

Bespoke • Concierge

LOS ANGELES

SUMMER 2015

50+
WAYS TO SEE
THE CITY

LA CONCIERGES SUGGEST
TOP RESTAURANTS, SHOPS
AND NEIGHBORHOODS

LA BY BIKE
TRAVERSE THE CITY
ON TWO WHEELS

OPEN SEATING
9 PATIOS FOR
ALFRESCO DINING

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LITTLE TOKYO**
EXPLORE THE JAPANESE
CULTURAL DISTRICT

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[WELCOME]

Welcome to Los Angeles

Every year, thousands of people make their way to Los Angeles to pursue their dreams and drink up the Southern California sunshine. The City of Angels has launched as many careers into the stratosphere of popular culture as it has disappointed young hopefuls on the Boulevard of Broken Dreams.

More than 25 years ago, I found myself in Los Angeles after aimlessly wandering all over North America. From the moment I arrived, I knew this was my city. I dabbled in the entertainment industry but found my true calling with the opening of a brand-new luxury hotel. For the last 23 years, I have introduced and recommended everything Los Angeles has to offer as a member of Les Clefs d'Or and the chef concierge of The Peninsula Beverly Hills. Every day has been a new experience with unusual requests allowing me to dig deep into the heart of Los Angeles in order to provide unique, engaging experiences for my discerning guests.

Summer in Los Angeles is a magical time—the long days and warm breezes make an ideal setting for outdoor dining (page 18) and a host of entertainment options. Enjoy live music and a picnic under the stars at the Hollywood Bowl, the summer home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic as well as the host of a multitude of contemporary artists. If you crave art, The Getty Center and Getty Villa both integrate gorgeous gardens and outdoor space into the experience, and the collection at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is second to none (page 32).

Or just cut loose and spend a day at the beach. Follow in Jim Morrison's footsteps along Venice Beach's Ocean Front Walk before hitting the surf or strolling the Santa Monica Pier. Regardless of how you choose to spend your day, make sure you finish with dinner in one of the many innovative restaurants Los Angeles has to offer.

Around every corner in Los Angeles, there is something unique and unusual just waiting for you to discover. So grab your sunglasses, kick off your shoes, put the top down and cruise into the sunset along Pacific Coast Highway. As The Mamas and the Papas said, "I'd be safe and warm if I was in LA"—so come join us.

*Sincerely,
James Little
Chef Concierge
The Peninsula Beverly Hills*



Concierge Partners

Bespoke Concierge Magazine recognizes the following concierges for their expertise and contributions to this issue:



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CONCIERGE,
THE LONDON
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THE PENINSULA
BEVERLY HILLS

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ANDREA CIMINI



KRISTINA MARTINDALE
CHEF CONCIERGE,
FOUR SEASONS
HOTEL LOS ANGELES
AT BEVERLY HILLS



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By Kirsti Correa

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CONCIERGE

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“50 for 50: Gifts on the Occasion of LACMA’s Anniversary”

ONGOING; LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, LACMA presents a collection of 19th- and 20th-century masterpieces gifted to the museum by more than 25 donors including Los Angeles philanthropist A. Jerrold Perenchio. Among the highlights are “Two Marilyns” by Andy Warhol and “At the Café-Concert: The Song of the Dog” by Edgar Degas. (323-857-6000; lacma.org)

“The Phantom of the Opera”

THROUGH AUG. 2; PANTAGES THEATRE

A Broadway staple, “The Phantom of the Opera” heads to Los Angeles as part of its North American tour following a successful run in the United Kingdom. Chris Mann (NBC’s “The Voice”) steps into the title role of the production, which despite new staging and design, still features a memorable score by Andrew Lloyd Webber to bring the tragic love story of the Phantom and his musical protege to life. (323-468-1770; hollywoodpantages.com)

“Emerging”

THROUGH SEPT. 20; ANNENBERG SPACE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

Ninety emerging photographers—honored over the years by Photo District News and hailing from 30



different countries—are featured in this exhibition designed to present fresh perspectives to the field. The display showcases nearly 100 prints as well as multimedia and social media pieces. (213-403-3000; annenbergphotospace.org)

“The Afghan Carpet Project”

THROUGH SEPT. 27; HAMMER MUSEUM

This exhibition is the result of a joint effort between groups in Los Angeles and Afghanistan. After visiting Kabul and Bamiyan in 2014, each of six LA-based artists created an original carpet design, which was

then handmade by Afghani weavers. Photos taken by designer Lisa Anne Auerbach throughout the artists’ trip to the Middle East complement the textiles at the Hammer Museum, operated by the University of California, Los Angeles. (310-443-7000; hammer.ucla.edu)

LA, Grow!

JULY 19; THE WILTERN

Promoting seasonal and local ingredients, this Sunday afternoon event includes a plant-based dinner by Jeannie Cook’s Catering using vegetables grown by RootDown LA, a local nonprofit that encourages high school students to both grow and

“Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography”

THROUGH SEPT. 6; THE GETTY CENTER

Featuring the work of seven artists—Matthew Brandt, Marco Breuer, John Chiara, Chris McCaw, Lisa Oppenheim, Alison Rossiter and James Welling—this exhibition explores the continual reinvention of photography through the medium’s materials, such as light and chemical processing. View Marco Breuer’s “Spin (C-824),” as well as other pictures that push the boundary when it comes to the traditional photographic process. In addition, “Light, Paper, Process” provides an overview of the various practices explored during the 20th century using pieces from the museum’s collection. (310-440-7300; getty.edu)

cook healthy food in their community. The event starts with a cocktail hour and tour of RootDown’s pop-up garden followed by a three-course meal. (213-531-0557; wiltern.com)

Sinatra’s 100th Birthday Celebration

JULY 22; HOLLYWOOD BOWL

The Hollywood Bowl celebrates the 100th birthday of Frank Sinatra with a selection of his classic recordings, welcoming the Count Basie Orchestra to reprise its original collaborations with the iconic crooner. Other special guests include contemporary jazz singer Kurt Elling, jazz and hip-hop



"Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin"

AUG. 4-16; GIL CATES THEATER

Hershey Felder takes on the role of "America's composer" in this solo show, which returns for a limited engagement after breaking Geffen Playhouse season production box office records last year. With an illustrious career that included classics such as "God Bless America" and "White Christmas," Irving Berlin cemented himself as one of the most prolific songwriters of all time. Audience members can expect a lineup of iconic tunes as Felder pays homage to many quintessential songs of the 20th century. (310-208-5454; geffenplayhouse.com)

vocalist José James, Brazilian singer/songwriter Seu Jorge and filmmaker Seth MacFarlane. (323-850-2000; hollywoodbowl.com)

International Surf Festival

JULY 30 - AUG. 2; SOUTH BAY BEACHES

Festival participants ranging from 8-year-olds to 80-year-olds—and lifeguard teams from other countries—compete in a variety of events including a relay, pier-to-pier swim, volleyball tournament, surfing contest, beach run and paddleboard race in this annual event presented by Beachsport.org, four South Bay

cities, Los Angeles County Fire Department and other agencies. (surffestival.org)

"An Evening with Buddy Guy"

AUG. 13; UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

A six-time Grammy Award winner and 2015 Lifetime Achievement honoree, Buddy Guy is one of the most prolific blues guitarists in recent history. UCLA presents an evening of electric blues with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee at Royce Hall. (310-825-2101; cap.ucla.edu)



"Inspired Eye: The Donald and Joan Damask Design Collection"

THROUGH DEC. 19; FIDM MUSEUM & GALLERIES

This exhibition offers visitors an inside look at Donald and Joan Damask's design collection, which includes more than 75 avant-garde clothing pieces donated to the museum established by the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising. "Inspired Eye" also features the seminal work of photographers Willy Maywald and Horst P. Horst, as well as more than 80 photos, sketches and books by Cecil Beaton, all part of the Damasks' gift. (213-623-5821; fidmmuseum.org)

"Gyre: The Plastic Ocean"

SEPT. 2 - NOV. 21; FISHER MUSEUM OF ART

Combining visual art and science, this University of Southern California museum exhibit probes the issue of plastic pollution in the ocean as displayed through the work

of more than 25 artists from around the world. Curated and community-based pieces are represented, each utilizing garbage to address environmental accountability and highlight the relationship between humans and the ocean. (213-740-4561; fisher.usc.edu) **C**

[RADAR]

Open Season

Local concierges share tips for visiting the latest shops and restaurants to debut in Los Angeles.

COMPILED BY KIRSTI CORREA

"Aside [from] ... winning what should be the 'best and smartest restaurant name' award, **ODYS & PENELOPE** has proven to be an incredible concept in a growing area of La Brea Avenue. From the duo behind Hatfield's restaurant, Odys & Penelope specializes in 'churrasco' (Brazilian barbecue) and grilled meats. The savory menu heavily features items cooked over an open fire, but also offers seafood and seasonal vegetables. The exposed brick walls give the restaurant an easy feel, and the drink menu is worth sampling. Odys & Penelope is perfect for those seeking a different yet hip, casual dining experience." (odysandpenelope.com) —**Sarah Dandashy, concierge at The London West Hollywood**

"**YSABEL** is located on Fairfax Avenue, just south of Santa Monica Boulevard, where the old Lola's called home for 17 years. ... The design is retro-chic, and there is plenty of charm both inside at the bar and dining tables or outside on the olive tree-adorned courtyard. Chef Mario Alberto cooks up a diverse menu. He serves American cuisine with options ranging from a raw bar, vegetable dishes [and] pastas to deliciously prepared meats, poultry and fish. The cocktail menu is also extensive, providing a great balance to the food. Ysabel is especially wonderful for those seeking a late-night dining spot with interesting drinks and a cool scene." (ysabelwesthollywood.com)

—**Sarah Dandashy, concierge at The London West Hollywood**

"Josiah Citrin, chef/owner of Mélisse in Santa Monica, has plans to open a casual restaurant [to be called **CHARCOAL**] on Washington Boulevard in Venice a couple blocks from the beach. It will be at the corner of Washington and Clune Avenue." —**Michelle Gilley, chef concierge at The Ritz-Carlton, Marina del Rey**

Revered restaurateurs Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo—known for Trois Mec, Animal and Son of a Gun—have opened the doors to their latest eatery in the Fairfax District. **JON & VINNY'S** offers Italian-American fare for breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week, serving favorites like meatballs and marinara, pizza, pasta and tiramisu. Book your table in advance, as the intimate dining room seats only 45 people. (jonandvinnys.com)

MOSCHINO opened its first U.S. flagship boutique this spring on Beverly Boulevard in the West Hollywood Design District. The sprawling space, which once housed Hadid Gallery, showcases pieces from creative director Jeremy Scott's primary collections, including ready-to-wear, accessories, swim, intimates and fragrances. (moschino.com)

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[SPOTLIGHT]

Neighborhood at a Glance

With independent boutiques and cafes, Larchmont Village offers visitors a quiet retreat from the rest of the bustling city.

