



Cheviot Hills

The greatest neighborhood in the world

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What Makes a Great Neighborhood?

By Ben Lee

I think about residential real estate all the time and have strong feelings about what elements contribute to creating a terrific house. Lately, however, I've been thinking a lot about neighborhoods in general and the components that go into making them great. It goes without saying that kind and thoughtful residents are the most important element, so right off the bat we get an A+. Beyond that, though, having excellent nearby schools is crucial. Overland and Westwood Charter are top-notch and I was happy to report Castle Heights has climbed in the rankings on the Great Schools website (see the back page of this newsletter for more on that). Another factor that contributes to making a neighborhood special is its stores and restaurants. It's supremely frustrating seeing the former Westside Pavilion sitting empty when we were originally promised a bustling mixed-use building that would be occupied by Google and a mixture of shops/dining establishments on the street level of the building. This current cavernous, empty shell is not fulfilling neighbors' once high expectations of how the space would be used.

As far as shops and restaurants go, we're getting there but could definitely use many more options. I recently tried out the new Italian eatery on Pico that took over where Louise's used to be. It's called Vicini and is run/operated by Michelin-star chef Lucio Bedon. I wasn't familiar with his work but was excited to try a new place on the block. Not only was the food delicious but the restaurant was so down to earth and approachable, there were families having an early dinner with babies. It wasn't snooty or overpriced and my friends and I couldn't help but extend our compliments to the chef. At the end of our meal, a very friendly and kind Mr. Bedon came out to say hello and treat us to a round of wine to go with our dessert. He told us that after decades working at fine dining establishments in the area, he was happy to come home again. We were equally happy knowing a special new restaurant was within walking distance.

Not everyone in a neighborhood will agree about everything. There has been a great deal of controversy of late over a few proposed structures being built. Namely the interim housing for the homeless on the vacant parking lot on Pico/Midvale; the high density/low-income housing project where Islands used to be and the rumored Dollar Tree store replacing Face Values. Some residents are worried about the homeless being sheltered so close to their homes and are concerned about safety. The same could be said for the Dollar Tree which is a store often associated with thefts and crime. Some say the Kelton project will bring about increased traffic and general headaches for the area without any substantial payoffs for the neighbors.

I recently attended an event at which our Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky spoke about these as well as other matters facing our community. A handful of angry constituents were protesting outside, understandably upset about some of the decisions Katy has made and fearful of the impacts they'll have on the neighborhood. I attended with an open mind, hoping to get more information directly from the source. Katy acknowledged the protestors and understood their anger. She has met with many of them over the last few months and addressed their concerns pertaining to the homeless shelter. Katie said the toughest part of her job is figuring out, "...how to satisfy as many people as possible while still doing the right thing." She explained to the folks gathered inside that there will be approximately 32 beds that will help get unhoused individuals off the

street and into a shelter. Businesses and residents alike prefer to see them indoors vs. on the streets and this provides a temporary solution to a persistent problem. Partnering with LA Family Housing, no one with severe mental illness will be admitted, there'll be 24-hour security, increased police presence and a host of other accommodations. The architecture and landscaping of the facility promises to seamlessly blend into the backdrop of the boulevard.

Katy's office has zero control over the mixed use housing build on Kelton or what businesses lease existing buildings (ie Dollar Tree). She stressed her priorities during this first year on the job, hoping to address: 1. homelessness 2. quality of life/public safety and 3. Climate and sustainability. There is an earnestness and intelligence to Katie that I appreciate and am willing to give her a chance to address these important issues facing our community. She is just as frustrated as residents by the slow, snail's pace of the city in terms of getting anything substantial done. Waiting 7 years to get a sidewalk fixed or 10 years to get a curb painted blue if you're handicapped is unacceptable! She hopes by hiring more people, things will get done faster but no one (including our elected officials) is holding our collective breath.

But just as important as working expediently is the ability to hear and understand those protesting her actions and decisions; because these people are just fighting for the good of our neighborhood, too. It makes me relieved to just sell houses in the area instead of ever running for public office. No matter what you try to do, you can't please everyone and some days you probably can't please anyone! It's clearly a tough and often thankless job no matter what you do.

In the end, we all just want a safe, harmonious, and nice place to live. We want our property values to increase and not worry too much about danger or crime when we



Councilwoman Katy Yaroslavsky

go to bed at night. We are lucky that our neighborhood is already great but the goal is to maintain and even build upon its beauty, charm and character. If that starts with supporting our local schools and patronizing fledgling restaurants and new businesses, I believe we are all up to the challenge. And if it means banding together to fight for the changes we want to see, that's equally important, too. Here's to you, neighbors. Let's make it a great October!



