

# Cheviot Hills

*The greatest neighborhood in the world*



NO. 55  
October 2017



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BRE # 01808926

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# To Reminisce...

By BEN LEE

Halloween is one of my favorite holidays of the year. If you're keeping track, Thanksgiving is my true favorite but Halloween runs a pretty close second. I tend to favor any holiday that puts family and food front and center while relegating gift lists and disposable toys to either the background or complete obscurity. Which is why Halloween has always ranked high at the top of holidays. There are no presents to deal with- just a costume, a few bags of candy and a chance to walk around, saying hi to neighbors and visiting friends. In our house, it's always been a family affair and I'm hoping my thirteen-year-old son isn't now too cool to still be part of the festivities. Every year we invite all the grandparents over to see their hilariously and wickedly costumed grandchildren. After the obligatory feigned horror and multiple photo ops, we make our way over to the dinner table where we carbo-load on spaghetti and meatballs before heading out the door to go trick or treating. There are always about fifteen or so of us meandering through the streets and sidewalks of Cheviot Hills, an amorphous group winding through the neighborhood, admiring the decorations while reminding our kids to say thank you after collecting treats.

It's a small-town atmosphere that makes me nostalgic for the days when I was a kid trick-or-treating down the streets of Santa Monica with my parents and a bunch of our family friends. This could be another reason why I probably enjoy Halloween so much. It's a sentimental memory from my youth that makes me smile. Recently I've been reminiscing a lot about my younger years and reconnecting with some of the activities that I used to enjoy but haven't made much time for as an adult. Maybe it took having a birthday last month to remind myself that life is too short to spend solely running around the hamster wheel without slowing down long enough to engage in more of the diversions I once loved, back when making time for them didn't feel like such an effort.

So, when my old buddy Justin (we met when we were both 12 at sleep away camp) called to ask me to join him and a few other guys on a Mexico surf trip, I said, 'sure.' Luckily I had



about a month to prepare, so with surviving the south-of-the-border waves as inspiration, I took my old board out to brush up on my surfing skills. The impending trip forced me to go back to the beach a few mornings a week and it reminded me how much I love surfing. I hadn't seen one of the guys, Zach, for over 30 years but it really felt as if no time had passed. Zach, Justin and I probably bored the other guys by recalling all of our fun summer camp memories while paddling out into the ocean, fresh from a terrible night's sleep in a horrendous motel situated in a dusty village outside of Zihuatanejo. No phone or internet service, just a bed and tequila bar by the ocean. It was quite possibly as far from the Four Seasons as one could get, yet the perfect backdrop for a boys' fun surfing safari weekend.

In addition to surfing, I'm also pretty pleased to say I've taken up guitar lessons again, too. Music has always been such an important part of



my life- I sang through my time at Santa Monica High followed by Wesleyan and grew up playing guitar and harmonica. There was a period of time back in college when a buddy of mine and I toured around, playing at dive bars and small venues both in Europe and Connecticut. My first job out of college was at Motown Records before making a move over to Warner Brothers Music. But once I left the business and got involved with real estate, guitar playing became the first casualty stemming from a lack of free time. Occasionally I'd have a reason to play, but gone were the days I had an excuse to surround myself with music all the time and I sorely missed that

part of my life. So, my wife got me a few guitar lessons for my birthday, forcing me to get back to the basics with a terrific teacher who'll come to the house in between showing houses for sale. It's very possible that if you call my office and are told I'm in a meeting, it's likely code for 'He's home playing guitar.' But don't worry- I will call you back and probably be in a better mood and possibly more helpful after having played music for the past hour. It's a win/win!

If I can make a suggestion that this October, whether or not you're accompanying a bunch of trick-or-treaters, try to dig up a silly costume and hit the streets of your neighborhood. Bring yourself back to the time when you were so excited to get a delicious chocolate bar instead of being irritated by the amount of bags of candy you now have to buy to distribute. And if you find yourself getting too bogged down in the adult world of relentless minutiae and responsibility, I also encourage you to carve out at least some time to reacquire yourself with those long lost hobbies from your past. Don't wait for a birthday to realize how much you miss what you once used to love. And one more piece of advice: the next time you head to Mexico for a surf trip with the boys, stay at the Four Seasons over the Casa Vieja. I'm all for 'going home again' but nothing makes you REALLY want to go home more than staying in a truly terrible hotel.





