

# WHY LOVE L.A.

On the topic of Los Angeles, writer D.H. Lawrence sniffed, "I wouldn't want to live here, but a stay here rather amuses me. It's a sort of crazy-sensible." A century after that back-handed compliment, seven locals spread across the county agree that the only thing better than visiting is staying. They tell why they love where they live, why you should check out their 'hoods, and favorite spots that you'd be crazy to miss.

BY KATIE McCARTHY



## GREG KATZ | SILVER LAKE

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usic surrounds Greg Katz. An award-winning law journalist turned music-industry consultant, Katz works on tunes by day and by night: The Silver Lake resident plays bass and sings in LA Font, an emerging rock quartet. And nights when he's not playing at the clubs on L.A.'s Eastside, he's usually in the audience. "I'm a musician, I've always been a musician, and I work in music, and [the Eastside] is where all the music energy is. Pretty much everything that is great that comes out of L.A. that's not mainstream pop music comes from that little corridor." In addition to the creative spirit found in Silver Lake and surrounding neighborhoods such as Echo Park and Los Feliz, the convenience factor of the area is what Katz appreciates. "You can walk out of your house and go do 10 fun things without needing to drive," he enthuses. For him, those "fun things" might include hitting a bookstore, grabbing a cup of artisan coffee or sharing a vegetarian dinner with his girlfriend, Traci. He says, "I'm always proud to show off to people we're not all sitting in traffic here. Some of us are having fun and exploring the things that we love, and we're not doing it from behind the wheel on the freeway."

**ORIGAMI VINYL** (Pictured.) "It's such a welcoming space, and for someone like me who is deeply emotionally invested in music, to go there and find whoever's working at the counter and whoever's shopping are other people who have also the same emotional investment in music—that is a sort of community thing that I really love."

**THE ECHO** "The Echo Park and Silver Lake clubs ... are really the heart of music in Los Angeles."

**FLORE VEGAN** "I'm a vegetarian, so I'm always hitting up vegetarian places. Right in my neighborhood is Flore, which is a great vegan diner."

**MASA + TWO BOOTS PIZZA** "The other great thing about being in a neighborhood with a lot of other vegetarians and vegans is that pretty much every restaurant has some mouthwatering options. Masa and Two Boots in Echo Park both have really ridiculously good vegan pizza."

**FORAGE** "A great place if you want vegetables. They just

do great asparagus, great salad, great various vegetable-based things—not like vegetarian cuisine, not like tofu and tempeh and things like that, but just tasty vegetables."

**INTELLIGENTSIA COFFEE & TEA** "Of course Intelligentsia is the best coffee."

**MORNINGS NIGHTS** "For coffee that's cheap and not a scene, there's Mornings Nights in Silver Lake in Sunset Junction, which everyone calls Julie's because the owner's name is Julie."

**STORIES** "A cool bookstore. It's a great hang, too, and one of those places where you'll always see somebody else you know no matter what time you go in there."

**OK** "A lot of times when it's like '\$%#@#, I need to get someone a gift!' I end up at OK."

### WHERE TO GO

- The Echo** 1822 W. Sunset Blvd., Echo Park, 213.413.8200
- Flore Vegan** 3818 W. Sunset Blvd., Silver Lake, 323.953.0611
- Forage** 3823 W. Sunset Blvd., Silver Lake, 323.663.6885
- Intelligentsia Coffee & Tea** 3922 W. Sunset Blvd., Silver Lake, 323.663.6173
- Masa** 1800 W. Sunset Blvd., Echo Park, 213.989.1558
- Mornings Nights** 1523 Griffith Park Blvd., Silver Lake, 323.664.8811
- OK** 1716 Silverlake Blvd., Silver Lake, 323.666.1868
- Origami Vinyl** 1816 W. Sunset Blvd., Echo Park, 213.413.3030
- Stories** 1716 W. Sunset Blvd., Echo Park, 213.413.3733
- Two Boots** 1818 W. Sunset Blvd., Echo Park, 213.413.2668