Ben with Michelin-star Chef Lucio Bedon

My featured listings

Cheviot Hills – NEW LISTINGS!



10542 Butterfield Rd. - \$2,349,000

3 Beds/2.5 Bath 2,000 Sq. Ft., 5,753 Sq. Ft. Lot

This idyllic Spanish Style, single story, recently remodeled home in Prime Cheviot Hills offers everything you could want! On a friendly street in the Overland Elementary School district, this picturesque home is brimming with style. Brand new hardwood floors, new interior/exterior paint, oversized plate glass windows, brick fireplace, traditional archway leading to the formal dining room with Crown moldings and dramatic Cathedral ceilings in the formal living room. The beautiful, spacious kitchen that was fully remodeled just last year is a vision in white punctuated by brass fixtures, blue patterned Spanish tile backsplash and stainless appliances. Natural light basks the entire home in sunlight. There are sliding French Doors in the den/family room that lead to the backyard. Each of the bedrooms are generously sized, the Primary Bedroom especially large with enormous his/her closets and attached bathroom. Additional French Doors open from the Primary Bedroom to the backyard, too. The private yard, surrounded by trees, offers drought resistant grass covering as well as patio space for outside dining. Additional features include: side by side washer/dryer, mature Palm trees, an abundance of storage, security gate and a detached 2-car garage. Visit this delightful home today as it's not likely to be on the market for long.

Cheviot Hills – FOR SALE!



3227 Shelby Drive - \$4,595,000

4 Beds/4.5 Bath 3,875 Sq. Ft., 10,168 Sq. Ft. Lot

This is a one-of-a-kind, gorgeous home that is unlike anything on the market today. A sophisticated home with city views in Cheviot Hills has been professionally designed for seamless indoor/outdoor entertaining. Built within the last five years, every area of the home is ready for its closeup. High ceilings with skylights bask the entire home in natural light. Built-ins and clean, vast wall space beckon for artwork at every turn. The open living room with modern fireplace, formal dining room, and an exquisite gourmet kitchen create a casual yet elegant backdrop and flow. The impressive 10,000+ sq ft backyard is completely hugged by tall privacy hedges, the swimming pool, hot-tub, sport court, skateboarding ramp, cascading bougainvillea, firepit, multiple seating areas, and a custom four-person sauna create the feeling of a luxury resort. Upstairs are three more spacious bedrooms that each offer their own bathrooms, well-sized closets, and balconies with far-reaching views. The Master Bedroom suite overlooks the backyard and offers an enormous walk-in closet and tastefully done bathroom with large shower and soaking tub. Additional features include: surround sound, security cameras, keyless entry, and two car garage with additional attached rooms for ample storage and a gym or office.

Cheviot Hills – FOR SALE!



3316 Shelby Drive - \$2,849,000

4 Beds/4.5 Bath 2,586 Sq. Ft., 5,678 Sq. Ft. Lot

Beautifully Remodeled Pool Home in Cheviot Hills! Very spacious, open floor plan with plenty of natural light shining in every room. Perfect for a family and entertaining with amazing indoor-outdoor living as THREE large 10-foot wide, glass bifold doors completely open up and expand your living spaces. The highlight of your primary suite is the gorgeous custom bathroom that is more like your private spa retreat as it features a sauna, free-standing tub, large rain shower with jets, double-vanity, and marble tile throughout. Each spacious bedroom has their privacy as well with a custom bathroom for each bedroom. This home has been beautifully renovated with meticulous attention to detail and countless great features which include a second primary bedroom, tons of storage, wide-plank hardwood floors, high ceilings, recessed lights, skylight, a large balcony and 2 Juliet balconies, 4 parking spaces, 2 HVAC systems, 9 olive trees, steam dryer, and more

Santa Monica – IN ESCROW!



1027 Ashland Ave - \$2,495,000

3 Beds/2 Bath 1,518 Sq. Ft., 8,528 Sq. Ft. R2 Lot

Stunning like-new remodel in a quaint pocket of Santa Monica's Sunset Park, mere blocks from the beach and moments from the shops and restaurants of Ocean Park Boulevard and Main Street. Exquisite 3 bedroom/2 bathroom, 1,518 sq ft home on a MASSIVE R2 8,528 sq ft lot! Beautifully designed and inspired by the sand and shore, the home boasts beachy hardwood floors, colorful blue accents, bright and airy bedrooms with large closets. French doors lead to the enormous backyard and allow natural light to flood the interior space. The open kitchen has Frigidaire stainless steel appliances, walk-in pantry, banquette seating and extensive storage. The primary suite features a large walk-in closet and beautiful bathroom with sunken tub. This lot is so large, and favorable zoning provides the rare opportunity to BUILD UNITS OR ADDITIONAL STRUCTURES behind the main house with the possibility to subdivide. A must see!

