



PHOTO BY ATHENA DELENE

BEST LOCAL BAND

1. **Sol Seed** solseedmusic.com.
2. **Blue Lotus** bluelotuseugene.com.
3. **Medium Troy** mediumtroy.com.

Well, this is no surprise. Eugene fans courted last year's winners Sol Seed throughout this year's Next Big Thing competition, and the six-piece reggae fusion band nabbed the title again. With roots in southern Oregon, a large Eugene following and fans up and down the West Coast, the guys of Sol Seed are primed to record their second full-length and first professionally produced album, *Family Tree*. The world could use more music like this: uplifting but not cloying, thoughtful but not preachy and hella good music to shake your booty to. For more information about *Family Tree*, check out Sol Seed's Kickstarter page at wkly.ws/1lm.

BEST VOCALIST

1. **Halie Loren** halieloren.com.
2. **Sara Dawson Zagarino & Siri Vik** (tie)

Eugene native Halie Loren is a rising star in the international jazz scene and just made the top of the Billboard jazz charts in Japan with her new album *Simply Love*. See our review at wkly.ws/1lv. Loren is charismatic on stage, whether it's with

pianist Matt Treder and bassist Mark Schneider, with her larger band or rocking out with The Sugar Beets. Loren has sold out the Wildish Theater a couple of times. We imagine she could easily pack some larger halls, but she prefers more intimate venues, such as The Jazz Station downtown.

Siri Vik is a Eugene native who returned to teach at LCC after a long absence of study and performance on the East Coast and Europe. She has sung with the Eugene Opera, Oregon Bach Festival and Actors Cabaret of Eugene.

BEST CLOTHING DESIGNER

1. **Laura Lee Laroux** revivallclothing.com.
2. **Alli Ditson** allihalla.com.
3. **Mitra Chester**

If you've been paying attention, Laura Lee Laroux is becoming a household name in local and regional fashion (she nabbed first place last year too). With her line, Revivall Clothing, Laroux created her own niche: upcycled prairie couture and ready-to-wear (found at Redoux Parlor and the Oregon Country Fair). Not only is her line wearable and so Eug, it's meticulously made. From flirty jumpers to schoolboy chapeaus, expect to see much, much more from the designer in the coming year.

STAFF PICKS

BEST KIMCHI ON HIGHWAY 58

For all we know it's the only kimchi on Hwy. 58, but if you get off I-5 at the Goshen exit and drive about a mile down 58, you'll see **Lee's Highway 58 Market** on your right. You can get all the usual Oregon convenience fare — wine, beer, fishing bait and microwave food, but you can also get the Lee family's fantastic spicy homemade kimchi in small or large jars. Homemade teriyaki chicken over rice or yakisoba noodles is also on the menu — made to order. Fermented food lovers: The kimchi is worth a stop.

BEST TIME TO SHOP GOODWILL, ST. VINNY'S AND SALVATION ARMY

Donors unload mountains of good stuff at the end of the year to take advantage of tax write-offs. December through February are prime shopping months.

BEST PLACE TO GO TO FEEL BETTER ABOUT THE ECONOMY

The Costco parking lot on any Saturday.

BEST PLACE TO PREPARE MENTALLY FOR AN EARTHQUAKE

Any of the Eugene businesses along the railroad tracks.

BEST PLACE TO BE WHEN THE DAMS FAIL IN THE BIG ONE

Fifth floor or above at Riverbend.

MOST IMPROVED SCENIC DRIVE

Hallelujah! The asphalt gods have heard our pleas because **Lorane Highway** (between Washington Street and Paige Avenue) went from being the worst pretty drive in town to one of the best. A year ago, driving your car or riding your bike down its sinuous path was almost certain death, for shocks and tires anyway. Now, instead of white-knuckling it, drivers can enjoy the leafy scenery speckled with chicken coops, gardens and beautiful homes. Don't get too cocky though, be mindful of cyclists and wandering souls.

BEST WAY TO REBUILD PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN CITY GOVERNMENT

Create an **independent performance auditor** office that reports directly to the City Council.



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