# CHRISTINE CHOI | MIRACLE MILE DISTRICT

# A

rare breed in a city whose people have increasingly diverse origins, Christine Choi is a native Angeleno, and one who won't be leaving her fair city anytime soon. Raised in the Inland Empire and schooled at a local university, today she's a communications manager at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. An aesthete whose passions run from fine art to fashion to food, she has found dozens of favorite spots to indulge her myriad interests within a few miles of her home in the Miracle Mile District, a hop, skip and jump from LACMA. "A lot of people

I know now at the museum end up staying in the area because it's super convenient," she explains. "And, say what you will, but it's kind of, kind of walkable." Over cocktails and margherita pizza at a new favorite haunt, the restaurant Ray's on LACMA's expansive campus, she says that she defends L.A. to detractors who think it's a town built on celebrity culture and flash. "L.A.'s big enough that you can do whatever you want. You don't have to abide by those rules."

## WHERE TO GO

**The Counter** 5779  
Wilshire Blvd., L.A.,  
323.932.8900

**Craft and Folk Art  
Museum** 5814  
Wilshire Blvd., L.A.,  
323.937.4230

**Farmers Market**  
6333 W. 3rd St.,  
L.A., 323.933.9211

**The Grove** 189 The  
Grove Drive, L.A.,  
323.900.8080

**Los Angeles County  
Museum of Art** 5905  
Wilshire Blvd., L.A.,  
323.857.6010

**The Page Museum at the  
La Brea Tar Pits** 5801  
Wilshire Blvd., L.A.,  
323.934.7243

**Pulp**  
452 S. La Brea Ave.,  
L.A., 323.937.3505

**Ray's & Stark Bar**  
LACMA, 5905  
Wilshire Blvd., L.A.,  
323.857.6180

**Short Order** Farmers Mar-  
ket, 6333 W. 3rd St.,  
L.A., 323.761.7970



**RAY'S & STARK BAR** "I am a bread fiend, and the bread here—someone told me before I'd even tried it that it was some of the best bread in L.A., and I think it is some of the best bread in L.A. They have a wood-fired oven back there. What Kris [Morningstar, executive chef] does with seafood here is excellent."

**SHORT ORDER** "Short Order has an awesome little bar upstairs, and I like going there. And Nancy Silverton's desserts are also to die for."

**THE COUNTER** "Sometimes I feel like a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich with my glass of beer at the Counter, 'cause they're open 'til 11."

**THE GROVE + FARMERS MARKET** "One of my favorite things is, Sunday morning I go for a run and I end up at the Farmers Market, get fresh fruit at the stands, get a newspaper, and I spend my morning just sitting there and people-watching."

**LACMA CAMPUS** (Pictured.) "When I see [people] lay out their blanket and just read in the shade on one of the hills ... I'm eternally jealous."

**THE PAGE MUSEUM** "For people who are more like the history buffs, they love the tar pits, they love the Page Museum. People love that tar! And the mammoth kind of moves. Believe me, I only discovered it two years ago and I thought it was in my head."

**CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM** "Everyone goes there for holiday shopping, or just shopping in general."

**PULP** "All the boutiques along West 3rd [Street are] awesome, and I think Pulp is one of the best stationery stores in the city. That is an awesome store. I'm a sucker for cards, like letter-press things, so I have an appreciation for that."

## ANTONIO MARTÍN GUIRADO + MARÍA ARGOS EZQUERRA WEST HOLLYWOOD

**S**painish expat María Argos Ezquerra sees much more of the sun since she moved to Los Angeles. A native of Torrelavega, a small town in northern Spain, she endures far fewer cloudy days here than she did in her rainy village—a huge bonus for this outdoors lover and her boyfriend, Madrid native Antonio Martín Guirado, who says with a smile, "Anytime the sun comes out, she feels happy." The couple—she, an employee of the Spanish Embassy, and he, a journalist for the EFE, a Spanish news agency—share an enviable apartment beneath West Hollywood's Sunset Strip, ideal since they love the nightlife as much as soaking up rays by the pool at the Standard Hollywood. Martín Guirado, who was sent to L.A. to cover Hollywood goings-on, says, "I never thought of coming here, and since day No. 1, I felt like this was some kind of miracle, or paradise." Buying a convertible completed their picture of SoCal paradise. Says Martín Guirado, "We always have that image of someone in California driving in the sun and hitting the beach. We wanted to be that guy, I guess."

