

ON AND OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

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NEW YORK TIMES
#1 BESTSELLER

A TRAVELER'S LIFE LIST

by PATRICIA SCHULTZ

THE WORLD'S WONDERS: A BALLOON SAFARI OVER MASAI MARA
♦ THE TASMAN GLACIER ♦ SAILING THE GRENADINES ♦
THE HIGHLAND GAMES AT BRAEMAR ♦ CANYON DE CHELLY
♦ GUBBIO ♦ OAXACA'S SATURDAY MARKET ♦ *(continued on back cover)*

history, the hilltop citadel is a work of art itself, done in gleaming off-white travertine marble and glass. Luminous, sometimes soaring galleries rely heavily on natural light and are interspersed with courtyards, fountains, connecting walkways, and windows that frame views of the Robert Irwin-designed gardens and beyond. Van Gogh's *Irises* and five *Genannes* (including his *Still Life with Apples*) are the Getty's magnets to the masses, but the museum's real strength remains its esoteric specialty collections, from Renaissance to Impressionism and 18th-century European decorative arts.

There is no more wonderful place to watch the sun set over the Pacific than from the wraparound terrace of the center's restaurant, whose cuisine of Californian, Asian, and Mediterranean flavors is attracting as much attention as the art. The same innovative kitchen oversees a simpler menu at the popular café. Food is a big part of the Getty's charms, exemplifying the attention the center devotes to atmosphere and all-around experience.

Among the other museums that add art to L.A.'s pop culture identity are the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Pasadena's small but excellent Norton Simon Museum, San Marino's Huntington Gardens



A hilltop acropolis houses one man's collection of art.

and Galleries, and the Getty's sister museum, the Getty Villa in Malibu. This Pompeii-inspired home was commissioned from afar by the expatriate American oil billionaire John Paul Getty, ranked among the richest men of modern times. It was completed two years before his death in 1976, and although he never visited it, he chose to be buried there. Today it is devoted to his estimable survey of Greek and Roman antiquities. It is currently undergoing renovation and is scheduled to reopen in late 2005.

WHAT: site, restaurant. **WHERE:** 1200 Getty Center Dr. Tel 310-440-7300; www.getty.edu. **COST:** admission free; parking \$5 (reservations required for parking except Thurs and Fri evenings). **DINNER:** \$50. **WHEN:** open Tues–Sun.

Where America Invents Itself

HOLLYWOOD

Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.

Ever since show-biz pioneers Cecil B. DeMille and Jesse Lasky were drawn to the climate-blessed West Coast in 1911, Hollywood ceased being a real place and became a concept, a glittering Tinseltown synonymous with fantasy, glamour, and ambition. It has long been true that the only stars you'll see on Hollywood Boulevard are at the local wax museum, but Hollywood is in the midst of a Times Square-like renaissance as it attempts to re-create the excitement of the industry's

heyday. A major catalyst in the area's rebirth is the brand-new home of the L.A. Philharmonic, the \$274 million Walt Disney Concert Hall, designed by celebrated architect Frank Gehry. At Mann's Chinese Theatre (still known to most movie fans as Grauman's Chinese), you can literally walk in the footsteps of Charlie Chaplin, Marion Davies, Mary Pickford, and some 160 other stars of the silver screen from 1927 to the present, who have been immortalized in footprints, handprints, and the odd noseprint (Jimmy Durante's). Nearby, the mile-long Hollywood Boulevard Walk of Fame honors more than 2,000 stars from 1960 on.



Visit Universal Studios for a glimpse of the film world.

Most of the studios moved away long ago, and today only Paramount remains physically in Hollywood. For a glimpse of how movies are made, head over the Hollywood Hills to the San Fernando Valley and Universal City. In addition to its decades of history as a film-producing studio, Universal Studios has become a major tourist destination and its popular tour of the world's largest television and movie studio is fun for the whole family, skeptics included. Special effects rides let you experience an avalanche, an earthquake, and a freak encounter with a 30-foot King Kong.

If you're looking to rub shoulders with the likes of Harrison, Goldie, Meg, and Mel, then you're in the right town. Scandia, Chasen's, and the Brown Derby are no longer, but Musso and Frank Grill remains. It's one of the oldest restaurants in L.A., a watering hole for the industry's hoi polloi since 1919. In burnished-

wood and leather booths, industry types nurse Ketel One martinis and relish a defiantly 1920s menu fixed in time: chicken à la king, corned beef and cabbage, grilled calf's liver and onions, and eleven kinds of potatoes. A little less retro in ambience, the casual-chic Ivy provides a rare outdoor-lunch opportunity with great star-spotting potential, and they're even nice to tourists. Along the same lines is the perennially popular Spago Beverly Hills, where neck twisting detracts from Wolfgang Puck's consistently great signature pizzas.

For a show-biz experience extraordinaire, the city's finest and most nostalgic venue is the Hotel Bel Air, where stars young and old seek out anonymity and subtle service, blending unobtrusively into its 12-acre refuge of flowering native and sub-tropical flora. Shaded pathways meander past swan ponds to hideaway Mission-style bungalows—Marilyn Monroe's was recently transformed into a gym.

WHAT: site, hotel, restaurant. **HOLLYWOOD:** Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau, tel 213-624-7300; www.lacvb.com. **WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL:** 111 S. Grand Ave. Tel 213-972-7211; www.musiccenter.org. **MANN'S CHINESE THEATRE:** 6925 Hollywood Blvd. Tel 323-464-8111; www.manntheatres.com. **UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD:** 100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City (5 miles from Hollywood). Tel 818-508-9600; www.universalstudioshollywood.com. *Cost:* \$45. **MUSSO & FRANK GRILL:** 6667 Hollywood Blvd. Tel 323-467-7788. *Cost:* dinner \$40. **IVY:** 113 N. Robertson Blvd., West Hollywood. Tel 310-274-8303. *Cost:* \$40. **SPAGO BEVERLY HILLS:** 176 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills. Tel 310-385-0880; www.wolfgangpuck.com. *Cost:* Dinner \$85. **HOTEL BEL AIR:** 701 Stone Canyon Rd., Bel Air. Tel 800-648-4097 or 310-472-1211; www.hotelbelair.com. *Cost:* from \$385. Dinner at the Terrace \$65. **BEST TIMES:** early Jul–mid-Sept, the outdoor Hollywood Bowl (in Griffith Park; www.hollywoodbowl.org) hosts the L.A. Philharmonic performing a repertoire that ranges from jazz to pop to classical; avoid “June Gloom” and hot Aug.