Cheviot Hills happenings

Hillcrest Country Club



By Ben Lee

Most of us are familiar with (or our backyards face) the Hillcrest Country Club. What was considered the first predominantly Jewish country club on the Westside, Hillcrest was created in the early 1920s by four Jewish men who were denied entry into the Los Angeles Country Club either because of their occupations or religion. Soon after opening its doors, Hillcrest hosted a variety of golf tournaments including the Los Angeles Open, a stop on the national PGA tour. Designed to attract prominent Hollywood luminaries, Hillcrest has been home to famous actors and studio heads including Milton Berle, George Burns, Groucho Marx, Louis B. Mayer

and Jack Warner, Adolph Zukor and Samuel Goldwyn. Not wanting to mimic the exclusive practices held at other clubs, Hillcrest admitted non-Jews, too, its first being Danny Thomas followed by Jack Lemmon and Sidney Poitier. Today, over 100 years since it opened its doors, Hillcrest Country Club is still very much in high demand and enjoyed by golfers, party-hosts and families and friends looking to spend time together. Many non-members particularly enjoy its annual fireworks display on the 4th of July. To read more about other Westside landmarks and points of interest, check out my father-in-law's book: More Westside Stories which can be found by contacting his brother and publisher Jeff Harris: hrrmg@mac.com

How Well Do You Spell?

By Ben Lee

Regardless of how you feel about spelling, do yourself a favor and see Hamilton High's upcoming performance of the 25th Annual Putnam Spelling Bee.

It's an energetic, sweet piece of musical theater that is fun for the whole family. Performances will be November 2-4 and you can purchase tickets via the Hamilton website: <https://www.hamiltonmusic.org/> Hope to see you there!

RAFFLE

By Ben Lee

Thank you to all who entered to win a sample box from the Very Best Cookie in the Whole World shop on Robertson. Congratulations go to: Elektra Grant! I hope you enjoy and I expect you'll agree they really are the very best cookies in the world. This month we are offering a \$100 gift card to the new Italian restaurant I mentioned visiting and enjoying on Pico: Vicini. To enter, please



send an email to: ben@benleeproperties.com and write VICINI in the subject line. That's it! We'll notify the winner at the end of the month. Good luck!

High Marks for Castle Heights



By Ben Lee

Our treasured neighborhood gem of a school (and my kids' alma mater), Castle Heights Elementary, has made great strides in recent years, earning a coveted 9 out of 10 rating on GreatSchools.org! Rising far above average in test scores, academic progress, and equity measures, Castle Heights is now recognized as one of the best public elementary schools in Los Angeles. Having a top-ranked and desirable public school in our own backyard is a benefit for the entire neighborhood and is significantly advantageous for our property values. According to the New York Times, "Economists have estimated that within neighborhoods, a 5 percent improvement in test scores can raise [home] prices by 2.5 percent." So, even

if you don't have an elementary school aged child, it helps your home's value to support your local school. And it feels good knowing your money is truly needed and appreciated. Current CHES parents are reaching out to ask neighbors, past alumni, future families, to invest in the continued success of Castle Heights Elementary. Since LAUSD does not fully fund the essential programs that help make Castle Heights great (like art, PE, science, a librarian, learning garden, coding, and teachers' aides), the school depends on fundraising to sustain these valuable programs. If you would like to learn more about this fabulous school, make a tax-deductible donation (bit.ly/chesdonate), purchase a corporate banner, set up a tour, etc. I encourage you to visit Castle Heights' website: <https://www.castleheightselementary.org/>.

Congratulations!

By Ben Lee

We held a raffle last month during our neighborhood ice cream party and the winner of a brand new pair of Bose headphones is Castle Heights resident Eric Becker (pictured here with me and his mom Randi). Congratulations, Eric and hope you enjoy your new headphones. Thanks, everyone for entering the raffle and looking forward to seeing you at our next ice cream party



Ladies' Wine Night

D.L. RHEIN

By Lilli Lee

It's not too late to attend October's Neighborhood Ladies' Wine Night! Deborah Rhein as graciously offered to host at her beautiful store on Motor (DL Rhein) on Thursday, October 26 from 7-9pm and everyone is invited. Not only can you get a head start on holiday shopping but it's a lovely excuse to get out of the house, meet some new neighbors and connect with old friends you may not have seen in a while. Light refreshments will be provided and you are guaranteed to have a great time. Please send me an email if you would like to be added to the list and receive information about this as well as future gatherings. If you would like to host an upcoming Wine Night (thanks in advance!), please let me know that, too: lillijlee@yahoo.com or 310-650-7735.