



Register Today!

Airing: September 9, 2020, at 2:00 p.m.

The Business Journal's Excellence in Entrepreneurship Awards will virtually debut on September 9, 2020. The local talent recognized in this program are individuals who exemplify America's entrepreneurial spirit through foresight, creativity, and determination. Join us in recognizing the achievements of this extraordinary group of people who have successfully been able to establish and nurture their businesses by looking through the nominees and tuning in.

Registration Information

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2020 EXCELLENCE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

**Accurate
Background Inc.,
Irvine**
*Dave Dickerson,
President/CEO*



**Architecture Design
Collaborative,
Laguna Hills**
*Craig Chinn,
Principal/Founding Partner*



**CISOSHARE,
San Clemente**
*Mike Gentile,
President/CEO*



**Idea Hall,
Costa Mesa**
*Rebecca Hall,
President/CEO*



**Agapay,
Tustin**
Daniel Han, President



**Austin Taylor Inc.,
Irvine**
Ron Viggiano, President



**CSUF,
Fullerton**
*John Bradley Jackson,
Director, Center for
Entrepreneurship*



**INBRACE,
Irvine**
*John Pham,
CEO/Co-Founder*



**AIVITA Biomedical,
Irvine**
*Hans Keirstead, Ph.D.,
CEO*



**Avatar Partners Inc.,
Huntington Beach**
*Marlo Brooke,
CEO/Founder*



**Cultivation Kitchen,
Anaheim**
Dale LaFlam, Owner



**JobzMall,
Irvine**
*Nathan Candaner,
Co-Founder/CEO*



**All Green Electronics
Recycling,
Tustin**
Arman Sadeghi, CEO



**Beacon Pointe Advisors,
Newport Beach**
Shannon Eusey, CEO



**David Meltzer
Enterprises,
Irvine**
David Meltzer, Founder



**JustFoodForDogs,
Los Alamitos**
Shawn Buckley, Founder



**All-American
Leadership,
Irvine**
Rob Nielsen, CEO



**Beeya,
Laguna Beach**
*Ladan Davia,
CEO/Founder*



**Designers Resource
Collection,
Costa Mesa**
Pamela Kellogg, Principal



**Kingdom Ventures
Unlimited Financial
Solutions Inc.,
Irvine**
Ernesto Diapera, CEO



**Allied Universal,
Santa Ana**
Steve Jones, CEO



**Bioniz Therapeutics Inc.,
Irvine**
*Nazli Azimi,
Founder/President/CEO*



**Ducere Global
Business School,
Corona Del Mar**
*Mathew Jacobson,
Founder/CEO*



**KPRS Construction
Services Inc.,
Brea**
Joel Stensby, President



**Alternative Divorce
Solutions Inc.,
Newport Beach**
*Lani Baron,
Founding Partner*



**Branch Startup Studio,
Irvine**
Dalip Jaggi, Principal



**Ephesoft Inc.,
Irvine**
*Ike Kavas, CEO/
Founder*



**Leaf Communications
Consulting Inc.,
San Clemente**
Dan Leaf, President/CEO



**Alternative Divorce
Solutions Inc.,
Newport Beach**
Jeanann Khalife, Partner



**Branded Group,
Anaheim**
Michael Kurland, CEO



**Finch PC,
Costa Mesa**
*Jonathan Pittard,
Co-Founder/Chief
Number Cruncher*



**Managed Direct
Response,
Irvine**
Pat Mercuri, President



Alteryx, Irvine
*Dean Stoecker,
CEO/Chairman/Co-
Founder*



**CAIN Group
Pacific Sotheby's
International Realty,
Newport Beach**
*John Cain,
Founder/Principal*



**Fusion of Ideas,
Lake Forest**
Russ Taylor, CEO



**Manna Kadar
Beauty Inc.,
Irvine**
*Manna Kadar,
Founder/CEO*



**American
Technologies Inc.,
Anaheim**
Gary Moore, CEO



**Channel Bakers,
Anaheim**
*Joshua Kreitzer,
Founder/CEO*



**Gorilla Stationers LLC,
Cypress**
*Rosemary Czopek,
President*



**Margaux Agency,
Long Beach**
*Monica Garrett,
Founder/CEO*



2020 EXCELLENCE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

**Mavenlink,
Irvine**
*Ray Grainger,
CEO/Founder*



**Outshine Public
Relations,
Newport Beach**
Talia Samuels, President



**Revealize,
Newport Beach**
