

## LA Unscripted | October 26th, 2022

From hot spots and hidden gems to lots of local flavor It's your guide to L A the unscripted way And tonight we're all about Tiki Hello everyone and welcome to L A unscripted or should I say Aloha I'm de and this is a privately owned underground tiki bar in Pasadena California We're going to give you a tour in a little bit But first what is Tiki And where did it all begin Well every person we asked had a slightly different answer but we'll start with the true expert His name is bamboo And if you want to take the bar and so this is the only guy to call We do live cheeky We build it during the day and then we live it at night Aloha I'm Bamboo Ben and I'm a third generation tiki bar builder The cultural part of Tiki is is basically from New Zealand It started there and they carved a uh ugly man which was basically the white man But our tiki is more of a made up thing uh for fun And um it was made by a guy named Don Beachcomber who opened this place in 1930 34 in Hollywood He invented a lot of cocktails and he basically was the one who admitted the zombie that just blew everything up We have this guy here is this I think he came from Don the beachcomber in Sunset Beach To me Tiki is uh escapism It's about uh like trying to go to the island but you can't afford it So you're gonna go to your neighborhood tiki bar and and have a have a strong drink and just sit back and dark It was barely lit in some huts and just relax That's tiki for me and my grandfather he did it His name is Eli Headley and he's kind of famous told the family hey we're moved to Anaheim Some guy named Walt Disney is making this crazy this crazy park in Anaheim He was involved in the original adventure land um doing some stuff and then they gave him a store there for the first seven years It's kind of neat So after you mix a cocktail up after work you come over here you have it relax and take a nice outdoor shower So we just started building small tiki bars like the one behind me And we and we started people drive by and here in Huntington Beach and hey is that for sale All the thatch and everything else comes from the Philippines So we have the importers bring it in for us Uh We just lost one of the famous ones called Oceanic Arts The tikis come from a few friends of ours or our artists and also um I have another guy who imports them but a lot of artists involved in the masks and a lot of artwork We've built 47 commercial tiki bars So far you guys were just at bamboo club in Long Beach We did that one We call that the second darkest tiki bar we've ever built They're all my favorite Everyone's different Everyone that we do is always different We can't do the same thing So we actually hand

paint these suits They're made out of a like we do like a puff peat So like it's a pinstripe bamboo My name is Blake Bassam and I'm 1/4 generation tiki bar builder I guess like it's different than like an average job So we kind of go off and like do our own thing The freedom is really nice and just everything that comes along with it all the events and stuff that you get to do It's all like a really fun job My dad is very beloved for what he does and we are both very passionate about what we do and the other family members as well My mom and my brother it is a tiki family my house we call it the hut and um it's small but it's close to the beach It's just been kind of a a we just collect stuff over the years It's hard not to like And the whole tiki thing is about about having a lot of stuff So this is our new cocktail from Tiki Toms in Walnut Creek the bin zombie I do love my job It is a lot of work I mean it's a lot of work My body's pretty beat up 57 years old I'm still climbing ladders and shooting stuff to the ceiling And uh but thank God I have my son Now we've been really lucky knock on bamboo knock knock knock to have so much work and to have done so many bars and people's homes We love it I mean we always try to fit people in anywhere we can or you know schedule jobs and it's hard to But um we just love uh love doing what we do and making people happy You know the old saying so many tiki bars so little time All right Now you heard been mention the bamboo club as the second darkest club he's ever built So let's head to Long Beach and take you right inside the bamboo club is a classic tiki bar in Long Beach California Oh wow Started by me and two good friends two good business owners in Long Beach that owned other bars and we decided to bring a whole revamp a dye bar into a whole immersive tiki experience by providing all the decor that you see here and then the drinks are amazing Cocktails along with our food with a little tropical flare We all are very big in Long Beach We live in Long Beach raising our families in Long Beach and our businesses were in Long Beach as well So we decided that we wanted to keep you know everything local and really bring the experience to you know the residents that we've already grown to love and already served It really is a made up It's an Americana culture that that was made up for soldiers returning back from war in the 19 thirties that were used to the tropical they they were exposed to this tropical atmosphere tropical drinks tropical food bamboo Ben was our our architect here for all the decor that you see and he's a third generation tiki bar builder that lives locally in Huntington Beach You know we were very lucky to get him on board with us to do this project We've become very good friends since a look of it was definitely his touch to the place Customers are very