BY ALLISON HATA

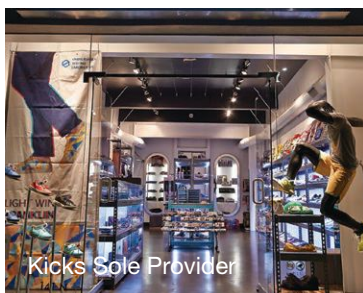
In a metropolis known for its traffic, the pedestrian-friendly area of Larchmont Village is a welcome contrast for when you want to take it slow. “The Larchmont neighborhood of Los Angeles is centered around Larchmont Boulevard between Melrose Avenue and First Street,” explains Lori Trimble, chef concierge at SLS Beverly Hills. “This stretch of Larchmont is also referred to by the locals as Larchmont Village. The charm of Larchmont is to experience the variety of restaurants, cafes and coffee shops, and local boutiques.”

Nestled between Windsor Square and Hancock Park, the village spans just a few blocks. It’s the perfect place to enjoy a leisurely morning or afternoon of dining and shopping.

If you’re driving, park at the south end of the community, off West

First Street; you can take a short walk through the neighborhood before arriving at Larchmont Boulevard. For a weekend brunch, the charming Larchmont Bungalow is one of the first destinations you’ll arrive at along the stretch of road. After finishing a cup of artisanal tea, spend a couple hours wandering in and out of the stores lining the street. Some businesses may be familiar to you—there are a few chain coffee houses, along with popular brands like Diptyque and Malin & Goetz—but many of the tiny gift shops and clothing boutiques are unique to the area.

“This neighborhood street is fun to explore, especially on foot,” says Sarah Dandashy, concierge at The London West Hollywood. “With local bagel shops, incredible pizza, a variety of international cuisine, even yoga and spin studios, Larchmont offers a bit of everything.”



Kicks Sole Provider

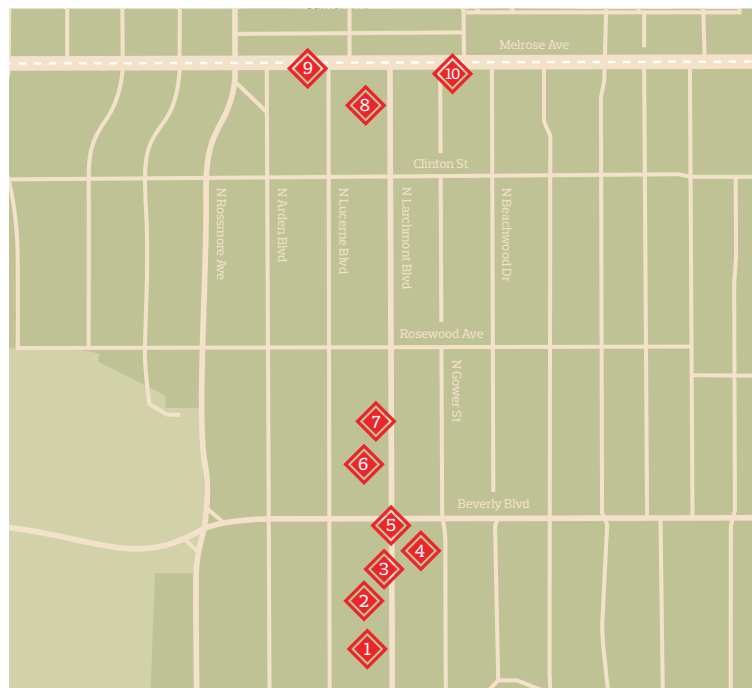
1. “There are plenty of clothing stores, from local fashion curators to more specialty selections. A personal favorite of mine is **KICKS SOLE PROVIDER**. This boutique offers an array of sneakers for men, women and kids. They have various brands, but the one thing in common is the level of cool. From sequined Toms to leather Converse All Stars to highly sought-after Nikes, Kicks specializes in limited edition shoes and accessories.” (141 N. Larchmont Blvd.; 323-468-9794; kickssoleprovider.com) —Sarah Dandashy, concierge at The London West Hollywood

2. “Every Sunday, make sure to visit one of LA’s best farmers markets, where you can find ... fresh flowers, organic fruits and vegetables, breads and cheeses, and the real reason locals visit [the] **LARCHMONT [VILLAGE] FARMERS MARKET**—the rotisserie chicken food truck, also known as ‘the chicken man.’” (209 N. Larchmont Blvd.; 818-591-8161; ccfm.com) —Lori Trimble, chef concierge at SLS Beverly Hills



Café Gratitude

3. “The one store I have frequented more often than any other is **LARCHMONT VILLAGE WINE, SPIRITS & CHEESE**. Yes, as the name suggests, they do have an incredible selection of wine and cheese. ... But it is the sandwiches, made to order, that are worth every bit of your wait in the line that forms during lunch hour.” (223 N. Larchmont Blvd.; 323-856-8699; larchmontvillagewine.com) —Sarah Dandashy, concierge at The London West Hollywood



4. “I would ... suggest **ERIN MCKENNA’S BAKERY**, formerly known as BabyCakes, for delicious cupcakes.” Also, all options in the bakery case are gluten-free and vegan. (236 N. Larchmont Blvd.; 855-462-2292; erinmckennasbakery.com) —Kristina Martindale, chef concierge at Four Seasons Los Angeles Hotel at Beverly Hills

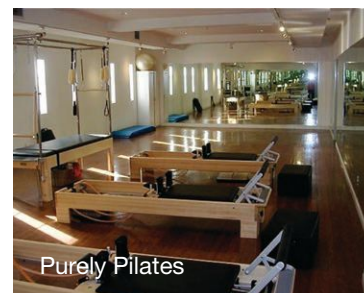
5. “If you’re looking for great Cajun/creole food you can’t do better than **PRADO**. Try the Jamaican tamales—fresh, sweet corn-off-the-cob tamales prepared and served with sour cream, homemade tomatillo sauce and golden caviar; or my personal favorite, pollo negro, [which is] grilled breast of chicken topped in a spicy black pepper sauce with fresh herbs

and pineapple.” (244 N. Larchmont Blvd.; 323-467-3871; pradola.com) —James Little, chef concierge at The Peninsula Beverly Hills

6. “[**LARCHMONT SANCTUARY SPA**] offers an illuminating body detox treatment. ... [It’s] one of the best day spas in Larchmont.” (331 N. Larchmont Blvd.; 323-466-1628; larchmontsanctuary.com) —Joyce Louie, chef concierge at Montage Beverly Hills

7. “**PURELY PILATES LA** offers private Pilates instruction in a clean, professional studio.” Located upstairs, the studio has specialty equipment and plenty of space for classes. (403 N. Larchmont Blvd.; 323-463-3282; purelypilatesla.com) —Joyce Louie, chef concierge at Montage Beverly Hills

8. “I would definitely recommend **CAFÉ GRATITUDE**, the vegan restaurant with very innovative entrees, which has a big celebrity clientele.” A seasonal menu offers a large selection for breakfast, lunch and dinner. (639 N. Larchmont Blvd.; 323-580-6383; cafeatitude.com) —Kristina Martindale, chef concierge at Four Seasons Los Angeles Hotel at Beverly Hills



Purely Pilates

9. “**THE LARCHMONT** [is] easily the most refined lunch experience in the Larchmont neighborhood. Whenever I go, I can’t decide between heavenly grilled cheese and tomato bisque, with aged Gruyere and cheddar, crisp Parmigiano [Reggiano] and oven-roasted tomatoes, or the Larchmont Cobb salad [with] applewood smoked bacon, avocado, a soft-boiled egg, roast chicken, Fourme d’Ambert and pommery mustard vinaigrette. Both dishes offer a twist on the traditional ingredients that elevate them to must-have status.” (5750 Melrose Ave.; 323-464-4277; thelarchmont.com) —James Little, chef concierge at The Peninsula Beverly Hills

10. “[Go to] **POUR VOUS** for a very Parisian drinking experience.” At the north end of Larchmont Village, this cocktail lounge is open Tuesday through Saturday beginning at 8 p.m. The strict dress code calls for cocktail attire only, which reflects the elegant signature drinks offered at the chic late-night spot. (5574 Melrose Ave.; 323-871-8699; pourvousla.com) —Michelle Gilley, chef concierge at The Ritz-Carlton, Marina del Rey C



Pour Vous

ADRIEN VARGUCCI

Retail Rapture

High-end merchandise and designer styles beckon shoppers to LA.

BY LAUREN MATICH

Compared to New York, where the streets have an unspoken dress code and black is a power color, LA's fashion scene has acquired a reputation for being a laid-back younger sibling. But looks can be deceiving in the city that's home base for BCBG Max Azria, Monique Lhuillier and Rachel Zoe. Though casual, beachy styles will always be a part of its sartorial DNA, this little-sister city has grown into a mature market of eclectic retailers armed with personal shoppers to give a helping hand. Most importantly, LA's array of high-end styles is furthering its foothold as a global destination and a visionary locale for fashion.

"Los Angeles has a great landscape for fashion-forward luxury boutiques.

In a city where everyone is seeking to be on the cusp of the next big thing, boutique shopping in Los Angeles is both unique and gratifying," explains Sarah Dandashy, concierge at The London West Hollywood. "... It is all about the curated shopping experience."

That experience wouldn't be complete without the goods that make the city's market singular. In LA, established names converge with fledgling designers, fresh faces with even fresher ideas. It's also a cross section of luxe apparel, footwear and accessories where the season's most current trends are available to the public. With racks full of chic treasures, the time is right to explore all the West Coast hub has to offer.

JANA WILLIAMS



"**ELYSE WALKER** is a great place for those looking for a more one-of-a-kind shopping experience. Specializing in clothing that is effortlessly casual with a metropolitan vibe, this store houses [clothing by designers ranging] from Alexander McQueen ... to [Helmut Lang]. The store was initially opened to appeal to those living in Malibu and Pacific Palisades who wanted luxury fashion without making the trek into Beverly Hills. Now everyone from Beverly Hills wants to make the drive to the Palisades to discover all the delightful threads that Elyse Walker curates to dress the racks under her roof." (15306 Antioch St., Pacific Palisades; 310-230-8882; elysewalker.com) —Sarah Dandashy, concierge at The London West Hollywood



Less than a year old, **ALICE AND OLIVIA'S** shop on Melrose Avenue is a bright, open space designed with the same artistry behind the fashion house's treasures. At 2,100 square feet, the space offers the full collections of apparel and accessories from designer Stacey Bendet. Alice and Olivia shops are also located in Beverly Hills and Malibu. (Multiple locations; aliceandolivia.com) —**Kristina Martindale, chef concierge at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills**

The full-length crochet dress dresses up a summertime style with a nod to 1970s flair, \$485, at Alice and Olivia.

