than 100 safety innovations not featured in conventional cars, including a novel airbag system for bidirectional vehicles and carriage seating that envelops passengers, which is equal to five-star crash safety protections for all four seats.

“The vehicles utilize a unique sensor architecture of cameras, radar, and LIDAR to obtain an unrivaled 270-degree field of view

on all four corners of the vehicle, eliminating typical blind spots and allowing the vehicle to consistently track objects next to and behind it, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and other road users,” the report states.

“Safety is the foundation of everything we do. Building a vehicle from the ground-up has given us the opportunity to reimagine passenger safety, shifting from reactive to proactive measures,” said Levinson. “These include new safety features such as our airbag design, redundant hardware throughout the vehicle, a unique sensor architecture, and a custom AI stack that detects and mitigates potential risks. Our vehicle has passed key crash tests, and we are continuing to look for new, innovative ways to protect our riders and others on the road.”



Vehicle interior



Rear view

NEW BEGINNINGS

# A Brave Young Afghan Woman in San Diego

Though the situation in Afghanistan has mostly faded from the news headlines, daily there are atrocities perpetrated by the Taliban against women and any individuals who they deem as hostile to their strict Islamic regime.

By Lee Wakefield



"Aadila" enjoys the sights and sounds of Balboa Park.

**“When I first arrived in America, I took a deep breath and I felt safe and calm. Although I was very tired, I thought that Americans are very happy and they are safe, something I did not see back in Afghanistan.”**

One young woman, Aadila (name changed for her safety) who I had the good fortune to train in Universal Human Behavior Threat Recognition courses in Central Asia, is one of the very fortunate women able to escape the terror there for the warm weather and relative safety of San Diego.

Aadila had worked for the Afghan government for several years and she knew her life would be in jeopardy if she remained in the country after the collapse of the Afghanistan Republic. Through the help of some international aid agencies, the U.S. military and others, she was able to gain entrance to Kabul Airport and then manifested on a flight out of the country. She first flew to Doha, where she remained for several weeks, then to Ft. Bliss, Texas for administrative processing by the State Department and other federal agencies.

Aadila was granted a work permit and authorization to travel to her sponsor's city. I greeted her with a huge hug at San Diego International Airport and drove her to a hotel that a local aid agency had arranged for her initial stay. Another friend arranged for her to apply to a local dress/clothing shop and within four days she obtained part-time employment.

Her English language has improved dramatically in the six months of living/working here. She recently passed

the DMV written test, and she is now wanting to start community college in the San Diego region.

Asking her to reflect on her first six months living in America as a female Afghan refugee, I posed several questions to her and here are some of her responses.

I asked Aadila what some of her first impressions of America were and she said, “When I first arrived in America, I took a deep breath and I felt safe and calm. Although I was very tired, I thought that Americans are very happy and they are safe, something I did not see back in Afghanistan.”

I also asked her what her first impressions of San Diego when she arrived in December. She answered, “When I was in the camp at Ft. Bliss, everyone told me that San Diego is one of the most beautiful tourist cities. It truly is a beautiful place to live and very comfortable temperature, especially compared to Kabul, my home city. Mr. Lee was the only American I knew, and it was such a relief to see him waiting for me at the airport – I knew I would be safe and OK.”

I then inquired about her first few days working in San Diego. Aadila said the first day there was beautiful weather and she walked to her new job and entered a new community where she only knew her manager. Everyone at her work was friendly and she even met someone from

Iran who spoke Dari, so she immediately felt better. The hours differed each day, but she was able to work and continues to save money for an apartment, a car and college.

Asked about her favorite meals here in San Diego, Aadila indicated that she rarely eats meat, but has had some wonderful and fresh vegetables and good Indian food. She loves the variety of fresh fruit and many she had never seen (Kumquat fruit growing in my yard was one example). Aadila visited my family where she was anxious to help prepare a wonderful Afghan dinner. We recently had Aadila join my family for tour of Balboa Park and then Little Italy where we all enjoyed a great lunch at Filippi's.

