



# Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world



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# May Old Acquaintance Be Forgot



By Ben Lee

Last month I reflected upon how different Thanksgiving 2020 would be, essentially dipping into self-pity since it really is my favorite holiday of the year. Looking toward the December holidays, though, feels slightly less daunting. Growing up, my family didn't have many annual traditions when it came to celebrating either Christmas or Chanukah. Food and a few casual parties were involved, of course, but other than that, my parents had a "take it or leave it," attitude when it came to doing the same thing year after year. We didn't wait for specific days to exchange presents: if one of them saw something they thought my brother or I would like, they would buy it and give it the same day instead of waiting. Some years we'd pick up and travel instead of staying home and sometimes during the college years, my parents would do their thing and my brother and I would do what we wanted. It wasn't until I married and had children of my own did all of that change. My wife is a steadfast traditionalist when it comes to the holidays and she likes making the same foods she grew up with, exchanging gifts on the actual

days for which they were intended and celebrating with all the family and friends she's known forever. For the last few years, I managed to convince her to go on a family vacation and even though she agreed, she did so rather begrudgingly. Not that she doesn't enjoy traveling, but going anywhere around Christmastime is always more chaotic and crowded and being gone a week or two beforehand undoubtedly means that everything holiday-related still has to get done, just earlier and with a heightened sense of stress and urgency. But this small compromise, as it were, to get out of town for a bit, has been rather successful. Last year we traveled to Mexico with my in-laws, remembering to pack the boys' presents along with our passports. The year before that we found ourselves zip lining over the jungles of Costa Rica, returning to Los Angeles on December 23rd and then scrambling to host a family brunch two days later. Going to Costco the day before Christmas to find lox is no easy feat. The parking lot alone is enough to send any sane person crazy.

The one December holiday we all can agree on that is way too important to miss is New Year's Eve. This is one event that all five family members invite

whoever we want to come over and ring in the new year. Friends we might not see too often during the other months know that on December 31, it's time to put on some over-the-top fancy clothes and start dancing. The tradition I grew up with that we still continue to honor is a few minutes before 12, everyone runs outside holding pots and lids and pans and spoons and at the stroke of midnight, we ring in the new year with loud banging of these pots and pans (sorry, neighbors). Adding to that legendary and euphoric tradition of welcoming the new year is a relatively new addition that our boys started several years ago: after banging the pots and pans, they jump into the pool with all their clothes on and now most of their friends do, too. New Year's Eve in our house is no joke. We do not mess around.

Of course none of that will happen this year unless Covid magically disappears. There will definitely be no pre-holiday international travel or any big parties to usher in 2021. But accepting that what is different is now what we are pretty good at doing. We've managed to somewhat adapt to all other changes this year and December is no different. And as much as I'll miss the

idea of a big, overblown, chaotic, messy party, there's a part of me that is looking forward to abandoning all the stress that comes with the holiday season and hunkering down at home. Yes it will be quiet and subdued and I absolutely miss seeing our extended family and friends but there's also something rather relaxing at the thought of doing nothing, too.

The one thing that remains the same though, despite all that is different this year, is the enduring gratefulness I feel for remaining healthy. I know not everyone can say the same and my heart goes out to you if you or one of your loved ones have suffered from either Covid or any pandemic-related issues. We have all been stretched to our limits this year emotionally, physically and possibly financially. If you have had kids home from school then you have likely suffered some mental breakdowns, too. I sincerely hope 2021 is a better year for all of us and a cure to Covid comes soon. If there is anything you may need, either real estate related or otherwise, please know as a neighbor and friend that I am always here for you.

Hope you manage to have a festive holiday season and cheers to a very happy and healthy new year!

# My featured listings

BEN LEE PROPERTIES

## Cheviot Hills - COMING SOON!

### NEW CONSTRUCTION!



### 3062 Earlmor Dr 6 Bed / 9 Bath \$6,995,000

A magnificent brand new construction on one of the most coveted streets in the Country Club Estates section of Cheviot Hills, this astounding 6 bedroom/9 bathroom home is a true sight to behold. Unique design flourishes really set this traditional style home apart from the pack and it manages to feel warm and intimate despite it's vast 7,000 + square foot size. Stone entry leads to a hard wood open floor plan that allows a breezy flow from room to room. A Butler's pantry connects the formal living room and formal dining to the ultra modern kitchen- a sleek vision in immaculate white. Even the custom Viking appliances have been finished in white for an overall clean, polished look.

