

Travel Sacramento

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River City revving up

Improved lanes and access for cyclists and arrival of e-bikes turning the town into a two-wheeled capital. Page 8



FESTIVALS FOOD, MUSIC AND CULTURE EVENTS ARE GLIMPSES OF CITY'S PASSION. **PAGE 2**

INSIDER SACRAMENTO'S OUTDOOR ART SCENE A WALL-TO-WALL EXPERIENCE. **PAGE 4**

ONE DAY, ONE PLACE EXPLORING THE CITY BY WEAVING WHAT'S NEW INTO THE RICH HISTORY. **PAGE 10**

SUITE SPOT
HOTEL WITH
ENTREE
TO CAPITAL

Pretty much since the gold miners passed through, downtown Sacramento has needed a luxury hotel with boutique sensibilities that wasn't just intended for the business, capital and convention crowd. (The Citizen had been the closest thing so far, but being housed in a 1920s Art Deco office building results in rooms that are oddly sized and, in general, smaller.) In the end, it took the city building the new Golden 1 Center sports and event arena in the middle of downtown to attract Kimpton to the neighborhood, although it might have been a package deal — pro sports leagues have been known to require upscale lodging near new arenas and stadiums to accommodate visiting players. Either way, the hotel, which opened in October, is only a couple of three-point shots from the arena.

Setting: At the heart of Sacramento's new Downtown Commons (DoCo) development, a complex that includes the 250-room Kimpton Sawyer Hotel, the Golden 1 Center, Macy's, a Century movie theater and a variety of other retail and dining (some of it yet to arrive), with a pedestrian mall and plaza that ties it all together. The Sawyer is two blocks from the Sacramento Valley Amtrak station, three blocks from Old Sacramento and a long stroll from Raley Field and Sacramento River Cats baseball games, which makes it a good base for exploring when you take Amtrak's Capitol Corridor train up. The top six floors of the 16-story building are residences.



Kimpton Sawyer Sacramento



The appeal: The rooms and lobby are contemporary, with quirky touches and the ubiquitous "boutique smell," but with just enough cozy furniture and natural fabrics to give them a homey feel (especially in the "living room" in the middle of the cavernous lobby). The lobby front door is on J Street, although doors on the other side open out to the DoCo plaza and the Golden 1 Center. Crowds permitting, you could finish a cocktail at Revival rooftop pool bar and return to a Sacramento Kings game or a concert.

Insider tips: Punch Bowl Social is a sprawling breakfast-lunch-dinner diner with modern sensibilities, an eclectic menu and plenty of diversions, including eight bowling lanes, two bocce courts, a 1980s video and pinball arcade, and two karaoke rooms. Some of the spaces are intended for private parties, but most of the time there are comfy places to hang out, grab a boozy chocolate shake and, well, play. Also off the lobby is Echo and Rig, a "reimagined steakhouse" and butchery that's open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well as for late-night dining.

Good to know: During the day, the Sawyer's 7120-square-foot pool deck is open to guests, with cabanas, lounges and living room spaces, and Revival bar and lounge offers poolside snacks and cocktails (but not until 11 a.m.). At 4 p.m., Revival transforms into a chic nightlife spot with DJs and live music. (Revival is billed as "Sacramento's first-ever rooftop pool, bar and lounge," although it's actually on the third floor, but it overlooks the lively DoCo plaza and Golden 1 Center.) Ask about reservations at check-in.

Details: 500 J St., Sacramento; 916-545-7111; www.sawyerhotel.com. From \$197 per night, depending on season, not including tax and parking. Revival: 916-545-7111; www.revivalsacramento.com. Punch Bowl Social: 500 J St. (entrance on second floor of Sawyer lobby); 916-925-5610; www.punchbowlsocial.com/location/sacramento.

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TRAVEL

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ON THE COVER:

A cyclist on a Jump Bike wheels past one of Sacramento's new crop of murals.
 Photo by Harriot Manley / Special to The Chronicle.

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SACRAMENTO

INSIDER

An art scene that feels like a home

By Harriot Manley

With his clean-shaven head, all-black outfit and oversized glasses, it's easy to imagine artist David Garibaldi striding into an edgy gallery opening in New York or Berlin. So what's the highly successful "performance painter" doing in a warehouse-style studio in Sacramento's R Street Historic District?

In his mural-splashed private studio, Garibaldi reflects on why he chooses to stay in his hometown. (Though born in L.A., Garibaldi grew up in Sacramento and nearby Elk Grove.)

"When I was just starting out in Sacramento, the art scene here was small and closed off," says Garibaldi, 35, who started out as a bad-boy graffiti artist. Going legit in his 20s, he gained fame with his hyperkinetic "Rhythm and Flow" stage shows, which featured him leaping, twirling, swiping and splattering paint to thumping music as he speed-painted oversized portraits of stars from rock, sports and other fields. "I traveled the world and got my credibility, but I wanted to invest my time here in Sacramento," he says. "I wanted to help create an art scene. And I wanted to be a part of it."

Today, the father of two doesn't have to look far to see how Sacramento's art scene has crupled all over his hometown. Hundreds of murals — including several painted by Garibaldi — add sizzling color and imagery to buildings citywide. Art festivals abound. And right across the street from Garibaldi's R Street studio rises WAL (Warehouse Artist Loft), a 1994 brick warehouse now filled with over 100 apartments for Sacramento-area artists.

Garibaldi loves that the scene has boomed without losing connection. "Our community is small enough that, as an artist, I can collaborate with a developer, a politician, a musician, as well as other artists," he says. "That's been what's special about staying here — building real relationships with these people and creating this cool place where we want to live."

