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Rancho Park



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What a (college) trip!

By Ben Lee

On the global stage, California is often the butt of many jokes: they ridicule our lack of seasons, lack of culture, lack of deep thinkers (all of these, might I add, are categorically untrue!). There may be a lot for everyone to make fun of, however, the one thing they absolutely can not disparage is our undisputed, top-notch chain of public colleges. Is there another state that can boast having the top one and two rated public universities in the whole country? Berkeley and UCLA may dominate those two spots but the rest of the UCs located up and down the coast are just as strong in their respective fields. And if you're a California resident, there is no denying the cost effectiveness of choosing one of these schools.

Hundreds of thousands of students from all over the world apply to attend one of the UC campuses and our current High School senior is no exception. Since he's in that calm moment in between submitting applications and receiving decisions, we figured a 3-day weekend was the perfect excuse to take a little road trip and see firsthand what's so great about the UC system.

We skipped the tour of UCLA primarily because between all the boys having attended Geffen Academy at UCLA, Spencer's older brother being a current Sophomore, Spencer's mom a proud alumni and our family's annual pilgrimage to UCLA Family Camp, it's fair to say we've seen that campus before. So, after packing the car full of snacks and suitcases, we hopped on the 405, bypassed Westwood and kept driving north. Spencer had already seen UCSB a few months prior (loved it) and while it's got my vote for its proximity to great surfing, we skipped seeing it again and

drove farther up the coast until we arrived at our official first stop: UC Santa Cruz.

Of our three boys, it's fair to say Spencer is the most taken with natural beauty and it's hard to find a prettier campus. It's so densely forested with majestic, towering trees we found ourselves speaking in hushed, muted tones as if we were in some kind of nature reserve and didn't want to disturb the animals in their natural habitat. Pathways that resembled walking trails wind to and from dorms and classes. We didn't notice any banana slugs but were so excited to see wild turkeys wandering around. There were even a few deer grazing on an open field. According to our friend and tour guide Bianca (a current junior we've known since she was a Castle Heights' second grader) the school is heavily geared toward computer science majors these days which is ironic given how the lush surroundings seem more inclined to inspire wood-nymph poetry than building metaverses. However, why not create code amongst the trees? Everyone, even the computer fans amongst us, can appreciate a pretty view.

The next morning, we said goodbye to our friend Bianca and headed east. About two hours later we hit our next destination. While located only 15 minutes from Sacramento, we opted to pass on an unscheduled visit to our state's capitol and instead drive straight to UC Davis. This is one campus that no one in my family has ever seen. We have a handful of friends who are alumni and each one of them has said that they loved attending this school. We had also heard it's so much more than vast, dusty fields and cow pastures which proved to be very true! While we were very happy to see some cows, we were pleasantly surprised by how pretty this campus is.

It's vast and flat, anchored by a beautiful grassy quad and punctuated by stately oak trees. There are whimsical statues peppering the landscape and even a small lake that gently rolls through a part of the campus. It prides itself on being bike-able and sure enough there were hundreds of bicycles around which made for a quieter, more peaceful co-existence with pedestrians than motorized Birds or scooters. Both Santa Cruz and Davis are situated in adorable, casual and approachable towns that seem to cater to and embrace the college students who live there. When Davis kids need a little more oomph to their evenings, Sac (Sacramento) is just a quick Uber ride away.

On the third and final day of our college tour, we journeyed to the granddaddy of all UC campuses, Cal Berkeley! Just an hour from Davis yet a whole world away, the surrounding town is not for the faint of heart. Our city kids were nonplussed; however, I imagine students coming from smaller areas might be shocked to see the grittier, more graffitied buildings that were missing from the college towns at our previous two stops. It was almost like the school was saying: you're in the big leagues now. This is serious!

When I was a High School senior, I narrowed down my acceptances and ultimately had to pick between two schools: Berkeley and Wesleyan. After much deliberation I ended up choosing Wesleyan but part of me always regretted it. Berkeley is undeniably a fantastic school and so deeply steeped in tradition, not to mention its illustrious alumni that have passed through its halls. So many accomplished individuals, in fact, they even have a row of parking spaces designated with signs that say: NL Parking Only. That's right- if you are a

Nobel Laureate, they give you a prime spot right on campus. I loved the stately architecture, the beautiful surroundings and studious atmosphere. I also love that their stadium is attached to campus; so supporting the Bears means students don't have to board a bus and travel an hour to their equivalent of the Rose Bowl. They can walk to the 50 yard line and then back home again after winning the game.

We couldn't leave Northern California without a quick Fisherman's Wharf lunch in San Francisco but then it was time to hit the road again and return to Los Angeles. A quick 5 or 6 hours in the car and we were back in Cheviot Hills. We'll pick another time to visit the southern campuses (I vote for UC San Diego but again, I am always biased toward possible surf spots. Also, not sure my vote counts for too much). Then await with bated breath the decisions from these wonderful schools. I'm hoping he has good luck in that regard and finds himself in the enviable position of having to choose between some great California Universities.

So, to the naysayers: feel free to say what you want about all the negatives facing our state: housing is expensive, taxes are high, there's crime, a homeless problem, traffic, smog, congestion...the list goes on and on. But one thing you can say for certain is: our state offers a multitude of phenomenal universities. In fact, one in particular happens to be only a stone's throw away. It has a great nearby surfing spot for when dad comes to visit and offers easy access to a home cooked meal and working washer/dryers for weekend laundry. Let's be honest, the rest of the schools are fine but venturing out of the city is highly overrated. Let's go, Bruins!!

My featured listings



Cheviot Hills – NEW LISTING!

This idyllic Spanish Style, single story, recently remodeled home in Prime Cheviot Hills offers everything you could want! 3 bedroom/2.5 bath 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.