loyal You know our staff is great They become good friends with all of our customers and you know they keep coming back for more and you know we love serving them and keeping the tiki vibes alive with everybody So the wings first of all starting from the top down can't be beat wings are incredible Their burgers on point and they have a new fish sandwich that came out a couple of months ago Super rum Super yum We wanted to do bar food but elevated bar food And that's what we did That is our spaghetti squash pad Thai Oh my God that is Pad Thai Yeah that's really tastes just like Pad Thai Exactly But it's healthy Wow That's our pork belly bowls That's our houses roasted pork belly There is so much going on in this I love it Yeah that's our flagship I have our Thai tea brine chicken sandwich We brine that Oh so brined in Thai tea for overnight for 24 hours And you've got the coleslaw on there Oh yes Mm Oh my word It's juicy That is so good Whoa Our head bartender Dustin Rodriguez has done a great job with our menu keeping True to the Tiki originals How many different daiquiris do you have We have 12 on the menu Now do you remember all of them Maruo Passion Fruit I have prickly pear Ok strawberry Ok I have a pineapple Ok We have a mango Ok Black daiquiri with black rum cinnamon It's really nice The dark side deck It's only three ingredients lime sugar and rum Really right here Ok Got it And I I have a I have a I saw your twirl I don't know how to do your twirl but that is nothing like the ice creamy creamy foamy ones It's like sweet but really light and refreshing What are we doing now Let's just let's go with the classic OK I'm gonna try I'm so excited I love my thai Oh Oh wow We're gonna do the Doctor Bamboo Oh so they are not light handed on the liquor in the Doctor Bamboo I'll just tell you that right now That was like two full shots We keep we keep the drinks nice and uh boo Oh that's my new favorite Oh my God I like this better than the Mai Tai who knew you cannot even taste the liquor So when you walk in these doors you kind of you escape Yeah you're you're not in Long Beach you're not even in Los Angeles You are in a tiki paradise and it just throws you back Um We love Hawaii we love Tiki culture It's just a wonderful place to just be between the incredible drinks and the food and the incredible staff Like it's just a wonderful and comforting place to be when you just want to escape and get a tiki drink and just relax We're never gonna cut corners We want to give them the best food best drinks best quality and the best time that they could have our time is just getting started more from when we come back Welcome back to L A Scripted Tiki Spectacular I'm Devin inside the privately owned underground bar in Pasadena California Now you have to

buy the house for a mere 43 million to drink at this tiki bar But you just have to drive to know how to have a drink at the oldest tiki bar in the country Jasmine Simpkins is at the Tonga Hut Grab your tiny umbrellas We're getting ready to do some tasting inside of las oldest tiki lounge Tonga hut Cheers Tonga Hut is the oldest surviving tiki bar in Los Angeles We were opened in 1958 by two brothers So 1958 the two brothers built it The layout is 90% as it was then The colors this darkened a little from decades of smoking in here but they're all original The ceiling the soffits Um Even the Tiki's big mo was carved in 1958 We have about 2025 drinks on our menu Most of them are rum but we do have vodka and whiskey and tequila and gin and everything Our traditional cocktails here that people like are the virago which I've named after an disciplined contemptuous woman We have our Classic House Rum Barrel We always serve the 1944 style Mai Tai and Dawn Beach's 1933 zombie I am the beverage director So I've created the menu Marie I love the way you make a drink I already can tell this is going to be yummy We're gonna make uh as close to the 1944 Mai Thai as we can We're using Rum from Jamaica and a rum from Martinique to give it the correct flavor profile And we add a little simple syrup for body some homemade almond syrup which we call a ja a little orange cura and a lot of lime juice because that is technically the only juice that you use in a mai tai Again we're gonna shake this up for you Got a beautiful glass here Oh my goodness Am to wake up that pallet Now that's a my Thai people Oh this is not a drill I might drink it all The second drink we're gonna have today is our house rum barrel I'm using a aged rum from Guiana at 86 proof So this is a big 20 ounce drink I only do 96 per So we have that and then we have a lovely Rum from Barbados the real mccooy And then after that we have all of our fresh juices as well A little grapefruit a little lemon a little lime and some orange juice We're gonna make this pretty here for you And this is our house run marrow One of the things when I was doing my research that tiki bars really became a home for returning war veterans It was the first time for decades that people had disposable income You know in the 50 s people were making money they can afford that car they could afford the house They may not have been able to afford to take the family to Hawaii vacation But you can always take wife out for a date to a tiki bar and she could feel like she's in Hawaii 100% It's about escapism recession waves politics everybody's looking for escapism Everybody's looking for a little bit of paradise You know you can't go to Hawaii you can't go to the South Pacific You can't go to the Caribbean We'll bring it to you Ok When we come back the true meaning

