

malibu times

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ARTS and ENTERTAINMENT ISSUE

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PEPPERDINE
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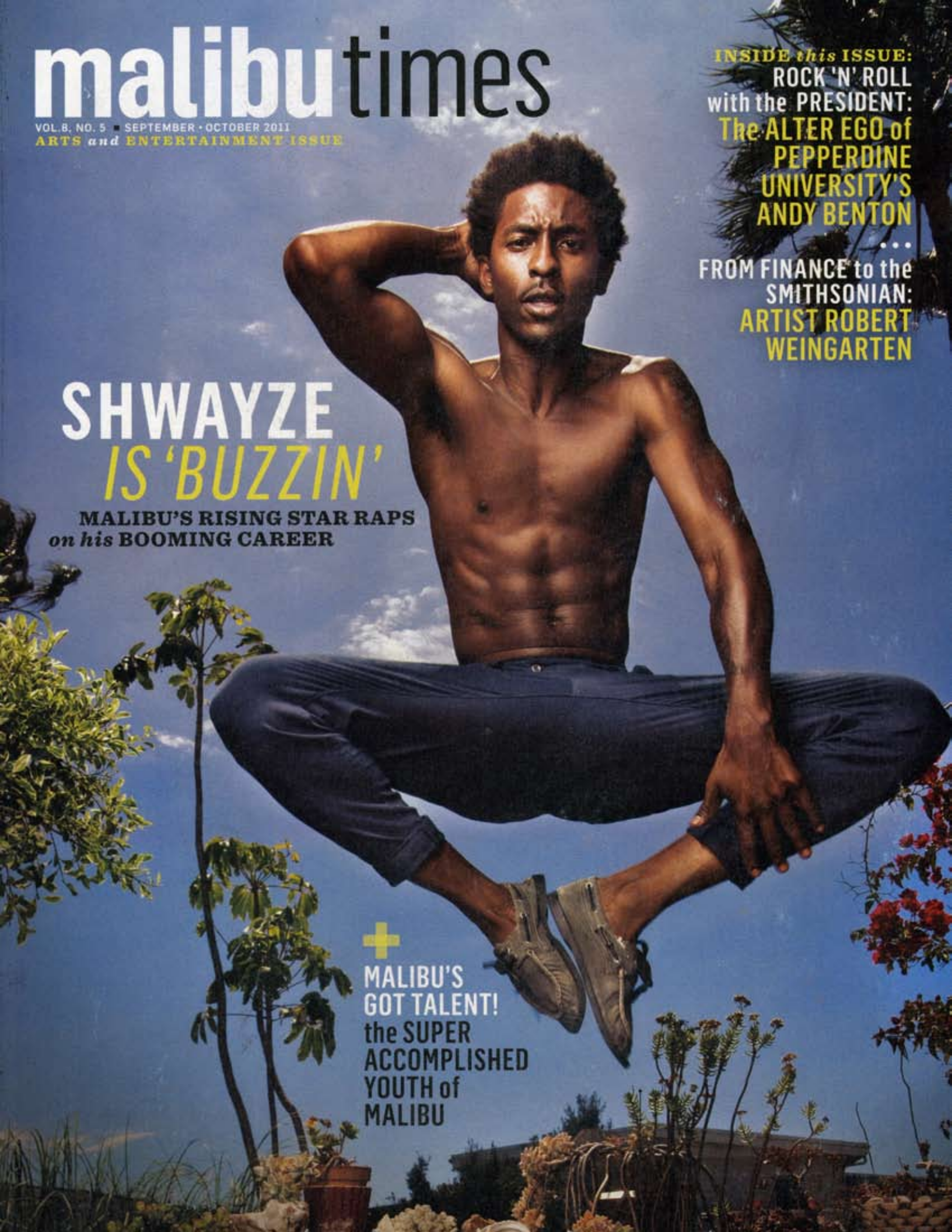
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FROM FINANCE to the
SMITHSONIAN:
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SHWAYZE IS 'BUZZIN'

MALIBU'S RISING STAR RAPS
on his BOOMING CAREER



MALIBU'S
GOT TALENT!
the SUPER
ACCOMPLISHED
YOUTH of
MALIBU



Sharing space with Tra di Noi Ristorante & Bar on Camden Drive in Beverly Hills, La Focacceria Artisan Bread & Bakery Café specializes in rustic Italian cuisine. Executive Chef-Owner Francesco Velasco wants to use La Focacceria to demonstrate his soulful side, creating comfort food like roasted chicken, braised short ribs, pizza, sandwiches, and pastries.