COURTESY OF OPENING CEREMONY



Mixing homegrown boutiques and curated collections of high-end brands, some retailers, such as **OPENING CEREMONY**, replicate the variety of the department store experience with diverse merchandise. "At Opening Ceremony in West Hollywood, you will find threads from trendy designers such as Alexander Wang, Acne Studios and Rachel Comey." (451 N. La Cienega Blvd., West Hollywood; 310-652-1120; openingceremony.us) —**Lori Trimble, chef concierge at SLS Beverly Hills**



"A great place to start one's shopping adventure, **MADISON LOS ANGELES** offers a selection of contemporary and designer clothing, shoes and accessories that are wearable and classic. Since they handpick their pieces, you can find various designers all under one roof featuring styles that range from the everyday to the professional to a perfect evening look. After all, if celebrities and stylists shop here, you know you are in good hands." (Multiple locations in Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Malibu and Beverly Grove in LA; madisonlosangeles.com) —**Sarah Dandashy, concierge at The London West Hollywood**



Take to the streets in Valentino's Rockstud heels, a day-to-night style that is sure to make a statement, \$975, at Madison Los Angeles.



LFrank's pendant hangs from a brown leather cord and sparkles with white diamonds and rose-cut tourmaline, \$5,400, at LFrank at III Luxury Collective.

TOM SIBLEY



"**BARNEYS NEW YORK** in Beverly Hills has the latest fashion trends. Their team of personal shoppers also works magic for discerning fashionistas." (9570 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills; 310-276-4400; barneys.com) —Joyce Louie, chef concierge at Montage Beverly Hills

III LUXURY COLLECTIVE brings together three boutiques in a historic space on Main Street in Venice. With the stores right next to each other, shoppers may peruse high-end shoes, bags and jewelry at Mona Moore, then pop over to Pamela Barish for the designer's fashion-forward yet timeless womenswear, and visit the fine jewelry and luxury lingerie collection at LFrank. (Mona Moore: 222 Main St., Venice; 310-452-4070; monamoore.com) (Pamela Barish: 224 Main St., Venice; 310-314-4490; pamelabarish.com) (LFrank: 226 Main St., Venice; 310-452-0771; lfrankjewelry.com) —Michelle Gilley, chef concierge at The Ritz-Carlton, Marina del Rey



"I love the simplicity and classic elegance of **THEORY'S** everyday wear. Located on Melrose Avenue, Theory is definitely a go-to shop for someone looking for more streamlined outfits that are sleek and sophisticated. ... In fact, the SLS concierges' suiting [features pieces] from Theory, ... and each person at the desk is able to walk into work feeling polished and chic." (8428 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood; 323-782-0163; theory.com) —Lori Trimble, chef concierge at SLS Beverly Hills C



The Assenzi dress boasts a sophisticated silhouette in a comfortable stretch cotton, perfect for transitioning from business meetings to sightseeing, \$295, at Theory.



DIANE VON FURSTENBERG continues to stay relevant in the world of high fashion decades after inventing the wrap dress for professional women in 1974. Head to stores at The Grove, Santa Monica Place or Glendale for the timeless silhouette that is now a canvas for modern styles with new hemlines, sleeve lengths, fabrics and prints. (Multiple locations; dvf.com) —Kristina Martindale, chef concierge at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills

JOSHUA WHITE © DVF

Ruth's Recipe:

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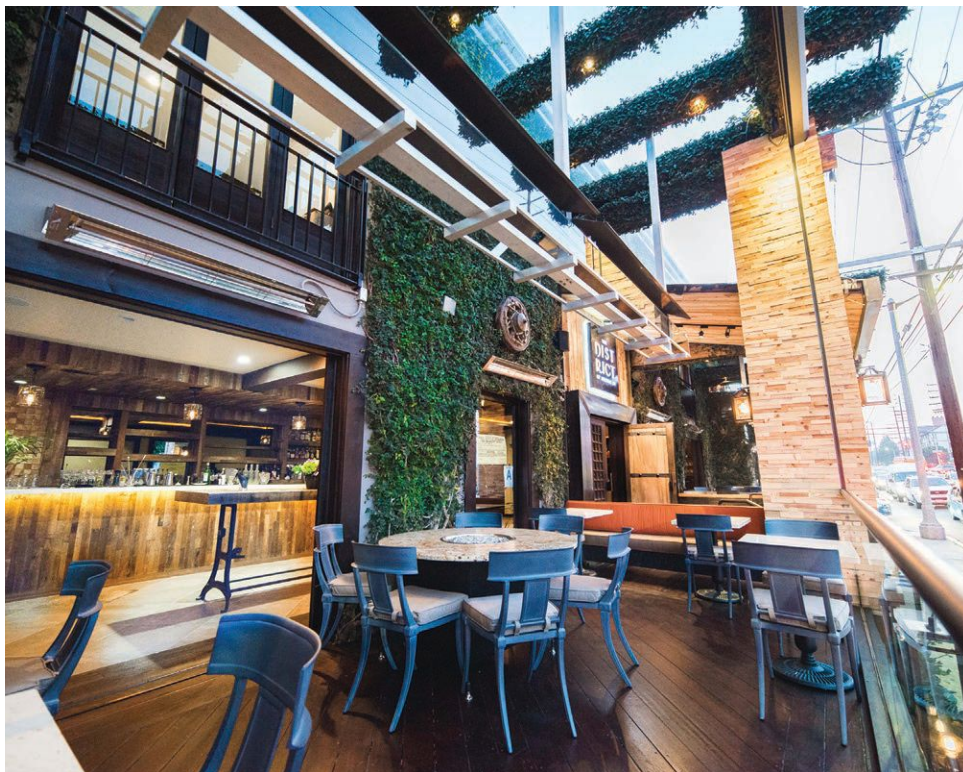
BY KIRSTI CORREA



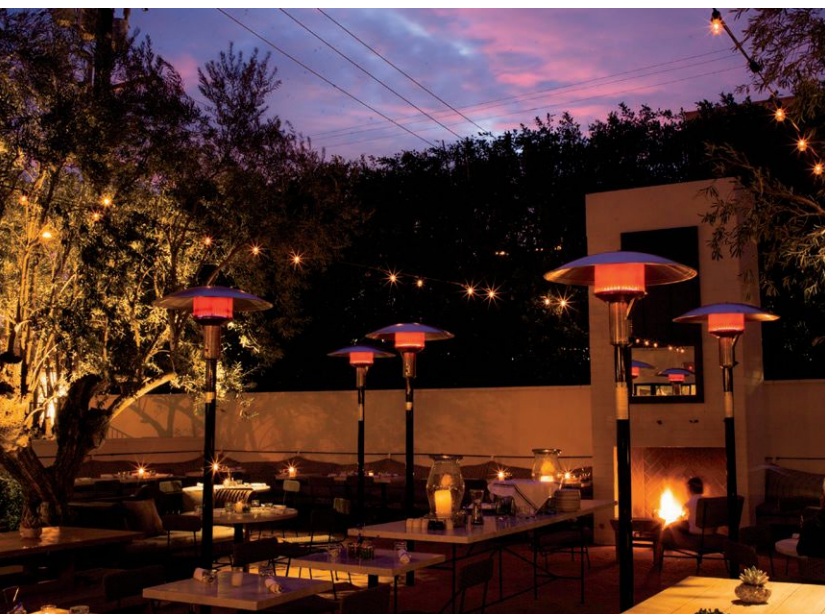
Compared to other areas of the United States, the City of Angels only experiences one season, and that is summer. There is hardly such a thing as a bad day in terms of the weather here. June gloom—if any at all—generally wears off by 11 a.m., as the sun always manages to peek out from the clouds to provide all-day warmth. Locals are fortunate to enjoy these prime outdoor conditions year-round, and visitors quickly learn that spending time outside is a standard in this city.

In addition to exploring the open-air shopping centers and viewing

public art on display around town, travelers can also bask in the sun when going out to eat. During summer, the best places to dine are the restaurants where the patio views are as impressive as the plates of food. From cafes located on the pier in Malibu to upscale dining rooms directly across the street from the tranquil Beverly Canon Gardens, there are plenty of options for an alfresco meal. Here, concierges at local hotels recommended their favorite outdoor dining spots—each place will have you hoping that summer never ends.



A recent addition to the current lineup of restaurants along West Third Street is **THE DISTRICT BY HANNAH AN**. The two-story space, which opened in February, has a hybrid style. Elements of colonial Vietnamese design are a nod to the owner's family heritage—she's the daughter of House of An's matriarch, Helene An—and rustic accents hint at her American upbringing. Outdoor seating is available, with a sidewalk-facing patio that includes tabletop fire pits and Douglas fir posts that frame street views. Inside, the first floor features industrial-inspired decor while the upstairs is much more lavish. When it comes to the menu, traditional dishes range from “bo luc lac” (filet mignon cubes sauteed with onion, garlic, tomato, basil and broccoli) to a wok-fried half or whole lobster served with handmade noodles. (8722 W. Third St., West Hollywood; 310-278-2345; thedistrictbyha.com)



ERIC WOLFFINGER

DON RIDDLE



“Nestled in between an array of galleries and interior design studios on Melrose Avenue sits **GRACIAS MADRE**, which hosts one of the best alfresco dining experiences in the area. The outdoor space is a sanctuary by day and a place to see and be seen by night. But with all the talk about the outdoor space, the fare at Gracias Madre cannot go without mention. Everything from tacos and enchiladas con mole to traditional Spanish flan, the entire menu boasts flavorful and organic ingredients—one will soon forget the entire menu is meat- and dairy-free.” (8905 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood; 323-978-2170; graciasmadreweho.com) —Lori Trimble, chef concierge at SLS Beverly Hills

“I would recommend **CULINA, MODERN ITALIAN**, which has one of the most spacious patios in Los Angeles, surrounded by succulents, lemon trees and a fire-water feature. Culina also features [a] live-action crudo bar, house-made pasta and a range of delicious entrees.” Located at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills, the casual yet elegant space transports diners to a Mediterranean garden that might make you forget you're in Beverly Hills. The patio is also the ideal spot to enjoy crudo hour—an Italian spin on happy hour. (300 S. Doheny Dr., Beverly Hills; 310-860-4000; culinarestaurant.com) —Kristina Martindale, chef concierge at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills



“**LUCQUES** by James Beard Award-winning chef Suzanne Goin opened in 1998 and has been a staple for fine dining in Los Angeles since day one. Focused on using only the freshest ingredients presented with innovative preparation and perfectly executed aesthetic, eating at Lucques offers a meal you will not soon forget.” (8474 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood; 323-655-6277; lucques.com)

—James Little, chef concierge at The Peninsula Beverly Hills



DON RIDDLE

“My first choice would be [The Ritz-Carlton, Marina del Rey] restaurant **CAST & PLOW**, which has an amazing patio overlooking the marina. Our chefs strive to use as many local producers as possible. I highly recommend the organic salmon.” The farm-to-table restaurant is open for breakfast (6:30 to 11 a.m.), lunch (11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.), dinner (6 to 10 p.m.) and also boasts a late-night menu (10 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.) for guests to savor the healthy bites for all meals. (4375 Admiralty Way, Marina del Rey; 310-574-4333; ritzcarterton.com) —Michelle Gilley, chef concierge at The Ritz-Carlton, Marina del Rey