of a hidden tiki gym in the heart of downtown L A will be right back  
Welcome back to L A unscripted everyone I'm David Devin And we have  
uncovered perhaps the biggest collector of Tiki culture I've ever seen So head  
to the heart of downtown L A to the place Even Walt Disney went to get  
ideas for his amusement park It's called Clifton's Republic and it's home to  
Pacific Seas Tiki Bar It's incredible I mean honestly I have never seen so  
much detail in in every little I mean just look at like this one like face right  
there then you look up and like every single shelf is full of like original  
authentic details So Pacific Seas is a Tiki Adventure bar that lives within  
Clifton's Republic What I did was I actually restored the original 19 thirties  
era uh Clifton's Brookdale and then I added additional floors to it and I I  
created separate venues in each of those locations I don't even know where to  
start so many beautiful things here but but obviously this bar is a standout It's  
like kind of an art deco Where did you get that This was ebay This was  
definitely one of my finer ebay purchases Clifton's was originally actually  
the terminus of Route 66 which ended at Seventh and Broadway right in  
front of the building Obviously route 66 has moved on and the city has  
moved on But Clifton's Republic is still here as the landmark center to  
downtown It's sort of the beating heart of the original social um creative life  
and spiritual life of downtown This is insane So in here there's an actual boat  
right Ok It's a DJ booth It's very smart But where did you get a where did  
you get a boat Another amazing ebay find It's always surprising to me when  
somebody says that they haven't been here because there's been 170 million  
people through these doors in the last 90 years So it's been such an  
institution in a part of downtown Los Angeles and Los Angeles culture in  
general I've been collecting everything here in this location I collected  
personally every item over my entire lifetime One of the first things I ever  
discovered and fell in love with and decided to collect is actually in this  
room This right here that right there Where did you get it It was in Kenya uh  
got it from a Masai village and it was the first thing that I think probably  
started igniting my my passion both for adventure but also for collecting  
things This is actually a little bit more than a tiki bar This is an adventure bar  
It's a bar that was based upon the golden era of travel in the 19 thirties when  
people first were able to go and travel to exotic places and discover new  
people and new lands and new cultures And they wanted to bring that back  
and they wanted to share that with everybody And then Tiki eventually  
evolved out of the Tiki culture which are the carvings and the statues that  
represent individual gods from within a whole variety of different cultures I

love the respect you have even for the things that are that are technically props like you just have such a respect for all of the the history and integrity of everything That to me it's really important that the authenticity is maintained because the history is not something you can reproduce I won the Conservancies Award for design and restoration when we actually finally reopened after about 3.5 years of restoration Bamboo ben And I started working on this at a relatively early stage when this space was just a shell And he has an incredible legacy and he's got this extraordinary talent to do authentic different methods and materials within a space like this Yeah this is Tiki Bob's cheeky Bob Oh is that the first Tiki Bar ever Yeah that is seen by most people as the original Tiki Bar who I actually had the pleasure of meeting Diane Disney who was Walt's daughter And she told me stories about how she used to go to Clifton's with her dad He would take her and walk her through the space and show her the trees and the babbling Brook downstairs and sit by the big stone fireplace And he pointed out the uh the little stone chapel which actually was his first inspiration for the castle at Disneyland And I did tell her that everybody said that this place was very Disney esque And she stopped me and she says no no no don't let anybody ever tell you that Disney is very clifton's esque And that was the best compliment I could possibly imagine I've never seen anything like it This is people have to like people have to come here Yeah they have to come explore They do I mean there's nothing like this I think in LA I don't think there's anything like this in the world be better And to end our tiki time How about a little tropical ice cream and coconuts to help wh you away to places we all dream about without ever leaving So I come from six generations of ice cream makers I'm Martin Ken owner of Pop's artisanal creamery And I dare Dana to make our signature coconut sundae We have a little bit of everything and within that just a mix of different cultures And I used um this L A is diversity uh uh uh just like as a foundation to to make creative flavors such as you know Thai tea we have a you know this Thai community like uh street vendors you know we see the fresh fruits in in the L A area who doesn't like you know the fruits and put taj a little bit of lime So we again recreate that into ice cream I come from six generations of ice cream makers uh from Belize is literally my family's tradition I learned how to make ice cream from my grandfather right who learned from his grandfather he taught me how to ride a bike and then I started doing all the stunts So I grew up cracking coconuts pouring it and shaving it We couldn't go out and play with my friends unless my mom was like are you done with those coconuts

Because we did everything with coconut back in Belize from from treats to you know from coconut milk or coconut um cream to we we make in our in our like staple foods like rice and beans things like that For me it was a good way to show something interesting in a coconut bowl I am ready for this coconut Let's do this All right we got Damon here my little brother It is a family affair She is the general manager I am shaving fresh coconut and we're going to use the shelf for the Sunday and then we're going to use the shavings on top You've got your tt ice cream your rum raisin your fresh honey lavender your little umbrella Who needs to travel to an island Everything is done with love I want it to be welcoming and and um uh diverse um like our flavors pops is such a big part of me and um um we connect with the community as many ways as possible We just open up our our third location in Santa Clarita and to have 100 and 50 people waiting outside um to serve about 12 to 1500 people in a weekend Um Completely surreal It's been six generations so far You have two kids Do you want to make it seven generations The one thing is it's been all boys in the family all the men That's why you know the name pops I only have daughters So the girls are gonna take it from here and that concludes our spectacular Thank you so much for joining us and thank you so much to John and you guys are amazing This was so much fun Go out there you guys and have a my tie on us We'll see you next time Good night