

To: Sandpiper Newspaper
From: Carlo Coppo, Del Martian, 461 Zuni Drive, Del Mar

I cannot recall the last time I, or anyone else for that matter, returned from Europe complaining that the village sidewalks were too narrow or the sidewalk cafes interfered with either my ability to move freely about the town or my visual appreciation of the scenery.

To state the proposition is to refute it. I have lived in Del Mar for 32 years and have enjoyed what this village was when I arrived, what it has become, and what it will be through the vision and selfless energy of those responsible for its present imprint on and appeal to all, young, old, and in between. It is with pride that I live here and it is with pride that I experience the delight that sweeps across the faces of those I meet when I tell them I live in Del Mar. With that being said, permit me to provide some hopefully ennobling commentary from a true "old timer" Del Martian.

Two outdoor cafe experiences first attracted me to the openness and congeniality of this village: the deck of the Firepit, now the Poseidon, which, from one point of view "encroached" on the beach, and the outdoor cafe atmosphere of Del Mar Danish, which reminded me so much of the ineffable invitation open air camaraderie offers to residents and visitors alike in Europe and stateside. Let's take the Del Mar Danish as an example of life "B.S.", that is "Before Starbucks." Del Mar Danish was a gathering place for friendship, families and conversation, morphed into other patisseries and eventually, through the dedication and emotional and financial investment of our beloved Sulyn and John, created Cafe Secret, a true gift to the community. Yet, it is true, the sidewalk would be wider were the improvements not there. This symbolic progress was accomplished legally, reasonably, involved great financial investments by the visionary owners, and is a tribute to what this quintessential village has become. In other words, the process worked.

Another example is the plaza. When I arrived in Del Mar it was a strip mall with a blacktop parking lot peppered with potholes, Zel's Liquor, Windmill Farms, a flower shop and the mandatory real estate office. Zel was a friend and I featured him in my reminiscence about my arrival in Del Mar, published a couple of years ago in the Del Mar Times in their "I Remember When..." series, entitled "How I Bought ZuniHouse in Six Hours." The point was that visionaries like Zel treasured Del Mar as a montage of Europe and a little slice of paradise on earth. The plaza was bitterly opposed, the opposition was incorporated into the award-winning design, and who, today, does not delight in taking a glass at the end of a long day at Enoteca overlooking the view corridor to end all view

corridors? Again, the system worked. The same can be said for L'Auberge.

Since I know the opposition appreciates facts, I walked Del Mar to prepare this commentary and found the sidewalk cafes on 15th to be consistent both in design and execution with the rest of our inviting village. For example, walking north on the west side of Camino del Mar from 11th to 15th streets, one encounters no less than 34 alleged "impediments" to straight line pedestrian travel along a meandering "sidewalk" that varies from 4 1/2 to 5 feet in most areas to 7 to 9 feet in others. These lawfully approved and reasonably located "impediments" include planters with trees or bushes which "green" the walk, bike racks, street signs, benches, newspaper racks, trash cans, and the seating areas outside Americana.

The pedestrians I observed navigated this "obstacle course" (according to the naysayers) effortlessly, to my observation, and those I spoke to offered no complaints that their foot travel had been too arduous or that they desired an unimpeded swath of footloose freedom traversing Del Mar and its shops, restaurants, and businesses. The same "impediments" exist on the east side of Camino del Mar, where the sidewalk is a "mere" 4 1/2 feet wide between the wonderful children's wall and the planter all the way to Starbucks, where it widens. If a family truly needs to walk hip-to-hip 7 people-wide, the beach is only two blocks away and will accommodate them nicely.

Walking west on 15th, the sidewalk between Americana's redesigned outdoor seating and the curb is six feet, with the "impediments" being two new, lovely Jaqueranda trees. The walkway widens to 8 feet from brick to curb outside Jimmy O's, reduces to 5 and 6 feet for the 30 foot traverse past Sbicca's and Del Mar Pizza, and widens to more than 20 feet from there there past Annemarie Ecole and Rusty's to Stratford. I was able to view the ocean every inch of the way.

Finally, it is axiomatic legally that should the City accede to those who sat on their objections during the numerous public hearings on these outdoor cafes during the duly-noticed hearing process, claims which any lawyer will tell you are procedurally barred, the City will be exposed to lawsuits by the businesses based on fraud, misrepresentation, and even inverse condemnation for the loss of business revenue and expenditures made in reliance on the administrative approval process. Perhaps the naysayers should be asked to collectively indemnify and hold the City harmless from the economic damages and attorneys fees to which they are exposing all the taxpaying residents with their untimely demands that what has legally been done be illegally undone.

And, finally, Having read with curiosity Sam Borghese's piece on the cafe

project in the Sandpiper, I offer the following: Once the cafes are completed, I extend an open invitation for you, Sam, to join me for breakfast at Americana, lunch at Del Mar Pizza, and dinner at Sbicca's, on a sun-filled day of your choice. You get the view seat and I buy. We'll discuss art and freedom of creativity in Del Mar. And let's save a place for Zel who just may show up to enjoy the view. He can re-tell the story he used to tell about the guy who got to the pearly gates whereupon St. Peter said "Welcome to Paradise. Where are you from?" "Del Mar," said the Del Martian. According to Zel, St. Peter shook his head and said, "you're going to be disappointed here."

Let's keep the cafes and move on as a village into the future of our lucky lives together here in our little slice of paradise.