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

3 Beds / 2.5 Bath, 2,158 Sq. Ft., 5,755 Sq. Ft. Lot



Beverlywood – NEW LISTING!

A stunning, corner lot home in prime Beverlywood! Comfortable, inviting and warm with a resort-like pool, this 3 bedroom/3 bath home is traditional in style, has been thoroughly updated and is turnkey ready for its next family. Hardwood floors, high vaulted ceilings, crown moldings, and fanciful Wainscoting are just a few of the characteristics that add personality to this enviable property. Just over 2,000 square feet, there's a bright and spacious family room, formal living room with fireplace, formal dining room, and a lovely kitchen that boasts stainless appliances, granite countertops and an abundance of cherry wood custom cabinetry. The bedrooms are each generous in size with large closets and the Primary Bedroom has an enormous walk-in closet with glass doors that open to the vast and private backyard. Here you'll find a pergola built over an entertaining patio space, a flat expanse of drought resistant grass and the aforementioned beautiful swimming pool, hot tub and waterfall. Additional features include: 2 car detached garage, gated long driveway, recessed lighting, lovely landscaping, attic storage and security system. Located on a 6956 sq ft lot in the coveted Canfield Elementary school district and just a brisk, quick walk to the restaurants and religious institutions of Pico, this picturesque house is ready to welcome its next family home.

9701 Oakmore Rd. - \$2,495,000

3 Beds / 3 Bath, 2,086 Sq. Ft., 6,920 Sq. Ft. Lot



Beverlywood – NEW LISTING!

Imagine the possibilities! A once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform this 3 bedroom/3 bath, 1998 square foot home situated on a flat, corner 6766 sq ft lot in a prime location in Beverlywood. Traditional style with hardwood floors throughout. Great sense of flow between rooms, the formal living room as a fireplace and there's a wet bar in the den. Sliding glass doors open to the pergola covered patio and backyard, highlighted by an expansive swimming pool. With ample storage, generously sized bedrooms, separate laundry room and lady's dressing room with vanity, this is an exciting chance to update this much-loved home and make it your own!

9700 Lockford Street - \$2,195,000

3 Beds / 3 Bath, 1,998 Sq. Ft., 6,766 Sq. Ft. Lot



Mid City – FABULOUS 4 UNIT PROPERTY!

Fabulous 4 unit property, perfect for an owner/user! This 4plex has one duplex and two detached houses. 4562/4564 18th street is the duplex and 1810 and 1812 Vineyard are 2 spacious SFR homes. The duplex offers multiple parking spaces. The other two units stand alone each with their own driveways and 2 car parking. 1812 Vineyard Ave is a 3br + 1ba house, and 1810 Vineyard Ave is a 2br + 1ba house. 1810 Vineyard is currently vacant. The vacant house can be toured, but inspection of occupied units with accepted offer only. Buyer to complete their own due diligence and satisfy themselves with regard to square footage, estimated expenses, and pro forma rental rates. All Pro forma rental rates are based on VPS for the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA). Listing may qualify for FHA 5% down!

1810 Vineyard Avenue - \$1,699,000

11 Beds / 5 Bath, 4,802 Sq. Ft.

Rancho Park happenings

Fiddler On The Roof

By Ben Lee

If I were a rich man and whether it's performed at sunrise or sunset, I know a great tradition when I see one and that is Hamilton High School's production of the iconic theater classic: Fiddler on the Roof! Mark your calendar as tickets go on sale starting March 21 for performances that will take place the 3rd and 4th weekends in April. Interestingly, the new theater director at Hamilton, Jenny Gordon, was raised on this

show. Her father played Tevye in 17 professional productions. Her mom played one of the daughters and Ms. Gordon herself played a variety of children's roles. "There's a lot of discord and unfortunately seems to be an antisemitic strain going on in the world right now," explains Gordon. "And because of that, this show is very important for me to do at this school in particular. I think there needs to be some education about the Jewish culture and Jewish religion here." But you don't have to be Jewish to appreciate the show,

in fact, quite the opposite. Says Gordon, "The beauty of Fiddler is it's a universal story of family, tradition, of change, of learning how to let go of ideals that you hold so tightly when the world around you is changing. How do you come to terms with that?" And with a musical score that will have you humming songs for days, it's a terrific show that no doubt you'll enjoy. You can visit: hamiltonmusic.org/events/ to buy tickets.

I look forward to seeing you there!



CO-ED WINE NIGHT AT VICINI



By Ben Lee

It's not too late to join your friends and neighbors at a super special co-ed Wine Night at Vicini Restaurant (located at 10645 W. Pico Blvd)! On Thursday, March 14 from 7-9pm, there'll be delicious bites and drinks courtesy of chef Lucio Bedon and his wife Jennifer. If you haven't tried this

fabulous new local restaurant, do yourself a favor and seize the opportunity to try it out while meeting some new people from around the neighborhood. Free of charge but space is limited so if you want to be included, please call, text or email me: ben@benleeproperties.com or 310-704-6580. It promises to be a very fun evening and I hope you'll join us.

Beverlywood On The Up And Up

By Ben Lee

I was happy when a journalist from the Wall Street Journal reached out to me last month, needing a neighborhood expert's opinion on the thriving real estate market in Beverlywood.

I was quoted a few times, offering my take on why there's such a competitive market in this area and why Beverlywood is having its moment in the sun.

If you'd like to read the whole thing, you can access the article in its entirety at <http://bit.ly/BenLeeProperties>, however if you want to google search my name and Beverlywood, the article was picked up by a handful of other publications including the Daily Mail and MSN.com. It's titled: Why the Heck is Everyone Moving to Beverlywood? And it was written by Jessica Flint. Let me know what you think!