Aadila still has family and friends in Kabul that she misses dearly, but life here in San Diego has given her a chance to reach her potential. She has the determination and confidence to obtain those goals of earning another bachelor's degree (the one she earned in Afghanistan is not valid here, unfortunately). Initially she plans to attend community college and then go to San Diego State University to study business.

Aadila is an extremely brave young woman who left everything she had in Afghanistan and has started her new life with optimism and determination. We should be so fortunate as to have more individuals like Aadila come to America.



## New UC San Diego Model Predicts Housing Prices to Fall as Much as 18 Percent this Year

By Christine Clark

Study finds internet search data can be used as an early indicator of where the market is going

A new model of forecasting home prices based on consumer demand predicts that prices for housing will decrease by 5 percent nationally and 12 percent in San Diego County by the end of this year.

The model, which highlights online search activity, was recently published in a new study from the University of California San Diego's Rady School of Management.

The model's predictions have a proven accuracy rate of up to 70 percent and are unique to other price predictors — such as Zillow, Goldman Sachs and Redfin — because those consider a variety of factors like interest rates, wage growth,

unemployment and housing supply.

Whereas the housing search index created by Allan Timmermann of the Rady School and collaborators at Arhus University in Denmark, focuses on consumer demand by tracking the rate at which prospective buyers use the internet to search for homes.

“It is one of the purest measures of potential demand that you can get because the first thing you do when you're looking for a house or interested in buying a house, is to go to the internet and look at what is available,” said Timmermann, a distinguished professor of finance at the Rady School. “Those in the market for a

home leave a big footprint with their online search activity because of the time it takes — often several months — to find something that is the right fit.”

Cities like San Diego have housing prices dropping more than the national average because it's where the market overheated the most during the pandemic, Timmermann said.

“What you saw following the lockdowns in March 2020 was that sunshine and suburbs became a big thing,” Timmermann said. “People were shifting to working from home, so they wouldn't have to be located close to the job and then they might cut out of their area altogether, choosing to live

somewhere with more space and better weather. San Diego has plenty of suburbs and desirable weather, of course.”

These traits plus limited supply caused prices to skyrocket across the county, but the market has cooled by 2.5 percent since May of 2022 when prices peaked.

“Many households got priced out of the market so now we are seeing levels adjust,” Timmermann said.

But home prices in other cities are expected to fall even more. Phoenix, AZ, is predicted to have the biggest drop at 18 percent. Other metropolitan areas where prices are predicted to be on the decline include Stockton-Lodi, CA (down 13 percent), Las Vegas, NV (down 13 percent), followed by San Diego and Tucson, AZ. The cities with the most price stability include the metropolitan area of Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton, PA and Kansas City, MO both predicted to rise by 2 percent. Other cities with forecasts of stable prices include Hartford, CT, Harrisburg, PA and Omaha, NE.

Timmermann added that the predictive power of internet searches tends to be a reliable indicator of where the market is going over the short-to-medium term as fluctuations in demand matter more than changes in supply, which tends to be quite stable over shorter horizons.

One major difference between the UC San Diego model for



Allan Timmermann, the Dr. Harry M. Markowitz Endowed Chair in Finance and Investing and a Distinguished Professor of Finance at the UC San Diego Rady School of Management.

forecasting home prices and other, commercial price predictors is that the data underlying in the housing search index isn't proprietary. The methodology is fully transparent and replicable as the study, published in *Management Science*, is public, so anyone can see how it works.

The formula starts with tracking key words such as “buying a house” and related search terms in Google Trends—a free website that analyzes the popularity of top search queries in Google Search. These data are compared to data on home tours and written offers, which allows the researchers to forecast prices in the short and long term.