**SUNSET TROCADERO LOUNGE** Antonio: "After a day of work, that after maybe we are a little bit tired, we like to go to some places that are in walking distance. One of those places is Trocadero." María: "They have a good happy hour." Antonio: "It's drinks and appetizers half-priced. That's important."

**LE CLAFOUTIS** María: "I love the mussels there. I always order it." Antonio: "And they already know us: 'Hey guys, how are you?'"



**THE STANDARD HOLLYWOOD** (Pictured.) Antonio: "If we are not in the mood for going to the beach, we would definitely go to the Standard to have lunch, maybe a drink before, play ping pong, get into the swimming pool, maybe call some friends, see if they want to come." María: "Spanish people really like it."

**THE LONDON WEST HOLLYWOOD** Antonio: "In Spain, it's not that easy to find these great places where you can just walk inside and have a mojito or whatever in such a gorgeous place. And you can find thousands of these places around here."

**LEMON TREE BUNGALOW** María: "It's a tiny shop [where] you can buy presents—picture frames and candles."

**SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD BARS** Antonio: "When María has people visit her, she likes to show the neighborhood especially on Sundays, because it's not common for us in Spain to see a lot of people in the streets and partying and having a good time on Sundays. And, well, if you go to Santa Monica Boulevard right now, at Troubadour and Rage—all those clubs are full of people. And it's fun to take a look at all the people half-naked, dancing, on a Sunday, maybe at 2 or 3 [pm]."

### WHERE TO GO

**Le Clafoutis** Sunset Plaza, 8630 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood, 310.659.5233

**Lemon Tree Bungalow** 8727 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, 310.657.0211 **The London West Hollywood** 1020 N. San Vicente Blvd., West Hollywood, 310.854.1111 **Rage Restaurant & Bar**

8911 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, 310.652.7055

**The Standard Hollywood** 8300 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood, 323.650.9090 **Sunset Trocadero Lounge** 8280 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood, 323.656.7161 **The Troubadour** 9081 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, 310.276.1158

# CHARLOTTE, HUDSON + DRAKE PRUITT | BRENTWOOD

**S**eattle: Notoriously rainy, pretty darn gloomy when not rainy, and probably a less-than-ideal place to establish a swimwear line. Yet Charlotte Pruitt did just that with her swimwear and resort-wear company FrenchFifty, and prospered in spite of her location: Her suits have been worn by celebs such as Charlize Theron and Halle Berry and are sold at a plethora of upscale boutiques, including L.A. stores such as Elyse Walker, the Beverly Hills Bikini Shop and Madison. She confesses that a move to L.A. was probably beneficial, though. "I feel more inspired being near the ocean and being able to do beach walks," she says. "I'm an ocean girl, and I wanted my son [Hudson, 3] to grow up on the beach." She, Hudson and her husband, Drake, live in Brentwood, and they are "in love with the Westside." "I love how wide open the streets are," Drake says. "It's kind of the boulevard feel.... It feels very eclectic, like everybody has built something unique, and you can stroll and people are friendly." When they're not entertaining Hudson with kid-friendly outings to the Brentwood Country Mart petting zoo or the neighborhood Tex-Mex restaurant ("They don't have a stroke if you bring the kid in the door," Drake explains), Drake and Charlotte have adult time over drinks or sushi. At Hamasaku in Westwood, adjacent to Brentwood, the owners actually named one of their rolls after Mrs. Pruitt, one of their most loyal customers. "The Charlotte Roll," she says bashfully. "It's lobster, crab, mango, avocado and a tomato relish/salsa. It sounds crazy, but it's amazing!"

## WHERE TO GO

- Bandera** 11700 Wilshire Blvd., Brentwood, 310.477.3524  
**Brentwood Farmers Market** 741 Gretna Green Way, Brentwood, cafarmersmarkets.com **Calypso** Brentwood Country Mart, 225 26th St., Santa Monica, 310.434.9601  
**Katsuya** 11777 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood, 310.207.8744  
**Shutters on the Beach** 1 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, 310.587.1707 **Sushi Sasabune** 12400 Wilshire Blvd., Brentwood, 310.820.3596  
**Sweet Rose Creamery** Brentwood Country Mart, 225 26th St., Santa Monica, 310.260.2663



**BRENTWOOD FARMERS MARKET** Charlotte: "It's so fun to walk over, stroll or take the bike, pick up everything for dinner and then cook that night."