“**SCARPETTA** in Beverly Hills has an outdoor patio facing the beautiful Beverly Canon Gardens.” Located at Montage Beverly Hills, this Scott Conant restaurant features his signature Italian cuisine, with favorite selections like creamy polenta with truffled mushrooms, and the tagliolini pasta served with lobster, guanciale and basil breadcrumbs. (225 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills; 310-860-7970; montagehotels.com) —Joyce Louie, chef concierge at Montage Beverly Hills



“**CLIFF'S EDGE** [has an] amazing patio off the beaten track in Silver Lake. The restaurant offers a changing menu that focuses on fresh, seasonal ingredients with simple preparation techniques that let the flavors shine. Most locals and visitors never make it as far east as Silver Lake, which makes this restaurant a secret gem especially with the amazing patio.” (3626 W. Sunset Blvd., Silver Lake; 323-666-6116; cliffsedgecafe.com) —**James Little**, chef concierge at The Peninsula Beverly Hills



“The patio at **A.O.C.** is one of my favorite outdoor dining spots in the city. It is an open, airy space surrounded by walls for privacy, but harboring two huge trees that create a canopy over the tables. You can never go wrong with a Suzanne Goin restaurant, and her take on tapas-style small plates of Mediterranean-influenced, California-French cuisine is not to be missed. The brunch on Sundays is phenomenal and sitting on the patio is the icing on the cake.” (8700 W. Third St., West Hollywood; 310-859-9859; aocwinebar.com) —**James Little**, chef concierge at The Peninsula Beverly Hills



“[A] great option would be the **MALIBU FARM** restaurant located on the Malibu Pier, perfect for before or after visiting The Getty Villa.” The cafe’s three aspects—fresh, organic and local—are evident on the breakfast, lunch and dinner menus. While reservations are not accepted for breakfast and lunch, guests are encouraged to make one if they are hoping to snag a seaside seat for dinner on Wednesdays through Sundays. (23000 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu; 310-456-1112; malibu-farm.com) —**Michelle Gilley**, chef concierge at The Ritz-Carlton, Marina del Rey C



The Getty Villa

Inspired Spaces

Visitors looking for a creative escape will find it in the various avenues of arts and culture.

BY KRISTIN LEE JENSEN

As the art world slowly expands its focus beyond New York and parts of Europe, Los Angeles—with its rich convergence of cultures—finds itself at the epicenter of the global gaze on the West Coast. A burgeoning creative capital, the city boasts an unrivaled combination of forward-thinking galleries and established performing arts centers—such as The Getty Villa, Hollywood Bowl and Bergamot Station—dedicated to LA's dynamic past and promising future.

The Getty Villa

Home to The J. Paul Getty Museum's antiquities collection, The Getty Villa is a historic haven that offers visitors the chance to walk amid luscious gardens, tranquil

fountains and peristyles lined with white columns. The Villa was meticulously modeled after a first century Roman country house and features a permanent collection of 44,000 Greek, Roman and Etruscan art

While some of the city's inspired institutions can offer an indoor reprieve from the California sun this summer, visitors can also enjoy many of LA's popular locales alfresco, as a number of acclaimed museums and theaters provide outdoor experiences for an invigorating artistic escape. From Regen Projects to The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens, concierges at local hotels offer their suggestions for stimulating summer sanctuaries to indulge the creative muse.

pieces spread throughout 23 galleries, with five additional exhibit spaces for rotating displays. "The Getty Villa is perfect for a nice summer day," says Michelle Gilley, chef concierge at The Ritz-Carlton, Marina del

Rey. "You can take in the museum and lunch with a view. Tickets are required. Most hotels should have them; check with your concierge." This summer, visitors can take a look at the Villa's collection of ancient



Clockwise from top left:
Los Angeles Philharmonic performance at the Hollywood Bowl; Katherine Rohrbacher's "Wallflower" on display at Laura Korman Gallery at Bergamot Station; Regen Projects, Los Angeles gallery



glass objects from 2500 B.C. to 11th century A.D., and peruse its opulent cache of Berthouville treasure featuring Roman silver, along with royal collections of precious gems and jewelry. (getty.edu)

Regen Projects

Housed in a 20,000-square-foot white building designed by Michael Maltzan, Regen Projects has earned its reputation as a trailblazer in the Los Angeles art scene since 1989, as founder Shaun Caley Regen's flair for the experimental has resulted in the representation of now-renowned artists like Matthew Barney and Catherine Opie early on in their careers. "My husband is an artist, so I've found myself more interested in local galleries lately," says Lori Trimble, chef concierge at SLS Beverly Hills. "This summer, Regen Projects—which can be described as more of a museum-like gallery—will be showcasing the work of Rachel Harrison." In a time when "selfie" has been deemed a word by Merriam-Webster, Harrison's multidisciplinary exhibit, "Three Young Framers," explores the current age of self-absorption and the ramifications of subjects framing themselves. New York-based Harrison will employ selfie sticks and a debut series of 34 iPhone photos in this installation through July 18. (regenprojects.com)

Bergamot Station

"Another favorite of mine is a rustic train station turned gallery complex

in Santa Monica called Bergamot Station," Trimble says. "Housing approximately 30 galleries, visitors can find exhibits ranging from contemporary fine art [and] photography to jewelry pieces." In 1875, Bergamot Station was a stop for the Red Line trolley on its way between Los Angeles and Santa Monica Pier. Now, the site serves as an artistic campus, attracting more than 600,000 visitors each year to the station's many displays and its cafe. Of note this summer is Laura Korman Gallery's opening exhibition, "Mirror | Mirror: Introspective Reflections." The show features the whimsical self-portraiture of Los Angeles-based artist Katherine Rohrbacher in a collection that explores her daily experience with the chronic autoimmune disease lupus. The exhibition will be on view through Sept. 19, with a public reception Sept. 5 from 5 to 8 p.m. (bergamotstation.com)

Hollywood Bowl

Since the first official season in 1922, audiences have enjoyed world-class performances from a wide variety of artists at the Hollywood Bowl. "It's classic for a reason," says James Little, chef concierge at The Peninsula Beverly Hills. "The half band shell and outdoor seating is iconic and the performances are eclectic, ranging from classical, musical theater and jazz to headlining contemporary artists. Be sure to bring food and picnic under the stars while enjoying the show."

The venue offers a range of programs throughout the summer, such as conductor Gustavo Dudamel's inaugural presentation of Carl Orff's 1937 composition "Carmina Burana" on July 21 and 23. Inspired by medieval poems, Orff's piece will come to life with the resonance of more than 100 voices and a brass and strings orchestra. The night will also feature performances of Grammy-winning composer Eric Whitacre's "Her Sacred Spirit Soars" and "Equus." Tickets can be reserved for each of the shows online. (hollywoodbowl.com)

The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens

"The Huntington Library, [Art Collections and Botanical Gardens] ... in San Marino is always beautiful in the summer," Gilley says. With both galleries and outdoor space, this institution offers a full day of artistic inspiration for visitors seeking a

creative escape from busy city life. The library houses approximately 6 million items in its collection of Anglo-American rare books and manuscripts, including an unrivaled compilation of Shakespearean works in their early editions, while the botanical gardens span 120 acres and comprise a vast collection of camelias and a conservatory with educational exhibits. The Huntington's art collections are also on view in four separate galleries on the property, accommodating a comprehensive collection of 18th- and 19th-century British and French art. Through Oct. 12, a summer exhibit titled "Magna Carta: Law and Legend, 1215-2015," displays a 13th-century draft of the Magna Carta in a celebration of the document's 800th anniversary. The Huntington is closed on Tuesdays; adult admission tickets are available for \$23 on weekdays and \$25 on weekends, while entry fees for children ages 4-11 are \$10 daily. (huntington.org) **C**

Stick With the Plan

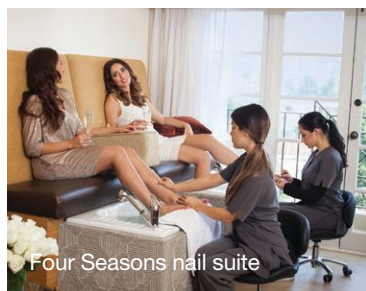
Concierges create daily guides for three types of vacations in the city.

SECTION BY KIRSTI CORREA



FRIENDLY ADVICE

Kristina Martindale, chef concierge at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills, suggests the ideal places to enjoy with your closest friends from morning to night for the perfect girls' getaway.



Four Seasons nail suite

BRUNCH BITES

"[Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills] offers the biggest buffet in the city, complete with a bloody mary bar and doughnut machine," Martindale says. "The brunch also has sushi, dim sum, a quesadilla station and farmers market salad station." Available on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the meal takes place at the hotel's Culina, Modern Italian restaurant with seating available inside or out on the terrace. For those wishing to dine outside the hotel, Martindale also recommends brunch at Crossroads on Melrose Avenue for its plant-based selections like the eggless frittata or croissant sandwich with kale, organic tofu and mushroom bacon. (Four Seasons: 300 S. Doheny Dr., Beverly Hills; 310-860-4000; fourseasons.com) (Crossroads: 8284 Melrose Ave., Beverly Grove; 323-782-9245; crossroadskitchen.com)

GIRL TIME

Following brunch, Martindale recommends a trip to the spa at Four Seasons. "We now have four pedicure stations and [two] manicure stations



Culina, Modern Italian

in the beautiful nail suite overlooking palm trees," she explains. In addition to the signature all-inclusive manicure that includes a sugar scrub, refining mask and hand massage, another notable service is the Minx manicure, in which design coatings are applied to the nail and require no drying time. Groups can also reserve a poolside cabana to enjoy their nail treatments, through the Cast Party package. (300 S. Doheny Dr., Beverly Hills; 310-273-2222; fourseasons.com)

STAR-STUDED EVENING

When it comes to dinner, select a trendy spot where your group will enjoy good food combined with a lively atmosphere and people watching. "The Nice Guy and Hyde Sunset Kitchen & Cocktails are new and both become clubs toward ... the later end of dinner service as well," Martindale suggests. "Numerous celebrities have been spotted at [both] of these locations." (The Nice Guy: 401N. La Cienega Blvd., West Hollywood; 310-360-9500; theniceguyla.com) (Hyde Sunset: 8117 Sunset Blvd.; 323-940-1650; sbe.com)



Windows Lounge

SPECIALTY SIPS

Before heading out for a night on the town, stop by the hotel to freshen up or to do a quick wardrobe change. Then, Martindale recommends girlfriends go to an upscale bar or lounge. "I would recommend Windows Lounge at Four Seasons," she says. It is known for its specialty martinis and live music on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights. She also suggests Eveleigh, where seasonal cocktails are made with fresh herbs and fruits. (Windows Lounge: 300 S. Doheny Dr., Beverly Hills; 310-273-2222; fourseasons.com) (Eveleigh: 8752 W. Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood; 424-239-1630; theeveleigh.com)

DANCING IN STYLE

Los Angeles caters to night owls, as there are several places to continue the celebration. "For a club, I would recommend Warwick in Hollywood," Martindale says. Reservations are a must, and it's best to get there early to avoid the long lines. Inside, enjoy the loud music with signature drinks. (6507 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; 323-460-6667; warwickla.com)

[ITINERARIES]



SCORING POSITION

Sports devotees visiting Los Angeles can join in the action or sit back and watch a game at these locations suggested by **Sarah Dandashy**, concierge at The London West Hollywood.



