

Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world

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On the move

By Ben Lee

People move from home to home for a variety of reasons. Every day I get calls from neighbors and strangers asking for advice about whether or not they should remodel and stay where they are or just pack up and move into a new home. There are so many factors to consider that I can never give a pat answer. One size definitely does not fit all. In fact, even size is an issue. Some folks want to downsize, others need more space and there are those who swear they'll never move. Until they get such an unbelievable offer on their house, they decide to sell on the spot. Bottom line is: you never know why people do what they do.

We sold our home a few months ago. We didn't have a great need to go bigger or smaller but an opportunity presented itself and it made sense for us to move. The selling of our home was easy and painless- it was all handled off market so there were no opens, no staging, no contentious negotiations. We happened to be friends with the buyers and were thrilled that the house that provided us with so many phenomenal memories would next be inhabited by a family we adored.

Here's another truth that made selling our house an easier decision: I don't mind moving. There is a cathartic cleanse that one can only really experience by going through dusty old boxes of forgotten treasures; and then, item by item- acknowledging, contemplating, and ultimately discarding them. Not an easy task and I never read the anthem of de-cluttering: The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up. However, it's my understanding



that the philosophy of this popular tome is: if something doesn't 'spark joy,' it gets tossed. Packing up is an arduous task but shedding what no longer provides true happiness makes the job a little simpler.

But all of this isn't to say that the process of selling, packing, moving, unpacking wasn't without its struggles. Because I sold our home so quickly, the one we were building and moving into wasn't quite ready for us. Even after a generous leaseback, we still had to board our dogs and go to a hotel for a few nights, hoping that by some miracle, the house would be finished up a week later. HA! We were living out of suitcases and shuttling the kids to and from school to the hotel, eating convenience breakfasts out of the lobby and taking full advantage of cocktail

happy hours, but after four days I decided that ready or not, enough was enough and we were moving 'home.' There was no gas, heat or much electricity. It was like indoor camping with the fancy bonus of taking showers at the Griffin Club.

That was nearly two months ago and our house, despite how much we love it, is still not fully done. We now have gas, heat and electricity so that's a definite plus. But there's a punch list 10 pages long of items that have yet to be completed. It has been a stressful time and that's probably the most careful language I can use given this is a family-friendly newsletter. Workmen and landscapers and sub-contractors and decorators start streaming in at around 7am and stay until 5pm. It's loud. There's a lot of dust. It's messy and chaotic and the dogs bark at everyone working inside and out and it's kind of like living in a construction zone (maybe because that's exactly what it is!).

At the end of the day, though, despite all the bumps we've encountered and slight headaches we've endured, I'm glad this new house is ours. We are still in the neighborhood (in fact one of my favorite memories of the move was watching each of our sons run down the two blocks between our new and old house, carrying their personal belongings in their arms). At night, when it's quiet and all the individuals working so hard to make this place perfect are gone, I like to sit outside in the absolute stillness of the evening

and appreciate the beautiful view and be grateful that we can call this magnificent feat of engineering home.

It's no one's fault that the house is taking some time to finish- it's just the nature of the beast when you set out to create something from scratch. And I imagine anyone who has been through this process could share a story about how the longest stretch is always at the end. I have to admit that while I do sincerely enjoy the design and build process, there's something to be said about buying a finished product versus building from the ground up. Not everyone has the patience or tenacity or actual interest to tackle the moment-to-moment decisions that often come with a project of this magnitude. To some people, a house is just a place to live and not a life's focus. As luck would have it, real estate –IS- a life's focus for our family so building, pondering, studying, analyzing, designing, respecting and creating an architectural piece of art in which to live just happens to come with the territory.

And everyone wants to know: is this it? Are you going to move again? I don't have a definite answer because no one ever really knows what the future holds but I never say never because despite it all, I find the energy in creating something from the bottom up a whole lot of fun. But, when and if there's a next time, I think we should wait to move in until we have gas. And hot water. And full electricity. And Wi-fi. And, paint on the walls. On second thought, I think it's safe to say we will be staying put for a very long time.



My featured listings

BEN LEE PROPERTIES

Cheviot Hills - NEW LISTING!

6 Bed / 3 Bath



10546 Butterfield Rd – \$1,850,000

A brick pathway leads to a County English style 6 beds/3 baths house originally built in 1929 but updated for today's modern living. Formal living room with hardwood floors, exposed ceiling beams, fireplace and beautiful leaded-glass window. Formal dining room leads to a spacious, open kitchen with Subzero refrigerator, Thermador oven and an in-land range. With an abundance of storage/pantry space and breakfast nook, this kitchen should please any at-home chef. Two downstairs bedrooms used as office and family room that has access to the yard via sliding French Doors. Outside offers a spacious covered patio, grassy expanse and tasteful landscaping. 4 beds/2 baths up, each with pleasant treetop views as well as an anteroom that could double as a baby nursery or reading room. Dramatic master suite has cathedral ceilings, walk-in closet and en suite bath. Highly desirable Overland Elementary school district.