“The cost of your time and the intensity with which you search and the number of people searching really does reflect the underlying interest in home buying,” Timmermann said. “At the end of the day, the higher the demand, the higher home prices will typically be.”

Coauthors of the *Management Science* paper include Stig Møller, Thomas Pedersen and Christian Schütte of Aarhus University.

To read the full paper, “Search and Predictability of Prices in the Housing Market,” go to: [pubsonline.informs.org/doi/abs/10.1287/mnsc.2023.4672](https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/abs/10.1287/mnsc.2023.4672)

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# SoCal Road Trip to Switzerland

## A Quest for Neutrality

By Marlise Kast-Myers | Photos by Benjamin Myers

In my mid-20's, I backpacked around the world as a Swiss citizen, flashing that red passport in all its neutral freedom. Born in San Francisco, I was fortunate enough to gain dual citizenship through my family bloodline. Despite my Cali-birthplace, I clung to the benefits of that bright booklet including flawless health care, tax benefits, retirement incentives, and visa-free entry to 185 countries.

Did I mention I moved there? Yep, at 23, I left my job, home, and family to find my roots and discover what I was missing besides chocolate and cheese. What I found was that Swiss life does, in fact, exist inside a postcard, and that perfection—ironically to a fault—is possible for one nation to achieve.

In my four years of Swiss residency, I also found that many of my closest friends were

rather perplexed that I — fresh from LA — had a Swiss passport, while they were still living as foreigners in their birth country.

Without that direct bloodline, the quest for citizenship can be brutal. It was one that I certainly took for granted. . . that is, until 2022.

Earlier this year, my husband Benjamin brought up the possibility of becoming a Swiss citizen. Our marriage didn't grant him automatic citizenship, nor would the process be easy or affordable.

But I was in luck. My renaissance man is simply challenged by challenges, to the point I've found myself asking such questions as: "You made your own leather quiver because . . . ? . . . So why are you getting your pilot's license? . . . You just passed the ham-radio test for what . . . ? . . . Tell me again why you're feeding your

sourdough starter? . . . What exactly does 'pro-level rider' mean?"

Regardless of being married for over a decade, I knew his latest challenge would be no easy feat. Benjamin would have to submit endless documentation, undergo a background check, present letters from Swiss relatives, and send photos from recent travels to prove his ties to the nation.

Assuming he made it that far, Benjamin would then need to take an in-person test in German at the Swiss consulate. . . in San Francisco.

And thus, our California road trip was born. Our plan was to leave on Friday and return on Tuesday, with overnight stays in Los Angeles, Carmel, San Francisco, and Ojai on the return. The irony of our destinations couldn't be ignored. I was born in San Francisco, went to high school in



Guests get ocean views at Shutters on the Beach.

Monterey, attended college near Ojai, and worked as a journalist in Los Angeles. Now, we would be trailing my past along the California coast in an effort to reach Switzerland.

Once at the consulate, we would renew my Swiss passport, make Benjamin's formal introduction, and schedule next steps for obtaining his citizenship.

### First stop, Los Angeles.

Straight out of college, I had lived in Santa Monica, working as an undercover journalist in Hollywood. After moving to Switzerland, I never looked back on California, until we eventually settled down in San Diego.

Now some 20 years later, I was returning to my old stomping grounds, this time to Shutters on the Beach hotel. Generally, Benjamin and I live the simple life with low-maintenance vacations ranging from camping to Airbnb's. But two years of pandemic pandemonium unveiled a 2022 sweet patch of revenge spending.

Shutters certainly got our feet wet with its beach chic boutique-ness reflecting the quintessential cottages of Cape Cod. Among a string of Porches and Bentleys, we arrived in our zippy little WRX Subaru. The valet attendants bypassed the luxury vehicles to open our doors, debating if ours was the STI model. Suddenly, I had an immediate love for the place, and their endearing staff.