Lululemon Athletica



Venice Beach Skate Park



WATER SPORTS

"There are many exciting activities for sports fans in Los Angeles. A great way to start off the day is to begin in traditional Southern California style—surfing," Dandashy says. "Head over to Learn to Surf LA at Santa Monica ... where you can rent a board and wetsuit, and take a surf lesson to perfect your form. After all, the best way to tap in to your inner athlete is by getting active." (1750 Appian Way, Santa Monica; 310-663-2479; learntosurfla.com)

TAKE A BREAK

"After riding the waves, you will surely have worked up an appetite. Refuel with some tasty grub and a round of beers, all while tuning in to the game of the day on one of the many televisions at Barney's Beanery," Dandashy recommends. "With a location in Santa Monica at the Third Street Promenade, you are just steps from the ocean. If your plans take you inland, their original location is in West Hollywood, and a pit stop at Barney's Beanery is a classic treat for any sports fan. They even have a few pool tables where

you can play a few rounds." (Santa Monica: 1351 Third St. Promenade; 310-656-5777) (West Hollywood: 8447 Santa Monica Blvd.; 323-654-2287; barneysbeanery.com)

GET THE GEAR

"In Santa Monica, there are many shopping options for sports lovers," Dandashy says. "Third Street Promenade and the nearby streets are home to REI, Lululemon Athletica ... and even Road Runner Sports for the avid runner." (REI: 402 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica; 310-458-4370; rei.com) (Lululemon: 1457 Third St., Santa Monica; 310-319-9900; lululemon.com) (Road Runner Sports: 1338 Fourth St., Santa Monica; 424-214-3535; roadrunnersports.com)

RIDE AROUND

"In the afternoon, head over to the Venice Beach Skate Park," Dandashy advises. "Bring a board or just a friend and get ready to be impressed. ... Join in or just watch local skateboard fanatics as they show off their skills and tricks." (1800 Ocean Front Walk, Venice; laparks.org)

GAME TIME

Even though concerts fill the summer schedule at Staples Center, Dandashy still recommends a stop at the iconic venue, which is home to two men's basketball teams (Lakers and Clippers) as well as the Kings hockey team. Statues of legendary figures in the sports world are located around the outside of Staples Center for visitors to admire. "[Then,] you can grab a beer or two at the Yard House ... located just a few steps away in the L.A. Live complex," Dandashy adds. (Staples Center: 1111 S. Figueroa St., Downtown; 213-742-7100; staplescenter.com) (Yard House: 800 W. Olympic Blvd., Downtown; 213-745-9273; yardhouse.com)

FINAL STRETCH

"Head back over to West Hollywood and enjoy a nightcap at Rock and Reilly's," Dandashy says. "Part Irish pub, part rock 'n' roll bar, Rock and Reilly's has the best nachos, crowd and waitresses. [It's] the perfect way to end the ideal day in LA for a sports fan." (8911 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood; 310-360-1400; rnrpub.com)

[ITINERARIES]



CORPORATE MATTERS

Business travelers can still take care of work duties while experiencing all the city has to offer during their trip, with these recommendations from **Joyce Louie**, chef concierge at Montage Beverly Hills.



The Grill on the Alley

MORNING BOOST

“[Visitors] can start with breakfast at The Rooftop Grill at Montage Beverly Hills,” Louie says. Here, colleagues can talk business and get a grand view of Los Angeles at the same time. As its name suggests, the restaurant is located on the roof and offers a glimpse of iconic Los Angeles sites like the Hollywood hills and ubiquitous skyscrapers. The fare is equally impressive: Most breakfast options are made with ingredients from local farmers and artisanal purveyors. Breakfast is served beginning at 7 a.m. for those hoping to get an early start on their day. (225 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills; 888-860-0788; montagehotels.com)

LUNCH BREAK

After morning meetings have ended, Louie suggests a power lunch at The Grill on the Alley, with locations in Beverly Hills and Hollywood. The steakhouse offers a classic American menu and some of the standouts include the ahi tuna tacos, which come with four mini tacos served with coleslaw and avocado, as well as the filet mignon and New York steak. When it comes to the drink menu,



Training Mate

the best option is to consult the bartender, as cocktails are made with freshly squeezed ingredients and vary depending on what is available. (Beverly Hills: 9560 Dayton Way; 310-276-0615) (Hollywood: 6801 Hollywood Blvd.; 323-856-5530; thegrill.com)

BREAK A SWEAT

As a midday break, Louie recommends visitors put the paperwork and projects aside and engage in some physical exercise. “A great workout can be a ... class at Training Mate,” she says. Training Mate’s high-intensity interval training divides the workout into four stations, focusing on exercises to improve speed, power and endurance. “Or our concierge team can set [you] up with a personal fitness trainer for a customized workout at our fitness center,” she adds. Whichever you choose, the invigorating activities will have you ready and motivated for the rest of the evening’s itinerary. (Training Mate: 7825 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood; 323-380-5492; trainingmatela.com) (Montage fitness center: 225 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills; 888-860-0788; montagehotels.com)



Spaghetтини

GRAB A DRINK

“[The] best place for a drink is at [the] Scarpetta bar for its great selection of happy hour cocktails,” Louie recommends. Happy hour takes place Monday through Saturday from 4 to 7 p.m. and specials include signature cocktails for \$9, house wine for \$8 and some Italian beers for \$5. To complement the libations, small plates range from roasted bone marrow to foie gras crostino and short rib with bone marrow agnolotti; and popular snack items are the mini lobster roll and polenta frita with tomato jam and a goat cheese fonduta. (225 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills; 888-860-0788; montagehotels.com)

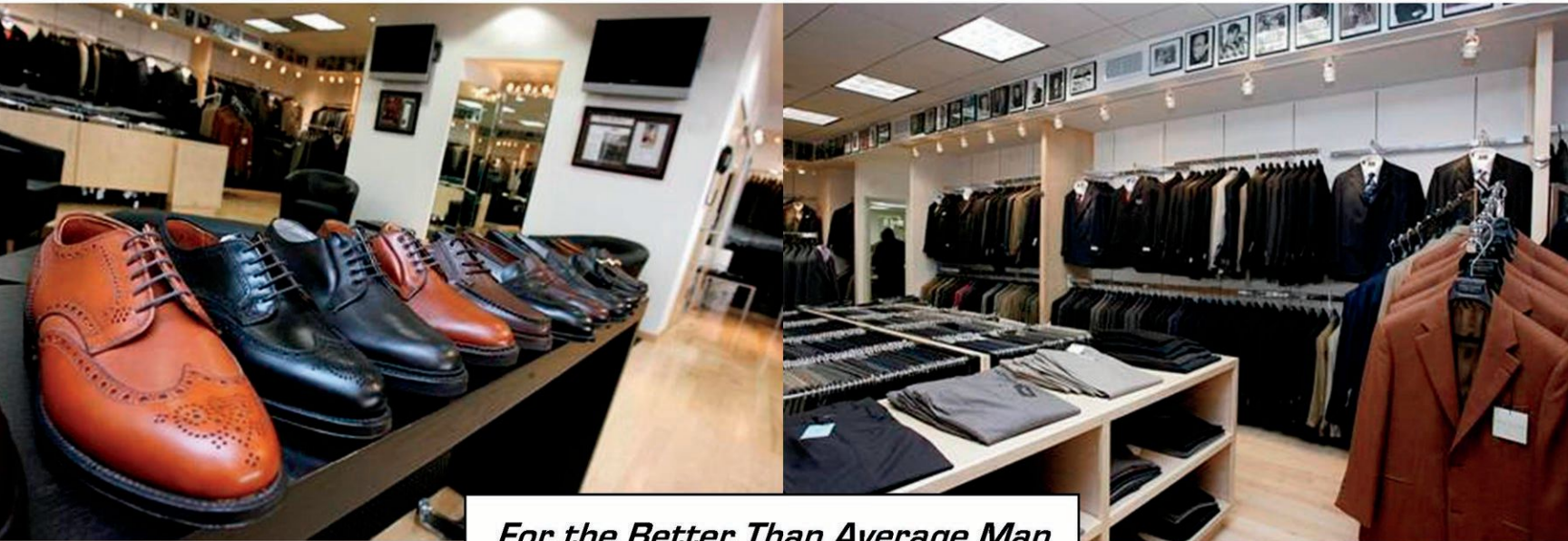
OUT TO DINNER

To round out the trip—and leave a lasting impression on potential partners—dinner at a sleek spot is necessary. Two places Louie recommends are Nic’s Beverly Hills for classic American dishes or Spaghetтини, which specializes in Northern Italian cuisine. (Nic’s: 453 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills; 310-550-5707; nicsbeverlyhills.com) (Spaghetтини: 184 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills; 310-424-4600; spaghetтинibh.com) C

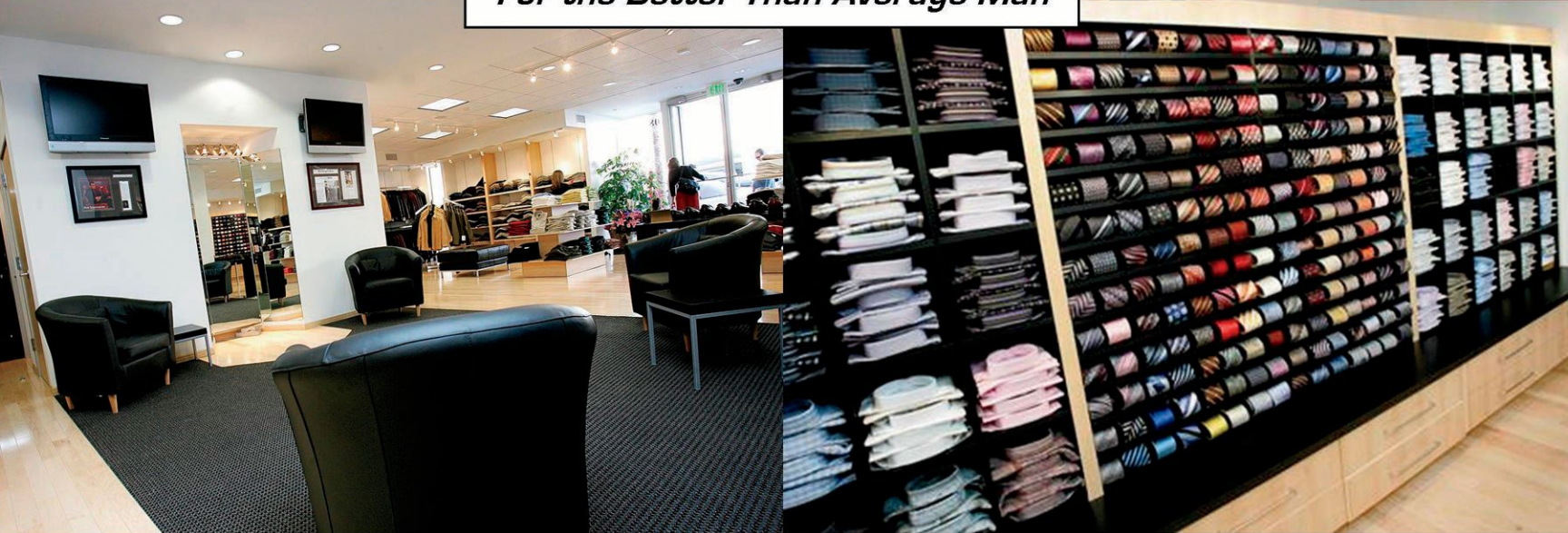
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All-Around ADVENTURES

Hop on a two-wheeler and coast down the bike paths in LA to discover this sprawling metropolis through immersion.

