

PALISADES NEWS

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PORTRAIT
OF A
LOCAL
ARTIST

See Page 20

Artist Alden Marin Remains Prolific

Story and photos by LAURIE ROSENTHAL
Staff Writer

Artist Alden Marin finds inspiration everywhere, from the squirrels that dine al fresco on his porch to the best-known names in 20th-century art.

The Connecticut native, who grew up in Bel-Air and Malibu, has called Pacific Palisades home for more than 20 years.

A talkative and observant fellow, whose brain is constantly taking in, processing or spewing out information, Marin is honest, straightforward and matter-of-fact about his life and family.

He is immersed in local culture and history. His grandfather, Ned Marin, was one of the first people to buy property in Malibu Colony from May Rindge in the 1920s. Marin's dad, John, grew up in the 1930s in the beachside home that his grandfather built there. His mother, Jana Week, grew up in Bell, on a farm.

"We moved back [to the Colony] in the 1960s when my parents' home burned down in the Bel-Air fire, and in '71 we moved to Point Dume, to a home my mom built right on the edge of a cliff."

A poet and musician in addition to being a fine artist, Marin has an eclectic style inspired by some of the greatest artists last century: Picasso, Kandinsky, Pollock, Hockney, Basquiat and, most notably, Paul Klee.

"A lot of those artists addressed the fragmentedness of modern existence. That's what a good artist should show. The Zeitgeist of the time," Marin said.

"I try to paint how I feel rather than how it looks, because anybody can paint something how it looks, but if you can paint it how it feels, you're going to get your own unique emotion in," said Marin, when explaining his style.



Alden Marin often sketches friends' faces on paper cups.

"The best thing you can hope for is to be yourself."

He can create a painting in 20 to 30 minutes, while a song, which Marin composes on his guitar, may take weeks. His desk overflows with his tools, mainly the Decocolor and Sharpie markers he uses to create his drawings.

Anything can become his canvas; he chooses to draw on whatever is handy, including coffee cups, placemats, tablecloths, rocks and paper. He draws every day, and has binders full of thousands of sketches.

"I just try to keep everything and make use of it. I pick up litter, cans, rocks at the beach."

Picking a favorite subject to paint is impossible for Marin. He likes faces, profiles and part-human, part-animal combinations.

As a poet, he has published more than two dozen poetry chapbooks, with titles ranging from "Jaywalking with the Baby" to "Paddling to Misto." Marin's late mother was a poet, and he began writing poetry as a teenager in Malibu.

The 1978 Stanford graduate has a day job: selling wine. He entered the business in 1980 and, in 1996, he began Marin Marketing, which sells wine throughout Southern California.

"Even though I'm sober, I sell wine," Marin said. He has been sober since 1997, when he realized his partying ways were destroying him. Today, he is "addicted" to creating art.

He studied wine during his junior year abroad in Europe, and is "almost obsessively maniacally knowledgeable about wine," he said. "I'm good at it. People turn to me for good wine. I sell to Whole Foods, Bristol Farms and eight to ten other accounts.

"The best wines show the winemaker's personality. And, the best art shows the person's actual inner soul and personality in theory, at least in my opinion."

Recently, his original artwork adorned boxes and bottles of the Wine of the Month Club's holiday selection. Riven Rock wines, available locally at Whole Foods, also feature one of Marin's original images on the labels.

In the Palisades, his art permanently adorns the walls of Ogden's Cleaners. Daniel Rolnik Gallery in Santa Monica and Blooming Art Gallery in Little Tokyo handle his work.

These days, Marin derives great pleasure from the squirrels that visit his apartment balcony (some of whom he pets and feeds), as well as his coffee group that has met since 2009 at Coffee Bean in the Village. There are 49 active members, and about a dozen people show up on any given day. Marin often sketches them on Coffee Bean cups, and frequently gives them to his subjects.

Marin thrives on his peaceful, quiet existence. He's up by 5 a.m. most days, painting, and remains an avid surfer (something he began doing as a kid in Malibu),



Artist Alden Marin in his art-filled home.

Photo: Bart Bartholomew

as well as a frequent hiker in the local mountains. He bemoans a lack of quiet in the world—and in his head—but finds peace and solitude when surfing.

He compares surfing to art, and says that the sport inspires him. "Surfing is very influential because of the movement and conformity of nature's lines.

(Continued on Page 21)



Marin's original artwork adorned boxes and bottles of the Wine of the Month Club's holiday selection. Riven Rock wines also feature Marin's images.



Some samples from Alden Marin's prolific body of work.

Alden Marin

(Continued from Page 20)

"Art imitates nature," he continues. "That's why I have leaves sitting around. Line is everything in art. Line defines everything in life. It conveys to people what your feelings are."

Marin's favorite colors are green and blue. "Green is a good color: jade, mountains, waves and mountain water holes I like to swim in. It's a spiritual color. Part of my surfboard is green. But I like all colors. I celebrate color."

He appreciates his good fortune in life, yet feels a sense of urgency about remaining engaged in the world. He paints, writes and/or works on new songs every day. "If not, I start to contemplate meaninglessness and worthlessness. I'm constantly troubled by something."

"The world is out of our control," he says, but in the end, "You've got to hope for the best."

Coward's *Hay Fever* Opens Jan. 15

Theatre Palisades will present the Noël Coward comedy *Hay Fever* from Friday, January 15 through Sunday, February 21. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and on Sunday at 2 p.m. at Pierson Playhouse, 941 Temescal Canyon Rd.

The play was written in 1924 and can best be described as a cross between high farce and a comedy of manners. The play is set in an English country house in 1924, where the four members of the Bliss family each invite a guest to spend the weekend. The hosts are so egocentric their guests soon find themselves lost in the midst of craziness.

Directed by Michael Worden and produced by Martha Hunter and Sherman Wayne, the cast features Philip Bartolf, Anna Carlise, Mark Davidson, Tyler Frost, Martha Hunter, Cassandra Orrantia, Yvonne Robertson, Holly Sidell and Przemek Jaremko.

This play is cleverly constructed, wittily written, slightly cynical and undeniably entertaining. The work contains all the elements that helped establish Coward's



Tyler Frost, Yvonne Robertson, Philip Bartolf and Cassandra Orrantia portray the Bliss family in Theatre Palisades' production of *Hay Fever*. Photo: Shari Barrett

reputation as an award-winning playwright.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$18 for seniors and students. Call (310) 454-1970 or visit theatrepalisades.org. Free onsite parking is available at the theatre.

Allied Artists Host Plein-Air Paint-Out

A plein-air paint-out will be held from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, January 9, at Chesebro Canyon, 5792 Chesebro Rd. in Agoura. A painting demonstration begins at 9 a.m.

A paint-out is a great way to meet other artists and discover new sites for inspiration. All levels of artists are welcome. Bring your own art supplies, water, lunch and walking shoes. Rain cancels the paint-out.

Take the Ventura Freeway (101) to Chesebro Road exit. Turn north on Palo Comado Canyon Road, then right on Chesebro. Go north one mile to park entrance. Turn right and follow road to parking lot. There are facilities.

Contact Bruce Trentham at (818) 397-1576 or bmtrentham@charter.net or Russ Hunziker, (310) 500-6584 or visit allied-artists.com.

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