

# Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world



**BEN LEE PROPERTIES • Real Estate Broker • Licensed Attorney**  
**[www.BenLeeProperties.com](http://www.BenLeeProperties.com) • (310) 858-5489**

BRE # 01808926

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# Our Safe and Semi-sane Vacation

By Ben Lee

I'm sure like many of you, we had some big plans this summer to get away. We actually had a pretty great plan for spring break (a trip to Japan) but of course that got cancelled a few weeks shy of our departure date. So, when it looked like this quarantine was not going to magically disappear after two weeks, or by Easter or Memorial Day, I started feeling a little panic stricken at the thought of being stuck at home and indoors for the unforeseeable future. At the end of the day, I needed something brighter to look forward to beyond just avoiding the hospitals and staying Covid 19-free.

Day after day I watched my boys' eyes glazing over as they stared into their screens. Their electronic school days bled into their after school activities and those generally involved screens, too. I was working like normal (albeit in a mask) and the monotony of my day-to-day routine without a light at the end of the tunnel was really bringing me down. So, a few months ago, we made a plan to go to a random dude ranch in Montana. Our exceedingly patient and fabulous travel agent made the arrangements. We would fly into Big Sky country, a place to which none of us had ever been, and give the boys a healthy dose of nature while giving me a fun diversion to get my mind off of Westside real estate for a few days.

Fast forward to about a week or so before departure date. Los Angeles' Covid numbers were spiking, tensions were running high and the airline abruptly altered our flight. My wife is a notoriously nervous flyer under the best of circumstances but getting her on a plane during a pandemic was in and of itself a monumental undertaking. Learning that she would now have to endure a few unexpected stops and have to wait it out in additional airports sent her reeling. So, we took it as a sign that traveling would not be in the cards this summer and cancelled. But because we were so close to our check-in date, we were told we would not just lose our deposit but the entire cost of a week's stay at the ranch. I don't want to say how much money that meant but let's just say it was enough to risk sitting next to my wife on an airplane in a pandemic without the benefit of the bar cart. So, we reached back out to our travel agent (Susanne Hamer at the Travel Store in Brentwood. A saint.) and



asked her not only to rebook the ranch but to figure out how to get us there by car, stopping in safe and culturally enriching points of interest along the way.

If you've ever seen the movie *Vacation*, you can pretty much imagine our trip. I invested in a luggage bag on top of my car so the boys could spread out a bit more. We started referring to my eldest as, 'Rusty,' the Anthony Michael Hall character from the film. My wife and I harmonized to songs the boys had never heard of prompting them to turn up the volume on their own devices. We made a handful of wrong turns and almost got attacked by an angry, overturned wasp hive somewhere hot in the middle of nowhere.

But then, miraculously, we saw a moose out in the distance, silently drinking water from a stream. We got gas from a station that sold guns from the same counter as Coke and Twinkies. We hiked through the sloshing Virgin River in Zion; risked heat stroke climbing the red rock hoodoos of Bryce Canyon and the next day witnessed Old Faithful shooting scalding earth water high into the sky. There were wild bison, Bald Eagles, random deer and even a small black bear wandering nearby. And all of this took place even before we made it to Montana!

Once we rolled into the dude ranch, we were pretty tuckered out from the adventures (and drive) of the week prior so it came as a relief to see that this particular ranch gives new meaning to the term "glamping." Tents with showers and heated floors? Sign me up! There was also no shortage of

available activities and every day was busier than the one that came before it. We experienced .22 rifle target practice, fly fishing, jet skiing, horseback riding, ATV touring... even knife and ax throwing for good measure. It felt like we were worlds away from Cheviot Hills. But then the world got much smaller when I heard my name called out during dinner one night, turned around and met a lovely Beverlywood family who recognized me from the neighborhood! I guess we all had the same idea... how to take a much needed mental break from the all-encompassing rigors and unrelenting stress of a global pandemic. We made every effort to stay safe while grabbing the chance to witness some of the most beautiful natural scenery our country has to offer. We were nervous to be out of the impenetrable bubble that has been our home but were somewhat relieved at how strict every hotel, rest stop and gas station was regarding masks. Yes, you can buy a gun from the local Stop n' Sip but not unless you had a mask on first! We ate every meal outdoors and away from other people, even on Montana mornings when the temperature hovered around 35 degrees outside. We found that people in Utah, Wyoming, even Idaho were more frightened of us bringing our germs in from Los Angeles than we were of picking up the virus from them. All this to say: it was a risk to escape town for a few weeks under these current circumstances but it was worth it. We were nervous about the virus and sometimes a little on edge being in the car for 20 hours each direction. But sometimes with risk comes great reward. These are



anything but normal times and I think taking care of your mental state is just as important as your physical one. I know I needed a total departure from the norm and to get out of town for a bit. I'm lucky in that we are not in the high-risk category and could come home and quarantine for a few weeks before seeing our elderly loved ones. I'm also lucky that I have a team who could handle the workload for me while I was busy wrangling cattle and having paint ball matches out in the wilderness.