# My featured listings

## BEN LEE - ESTATES SALES

### Pacific Palisades - COMING SOON!

5 Beds / 4 Bath 4,100 Sq. Ft., 8,276 Sq. Ft. Lot



**515 Muskingum Ave – \$3,350,000**

Newer Mediterranean set on a quiet loop street with unobstructed ocean, canyon & mountain views. Bright & dramatic entry leads to wide open living & family rooms with bar/lounge area. Step down to the spacious dining off center-island kitchen – all opening up to huge entertaining deck & views. Five large bedrooms, 4 baths + several balconies, view decks & covered patios. Lower level storage area, etc. (additional 1,200 sq. ft.) with 12-ft. ceiling opens to patio & view.

### Cheviot Hills - ACTIVE!

5 Bed / 6.5 Bath



**2715 Forrester Dr – \$5,595,000**

A luxurious Hamptons retreat on the most coveted street in Cheviot Hills, impeccably designed and newly constructed estate by Diamond West Distinctive Homes. Artfully detailed wainscoting and intricate custom built-ins set the tone throughout this amazing home. Greeted by a formal living room with fireplace and bay window, pass the formal dining room with butler's pantry to enter the gorgeous gourmet kitchen. This dazzling property, unmatched in location is truly an opportunity that cannot be missed.

### Rancho Park - IN ESCROW!

3 Bed / 2.5 Bath 1,934 Sq. Ft., 6,005 Sq. Ft. Lot



**2637 Midvale Ave – \$1,549,000**

California Contemporary home in one of the most desirable areas of West Los Angeles. From the Travertine-tiled fireplace in the formal living room, to the effortless flow between dining room, kitchen and great room, there is plenty of opportunity to entertain well in this comfortable home. The gracious master bedroom suite offers ample built-ins in the closets and a beautiful bathroom. Located on a quiet street, just a convenient stone's throw to the Expo Line and the Westside Pavilion, this fine home is an ideal place in which to live.

### West LA - PENDING

3 Bed / 2.5 Bath



**1530 S. Centinela Ave PH4 – \$999,000**

Bright, warm and welcoming, this very spacious 3 bedroom/2.5 bath penthouse condominium on a centrally located street in the heart of West Los Angeles is tailor made for stylish, grown up living. Hardwood floors, large open kitchen with stainless appliances, granite counters and breakfast nook; formal dining room with fireplace; expansive living room that leads to a balcony which provides far-reaching city lights and mountain views. Two tandem parking spots in the secured downstairs garage, and a stone's throw to all the fun shops and restaurants in Santa Monica. A peaceful oasis in the heart of the city.

### Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW!

4 Bed / 4 Bath 3,359 Sq.Ft., 8,707 Sq.Ft. Lot



**10377 Monte Mar – \$2,950,000**

With a beautiful view of the golf course beyond, this modern and minimalist 3 bedroom/3 bath home in Cheviot Hills embraces its inhabitants with both peace and tranquility. Custom wood cabinetry, midnight black granite countertops, oversized island and window wrapped breakfast nook with banquet seating will make preparing and enjoying meals a welcome respite from restaurant dining. With a strong emphasis on style as much as function, this simply glorious home in the award winning Overland School District is precisely what you've been looking for!

### Rancho Park - SOLD

5 Bed / 5.5 Bath



**10646 Esther Ave – \$3,595,000**

Welcome to your American dream home! Traditional style new construction by Diamond West Distinctive Homes, this impeccably crafted 5 bed/6 bath, 4378 sq ft home charmingly set on a flat, wide-frontage 9267 sq ft lot is a wonder in design and detail. Bright, open and well-appointed, this home is truly ideal for modern family living. From the lovely front porch, enter the fabulous formal living and dining rooms with exquisite custom millwork and wainscoting. Enormous great room with impressive eat-in kitchen boasts stainless Thermador appliance package with pot filler, walk-in pantry with beverage center, butler's pantry with sink and wine storage, and convenient access to laundry room and guest bedroom/office. Atop the stairs, a generous central landing with custom built-ins adjoins to an upstairs family room with balcony, perfect for studying, lounging or sharing a fun family game night. Four spacious bedrooms, all with en suite baths, complete this level. Fantastic Westside location—walk to shopping, dining, cinema, light rail and highly coveted Overland Elementary School.

