

Sunset

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Embracing innovation: exhibition producer Vanda Vitali.

City of dreams

Vanda Vitali curates a stunning exhibit on L.A.

"There has been a shift in museum thinking," says Vanda Vitali of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. "Public shows must educate, communicate. To do that, we must invent new techniques that borrow from movies, photography, artifacts, and environmental immersion."

You'll see the results of Vitali's thinking at the stunning new exhibit she has produced for the natural-history museum. *L.A.: Light, Motion, Dreams*, a video presentation, is slated to open March 14. You enter this exhibit as if arriving on a spaceship, with Los Angeles coming into view as you descend from the sky. You walk through streetscapes and freeways, see earthquakes, mudslides, brushfires, and fog, step into the primordial Los Angeles River, then turn around and see it filled with concrete. You may find yourself face-to-face with a whale in the Pacific Ocean.

L.A.: Light, Motion, Dreams

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County; \$9. 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles; www.nhm.org or (213) 763-3466.

The city's oldest museum—it opened its doors in 1913—the natural-history museum is not known for the sort of mind-bending exhibits more commonly found at a theme park. But Vitali, who came to Los Angeles after a stint as museology advisor to the president of the Royal Ontario Museum, hopes that will change with the premiere of *Light, Motion, Dreams*.

"Typically," Vitali says, "museums focus on preserving and protecting the past. We learn from the past, yes. But we must care about the future. We want to be a player in the city's future." —BARBARA

TANNENBAUM



TRAVELER'S JOURNAL

Catalina's Cubs

As a lifelong Chicago Cubs fan, I am more attuned to harbingers of doom than harmonic convergences. So while on Santa Catalina Island last fall, I was slow to understand that I was making a pilgrimage to a sacred Cubs site at a propitious time.

The visit coincided with that rarest of events, a Cubs playoff appearance. My wife and I were staying at the Inn on Mt. Ada, the onetime home of Cubs owner William Wrigley. From 1921 to 1951, Wrigley brought the Cubs to Catalina for spring training. With five National League pennants, those were glory years.

A new book, *The Cubs on Catalina* (Settefrati Press, Gainesville, GA, 2003; \$40), by Jim Vitti, is filled with nostalgic photos. The team's clubhouse is now the Catalina Country Club's restaurant, where the pub displays vintage jerseys and old spring-training programs.

The morning after a 12-3 victory over the Florida Marlins, we went to give thanks at a Cubs monument along Avalon Canyon Road. Except that it was gone, removed for construction of a firehouse.

Not a good sign.

Although within five outs of their first World Series since '45, the Cubs lost the playoffs to the Marlins. I called to check on the monument's reinstallation; there was no scheduled date. For this Cubs fan the message was clear: Wait until next year.

Well, next year is now.

Catalina Country Club restaurant: 1 Country Club Dr.; (310) 510-7404. Inn on Mt. Ada: 6 rooms from \$310; www.catalina.com/mtada or (310) 510-2030. —MATTHEW JAFFE