

East Bay Jewish International Film Festival opens in Orinda March 1

By Sophie Braccini

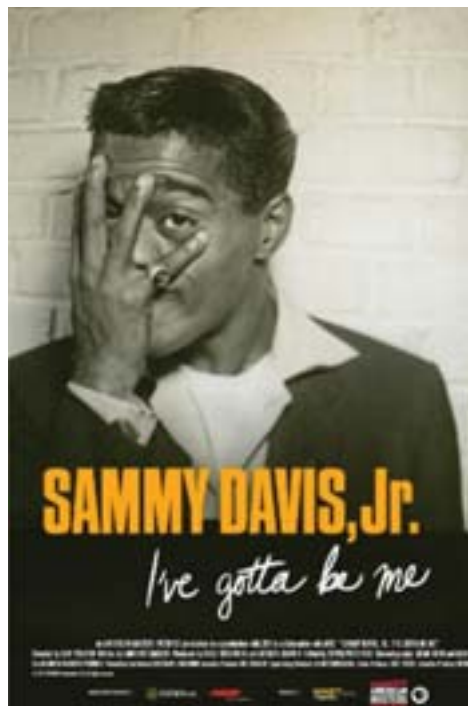


Photo provided

For 23 years the East Bay Jewish International Film Festival has brought American and international movies of higher and higher quality to the East Bay, all with ties to either Jewish culture or to the fight against intolerance. The EBIJFF's films are moving, funny, educational or inspirational – a cultural treat not to be missed from March 1-12.

This year, opening night will be held at the Orinda Theatre with the presentation of the documentary "Sammy Davis, Jr: I've Gotta Be Me" at 7:30 p.m. March 1. The film paints a portrait of the multi-faceted life of this American 20th century iconic entertainer who started life on stage at age 3, never went to school, climbed all ladders of the social hierarchy, transcended the

racial prejudices of the time, and walked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but also supported Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War. Davis was an extraordinary showman with unique talents who craved recognition and authenticity at the same time.

The film, directed by Sam Pollard, is the first movie centered on Davis. It showcases a large number of stars who share their memories of Davis, including actress Kim Novak, who was Davis' lover at a time when relationships between people with different skin color was not allowed in some states.

The movie is also a testimony to this troubled time in American history, with the civil rights movement, still tremendous racist backlash, and the birth of the hippie generation. The film will take older folks down memory lane, and teach younger ones some history, especially the mistreatment faced by so many because of variable melanin content in the skin.

The other Jewish film festival movies will be shown at the Century 16 Theatres in Pleasant Hill.

Orinda resident Efi Lubliner, who created the International Film Showcase in Orinda, and Jo Alice Canterbury are both on the board of EBIJFF. Canterbury, who is part of the selection committee for the festival, says that she reviews about 100 films each year and she is delighted with this year's lineup, with great movies from Australia, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, South Africa, the UK, and the United States. Tickets for the Orinda showing are \$13 and are available online at eastbayjewishfilm.org.

College Advisor

Tell Me More about UC Davis!

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

The University of California at Davis offers a small town alternative to the dense, urban locations of UC Berkeley and UCLA. Located in the Golden State's fertile agricultural region in California's Central Valley, UC Davis is a 90-minute drive from San Francisco, and about a half-hour's drive from Sacramento, the state's capital. With 265 days of sunshine, Davis is everything you might want a college town to be, minus the traffic congestion. The downtown is lined with dozens of student-oriented dining options, retail stores and two multiplex movie theaters. One-hundred miles of bike paths in town and on campus give testimony to its bike friendly environment.

While Davis is a smaller town, there is nothing smaller about the undergraduate population. UC Davis is home to over 29,000 undergraduates, second only to UCLA within the University of California system. Although it is easier to get into UC Davis than it is to get into UCLA or UC Berkeley, that differential is fading over the years and the competitiveness of the university is increasing. Of the nearly 71,000 students who applied to join this year's freshman class, the 44 percent that were accepted presented very strong credentials. Most of the students come from California, though the university has scholarships targeted at students who come from Oregon as well as Washington state. Like the other UCs, UC Davis is more achievable as a transfer destination from the state's community college system; nearly 60 percent of the students who applied to transfer last cycle were offered admission.

As the Fiske Guide to Colleges states "If the subject is living things, you can study it here." The university has a challenging curriculum, especially strong in the sciences and approximately one-third of bachelor's degrees are granted in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. The school is great for premeds and the first choice for any prevet student. Although UC Davis does not have an undergraduate business school, managerial economics, offered in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, is one of the most popular majors, as is the economics major offered in the College of Letters and Sciences.

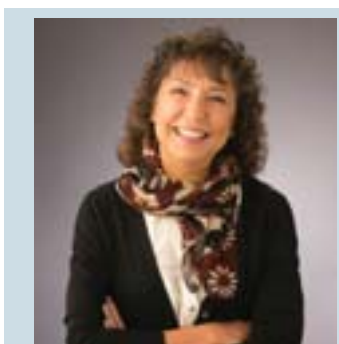
There are also some unique options within the College of Letters and Sciences including a major in Chicana/Chicano Studies, a public service option within the political science major, as well as an organizational studies option within the sociology major. Given the university's location near Sacramento, students interested in public policy and politics have many opportunities

to gain work experience in these areas. A program that matches students with internships in Washington D.C. is also available.