BY JACKIE ADAMS

Even longtime residents can never predict traffic conditions in Los Angeles. Streets that are empty one day will be gridlocked the next, and vice versa. One guaranteed tip most Angelenos will tell you is this: Embrace every opportunity to leave behind the congested, car-filled roads and let the cool breeze in your face be the only thing to slow you down. Luckily, biking is one of the increasingly popular modes of transportation for getting around the city. In the past decade, LA has gradually encouraged this method of travel by enacting laws to make the roads safer for cyclists,

fixing infrastructure and implementing a plan to build more than 800 miles of new lanes by 2032.

Not only a way to escape traffic, switching to a bike also offers an opportunity to get a true taste of an unfamiliar place. It's not nearly enough to get a quick glimpse of LA from the window of a town car as you shuttle from landmark to landmark. To experience the city, the best option is to swap four wheels for two and coast down the pavement. For added exploration, a tour in one of the following three locales boasts trails flanked by notable stops along the way.



From Pier to Pier

WHERE: SANTA MONICA

DISTANCE: APPROXIMATELY 7 MILES

DIFFICULTY: BEGINNER

STARTING POINT: SANTA MONICA BIKE CENTER

TRAVEL TIP: THE PATH IS FAIRLY FLAT, SO A BEACH CRUISER WILL SUFFICE THE ENTIRE WAY.



Santa Monica may be one of the most beautiful and bike-friendly places to ride in LA. In 2011, the City Council unanimously adopted the Bike Action Plan, which aims to transform the community into a hub of active transportation. Wide bike lanes and greenways give riders access to nearly any destination in the city, and there are racks to lock up bikes at several points on these paths.

Start the ride at the Santa Monica Bike Center. An all-in-one shop designed to serve most bicycling needs, visitors can rent or purchase bikes here, and get a tuneup and directions before taking off. There's also the option to sign up for curated, guided tours along themes like street art and sweet spots.

If you'd prefer to mosey along the beachside path at your own pace, first fuel up at Philz Coffee. Located half a mile away from the bike center at Santa Monica Boulevard and Sixth Street, the shop pours a range of blends to kick-start the ride.

"We see a lot of bikes come through

our coffee shop—all kinds too, from Fixies to Bianchi and Cannondale," explains Terra Ramirez, shift leader at Philz. "On a day-to-day basis, cyclists are in and out all the time, and always on the street. ... The bike path around the pier is pretty popular and the streets around it."

To get to the pier, head down Santa Monica Boulevard until you reach Ocean Avenue. Two streets over, the pier branches off Colorado Boulevard and features a Ferris wheel, games and souvenir shops. At the entrance, there's a southbound bike path to take for the rest of the journey.

The first 3 miles of the trip are framed by unobstructed views of waves crashing onto the sand until you pass the legendary Muscle Beach. Here, an outdoor gym offers a seaside workout to fitness enthusiasts. Continue taking the trail to Venice Pier, where you'll be greeted with colorful characters lining the streets, hawking goods and engaged in performance art. Street vendors and drum circles are also common, as is pedestrian traffic, so use caution

and slow speeds as you meander.

Once you've passed Venice, turn left onto Washington Boulevard for one-third of a mile and make another left onto Dell Avenue, the main street that leads into the Venice Canals. Built in the early 1900s and modeled after Venice, Italy, the upscale neighborhood is a favorite site for visitors and locals alike. The area offers a quaint piece of Europe in Southern California, with stunning houses sitting on the water.

Next stop is Abbot Kinney, one of the trendiest boulevards in LA where biking is the leading transportation choice. The street is filled with several boutiques to peruse and places to dine. From 3 Square Cafe & Röckenwagner Bakery, known for its selection of fresh baked goods and breakfast dishes, to Willie Jane, which serves Southern food in a modern space, there are eclectic eateries to sate any appetite along the boulevard. Once you've had a bite, follow the road back to Ocean Avenue and head back up toward the bike center to end the afternoon cruise.



Counterclockwise from top left: Start at the Santa Monica Bike Center, then visit the pier, boardwalk, beach and Venice Canals.





Scenic Route

WHERE: DOWNTOWN ARTS DISTRICT

DISTANCE: 10 MILES

DIFFICULTY: INTERMEDIATE

STARTING POINT: EL MAESTRO BICYCLE SHOP

TRAVEL TIP: AS YOU RIDE ALONG THE RIVER AT FOURTH AND SIXTH STREETS, YOU'LL EXPERIENCE CINEMATIC DEJA VU. THE AREA AROUND THE BRIDGES IS FILMED FOR COMMERCIALS AND MOVIES.

Counterclockwise from top left: Stumptown Coffee Roasters provides the caffeine for cyclists who ride in the Arts District to the river and Sixth Street Bridge.



Downtown Los Angeles is in the midst of a notable transformation. One area in particular, the Downtown Arts District, is a lively place to spend a weekend morning pedaling around. The streets are flat and bike lanes abound here, making the ride an inviting one. Another bonus of visiting this sprawling area by two-wheeler is that visitors will not have to worry about hunting for parking, as bikes can be secured to one of many racks. El Maestro Bicycle Shop, on Main and Eighth streets, is the closest place for visitors to rent a bike. From there, take Main Street up one block to Seventh Street and turn right; travel down Seventh for a little less than 2 miles until you reach the Arts District.

On Saturday mornings, it's

standard to see residents gathered outside, walking their dogs and chatting with friends at cafes. Also, food trucks line up in front of Stumptown Coffee Roasters on South Santa Fe Avenue. Stop by for a morning pick-me-up with a cold brew or single origin drip coffee, or grab a bag of freshly roasted beans to take home.

Those in need of more sustenance can go one block up to East Seventh Street, where Bread Lounge makes loaves for cold sandwiches and paninis. The curated marketplace Urban Radish, located on Imperial Street, also tempts passersby with cheese and charcuterie boards, sandwiches and salads, as well as house-made drinks like honeydew and mint agua fresca and cold-pressed juices. Every Saturday starting at 1 p.m., there is an outdoor barbecue for grilled quail, trout and steak.

Following refreshments, dozens of art galleries and boutique shops await visitors. Head back toward the bicycle shop to Spring Street. Here, The Hive Gallery and Studios is one of the busiest galleries in the area, and Spring Arts Tower is also

a must-see. The bottom floor houses The Last Bookstore, one of the best independent shops in LA. Inside this converted bank, you will find used novels and nonfiction tomes, old records and, oftentimes, live music; there is also a labyrinth to explore upstairs.

Once you have your purchases, pedal over to the Spring Street Park where you can lay down a blanket and read your newly bought books or people watch. The park is a green oasis amid towering urban buildings, and it was recently renovated to provide a mecca for nature lovers and dog owners alike.

At sunset, facing west on the Fourth Street Bridge is the best place to be. Surrounded by the Los Angeles River and two blocks away from the Sixth Street Bridge, this ride offers a grand view of LA. As you cross the body of water, you will be heading toward the city skyline, which is breathtaking as the sun settles on the horizon. This is an ideal spot to see the metropolis from a distance after spending a day experiencing it up close.





The Star-Studded Tour

WHERE: WEST HOLLYWOOD

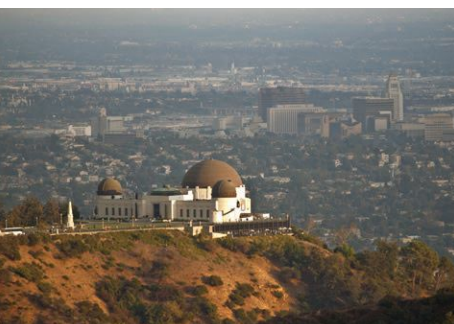
DISTANCE: 25 MILES

DIFFICULTY: ADVANCED

STARTING POINT: BIKES AND HIKES LA

TRAVEL TIP: FOR ADDED SAFETY AS YOU TRAVERSE THE BUSY STREETS, BE SURE TO WEAR REFLECTIVE GEAR, WHETHER IT'S A BRIGHT SHIRT OR VEST.

Counterclockwise from top left: Notable attractions on this route include Griffith Observatory, Paramount Pictures, celebrity neighborhoods and mansions.



This ride is not for the casual cyclist, given the inclines that take riders into the hills and the large number of bike lanes in West Hollywood that are surrounded by heavy traffic. The best time to go is early Sunday morning when the streets are somewhat empty. But if you can brave it, this is a star-studded route from the glamorous Rodeo Drive to Griffith Park.

Once you pick up a set of wheels from Bikes and Hikes LA on Santa Monica Boulevard, start off on Rodeo, where you can re-enact your favorite "Pretty Woman" scene. If you shop long enough, you are bound to have A-list celebrity sightings.

Then head up to the famous Sunset Boulevard; after pedaling for 3 miles, you'll pass the Viper Room, which used to be co-owned by Johnny Depp. About a mile down the road from here is the iconic

House of Blues. As you ride past it, take one last look: After standing on Sunset Strip for more than 20 years, the concert hall will be torn down to make way for a hotel and condos (construction is slated to begin later this year).

For a break, make a stop at the celebrity hideaway and landmark hotel Chateau Marmont. Grab a cup of tea and see if you can recognize the faces behind the huge sunglasses—just don't ask to take a picture. This is a serene spot to relax near the garden and see the bungalows where a laundry list of celebrities have stayed, including names like Robert De Niro, Leonardo DiCaprio and Bob Dylan.

If you still haven't spotted anyone famous, once you're back on Sunset take a quick detour down North Sweetzer Avenue to see the massive estates owned by stars. From here, circle back to Sunset where you'll wind your way to Griffith Park. To get to the park, turn left onto North Western Avenue then right onto Los Feliz Boulevard; the entrance will be

to your left after 3 miles.

This is where the city buildings end and nature begins. The trail includes a steep incline, but the payoff will be worth it: Riders will enjoy a great view of the city from the top of the hill directly across from Griffith Observatory. Sometimes there are access roads that are blocked off, so it's best to check the route before heading up.

On the way back, enjoy the downhill ride all the way to Western Avenue. Take Western to Melrose Avenue, stopping at Hollywood Forever Cemetery to pay respects to Hollywood's greatest stars. Paramount Pictures was built on the cemetery grounds and offers tours to visitors interested in seeing where movies are made.