### Beverlywood - SOLD

3 Bed / 1.5 Bath



**2904 Oakhurst Ave – \$1,149,000**

A beautifully maintained home on a large corner lot in one of the Westside's friendliest neighborhoods, this bright and delightful 3 bedroom/1 and 1/2 bath property is tailor made for the young family who dreams of walking the kids to and from the award-winning Castle Heights Elementary school each day. Features include: Hardwood floors, crown moldings, detailed ceilings, comfortably sized rooms and brand new Milgard double-paned windows that provide lovely views of the meticulously landscaped backyard. There is a formal living room, large formal dining room and airy, immaculate kitchen that offers stainless appliances, convenient yet attractive butcher block counter tops and a newly installed glass door leading outside. There is a fully converted/insulated detached garage with private access that can provide additional storage or a quiet workspace. The backyard has been fully fenced in and privatized so the children can safely play outdoors either at the front or back of the house. Boasting a brand new roof, washer/dryer, excellent use of space, ample storage and nestled in the heart of a warm and loving community, this home is an absolute must see!

### Westwood - SOLD

5 Bed / 4 Bath



**846 Warner Ave – \$4,495,000**

Stunning Spanish hacienda in Little Holmby Hills. Dramatic 2-story entry. Living room with stained glass windows, exposed beams, dark hard wood floors and oversized fireplace. Generous formal dining room with an abundance of light. The kitchen is a true showstopper with Subzero stainless refrigerator, La Cornue range, brick backsplash, colorful tiled floor framing the island and a large breakfast nook with a wall of windows and overlooks the great room complete with built-ins. Guest room and private office downstairs. Beautiful backyard with mature landscaping, covered patio as well as the swimming pool/spa. An outdoor fireplace and separate entertaining space with built in bar-b-que makes this yard ideal for parties. Up the Spanish tiled staircase with wrought iron banister is an enormous master bedroom suite with dressing room, walk-in closet and gorgeous, marble/Spanish tiled bathroom. Two additional bedrooms are on this level. 10 out of 10 rated Warner Avenue Elementary.

### Cheviot Hills - SOLD

5 Bed / 4 Bath - (Ben Lee represented the BUYER)



**10526 Butterfield Road – \$2,795,000**

Traditional New England charm makes its way to an ideal central location via this impeccably-designed Cheviot Hills home. Marked by a manicured driveway and bold farmhouse style door, the home opens to reveal honey-hued white oak flooring throughout, high ceilings and an intoxicating flood of natural light. The large open great room, replete with a fireplace, flows seamlessly into the custom kitchen and dining space with direct access to the sprawling backyard and outdoor living area. Up the split staircase, a sense of warmth envelopes as you step into the master suite, defined by a blend of modern woodwork, a vaulted ceiling and a terrace retreat complemented by a luxurious en suite bath. The remaining 4 bedrooms and 4.5 bathrooms, too, showcase unmatched elements of luxury and comfort. A captivating traditional, in a coveted neighborhood, with idyllic farmhouse detail and touches of contemporary opulence, this home epitomizes quality living.



# Cheviot Hills happenings



## Pumpkin Patch

By BEN LEE

Get in the spirit of the season and head over to Castle Heights on October 20 from 2-7pm for all your pumpkin patch needs! In addition to purchasing fabulous pumpkins of all sizes, there will also be a variety of food options and fall-themed

activities that include face painting, games, sunflowers and the grand opening of the Western-themed Book Fair! Open to the public and fun for all ages, you can feel good about purchasing your pumpkins and books this year because all proceeds go to help Castle Heights Elementary. Have fun!