And now that we are back safe and sound, I feel somewhat recharged and refreshed to return to the uncharted territory of Westside real estate. Contracts and listing appointments may not be as gorgeous as big skies and vast open plains but memories of our Montana home-on-the-range will now help motivate me to work hard and return there one day. Possibly by plane but truthfully, I'd pick the car again. Why? Because I'm someone who doesn't back down from a challenge. Let's be honest: hiking in 115 degree heat is tough, but a true test of strength is spending 40 hours in the car with your loved ones and still liking each other when you get home. All the ax throwing and brushes with bison don't compare to the sheer bravery of enduring an extended family road trip. And will this newfound Herculean show of strength translate to my real estate work? Why, yes, I think it will. Thanks to this quick pandemic get-away, I can honestly say: I've had a great break and am now ready to work hard once again.



# My featured listings

BEN LEE PROPERTIES

## Cheviot Hills - NEW LISTING!

NEW CONSTRUCTION!



**3021 Club Drive** \$4,495,000  
5 Bed / 5.5 Bath

A sophisticated take on the classic modern farmhouse, this absolutely gorgeous new construction is a feast for the eyes and senses. Built by one of Cheviot Hills' most trusted and highly regarded builders, Bob Skibinski, no expense was spared in creating this stunning home. Wide planked wood floors, detailed moldings and designer fixtures add to the property's richness in detail and the open floor plan makes it feel spacious and grand. This home benefits from truly unique design details and an unparalleled craftsmanship that can't be fully appreciated until you witness it for yourself. Be sure and visit today!

## Beverly Hills - NEW LISTING!



**2041 Desford Drive** \$4,895,000  
5 Bed / 4.5 Bath 3,219 Sq. Ft.

More moments from the Beverly Hills Hotel yet a world away from the busy city, find your peace in this gorgeous sanctuary of a modern home. High ceilings, open floor plan, absolutely private and nestled within the natural beauty of surrounding hillsides and lush foliage- this property exudes peaceful, quiet solitude. The outdoor space is a vast patio deck created from limestone and Brazilian Ipe wood. The home is situated behind a mechanical gate with a long, winding driveway and has room to park at least eight cars. Utterly secluded with not a neighbor in sight yet just a stone's throw to the trails and open landscape of Franklin Canyon, this beautiful home could be yours today.

## Beverlywood - NEW LISTING!



**2407 Bagley Avenue** \$2,175,000  
3 Bed / 3 Bath + Guest House 2,245 Sq. Ft., 6,924 Sq. Ft. Lot

Recently remodeled traditional that embodies true Southern California living. Bay windows flood the interior with light and the new, sandy hued hardwood floors mesh with the soft grey-toned walls. Open floor plan ensures an easy flow between the living room, dining, den and kitchen, ideal for entertaining. Brand new kitchen includes white quartz countertops, stainless appliances and breakfast nook. Family room has a bar and offers sliding French door access to the backyard. Master suite has an in-wall electric fireplace, large walk-in closet and French doors that lead out to the backyard.

## Rancho Park - NEW LISTING!



**10756 Ashby Avenue** \$1,895,000  
3 Bed / 2 Bath 1,920 Sq. Ft.

Classically stunning home in the highly coveted Overland Elementary School District offers an equal blend of flair and function. An open floor plan allows for a vast, airy space in the front of the house in which the formal living room, dining room and a variety of smaller seating areas all seamlessly flow together, leading toward the kitchen, always the busiest social hub of the home. Each of the bedrooms are spacious yet cozy with clean, updated bathrooms. Walking distance to the shops and restaurants of Pico Boulevard, Overland School and the Expo Line, this conveniently located and utterly delightful home will likely not be on the market for long.