Kenter Canyon - NEW LISTING!

5 Bed / 3 Bath



500 Hanley Pl – \$3,275,000

A unique opportunity to live in one of Brentwood's most beautiful, rustic settings. Built in 1956 on a quiet and tranquil cul-de-sac on Hanley Place, this 2,941 square ft very special property is surrounded by nature. A slate entryway leads way to a spacious living room with fireplace and dining room, both of which open to the classic back covered veranda with picturesque views of the backyard and canyons. The kitchen and breakfast room overlook foliage at its unpolished best: a hillside of trees and plants indigenous to the area and an enviable feature to living in Kenter Canyon. The main level of the home offers a master with ensuite and an adjoining dressing room/office, and two bedrooms with ample built-ins and storage spaces. Upstairs there are two more bedrooms each with generous closets and impeccable views of the hillside below, as well as a convenient Hollywood bathroom. Located in the award winning Kenter Canyon Charter Elementary School District.

Westwood - ACTIVE!

2 Bed / 3 Bath Condo



1830 Westholme Ave #207 – \$824,000

A bright and spacious unit in a private and secure building, this condominium offers the most in quality city living. Sunny communal spaces, a welcoming living room with balcony, an elegant formal dining room and tasteful kitchen with granite counter tops, dual ovens and ample prep space. Windows throughout provide an abundance of natural light coupled with treetop views. There are three enormous walk-in closets, an almost unheard of amenity in the typical condominium. Additional features include: a separate office space (which could serve as a breakfast nook instead), formal powder room and laundry within the unit. The building offers a rooftop deck, swimming pool, two tandem parking spaces and an extra storage facility within the gated garage. Conveniently located near the shopping and dining areas of both Westwood and Century City (walking distance to the newly renovated Westfield Mall) and situated within the highly coveted Westwood Charter School District.

Beverlywood - IN ESCROW

5 Bed / 6 Bath



3017 Bagley Ave – \$2,150,000

A pristine, brand new construction courtesy of Thomas James Homes. Formal living and dining rooms with fireplace and side patio. A great room conveniently situated just beyond the chic black and white kitchen, striking in design and built to nurture a busy family. Stainless Frigidaire refrigerator, state of the art Bertazzoni Oven with 6-burner range and eat in island as well as a breakfast nook. Upstairs you'll find the laundry room as well as four bedrooms, all en suite with attached bathrooms and breathtaking views. This includes the regal master bedroom suite complete with fireplace, balcony, enormous walk-in closet and exquisite bathroom with two sinks in the vanity, oversized tub and multi-head shower. Additional features include: two fireplaces, an office with view, skylights, walk-in pantry in the kitchen, attached two-car garage and situated in the award winning Castle Heights Elementary School District.

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW

4 Bed / 3 Bath



10523 Dunleer Dr – \$2,250,000

Traditional with modern sophisticated details in great Cheviot Hills location. Easy flow from the formal living to dining room to kitchen. Bay window and skylights bask the house in light. Gourmet kitchen with breakfast bar and built-in dining banquette. Great room with sliding French doors to fantastic outdoor entertaining space featuring living area and large al fresco dining space that seats 12, outdoor kitchen with wine frig and built-in BBQ. 3 beds/2 baths downstairs. Completely remodeled master suite upstairs featuring soaring vaulted ceiling, fireplace, huge terrace with retractable awning overlooking rear yard and spectacular views of Century City, exquisite 5-star bath with gorgeous designer steam shower, heated floors and luxe tub leading to enormous walk-in closet. Intricate crown moldings, hardwood floors, Sonos home automated music system, Nest controlled multi-zone heat and air, mature landscaping. Located in coveted Overland Elementary School District.

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW

4 Bed / 3 Bath 8375 Sq. Ft. Corner Lot



2751 Motor Ave – \$2,195,000

A family home on a generously sized 8375 ft corner lot, nuanced in Southwestern detail with a hint of Santa Fe, this home feels like an inviting artist's retreat, brimming with inspiration and creativity. A multitude of bay windows and French Doors provide light and views from virtually every room. Hardwood floors and fireplaces bask the home in warmth and an abundance of cozy window seats and romantic nooks. The immense master bedroom suite has impressively high vaulted ceilings, oversized tub and plenty of storage spaces. In the kitchen there are stainless appliances and granite countertops. You can enjoy a tranquil view of the dining room and backyard beyond featuring a hot tub and long swimming pool that stretches the length of the outdoors. Upstairs is bursting with charm, reminiscent of a country cottage inn. Just a short distance from the Cheviot Hills Recreation Center and located in the award winning Overland Elementary School District.