The closest approximation to a cow college in the UC system, Davis features agricultural programs that are rated second in the world in U.S. News Global Universities Rankings. UC Davis is the Land Grant University for California, the Golden State's primary center for agricultural education by the federal government. The depth of the offerings in the Department of Agriculture is tremendous. There are choices, for example, between animal biology and animal science and management, as well as between environmental horticulture and urban forestry. A new addition is a major in viticulture for students interested in wine making.

Agriculture has also been a major theme of the campus design. The Memorial Union, the signature building, originated from a farm silo that was one of the first buildings on campus. The main quad was once the parade ground for livestock shows. And the well-landscaped campus has a 100-acre arboretum for research and recreation; students can be found helping to harvest olives for olive oil.

If someone tells you that UC Davis is one of the best state universities in one of the nicest college towns in the U.S., believe them. The academic breadth of the school, success of the students and the quality of life in the surrounding community easily support this contention.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD, brings decades of admissions expertise to personally guide each student through applying to well-matched colleges, making each step more manageable and less stressful. She has placed hundreds of students in the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. Reach her at (925) 385-0562 (office) or (925) 330-8801 (mobile), or online at www.doingcollege.com or Elizabeth@doingcollege.com.

Local artist captures Frida Kahlo's courageous spirit



An unveiling of "Frida Kahlo's Courageous Transformational Life," a vibrant portrait of Mexico's most famous 20th Century woman artist by present-day artist Trina Swerdlow, will be held at the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery in Lafayette at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22. Swerdlow will give a talk about the portrait of Frida Kahlo and the inspiration behind her painting.

Like Kahlo, Swerdlow understands how creating expressive art serves as a lifeline during times of personal darkness. "It is vitally important to honor people who have inspired us. For this reason, I am releasing my first painting in the Fine Art Series called Legacy of Light Portraits," said Swerdlow.

Swerdlow is an international bestselling author – "Stress Reduction Journal" (iUniverse, 2005) and "The Grandmother Legacies" (WOM Enterprises, 2017) – a thought leader, and artist with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Art Center College of Design. In addition to her art, Swerdlow has a private practice in Danville where she offers transformational tools to empower people to create their own "legacies of light" through healthy behavior, creativity, and assertive/compassionate communication.

"Frida Kahlo's Courageous Transformational Life" painting and an exhibition quality Giclée print on canvas will be displayed during the 6:30 p.m. gallery celebration at 3620 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

To attend, RSVP by email: jp@jenniferperlmutter.com with your name and "Yes Frida" in the email subject line. For information, visit jenniferperlmuttergallery.com.

– J. Wake

A warm side for cold winter nights

By Susie Iventosch



Tomato-stuffed bell peppers

Photo Susie Iventosch

Over the holidays, my nephew Brian gave me a beautiful kitchen towel along with a fun little tapas cookbook, "200 Tapas & Spanish Dishes," by Emma Lewis. This was the perfect gift for an auntie who loves to be in the kitchen, stirring up new recipes! In the book I found a fun idea for stuffing red bell peppers with tomato halves and decided to give it a try. I liked the idea of using orange bell peppers to set off the red tomatoes and adding panko-Parmesan on top to give it a nice crunchy topping. Snipped pieces of fresh basil added the perfect Mediterranean touch.

This made for a colorful vegetable to go alongside the steak we were serving that night, but it would also be a great vegetar-

ian entree. You can use any color bell pepper except green. The red, yellow or orange peppers have a better flavor for this recipe. Although I haven't tried this yet, it would also be delicious to top the stuffed pepper with feta, gorgonzola or blue cheese and bake until bubbly and golden brown.

One half pepper per person is perfect as a side dish, but I'd suggest a whole stuffed pepper per person for a main dish. Also, if you would prefer to use these as pass around appetizers, try using the miniature tri-colored bell peppers stuffed with cherry tomatoes. The pear-shaped cherry tomatoes would fit in the bell pepper cavity just perfectly. If using the small peppers, reduce cooking time appropriately.

Cooking Term of the Week

Za'atar

Za'atar is a middle eastern spice mixture usually made from a combination of herbs and spices that can include: sumac, toasted sesame seeds, thyme, summer savory, marjoram, oregano and salt. Various regions have their own special blend of za'atar, and in fact, may add additional or different ingredients such as cumin or coriander. Za'atar can be used to season meats or vegetables before baking or grilling, or sprinkled into olive oil for dipping bread.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

Tomato-stuffed Bell Peppers

(Serves 6 as a side, or 3 as a main)

INGREDIENTS

- 3 orange, red or yellow bell peppers, cut in half lengthwise, seeds and ribs removed
- 3 medium sized tomatoes, cut in half (can use plum or Campari)
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, crushed or ½ tsp. garlic powder
- 6 basil leaves, cut in thin strips (chiffonade)
- 1 tsp. each salt and pepper
- 3 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1/3 cup panko
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan, or 1/3 cup crumbled feta, gorgonzola or blue cheese

DIRECTIONS

Cut peppers in half lengthwise, leaving stem intact on one half, if possible. Remove seeds and the white ribs. Remove stems from tomatoes and cut in half. Place a tomato half, cut side up, in the hollow of each pepper and place on baking tray, tomato side up. Drizzle olive oil over tomatoes and sprinkle with garlic, basil strips, salt and pepper. Drizzle balsamic evenly over each tomato. Mix grated Parmesan with panko and divide evenly over tomatoes. Bake at 400 F for approximately 20 to 25 minutes, until peppers are al dente and cheese is bubbly and browned. Serve hot.