Before launching the bakery, Velasco researched focaccia in all its varying forms throughout Italy. What most Americans think of as focaccia—a spongy, hole-filled, one-inch thick bread flavored with olive oil and topped with rosemary and onions—is from Genoa. Velasco doesn't like the woody texture of roasted rosemary, so to avoid it, he infuses that herb in the olive oil used to make the dough. He also prefers to cut the onions vertically to get the best texture possible on the top of the focaccia. "The onions release too much water if they are cut horizontally," he insists. For this

Genoese-style of focaccia, often strewn with roasted vegetables, Velasco will change the toppings seasonally.

Another kind of focaccia is served in the region of Liguria. This Roman focaccia is paper-thin and crispy, usually presented without any toppings at all. Velasco likes to layer Taleggio cheese between these thin sheets and create a sort of focaccia tart that resembles a pizza with an amazing amount of flavor. In Italy it's known as Focaccia di Recco. Instead of Taleggio, he might spread a mixture of braised leeks, mortadella, and a Parmesan cheese sauce between the focaccia sheets, also to excellent effect.

Of course Velasco uses his focaccia bread to make sandwiches. "A sandwich is like a building," he says. "We start with the bread, consider its structure, and then decide on the amount and type of filling." That filling might take advantage of the wide selection of Italian cured meats called *salumi* flown in from

BELOW | three pizzas on the patio

BOTTOM | Genoese focaccia cooking at 750 degrees for 3 minutes.

PHOTOS BY MATTHEW FRIED



LEFT TOP | Ligurian Focaccia di Recco

LEFT MIDDLE | Genoese-style focaccia, strewn with roasted vegetables

LEFT BOTTOM | Baker Mauricio Salinas checking the temperature of the pizza oven

ABOVE TOP | Chef-Owner Francesco Velasco, with freshly sliced, imported prosciutto

ABOVE | brioche and coronettes just out of the oven

PHOTOS BY MATTHEW FRIED

LA FOCACCERIA

Artisan Bread & Bakery Café

Before launching the bakery, Velasco researched focaccia in all its varying forms throughout Italy.

New York from Salumeria Rosi. Or the many artisan cheeses on display behind the bakery counter. Or Velasco's house-cured pickles and spreads. He assembles everything from a simple prosciutto-and-butter sandwich to a New-Orleans-style muffaletta on ciabatta bread.

For the pastries, Velasco again looked all over Italy for inspiration. The coronetto is a horn-shaped pastry similar to a croissant,

and he fills his with fruit jams, custards, sweet ricotta, and even nutella. One of his favorite pastries is the lemon brioche with sweet ricotta cheese. The bread is infused with orange-blossom water and the ricotta is studded with lemon peel. It's the perfect accompaniment to a strong cup of espresso, and a sweet way to celebrate an afternoon break. LF



The cucina rustica side
of La Focacceria Tra di Noi
in Beverly Hills

SPECIAL PREMIER ISSUE — SPRING/SUMMER 2011

La Focacceria

TRA DI NOI

magazine

*Executive Chef
& Partner*

FRANCESCO

VELASCO in the

second-story

window of his new

Beverly Hills

restaurant

La Focacceria

Tra di Noi.

La Focacceria Tra di Noi

362 North Camden Drive

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

310-277-7346

lafocacceriabh.com

WELCOME to BEVERLY HILLS

Tra di Noi Ristorante Travels From Sea Level to the Second Story