## Cheviot Hills - FOR LEASE!



**2890 Forrester Drive** \$14,000/mo.  
5 Bed / 5 Bath 4,438 Sq. Ft., 7,265 Sq. Ft. Lot

Built in 2007, a luxurious Contemporary Mediterranean home w/ rolling staircase, skylight, & soaring ceilings. Spacious living rm w/ fp opens to the cozy den/office which leads to a grassy, well maintained & fenced side yard. Elegant formal dining rm w/ ample built-in storage space. Gourmet kitchen features custom cabinetry, granite counters w/ glass tile back splash, SS Viking appliances & center island. The master features an amazing walk-in closet w/ center storage unit, & an impressive master BA, w/ sunken Caesarstone spa tub, dble vanity, built-in cabinets, & bidet. Downstairs is subterranean Garage aside Maid's Room.

## Beverlywood - IN ESCROW!



**1929 Hillsboro Avenue** \$1,995,000  
3 Bed / 2 Bath / Den 2,303 Sq. Ft., 7,771 Sq. Ft. Lot

A sprawling, mid-century home, this house is surrounded by foliage and steeped in character. Crown moldings, bay windows and wainscoting are just a few of the adornments that bring personality to the home. The kitchen and breakfast nook are bright and cheerful yet updates are most likely needed to bring it up to today's standard of luxury living. This home offers spacious bedrooms, huge laundry room with access to the backyard, a cozy den with decorative fireplace, wet bar and built-ins. The structure of this grand family home is strong and its layout is well suited for today's active family. A bit of vision and handful of cosmetic alterations will restore this much loved home to its natural grace and beauty.



# Cheviot Hills happenings

## – Westside Stories –

By Michael Harris

Labor Day is not just the end of Summer. It is a day intended to honor the achievements and contribution of workers to society. It became a national holiday in 1894 because of the unrest and riots which had developed in the mid 19th century as a result of the union movement of the time. In the mid to late 19th century factories and mines exploited child labor, as well as struggling citizens, and immigrants. They were working in unsafe conditions for low

wages and for unregulated hours. To better their working lives unions began to protest the poor conditions, hours, and pay. The result was massive unrest, strikes, and violence to seek better lives for the workers. In response to the civic upheaval and to repair ties with labor Grover Cleveland proclaimed Labor Day as a federal holiday. The West Side may see it as the day after which it is no longer appropriate to wear white summer clothes, but the civic unrest which was the impetus that created Labor Day is still a force to be reckoned with.




*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, just search for Westside Stories by Michael Harris.*

## HIGH HOLY DAYS

By Ben Lee

If you are looking for a little spiritual guidance during the upcoming Jewish holidays, look no further than your home computer. Temple Isaiah is providing services- free of charge and open to the public regardless of whether or not you are members. Please see this chart for a schedule of events. For links or login information head to [templeisaiah.com/highholydays](http://templeisaiah.com/highholydays) or call 310-277-2772 to learn more.

HIGH HOLY DAYS	<b>ROSH HASHANAH</b> <b>SEPTEMBER 18 TO 20</b>	<b>ROSH HASHANAH EVE</b> Friday, September 18  5pm - Begin the Holiday with Isaiah clergy & an Erev Rosh Hashanah Seder	<b>ROSH HASHANAH</b> Saturday, September 19  9am - Family Service 10:30am - Adult Service 11:45am - Torah Service 12:30pm - Teen Service 1:30pm - Virtual Tashlich Ritual	<b>ROSH HASHANAH DAY 2</b> Sunday, September 20  10:30am - Rosh Hashanah Day 2 Service
	<b>YOM KIPPUR</b> <b>SEPTEMBER 27 TO 28</b>	<b>KOL NIDRE</b> Sunday, September 27  7:30pm - Kol Nidre Service	<b>YOM KIPPUR</b> Monday, September 28  9am - Family Service 10:30am - Adult Service 11:45am - Torah Service 1:30pm - Yizkor 3pm - Teen Service 4:30pm - Afternoon Speaker 5:45pm - Neilah	 High Holy Days 2020/5781

## – RAFFLE –

By Ben Lee

Thank you to all who entered the \$50 gift card raffle to Postmates. Congratulations to Margaret Neary! You are the lucky winner this month. To all those who entered but didn't win this time, don't worry as there is always another raffle around the corner. In the spirit of kids returning to on-line school, we are offering a \$50 gift card to Children's Book World

on Pico. You can order books from their website and they will provide contact-free, parking lot pickup or can ship directly to your home. To enter the raffle, please email: [ben@benleeproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com) and write "BOOK" in the subject line. That's it! We will pick a winner at random at the end of the month. Good luck and congrats, again, to Margaret for winning last month's raffle to Postmates.

