

The A-Z Guide to
Backyard BBQs
(*recipes included!*)

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San Diego

FOOD LOVER'S ISSUE

MAGAZINE

BEST Restaurants



165
Winners
in 55
Categories

Seafood,
burgers,
small plates
& more

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Juniper & Ivy's
Garden & Grain

INSIDE THE ICON

Belmont Park

As Mission Beach celebrates its centennial, take a closer look at its historic amusement park, which sees 1.2 million visitors annually.

By Christina Orlovsky Page

LONG RUN

Developed by sugar magnate John D. Spreckels, the Mission Beach Amusement Center opened in 1925. Later, in 1976, all but The Natatorium—now known as The Plunge—and the roller coaster closed.

BECOMING BELMONT

When Spreckels died in 1926, the amusement center was gifted to the City of San Diego.

In 1955, amusement park designer Jack Ray, who'd just moved to La Jolla, leased the park and renamed it Belmont Park, after the same-named park in Montreal, which he'd worked on.

RENOVATING A RELIC

The park was rebuilt as a shopping center in 1988 and the coaster was renovated at a cost of more than \$2 million by the San Diego Coaster Company.

It reopened on August 11, 1990.

SPECIAL PROVENANCE

Four of the cars in the Speedway Bumper Cars come from Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch.

TICKET TO RIDE

The original ticket price to ride the Giant Dipper was 15 cents. Today it's \$6 per ride.

MAKING WAVES

The Plunge is now part of the Wave House Athletic Club, a mega sports complex with fitness classes and wave riding.

ICEMAN COMETH

Hello, Iceman in a towel! The locker room scene in *Top Gun* was filmed at The Plunge.

WATER WOES

The Plunge originally pumped in seawater and was the world's largest saltwater pool. When the salt began to damage the filtration system in 1940, management switched to fresh water.

CELEB SIGHTINGS

Kelly Slater, Tony Hawk, Reggie Bush, and Mark Ruffalo have all tested their skills on the Wave House's FlowBarrel, the only artificial wave machine of its kind in the U.S.

SAVING THE DIPPER

The famous wooden roller coaster, the Giant Dipper, opened on July 4, 1925, and was scheduled for demolition after the park closed. The Save the Coaster Committee stepped in and got the 2,600-foot coaster listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 27, 1978.

MARATHON RIDE

In 1998, Star 100.7 FM hosted a contest to see who could ride the coaster the longest. The radio station ended the contest after 70 days, with five winners taking home \$10,000 each.

GET INSIDE THE ICON

3146 Mission Boulevard

Free parking and admission