Before the ride is over, reward yourself for surviving the hills by eating like the stars at the famed Pink's Hot Dogs, at North La Brea and Melrose avenues. Many celebrities, from Marlon Brando to Rosie O'Donnell, have hot dogs named after them based on their order. **C**



Artistic OASIS

No longer a cultural desert, Los Angeles has morphed into a giant in the art world.

BY JOE YOGERST

Iconic museums, a wealth of galleries and auction houses, top-flight art schools and a heritage of famous artists are among the elements that merit a metropolis designation as one of the world's greatest arts and culture hubs. New York, Paris and London quite obviously qualify. But there's a good argument to be made that Los Angeles should be mentioned in the same breath.

There are those that snicker at the very thought that dreaded Tinseltown might actually have culture. Aldous Huxley dubbed it the

"City of Dreadful Joy," while another 1930s writer, Westbrook Pegler, described it as a "sprawling, incoherent, shapeless, slobbering civic idiot." Even those who fell under its spell were apt to disparage rather than sing its praises: Raymond Chandler defined LA as a "hard-boiled city with no more personality than a paper cup."

But maybe the legendary travel writer Jan Morris is the one who came closest to the truth: "They say that in San Francisco there is less than meets the eye; in Los Angeles there is far more."



The Getty Center (opposite page) boasts a collection of Greek antiquities like the bronze sculpture Terme Boxer (left) and a statue of Aulus Metellus (right), as well as renowned paintings, including Édouard Manet's 1881 "Spring (Jeanne Demarsy)" (middle).

"Growing up on the East Coast, I harbored the same Woody Allen-esque stereotype of LA as a city whose only cultural advantage was [turning] right on red," says Emily A. Beeny, associate curator of the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena. "So when I first arrived, I was astonished by the cultural riches I found here."

Most cities are lucky to boast one world-class art museum. But in the Getty, Norton Simon Museum, The Huntington Library, Museum of Contemporary Art and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the region flaunts no less than five iconic art collections. Throw in the commercial galleries and auction houses of Beverly Hills, Culver City and Gallery Row in downtown LA, the nouveau Arts District, plus a budding bohemian arts scene in places like Silver Lake, Los Feliz and Highland Park, and you've got all the makings of an art oasis equal—if not superior—to just about anywhere else on the planet.

"The art scene in Los Angeles, particularly the contemporary art scene, is characterized by freedom and innovation, which has been

made possible by Los Angeles' distance from the traditions of the East Coast and Europe," explains John Giurini, assistant director for public affairs at the J. Paul Getty Museum.

It may not be Paris' Montmartre in the 1890s or New York City's Greenwich Village in the 1960s, but LA has also nurtured many prominent artists. British painter David Hockney immortalized the Southern California swimming pool and leisure lifestyle with his evocative pop art landscapes. Mexican maestro Diego Rivera left a trail of murals on public buildings across the Southland. Pop art pioneer Ed Ruscha has called the metropolis home since the late 1950s and the city has clearly influenced many of his works.

"Los Angeles remains a city where wild, extravagant endeavors still feel possible—from making movies to amassing an art collection from scratch," Beeny explains. "It's a place where the pioneer spirit has survived."

TYCOON TREASURES

LA's rise to the top of the art world traces back to a handful of local

movers and shakers, all of them immensely wealthy, although they each earned their fortunes via different means.

Henry E. Huntington got rich by expediting the movement of passengers and cargo along steel tracks. He went into business with his uncle, Collis P. Huntington—one of America's "Big Four" railroad tycoons—when he was 21 years old and worked diligently in the industry for decades.

Around the age of 60, Henry decided to invest a good deal of his fortune in art. Between 1910 and his death in 1927, Huntington acquired more than \$50 million in European paintings, antique maps and rare books. His collection was especially rich in British masters and among the purchases were famous paintings like Thomas Gainsborough's "The Blue Boy" and Thomas Lawrence's "Pinkie," as well as a Gutenberg Bible, a 15th-century Ellesmere Chaucer manuscript and original

OPPOSITE PAGE PHOTO COURTESY OF THE J. PAUL GETTY TRUST; TOP LEFT PHOTO COURTESY OF VANNI ARCHIVE/ART RESOURCE, NY/PRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ACTIVITIES, SUPERINTENDENCE FOR THE COLISEUM, THE NATIONAL ROMAN MUSEUM AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREA OF ROME; MIDDLE PHOTO COURTESY OF J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES; TOP RIGHT PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SUPERINTENDENCE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF TUSCANY/NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF FLORENCE



The Huntington Library (left) opened in San Marino after Henry E. Huntington's death for visitors to view his art collection. One room to explore is the 2,900-square-foot Thornton Portrait Gallery (right).

handwritten works by a host of famous authors.

Huntington's will stipulated that his treasures be available for everyone to view, and shortly after his death, The Huntington Library in San Marino opened to the public.

Around the same time that Huntington was building his art collection, a young Californian by the name of J. Paul Getty was making money hand over fist in the oil business. By the 1930s, he was avidly collecting art. Getty's taste was nothing if not eclectic and he spent millions amassing a broad gamut of cultural keepsakes, from Greek and Roman sculptures to tapestries, furniture, chandeliers, illuminated manuscripts and Persian

carpets. He even wrote a book about his hobby titled "The Joys of Collecting," published in 1965.

The bulk of Getty's artworks were shipped to his sprawling seaside ranch in Malibu. In the early 1970s, he put many of them on display to the public at a new museum modeled after the Roman-era Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum. As The New York Times pointed out in 1976, the structure may have looked out of place among the modern mansions of Malibu, but Getty's collection "delighted the public, which clamored for tickets of admission."

Despite his reputation for being a miser—at one of his homes, Getty reportedly insisted that guests use

a coin-operated telephone—he bequeathed billions to the trust that would manage his collections after his death in 1976. The world's richest art endowment spent part of that money to create a much larger home for all of that art—an incredible ultramodern museum called The Getty Center that hovers on a hilltop above Brentwood and West Los Angeles.

"Independent from the traditional art markets, Los Angeles museums developed a reputation over the years of taking risks and presenting exhibitions that might not happen elsewhere," Giurini says of the Getty. "We have also been known to look east to Asia and south to Latin America for influence, and

have drawn inspiration from the new technologies that have been a part of Southern California's rapid growth."

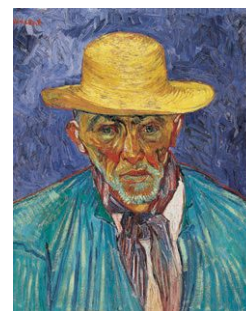
PASADENA PATRON

Oregon-born Norton Simon made his money in fruits, vegetables and other foods. But unlike Huntington and Getty, he managed to keep a low public profile and amass a sizable collection of important paintings and sculptures without anyone outside the art world really taking notice.

By the 1970s, he had more than 4,000 objects in his possession, some of which Simon loaned to museums around the world. But when the financially struggling Pasadena Museum of Modern Art approached him with an offer to become the institution's primary patron, Simon jumped at the chance to display his most important works under one roof.

In return for assuming the museum's financial obligations, Simon was given both the management and naming rights. Thus the Norton Simon Museum was born, an amalgamation of an existing collection that largely revolved around 20th-century paintings (Wassily Kandinsky, Roy Lichtenstein, Ed Ruscha, Frank Stella and Andy Warhol) and the food magnate's

Clockwise from left: Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena; "Woman with a Book" by Pablo Picasso; "Self-Portrait" by Rembrandt van Rijn; "Portrait of a Peasant" by Vincent van Gogh; a gallery at the museum



TOP PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY; ART COLLECTIONS AND BOTANICAL GARDENS; NORTON SIMON EXTERIOR, REMBRANDT VAN RIJN AND VINCENT VAN GOGH PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NORTON SIMON ART FOUNDATION; PABLO PICASSO PHOTO COURTESY OF 2015 ESTATE OF PABLO PICASSO/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK



Post-1940s art is on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art's three campuses, MOCA Pacific Design Center (pictured left) in West Hollywood, the downtown facility and The Geffen Contemporary in Little Tokyo.

wide-ranging works.

Nowadays, the museum is renowned for its world-class Asian art and European collections that span the 14th through 19th centuries, including what many consider the most important assemblage of Rembrandt portraits in the Western Hemisphere. Among its treasures are works by Raphael, El Greco, van Gogh, Renoir and Picasso—a veritable who's who of great masters over the past 500 years.

Before his own museum came into being, Simon was actively involved (as a founding trustee) in creating the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Unveiled in 1965 in a stunning postmodern campus on

Wilshire Boulevard, it's the single largest art museum in the western United States and one of the largest in the world.

LACMA's assortment of more than 120,000 objects spans nearly the entire history of art from ancient artifacts to modern masters—and just about every corner of the world. Among its many fortes are Asian, Latin American and Islamic art.

Ironically, it's another California tycoon—William Randolph Hearst—who posthumously became LACMA's single greatest donor when much of his gargantuan art collection wound up at the museum after his death. And the museum is renowned for pushing the outer

edge of the art envelope with special exhibits like last year's "Fútbol: The Beautiful Game" and the popular Tim Burton retrospective from 2011. This spring, LACMA debuted an exhibition in honor of its 50th anniversary, displaying gifts made to the museum.

GALLERY SPACES

The region's fifth world-class museum sprawls across three separate locations and a collection that was also largely fueled by a local billionaire and his "hobby." The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) is also the youngest of the five, founded in 1979, and currently the city's only museum devoted to modern (post-1940) painting, sculpture and other mediums.

MOCA's exuberant, edgy and sometimes baffling works are housed at the main facility on Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles, as well as MOCA Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA in Little Tokyo. The latter derives its name from David Geffen, the music mogul and movie producer who owns what most experts deem the world's most valuable private art collection (worth an estimated \$2.3 billion in 2014, according to Wealth-X research).

MOCA has forged partnerships with other artistic bastions, in particular Sotheby's, which recently organized an auction to raise \$10 million for the museum endowment. The famed auctioneers have had a presence in LA since the late 1960s when the art world realized that

people from the movie and music industries were also collectors with plenty of disposable income to spend on the odd Picasso or Warhol.

No one knows exactly how much art Angelenos buy each year, but no one in the business seems to have any doubt that Southern Californians are still some of the most ardent collectors. For instance, it's speculated that the anonymous buyer who ponied up a record \$142 million to purchase Francis Bacon's "Three Studies of Lucian Freud" in 2013 was actually Elaine Wynn, former wife of the hotel magnate and a board member at LACMA.

The Financial Times also reports that the LA art market "hots up" with the launch of local outlets by some of the world's leading commercial galleries. The prestigious London art emporium Ibid opened a gallery last year; German art giant Sprüth Magers launched a West Hollywood outpost this spring; and Zurich-based Hauser Wirth & Schimmel debuts next year in downtown LA.

"Los Angeles has remained a wonderful place to be an artist in a way that New York no longer really is," Beeny says. "Studio space here is relatively affordable, and the combination of great art schools and a supportive arts community has nurtured lots of talent. In a way, LA has actually benefited from its reputation as a place on the cultural margins. There's less pressure here to conform to trends or an established model of taste, so people have made—and collected—exactly what they pleased." **C**



Los Angeles County Museum of Art features a range of art, from last year's exhibit "Calder and Abstraction: From Avant-Garde to Iconic" (left) to A Dwarf Drummer statue (top right) and "Two Marilyns" by Andy Warhol (bottom right).