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW

5 Bed / 5 Bath Large Corner Lot



3035 Queensbury Dr – \$2,999,000

A warm and welcoming family home built in an artistic Spanish architectural style. With multiple levels and an array of cozy lofts, balconies, landings and nooks, this home features an open floor with a bold personality all its own. The kitchen offers ample storage as well as granite countertops, Subzero refrigerator, breakfast nook and peninsula with extra seating. There's an enormous playroom, formal living room with fireplace and sprawling backyard with swimming pool and entertaining patio. In the coveted Castle Heights Elementary School District, with convenient access to downtown.

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW

5 Bed / 5 Bath 3,842 Sq. Ft., 7,444 Sq. Ft. Lot



2742 Forrester Dr – \$2,625,000 Great new price!

A once-in-a-generation chance to own this authentic gorgeous, Spanish-style, 5 bedroom/5 bath hacienda. It's a remarkable true beauty with a palatial entry hall and museum-style 2 story wood-beam living room. Virtually all details are original from its inception in 1929: intricately designed stained glass windows, crystal doorknobs, exposed wooden beams, coved ceilings and doorways, wrought iron banisters alongside the sweeping, dramatic staircase. Located in the award-winning Castle Heights Elementary School district.

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW

5 Bed / 6.5 Bath



2715 Forrester Dr – \$4,999,000 Great new price!

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. 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.

Brentwood - SOLD

5 Bed / 6 Bath 10,668 Sq. Ft. Lot



224 N Kenter Ave – \$3,399,000

A vast property that incorporates elements of traditional and colonial styles, this estate in Brentwood has a multitude of features to please any potential buyer. Inside you'll find a formal living room with an abundance of light, hardwood floors, intricate crowned moldings and fireplace. There's a formal dining room that connects to the kitchen and also opens to a private, exterior courtyard. Upstairs you'll find the generously sized bedrooms, bathrooms and walk-in closets. In the coveted Kenter Canyon Charter Elementary School district, this home is a definite must see!

Cheviot Hills happenings

Earthquake safety

By Ben Lee

Thank you to Beverlywood resident and safety expert Marci Sandell for helping get the word out about a free app called QuakeAlert that will potentially help keep us all safe during the next earthquake. Developed by Early Warning Labs in conjunction with the United States Geological

Survey, the app is supposed to alert you 60 seconds before an earthquake hits. You can visit the website and sign up now to be notified when the app will be available.

<https://earlywarninglabs.com/mobile-app/>

This may be a life saving warning and the closest we have come to such an important breakthrough in earthquake safety.



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 August that you would like mentioned in this publication, feel free to reach out:

ben@benleeproperties.com or
(310) 858-5489. Thank you!

This month's raffle

By Ben Lee

We had an unprecedented number of entries to win the \$50 raffle to the new Culver City Italian restaurant: Pasta Sisters. Thank you to all those who entered and a special congratulations to Craig Miller. You are the lucky winner! We hope you enjoy

all the delicious homemade pasta and sauce \$50 can buy. To all those who entered but didn't win this time, no worries because we always have another raffle right around the corner. For July we're giving away \$50 to the new bakery that's taking West Los Angeles by storm: Top Tier Treats. Creating the most gorgeous cakes you've

ever seen, if you have a party coming up (or even if you don't!), you'll definitely want to enter this month's raffle to win something extra special. Simply send an email to: ben@benleeproperties.com and write TOP TIER in the subject line. That's it! We'll pick a winner at the end of the month. Good luck and thanks in advance for entering!



Westside Places

By Michael Harris

The Fox Plaza Office Building is located at 2121 Avenue of the Stars in Century City. It is now owned by the Irvine Company. The Irvine Company has a peripheral connection to the movie business. The billionaire owner of the Irvine Company Donald Bren is the developer of the planned

City of Irvine and its environs which is located on the former Irvine Ranch in Orange County. Donald Bren is the step-son of Claire Trevor a well known actress of the 1940s and 1950s. Her credits included major roles in Stagecoach, The High and the Mighty and Key Largo. Donald Bren's father had been a movie producer.

The Fox Plaza was not developed by Bren, however. It was originally developed and opened in 1987 by the oil man from Denver, Marvin Davis who bought Fox studios when it was in financial difficulties in part caused by the excesses related to the film Cleopatra. The Fox Plaza is comprised

of 35 floors. It was designed by Fain and Johnson and more importantly was the last major work by William Pereira who was responsible for so many mid-century works in Los Angeles along with his partner Charles Luckman. The Fox Plaza has many sides which speaks to its effort to provide as much space for prestigious corner offices as possible. Because it is constructed on a part of the old backlot of the Fox studios it would not be a surprise that many movies have been shot in the location. Just a few would include Die Hard, Speed, Lethal Weapon 2, Motorama and many others.



If you enjoy reading these vignettes each month, you may want to check out my father-in-law's book, Westside Stories. It's a memoir/history of growing up on the Westside of Los Angeles in the 1940s and 1950s with great photos, anecdotes and stories. Perfect for the history buff/enthusiast in your family! It's available for purchase on Amazon, search Westside Stories by Michael Harris.