Cole McKeon, President



**Terra Tech Corp.,
Irvine**
Derek Peterson, CEO



**MEESH Boutique
Advisors,
Dana Point**
*Michele Noparvar,
Owner/Founder*



**Pendulum
Property Partners,
Irvine**
*Kevin Hayes, Managing
Partner*



**Scarlet Kitchen
& Lounge,
Rancho Mission Viejo**
*Paige Riordan,
Chef/Owner*



**The Blind Pig,
Rancho Santa
Margarita**
Tony Monaco, Owner



**Miracle Mile Advisors,
Newport Beach**
*Nella Webster, Managing
Director*



**PeopleG2,
Brea**
Chris Dyer, CEO



**Seven Gables Real
Estate,
Tustin**
*Michael Hickman,
President/CEO*



**The Butchery,
Costa Mesa**
*Robert Hagopian, Co-
Owner*



**Modulim,
Irvine**
*David Cuccia,
Founder/CTO*



**Perfect YOUTH,
Newport Beach**
Yeral Patel, CEO/Founder



**SmartBug Media,
Irvine**
*Ryan Malone,
Founder/CEO*



**The Butchery,
Costa Mesa**
Brian Smith, Co-Owner



**Montage International,
Irvine**
*Alan Fuerstman,
Founder/Chairman/CEO*



**Pinnacle
Petroleum Inc.,
Huntington Beach**
*Liz McKinley,
President/CEO*



**Spinnaker
Investment Group,
Newport Beach**
*Morgan Christen,
CEO/Chief Investment
Officer*



**The Collective,
Costa Mesa**
*Tony Oliver,
Founder/CEO*



**Natasha Minasian
Interior, The Studio
at DRC,
Costa Mesa**
*Natasha Minasian,
Designer/Owner*



**Pinner Construction,
Anaheim**
Dirk Griffin, CEO



**Sterling Public
Relations,
Corona del Mar**
*Paula Steurer,
President/Founder*



**The Mark USA INC.,
Irvine**
*Traci Shirachi,
CEO/President*



**NetServe Systems Inc.,
Laguna Hills**
Abdi Ahmed, President



**Platinum Wealth Group,
Orange**
*Ken Kladouris,
President/Wealth Advisor*



**Stretto,
Irvine**
Jonathan Carson, CEO



**The Sandwich Society,
Tustin**
Mi Ho, Owner



**Ocean at Main,
Laguna Beach**
Craig Strong, Chef/Owner



**Powerhouse
Communications,
Santa Ana**
*Kristin Daher,
President/Founder*



**Stretto,
Irvine**
Eric Kurtzman, CEO



**The Saywitz
Company,
Newport Beach**
*Barry Saywitz,
President*



**Old Brea Chop House,
Brea**
*Tony Fasulo,
Owner/Operator*



**Profit Recovery
Partners LLC/Steiner
Innovations/Two
Masters Win Club,
Costa Mesa**
Donald Steiner, CEO



**Syntiant Corp.,
Irvine**
Kurt Busch, CEO



**Think Together,
Santa Ana**
*Randy Barth,
Founder/CEO*



**Orange Aluminum,
Laguna Niguel**
*Cameron Munson,
President*



**Restaurant365,
Irvine**
*John Moody,
Co-Founder/Chief
Strategist/Board Member.*



**TAE Technologies,
Foothill Ranch**
*Michl Binderbauer,
CEO*



**Trilogy Financial,
Huntington Beach**
*Jeff Motske,
President/CEO*



2020 EXCELLENCE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD NOMINEES

US Alliance Group Inc.,
Rancho Santa Margarita
Fadi Cheikha, CEO



Uplift Transport,
Irvine
Greg Krueger, Founder



Vincit,
Irvine
Ville Houttu, CEO



Ware Malcomb,
Irvine
Lawrence Armstrong, Chairman



uDirect IRA Services,
Irvine
Kaaren Hall, CEO



Veronica Kirin Inc.,
Long Beach
Veronica Kirin, President



ViridiSTOR LLC,
Tustin
Terry Mullin, President/CEO



WindWater Real Estate,
Irvine
Rudy Caamano, CEO



Unbiased LLC,
Brea
Danny Basu, Managing Partner



VF Developments LLC,
Costa Mesa
Victoria Vu, Managing Partner/Founder



Wahoo's Fish Taco,
Tustin
Eduardo Lee, Co-Founder/Partner



WurkNow Inc.,
Irvine
Sammy Singh, CEO/CO-Founder



Unbiased LLC,
Brea
Roger Pakalapatty, Managing Partner



Zadara Storage Inc.,
Irvine
Nelson Nahum, CEO



Owners Elena and Josh Kornof and Chris and Sara Van Dusen



Canned cocktails: 4-pack for \$14.00



Surf City's restored bus won best in class in the Huntington Beach classic car show in 2014

Surf City