MOCA EXTERIOR PHOTO BY MARISSA ROTH, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES; MOCA GALLERY PHOTOS BY BRIAN FORREST, COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES; "CALDER AND ABSTRACTION" PHOTO BY FREDRIK NILSEN/COURTESY OF 2014 CALDER FOUNDATION, NEW YORK; ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NY; A DWARF DRUMMER PHOTO COURTESY OF MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA; ANDY WARHOL PHOTO BY JOHN WHITE, COURTESY OF MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA © 2015 ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NY

Cultural COMMUNITY

Experience the Little Tokyo neighborhood, which is anchored by specialty eateries, storefronts and landmarks that all maintain their Japanese roots.

BY JOE YOGERST



Ellison Onizuka memorial



Tanabata Festival



Historic photo display in Little Tokyo

Located on the edge of downtown Los Angeles, Little Tokyo first took shape in the late 19th century when the first wave of Japanese immigrants began arriving in Southern California. The neighborhood traces its origins to a single Japanese restaurant on First Street established by an emigre sailor in 1884. The population swelled with the arrival of Japanese workers who helped construct the city's electric tram line and refugees from earthquake-devastated San Francisco.

By the late 1930s, Little Tokyo was home to more than 30,000 Japanese, a sprawling neighborhood that abutted Chinatown on the north and Boyle Heights on the east. However, the forced relocations during World War II and the postwar march of progress greatly depleted the area's population. Little Tokyo may have disappeared altogether if

not for a wave of new investment and business activity sparked by Japan's economic boom of the 1970s and 1980s.

While the majority of the city's Japanese-Americans now live in suburbs like Gardena and Torrance, many of them own stores, restaurants and other business establishments in Little Tokyo or patronize the old neighborhood for shopping, dining, entertainment or religious activities. As a result, it remains one of the city's most distinct enclaves with more than 100 Japanese restaurants, shops and temples in a 13-block area.

The stretch of First Street between San Pedro Street and the Japanese American National Museum on Central Avenue is the nucleus of Little Tokyo. From there, the neighborhood spreads north to Temple Street, south to Third Street, west to Los Angeles Street and east

to Alameda Street, where the Little Tokyo/Arts District station affords public transit access from greater LA.

"The most traditional Japanese aspects of Little Tokyo are the cultural and religious institutions and unique Japanese-American businesses found nowhere else in LA," says Mike Okamura, president of the Little Tokyo Historical Society. "Traditional Japanese cultural schools [such as] tea, flower, calligraphy, poetry [and] singing are still in Little Tokyo. Japanese traditions and customs are still observed and showcased. Ironically, you do not hear too much Japanese language in LT (Little Tokyo) any longer."

The high point of the Little Tokyo calendar is the annual Nisei Week, which takes place in August; this year's event runs from Aug. 15-23. Established in 1934, the festival is one of LA's oldest and most colorful

events. In addition to a grand parade down First Street, the week includes fashion shows and beauty pageants, karate and kendo tournaments, anime and cosplay activities, and a hilarious gyoza (dumpling) eating contest.

"LT is still the center of the Nikkei (Japanese diaspora) community," says longtime community leader Bill Watanabe, who was born in the Manzanar internment camp during World War II. "The manju confectionary shops and markets and gift shops are all part of the traditions that have existed in LT since the 1880s."

Still, Watanabe welcomes the infusion of new investment, energy and youth that has revived the neighborhood in recent years. "The streets of Little Tokyo that were deserted at nights and on the weekends before 2000 are now jumping with ... people with dogs and kids, and many



Tanabata Festival during
last year's Nisei Week



From a New Year's festival (right) to Nisei Week (left), lively events take place throughout the year in Little Tokyo. This summer, Nisei Week runs Aug. 15-23.

of them are young professionals," he explains. "The challenge is to welcome the changes—but to fight to preserve the history, heritage and cultural differences that makes Little Tokyo a distinct neighborhood."

MUSEUM ROW

First-time visitors should start their exploration of Little Tokyo at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM). Opened in 1992, the museum dives into the stories of Japanese-Americans through exhibitions and educational programs. "The ongoing, core exhibition here is 'Common Ground: The Heart of Community,' an overview of 130 years of the Japanese-American experience," says museum representative Leslie Unger. The museum also stages creative temporary exhibits like the recent "Hello! Exploring the Supercute World of Hello Kitty," which ended May 31. "Organized as part of the iconic character's 40th anniversary celebrations, the exhibition [examined] Hello Kitty's colorful history and influence on pop culture," Unger says. In addition to workshops, readings and film screenings, JANM organizes historical walking tours of Little Tokyo.

While exploring the museum grounds, visitors can also discover the fine art of drinking tea at Chado Tea Room. The eatery sits on the southwest corner of the museum complex and offers more than 300

varieties of leaves from around the globe alongside Asian and European bites during the afternoon tea service. The cafe also hosts special events like the Los Angeles International Tea Festival during the summer and Hello Kitty-themed tea service in honor of Hinamatsuri, or Girls' Day, in March.

Just up the block is The Geffen Contemporary, one of three branches of the city's Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). Celebrated local architect Frank Gehry transformed this former police car garage into a stunning display space for edgy, esoteric modern art.

For more exploration options in this hub of museums, at the north end of Central Avenue is the touching Go For Broke Monument. Dedicated to more than 16,000 Japanese-Americans who served in the U.S. military during World War II, the black marble slab is a tribute to their wartime heroics and a reflection on the mistreatment of

Japanese-Americans during the war. "I think of this as a civil rights monument," says Tets Asado, a veteran who helps maintain the landmark. "Not just to those in the military but to all residents of Little Tokyo and Japanese-Americans at the time."

NEXT STOP, FIRST STREET

Almost like a movie set from 1940s Los Angeles, the north side of First Street between Central Avenue and San Pedro Street seems virtually unchanged over the past 70 years. The old brick-and-mortar facades and the vintage neon and kanji signs summon a bygone era. Most of the storefronts are now occupied by eateries of one sort or another.

The "Chop Suey" building (named for its historic neon sign) stands out along the strip with elements of Beaux Arts architecture. Erected in 1896, the edifice once housed the Far East Cafe, where Hollywood stars and local sports

heroes rubbed elbows with local residents. From "Chinatown" (1974) to "Farewell, My Lovely" (1975), the structure has appeared in numerous films. The old cafe is now long gone, replaced by the hip Far Bar, where creative cocktails like Godzilla and Bird Flu complement a wide selection of sake, Japanese whiskeys and other libations.

Meanwhile, the smell of freshly made treats draws pedestrians through the front door of Fugetsu-Do Sweet Shop, a Japanese bakery founded by the Kito family in 1903 and still going strong. One of the house specialties is the Japanese confection mochi, a rice cake enjoyed with accompaniments like manju (a sweet paste made of red bean). And there's always a line to get into Marugame Monzo, Little Tokyo's top noodle house, renowned for dishes like sea urchin cream udon and mentai squid butter udon.

Aside from food spots, First



A mural in Little Tokyo (left) and the Go For Broke Monument (right) remind visitors of the area's Japanese roots.



TOP LEFT PHOTO BY TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO; TOP RIGHT PHOTO BY RYAN FURUYA; MIDDLE LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM; BOTTOM LEFT PHOTO BY WATANABE OSHOGATSU

Street also serves as a reference point. Near the corner of First and San Pedro streets is the Little Tokyo Koban and Visitor Center, a combination information hub and police post modeled after the ubiquitous street corner kobans of Tokyo and other Japanese cities.

“We get a lot of Japanese visitors,” says a volunteer working at the info desk. “These are people visiting LA who need information or maybe they are lost or maybe they just feel the need to speak Japanese to someone.”

Around the corner is the Union Center for the Arts. Housed in a building that in 1922 served as the first Christian church in Little Tokyo, the eclectic center presents Asian-themed music, poetry and art exhibits as well as plays by the East West Players (EWP). One of the nation’s first Asian-American theater troupes, EWP has premiered more than 100 dramas and musicals. Taking the Union Center stage

toward the end of this summer is EWP’s production of “Chinglish” (Sept. 10 to Oct. 11) by renowned playwright David Henry Hwang about a businessman trying to launch a new company in Asia.

THE SOUTH SIDE

The south side of First Street is dominated by a warren of purpose-built shopping centers that blend aspects of old and new Japan. Step into the past at Japanese Village Plaza, a pedestrian precinct flanked by traditional Japanese architecture. A soaring, red watchtower marks the main entrance to the village, an assemblage of 40 eateries, fashion boutiques and gift shops where you can find everything from Hello Kitty gear to mochi ice cream and California rolls.

At the back of the village, next to Kagura Downtown (a sushi and sake bar), a passage leads into the adjoining Little Tokyo Galleria, an Angeleno version of the multistory shopping



Top: Nisei Week features a parade with performers and illuminated floats.

Bottom: Eateries in the neighborhood serve Japanese delicacies like mochi at Fugetsu-Do Sweet Shop (left) and tonkotsu ramen (right).

centers that dominate Tokyo’s inner city. Foremost among the tightly packed shops is Anime Jungle, which specializes in the amazing world of Japanese comic books, action figures and cosplay outfits.

Farther west along Second Street is a short pedestrian-only street with a giant orange rocket monument. “It’s a memorial to astronaut Ellison Onizuka, the first Japanese-American in space, who died as part of the crew on space shuttle Challenger,” Unger says. The short thoroughfare also affords visitors an incredible view of LA’s classic art deco City Hall.

Another pedestrian street leads south to a red brick plaza designed by acclaimed artist and designer Isamu Noguchi at the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center. Here, the Aratani Theatre presents kabuki, noh and other traditional Japanese performing arts, while the James Irvine Japanese Garden offers an inner-city mosaic of waterfalls, cedar bridges and stone lanterns.

On the same block as the garden

is the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple. Founded in 1904 as Little Tokyo’s first Buddhist shrine, the temple migrated several times before settling on its present location in the 1970s. In addition to being an outstanding example of modern Japanese religious architecture, the temple offers Shinto ceremonies, yoga classes and Japanese culture workshops for visitors.

Little Tokyo finally peters out at the corner of Third Street and Alameda, where the modern indoor mall offers another collection of Asian eateries and retailers. The gem here is a Japanese and Korean supermarket called Little Tokyo Market Place, which dispenses a variety of hard-to-find culinary ingredients from East Asia and fresh seafood.

On Saturday afternoons, the market presents a tuna-cutting demonstration that produces incredibly fresh sashimi that’s ready to eat—or, attendees can take home the delicacies to enjoy later as a reminder of the traditions experienced in Little Tokyo after they leave. **C**



Left: Japanese American National Museum; right: the watchtower outside the Japanese Village Plaza

DEEP SEA DISCOVERIES

A step further than seeking inspiration in the ocean, artists are using the blue waters as a backdrop for their creative works.

BY TIFFANIE WEN



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