## Disaster Workshops

By BEN LEE

You don't need me to tell you that our world has been rocked lately with what feels like a higher amount of natural disasters.



Between the Texas/Florida hurricanes and LA County fires, not to mention the threat of living in earthquake country, there is no time like the present to brush up on being prepared for when disaster might strike. Beverlywood resident and safety expert Marci Sandell, EMT, CERT, is offering two free workshops: Disaster Preparedness on Thursday, October 19 and Disaster First Aid on Thursday, November 16, both from 7pm-8:30 PM and held at Castle Heights Elementary School Auditorium (9755 Cattaraugus Ave.). Open to the public, Marci will share tips about how to prepare before a disaster should occur. She'll tackle subjects such as: what to do if power lines are down? What water is safe to drink? What if phones don't work and you smell gas? There is no reason to be nervous about these and related issues if you prepare for them now, so I encourage you to head over to Castle Heights auditorium on 10/19 and 11/16 and bring your friends and family with you. Better to prepare now than be sorry later.

## Westside Places - No. 14

By Michael Harris

A trip close to home and on the Westside is the Veterans Home and grounds. This 400 acre parcel in the midst of West Los Angeles was originally a gift in 1888 from the Bandini De Baker family who gave it for the exclusive use of the veterans with a reversionary clause in the deed: meaning if were not used for the specific purpose the land would revert to the family. In the recent years there has been some hint that the donor family could make such a claim of reversion based on the uses that are arguably not for the benefit of veterans: a commercial laundry; a baseball stadium for UCLA; athletic grounds for the exclusive benefit of the Brentwood School; and the public dog park facility entered off of Barrington Ave. All of these uses are currently under review by the VA but a visit to the grounds before they are completely renovated would be worthwhile. There is a public golf

course on the most northerly portion of the grounds; a derelict remnant of a well-designed but now barely recognizable Japanese Garden; softball and sports fields but perhaps the most interesting remaining sites are the old buildings some of which date from the earliest development of the grounds. The Victorian Church building which faces Wilshire Blvd is the most shameful example of neglect and the most obvious but there are others. However touring the grounds especially on that portion south of Wilshire Blvd will yield a feast of architectural pleasures particularly the Director's residence and other wonderful examples of Victorian and Queen Anne buildings including the train station which dates from the turn of the century when the trolley took the vets from their residences to the Western Front which they called the many bars and saloons on San Vicente Blvd which provided a liquid remedy for the troops which was not available on the grounds.



Veterans Administration Building

*If you enjoy articles such as the one you just read, please check out my father-in-law's book: Westside Stories. It's a collection of essays, some of which appeared on the pages of this newsletter, all pertaining to the experience (both historical and personal) of growing up on Los Angeles' Westside in the 1940s and 1950s. Available for purchase on Amazon (just enter Westside Stories by Michael Harris in the search bar, it's the first thing that comes up), this is the perfect gift for the local history buff in your life.*

## Hot Pizza, Cool Clothes!

By BEN LEE

A delicious thank you to all those who entered our raffle to win a \$50 dollar gift certificate to Regular Guy's Pizza, the new restaurant inspired by the old Brentwood pizza parlor: Regular Jons. Congratulations go to Barbara Moreno! You are the winner of all the tasty Regular Guy's slices \$50 dollars can buy. If you didn't win the raffle this month, don't despair- we always have another one right around the corner. This month

we are pleased to highlight a local business on Pico called 'Coal and Ice.' A fashionable, high-end clothing boutique without those high-end prices! Each item in Coal and Ice's inventory is hand selected to bring beauty and style to the women of the Westside. If you would like to enter

the raffle to win a \$50 gift certificate to this neighborhood shop, please send an email to: [ben@benleeproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com) and write 'COAL AND ICE' in the subject line. That's it! We will select a winner at random at the end of the month. Thanks and good luck!

COAL & ICE BOUTIQUE

If there is a community event with which you are involved and would like a notification about it in this newsletter, please feel free to let me know. We need the information about a month in advance so if something is happening in November that you would like mentioned in this publication, feel free to reach out:

[ben@benleeproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com) or (310) 858-5489. Thank you!