That love only grew stronger once we entered our room with shuttered doors that opened onto a breezy balcony and pool terrace. Even with the shutters closed, it was clear we were on one of SoCal's most iconic beaches. Books about Santa Monica, seashells, and roses adorned the room, decorated in creamy hues of blue and white. This 90's hotel got a facelift in 2005 by designer Michael S Smith, famous for his refresh of The Obama White House.

We felt the classic Hollywood charm during our dip in the pool, where white umbrellas shaded the rich and private cabanas enclosed the elite. The beach concierge offered complimentary beach equipment including cruisers that we rode from Malibu to Venice. We cycled past the Santa Monica Pier dating back to 1909, and the same lifeguard stations featured on "Baywatch." Beyond the skatepark and drum circles was Muscle Beach where bodybuilders pumped and flexed. Flashbacks of sunset bike rides in my 20s came flooding back, to the point I found myself wondering how I went from LA's city-and-coast to San Diego's country-and-farm life.

That fleeting moment faded during our dinner at 1 Pico, the hotel's signature restaurant with a Pacific-harvest menu. Their new culinary program is based on communication with local fishermen and farmers—creating dishes from the daily catch and harvest. Clean, simple, and ingredient-focused, our menu featured beef steak tomatoes, oysters on the half shell, linguini with clams, and lamb from Elysian Fields Regenerative Farm (also serving Thomas Keller's French Laundry). Somehow, we saved room for the salted caramel sundae.

Thank God for yoga. The following morning, we stretched out those calories in the sand before driving nearly six hours to the Monterey Peninsula.



Reflections of Topatopa Mountain Range at Ojai Valley Inn.



Opened in 1875, The Palace was San Francisco's first luxury hotel.

## TRAVEL

### Next stop, Carmel-By-The-Sea.

If only we had more time, we would have paused in Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Solvang, Pismo Beach, Big Sur, and of course Monterey. It was here where I spent my youth attending high school, writing for the community newspaper, and working at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Instead of hitting tourist attractions, we soaked in visions of vineyards, lavender fields, almond orchards, and moon-like landscapes pecked by pumpjack oil wells. Reverting to our low-maintenance model, we ate burgers at In-n-Out and scarfed down fries before they turned cold. Unlike pre-Covid road trips, we traveled music-and-news free, communicating with one another both in sound and in silence.

It was 3 o'clock when we arrived at Quail Lodge, just in time for complimentary wine hour. This Carmel hotel and golf club lures guests to its award-winning 18-hole championship course. As non-golfers, we were hooked by their online offers and spacious rooms with patios on the greens. Outside our room was a duck pond and a

nine-hole putting course where I swung and failed. Benjamin of course, made a hole-in-one.

At sunset, we chased the view in a golf cart with no clubs or balls or game. Deer crossed our path, as did golfers, wondering why we were cruising the course without a target in mind. That pretty much sums us up, the couple who goes full steam ahead for the journey over the destination.

That journey continued during our dinner at Covey Grill where we shared beet salad, striped bass, and wagyu steak. A morning swim in the heated pool refreshed us for the day ahead, taking us to Carmel-By-The-Sea village just 10 minutes away.

Beyond fairytale cottages and gingerbread galleries was the Scenic Bluff Path that spilled onto white sand beaches sculptured by Monterey Cypress trees. Beneath the Dr. Seuss-esque greenery were beach bonfires and off-leash dogs kicking up sand in their wake.

From here, we trailed the scenic 17-Mile Drive past dramatic cliffs and the Lone Cypress. Closer to San Francisco, our route

bypassed artichoke fields, fruit stands, and the fishing port of Moss Landing.

### Next stop, San Francisco.

And there it was, the fog over the city that blocked the sun but not its people. The almost 850,000 residents who survived the pandemic seemed to be out that day, either on (or in) the road, causing my palms to sweat and my husband to scream at Siri.