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Quiksilver Inc. and his son, **Robbie McKnight**. Together they bring more than 50 years of experience in sports apparel and retail.

Connections run deep; golf apparel firm **TravisMathew**, which acquired Robbie McKnight's shoe company **Cauter** ahead of its own \$125.5 million sale to **Callaway Golf Company** in 2017, is also making contributions to Surf City.

The casual sports apparel firm's co-founder **Travis Brasher** and president emeritus **Ryan Ellis** are both investors and advisory board members, along with the McKnights.

Quiksilver, which now operates under the umbrella of **Boardriders Inc.**, and TravisMathew are based in Huntington Beach, a few miles from Surf City's operations.

In the beverage department, Surf City has also won the attention of **Bart** and **Dan DeClark**, co-founders of artificial sweetener maker **Flavor Infusion International**. The company has op-

erations in Laguna Beach and Panama. They're also investors and advisory board members.

"I think I can speak for the advisory board when I say that we're proud to be investing in our local community and in a product as cool as this," Bob McKnight said. "We will use our experience to guide the distillery to become one of the most recognizable and enjoyed brands in the space."

"We believe our story is one of momentum," Van Dusen said.

"The alcohol business is a difficult one, and finding the right distribution partner and the right advisory board members is really the challenge. We think we're positioned well in the current environment, as the only distillery in Huntington Beach and one of the few in OC. We are growing extremely fast and we couldn't be happier to see our brand resonating with the community."

Sales Afloat

Since the pandemic, retail sales via its dis-

tributor **Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits** are up more than 50%, according to Van Dusen.

Surf City's spirits are available at **Costco**, **Albertsons**, **Total Wine & More**, among others.

Director of Sales **Ben Carpenter**, most recently the beverage director for Newport Beach's **Balboa Bay Resort**, is driving retail growth and brand expansion, Van Dusen said.

Meanwhile, the company has also seen 30% to 40% of its overall sales come from curbside pickup, while its tasting room remains closed in accordance with the state, he said.

Like other area booze makers such as Santa Ana's **Blinking Owl Distillery**, Surf City has helped make bulk sanitizer for commercial and personal use during the pandemic. After an initial flurry of sales, that product line has seen slower sales as the year has progressed and larger national sanitizer manufacturers upped their production.

Other new hires include **Bill Auxier**, who



McKnight: 'proud to be investing in local community'

Surf City Still Works



- **FOUNDED:** 2018
- **FOUNDERS:** Josh and Elena Kornof
- **HEADQUARTERS:** Huntington Beach
- **BUSINESS:** distillery
- **PRODUCTS:** Shorebreak Vodka, California Gin, Surfrider Rum, Pierside Bourbon
- **NOTABLE:** expanding to 25K-SF facility with \$2.7M investment

was tapped as head distiller just in time to oversee capacity expansion from 5 gallons per minute to 8 gallons per minute in the distillery. He will bring innovation to the menu in the form of new spirits.

Auxier was previously production manager and distiller at Los Angeles-based **Greenbar Distillery**.

Van Dusen said consumers can expect to see new canned cocktail flavors and a new category of hard seltzer drinks hit the menu next year. ■