The kitchen offers two center islands with designer pendants, two dishwashers, double-sized refrigerator, beverage fridge and banquet seating in the breakfast nook. This level of the house also includes a Great Room with fireplace, guest room, private office and French Doors that lead to the backyard. Take the elevator or stairs to the subterranean level and marvel at the luxurious screening room, wine cellar and gym. There's also a private guest room suite with patio allowing the space to be basked in light. The second story of the home is where you'll find the family's sleeping quarters: exceptionally large bedrooms all en suite with generous closets, balconies and sophisticatedly decorated bathrooms.

The Master Bedroom retreat offers a romantic fire place, cozy seating area, enormous walk in closet and a bathroom with free standing tub, brass fixtures and toilet room. The beautiful backyard of this fabulous home is an entertainer's dreamscape: flat expanse of grass, swimming pool with Jacuzzi, built in barbeque, a pergola covered patio and sociable fire pit. Tall hedging surrounding the area provides absolute privacy. Additional features include: chutes to the laundry room, multiple skylights, immense walk-in pantry, elevator and masterful craftsmanship unlike any other home currently on the market today. See to believe!

### Beverlywood - COMING SOON!



**9320 Oakmore Rd** \$3,995,000  
6 Bed / 4.5 Bath

### Cheviot Hills - NEW LISTING!



**9906 Girla Way** \$2,495,000  
3 Bed / 3 Bath 2,481 Sq. Ft., 10,139 Sq. Ft. Lot

### Cheviot Hills - FOR LEASE!



**2839 Medill Pl** \$11,000 Per/Mo.  
5 Bed / 4 Bath 3,703 Sq. Ft., 7,953 Sq. Ft. Lot

# Cheviot Hills happenings

## Westside Stories

By Michael Harris

Soon Christmas, Hannukah and Kwanza will be upon us. These are all mid-winter celebrations which have as their antecedents traditional and ancient festivals welcoming the Winter solstice. The Western world tradition owes its roots to Saturnalia an ancient Roman solstice celebration dedicated to Saturn the God of agriculture and time. Saturnalia was a week long party from December 17 to December 24.

It featured drinking, feasting, and the exchange of gifts. However, the celebration of the winter solstice was not limited to ancient Rome. There were similar feast days and celebrations in Japan, China, India, Peru, Scandinavia and among the Hopi in the south western American continent. So our celebrations are but a reflection of a tradition that has its roots in ancient times as the winter solstice starts the clock toward warmer days.



*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.*



## Flowers for a Cause

By Ben Lee

If you are in need of some beautiful flowers to decorate your holiday table or just to bring some cheer to your home, look no further than the Flower Truck LA and toy drive benefitting a truly worthy charity: United in Harmony. The outdoor event will take place on December 6th from 12:30-2:30 in Cheviot Hills. Shop for beautiful, freshly cut flowers for yourself and bring a new, unwrapped toy to brighten a 7-12 year old's holiday season. United in Harmony is an award winning charitable organization that provides summer and winter camp experiences for underserved children in Los Angeles. These boys and

girls are given a sleeping bag, clothes and a backpack full of supplies and then get to experience the joy of sleep away camp, totally free of charge. While the usual camp experience has been altered due to Covid precautions, United in Harmony still provides tutoring and additional services throughout the year and has offered a virtual camp experience via Zoom. A precise location for this December event wasn't secured as of press time so feel free to send me an email ([ben@benleeproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com)) and by the time you're reading this, I'll be able to tell you exactly where the flowers/toy drive will be! Thank you for supporting this wonderful organization.

## HOLIDAY GIFT

By Ben Lee

Did you receive your holiday gift from Ben Lee Properties? In honor of one of the spiciest years of all time, we were happy to give a pair of state-of-the-art salt and pepper shakers to each and every house in the neighborhood. As attractive as they are functional, we hope these handy helpers

bring a dash of flavor and extra pinch of seasoning to your holiday season. If for some reason your house was accidentally skipped or if you would maybe like an extra set, we have extras so please reach out and let me know-happy to drop one off to you: [ben@benleeproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com) or give me a call: 310-704-6580 and let me know. Thanks and happy holiday cooking!



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