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Showcase

CHRISTMAS in SoCal

The complete list of everything to see, hear and do this holiday season. Pages 14-15

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CHRISTMAS is all around us

By BRITTANY MOSHEA
Valley Press Staff Writer

People always say Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year and with just a quick look around, it's easy to see why.

Everywhere you turn houses, trailers, even cars are donned in hundreds of thousands of twinkling lights and thickening displays with nary an electric bill in sight.

Not satisfied with merely perfecting choreography and remaining on key, producers equip Christmas shows with everything from confetti cannons and full orchestras to pyrotechnics and special effects.

Finally, shopping isn't shopping unless you can strap on some ice skates and do a few rotations around a 60-foot Nordmann tree bedecked in over 120,000 LED lights in the heart of downtown.

As outrageous, unconvincing and unbelievable as these events may sound, they define Christmas in Southern California and with just a few weeks left in the holiday season, there isn't much time to get it all in.

Luckily, we've compiled a list of the best things to see, hear and do in Southern California this holiday season. Consider it an early Christmas gift.

Illuminating Creations

➤ **106th annual Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade** — 6:30-9 p.m. Friday-Sunday, Dec. 19-21. Bejeweled yachts, kayaks, canoes and small boats will light up the harbor as a dazzling array of holiday lights and music fill the air. Ranked by Sea Yacht Times as "one of the top ten holiday happenings in the nation," the event will feature over 100 vessels of all sizes docked out from top to bottom with lights, displays, dancers, music and more. Cost: Free. Parady starts and ends at Bay Island and guests can see the procession from just about any place on the shore. www.visitnewportbeach.com

➤ **Oceanside Festival of Lights** — 5-10 p.m. daily, Dec. 19-Jan. 3. Some four million lights illuminate Riverside's Main Street during this annual holiday tradition that People magazine ranked as the second best in the nation. Events include ice skating, horse-drawn carriage rides, festive food and drink, live entertainment and nightly appearances by Santa Claus and his reindeer. Cost: Free. Main Street Riverside, between University & Mission San avenues. (951) 826-5223, www.streamlakes.gov/64

➤ **L.A. Zoo Lights** — 4-10 p.m. daily, Dec. 19-Jan. 4. Los Angeles Zoo is transformed into a winter wonderland with animal ice sculptures, animated exhibits, lasers and 3D projection mapping and interactive displays. The self-guided 6th- to 90-minute tour takes guests through select parts of the zoo and includes a special chance to meet real reindeer and weekend-only visits with Santa Claus. Free parking is available. Cost: $13, $11, children ages 2-12. Free, children under 2. Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens, 5333 Zoo Drive, Los Angeles. (323) 644-6042, www.lazoo.org

➤ **Dana Point IlluminiDocan** — 5:30-9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 5-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday, daily through Jan. 4. OC Dana Point Harbor will transform into a festive village surrounded by thousands of lights sculpted into the wonders of the sea including grand creations like a 30-foot Glowfish-on tree and Lighteave tunnels that stretch longer than a football field. OC Dana Point Harbor, 34615 Park Lantern, Dana Point. (949) 923-2251, www.anchorpoint.com/danapoint-illuminidocan.

Frosty Escapes

➤ **Family Snow Day** — 1:30-4:30 p.m. Sundays, Dec. 21 and 28, Wednesday, Dec. 24. Child admission includes a snow play area on the park's Pond rink where little ones can play in the snow, skate rental on the complex's Olympic-sized rink, hot cocoa and the opportunity to meet Frosty the Snowman. Sleds will be available, but guests may bring their own sleds and snow play gear. Cost: $15, ages 3 and under, $12, children ages 3-12, adults, free to play with child. $5 skate rental. Ice Station Valencia, 25745 North Norfolk Drive, (661) 775-9696, www.icestation.com.

➤ **Queen Mary's Chill**—Dec. 19-Jan. 4 and Jan. 8-11. Visitors experience an Ice Kingdom hand-carved from two million pounds of ice, six lanes of ice tubing, ice skating and a visit to North Pole Village featuring the Claus Cabin. Cost: $34.99, $24.99, children ages 4-11. The Queen Mary, 1126 Queens Highway, Long Beach. (877) 342-0738, www.queenmary.com.

➤ **The Rink in Downtown Burbank** — 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Friday and Saturday, through Jan. 19. Special school day hours also apply. Winter weather has descended on Burbank and chilling out has never been so fun. Skating sessions are 90 minutes. Special events include performances by the Los Angeles Ice Theater every Saturday in December, Skating Santas Night where everyone is welcome to come in costume on Dec. 20, Wednesday Night Lights on Wednesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays through the month. Cost: $16.45, skate rentals, $6, Bobby the Seal rentals. Corner of North 3rd Street and East Orange Grove Avenue. (818) 238-5180, www.DISBURBANK.com

➤ **L.A Kings Holiday Ice** — A blockbuster holiday tradition, through Dec. 31. This 5000 square-foot rink allows some 200 guests to skate at a time. Cost: $10, $8, $6. 1111 S. Figueroa St., downtown Los Angeles. The rink will be done skating, visit the handmade of crafts, restaurants and shops located around the Nokia Plaza and take in the 25,000 holiday lights that line the streets and adorn the plaza's 30 304-foot angels. Cost including skate rental: $15, $10, children under 7, $8, seniors and military. (602) 305-5149, www.lalive.com/holidayice.

Charming Carols

➤ **Handel's "Messiah"** — 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 21. The Los Angeles Master Chorale along with chamber orchestra and soloists will perform one of the greatest choral works of all time, Handel's "Messiah." Presented by Los Angeles Master Chorale. Cost: $29-$139. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 South Grand Ave., Los Angeles. (213) 972-7282, www.lamc.org.

➤ **Los Angeles County Holiday Celebration** — 6 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 24. The Palisades High School Choral Union will be returning to this three-hour seasonal event which features choral and dance performing groups throughout L.A. county including choirs, ensembles and dance companies. Cost: Free. Parking: Free in the Shoto Center garage. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Music Center, 135 South Grand Ave., Los Angeles. (213) 972-3099, www.holidaycelebration.org.

➤ **The Magical Christmas Caroling Truck** — 4:30-11 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 24.

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