As we approached The Palace Hotel, a calming peace came over us. I nearly hugged the valet as he took our keys and pointed toward the uniformed staff opening the doors to grand dame luxury. Perfuming the air was the scent of roses and chocolate coming from Ghirardelli Chocolate Shop neighboring our hotel.

Opened in 1875, The Palace was San Francisco's first premier luxury hotel and the largest in the world. As we entered this city landmark, I suddenly felt the urge for a martini and maybe pearls and sunglasses befitting of Audrey Hepburn. Natural light flooded the atrium dome where guests nibbled on savory bites, rich desserts, and



White sands shaded by Monterey Cypress trees at Carmel-by-the-Sea

breakfasts of caviar omelets with peach Bellinis.

Overhead were Austrian crystal chandeliers, not to be overshadowed by orchid bouquets and Italian marble pillars. Our room—with tufted-leather accents and French balconies—made it challenging to leave the property. But we did, since Union Square, cable cars, Chinatown, and plenty of restaurants and cafés were just blocks away.

Our stroll to the Italian restaurant, a Mano on Hayes Street, justified our multiple-course lunch, and my swim in The Palace pool reset me for dinner at Pied Piper. Beloved by San Francisco locals, this iconic bar boasts strong cocktails, liberal portions, and old-world charm dating back to 1906. Gracing the wall was the famous painting “The Pied Piper of Hamelin” commissioned from Maxfield Parrish. In 1906, the artist was paid \$6,000 for the piece that today is worth over \$5 million.

That next morning, we powerwalked to Pier 17 for our morning appointment at the Swiss Consulate. Albeit rusty, I managed to communicate in Swiss German to renew my passport, and to inquire about the status of Benjamin’s pending application.

With typical Swiss efficiency, we were done with our appointment in less than 30 minutes, leaving with a vague message that someone would reach out to Benjamin.

It was like grasping at snowflakes.

After a stroll through the nearby Ferry Building Marketplace, we drove six hours south, winding through the Los Padres National Forest. Benjamin put our little Subi to the test, hugging curves and commenting that “she” was living her best life on those hairpin turns. Hillsides teased autumn with patchworks of gold, taking us from mountain ranges to palm trees as we dropped toward Ojai Valley Inn.

### Last stop, Ojai.

Within this luxurious enclave was a micro-village with eight dining options, four boutiques, and an award-winning spa. White roses lined pathways where cream-colored cruisers tilted curbside for guests to roam at will.

Since this was our last night, we went out with a bang, settling into a suite with two fireplaces, neither of which we used . . . well, because there was simply too much to do in this paradise where “to do” lists were obsolete.

At our fingertips were fitness classes, a 31,000-square-foot spa, and activities including horseback riding, golf, cooking classes, bee keeping, stone painting, and aromatherapy rollerball blending. No one comes to this treasured retreat for just one night, except for us of course—the couple

on a mission and a budget determined to maximize the moment.

And we did, biking at sunset, swimming at dusk, and strolling at dark among the ancient oaks strung with lanterns. Backed by the Topatopa Mountain Range, the setting was romantic yet family-friendly, with kids in white linen skipping on lawns at pink hour.

I wondered if I had ever seen a place so flawlessly perfect. And then, I thought of Switzerland—a country that had twice lured me from my home, once for nearly four years, and now for four days. It had taught me the *joie de vivre* that comes from exploration, and the peace one finds in emerald hillsides that blush at sunset.

As we pulled into our San Diego property, I hoped that Benjamin too would soon achieve his *Alpen Avalon*.

Lord knows he’s tried.

In the past month, I’ve watched as my husband has memorized facts, studied the language, researched politics, read history, devoured books, and even (just yesterday) prepared Swiss fondu for dinner.

Where does this leave us? In two weeks, we’ll be flying back to San Francisco for his final in-person test at the Swiss Consulate. Regardless of the outcome, I know that Benjamin has valiantly pursued his Swiss citizenship—neutrally of course.



The grass is always greener at Quail Lodge.

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