While artists are often hit hard during economic downturns as discretionary dollars dry up, Garibaldi's Sacramento-area surroundings are surprisingly positive about

the impact of the Great Recession. Though the economic collapse was tough on the city, Garibaldi thinks it gave Sacramento a chance to create a city vibe that felt authentic.

"Before the crash, Sacramento had new money and new real estate," he says. "But it felt like we were living in someone else's scene — where you had to dress and act a certain way to fit in."

When the economy nosedived and businesses closed, "it was like a reset for us," says Garibaldi. "Those modern restaurants and bougie bars — it was not us."

When the economy started to recover, new businesses moved in that "felt like the Sacramento mind set — casual but quality," he says. "Now we have great fine-dining restaurants, like Ella, where I can show up and just sit at the bar in my jeans. I love that."

Another plus: a creative environment that has gone from a small-town vibe to a place with endless possibility. "It seems like there's no idea that's too far-fetched these days," says Garibaldi.

Cases in point: Art Hotel, across the street from Garibaldi's R Street studio rises WAL (Warehouse Artist Loft), a 1994 brick warehouse now filled with over 100 apartments for Sacramento-area artists. Garibaldi loves that the scene has boomed without losing connection. "Our community is small enough that, as an artist, I can collaborate with a developer, a politician, a musician, as well as other artists," he says. "That's been what's special about staying here — building real relationships with these people and creating this cool place where we want to live."

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Performance painter David Garibaldi outside his R Street studio in Sacramento. Below, all types of paddlers enjoy a cool escape to Lake Natomas, east of Sacramento.



Lowbrau Bierhalle

"Before it was Lowbrau. It was this slick, modern wine bar. But these guys moved in and it seems 10 times more successful, because it speaks to us, like it's 'Be you, be what you want.'"

The modern twist on a German beer hall lets you relax on a broad porch overlooking a leafy Midtown intersection, or inside in the airy main room. Order a locally cured bratwurst, duck-fat fries and a triple IPA — you might never get up, but oh, what a way to go. Live music and DJ events get the joint jumping. 1050 20th St. (916) 706-2636; www.lowbrau-sacramento.com

Street murals and Wide Open Walls

"What I really appreciate around town is all the murals. It's like an outdoor gallery. I ride my bike around town and I see all of these spaces, and they're so inspiring. A lot of them were created for the Wide Open Walls festival that happens in August. There's a mural on the back of Golden 1 Center, by Starfighter [SoCal artist Christina Angelina]. It's of Lady Gaga and it takes up three walls. Just stand there and look at it and I see something new every time."

Through the 2018 Wide Open Walls festival just ended, you can see this year's murals, plus those from previous festivals, by following free online maps. Guided walking and biking tours are also available; details on the festival website. Wide Open Walls; www.wow916.com

Kimpton Sawyer Hotel

"If I have friends coming to town, I book them a room here. I think this new place is up there with a hotel you'd find in San Francisco or New York. They hit all the marks, and the rooms will stay modern looking for a long time. There are fun places to eat and hang out, too. At Punch Bowl Social downstairs, you can get great drinks and some bites." Revival, on the hotel's

third-floor pool deck overlook Golden 1 Center, is a swanky spot for drinks after a Kings game or concert at the arena. 500 J St. (916) 545-7100; www.sawyerhotel.com. Rooms start at \$269.

Flamingo House Social Club

"This place has silent discos on Sundays. I love that. I can go and get good vibes and good drinks — and actually have a conversation with someone and not be screaming, because the music is all in headphones. If I want to listen to music, I do, and then I can take off the headphones and talk to someone." 2315 K St. (916) 409-7500; www.flamingohouse.sac.

WAL Public Market

"Across the street from my studio is the WAL (Warehouse Artists' Lofts), and downstairs is this marketplace with local businesses that I like to support. There's a vintage store called Old Gold and Kicksville and get good vinyl records. At any given time of day, when I go in to get food at Fish Face Pale Bar or a coffee at Camelia, I constantly run into musicians or artists I know. They're just sitting outside at picnic benches, having a coffee. Some live in the building, and some just hang out because it's got a

Ace of Spades

"This music venue down the street from my office used to be called Empire Night Club. That's where I got started, and where I got my chops as a performer. When I was 20, I asked the owner to let me perform every Friday night. I just went up to him and told him that this is what I do — that I'm a performance painter and this is my act. He told me to come back with a written proposal, so I did. He said, 'Kid, you're either crazy or you know



Clockwise from top: Nick Faulkner and Lacey Kaczmarek relax at Lowbrau Bierhalle; Starfighter's soaring Lady Gaga mural on the side of the Golden 1 Center; Sarah Kronenberg and friends enjoy Liquid Wednesday at Revival at the Kimpton Sawyer Hotel; locals step inside WAL Public Market.

Lake Natoma

"When I'm not creating or on the road, I love taking my kids here. It's just a half hour up the road. I love to go stand-up paddling. If I take one of my kids out with me, they can sit on the front and I'll paddle. We'll get out to the middle of a lake, with no one else around. I mean, if you stay on the beach,

you're going to have people all around you. But me? I'm going to paddle away from all of you and just sit on the lake and relax." Several companies rent stand-up paddleboards, as well as canoes, kayaks and other watercraft, for use on Lake Natoma (where the speed limit is a board-friendly 5 mph); largest is Sacramento State Aquatic Center, on the lake's south end at Gold River, 1901 Hazel Ave., Gold River, SLP rentals \$15/hour, parking \$10; (916) 278-2942; www.sac-stateaquaticcenter.com

Arden Hills The Villas

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