**KATSUYA** Charlotte: "That's good when we just want to go out nearby and get a cocktail, get a little bit of sushi, some appetizers."

**SUSHI SASABUNE** Drake: "A great one on Wilshire that's big, and it's a little bit like Katsuya, [but] not quite as over-the-top and less of a scene."

**SHUTTERS ON THE BEACH** (Pictured.) Charlotte: "Probably my favorite thing to do is get Hudson, get the bike and, on a nice day, ride down to Shutters and have breakfast at Coast."

Drake: "Hudson is all about the pancakes."

**CALYPSO** Charlotte: "They have new merchandise every few weeks and they've got really interesting stuff. It's at the country mart and they just expanded. It's really one of the better Calypso stores I've ever been in."

**SWEET ROSE CREAMERY** Charlotte: "My favorite [ice cream] is the mint with the homemade chocolate chips."

**BANDERA** Charlotte: "My favorite restaurant here in Brentwood that I would go to every night is Bandera. OK, first of all, the grilled artichoke or the dip duo—just order them both, because they're both delicious. And the Flying Tuna Platter—I mean, I could eat that every night. It's so romantic in there—they have the music going, it's a good atmosphere. Amazing drinks."

## KATY SWEET | CHEVIOT HILLS

**E**ven L.A. residents sometimes furrow their brows at the mention of Cheviot Hills, a residential neighborhood south of Century City and north of Culver City, easy to miss unless you find yourself on winding Motor Avenue, the neighborhood's main street. With a charm reminiscent of a simpler time—pristine Colonial homes, some painted in candylike pastels, with emerald lawns and manicured gardens—Cheviot Hills seemed to public relations consultant Katy Sweet a sweet place to make a home with her husband. "When my husband and I were first engaged, we were looking for a place that was both convenient—my office was in Beverly Hills and his in Culver City—and had a certain amount of charm. We fell in love with Cheviot Hills!" However delightful she finds her patch of Los Angeles, Sweet, whose surname is befitting her warm personality, enjoys venturing out to experience the benefits of metropolitan life. "Since Cheviot Hills is residential, we rely on the surrounds for shopping, restaurants and entertainment," she says. For someone who represents clients such as the Montage Beverly Hills (which hosts an acclaimed restaurant, Scarpetta), as well as wineries such as Rosenblum Cellars, Sweet often makes good food a part of her day or night on the town.

**LANDMARK THEATRES + WESTSIDE TAVERN** "We might catch a movie at the Landmark nearby. The Westside Tavern is adjacent to it and is a terrific place for an early dinner. Chef Warren Schwartz is amazing! We're crazy about the spit-roasted chicken and can make a meal out of their crispy green beans with aioli dipping sauce."



**PASTINA TRATTORIA** (Pictured.) "It's been around forever and has a real local following. Their spaghetti and meatballs are the best! We love to bring along a bottle of our favorite wine. Right now, we're in love with Rosenblum Zinfandels."

**KOUTOUBIA** "Also on Westwood Boulevard is this fun Moroccan restaurant with terrific food. When friends come in from out of town, we love taking them there."

**WESTFIELD CENTURY CITY** "We're only five minutes from Century City, so we do most of our shopping at the Westfield mall. Love Gulfstream, and I can always find what I want at their Bloomingdale's."

**RANCHO PARK GOLF COURSE** "Very popular and an easy walk. While we haven't played golf in years, we enjoy their little coffee shop for an occasional breakfast."

**CHEVIOT HILLS RECREATION CENTER** "Love walking around the Recreation Center off Motor [Avenue]. Beautiful green lawns, tennis courts and a pool. It's a popular setting for TV and film shoots."

**SCARPETTA** "For Sunday brunch, our favorite is Scarpetta at the Montage. Their gorgeous open chef's kitchen is piled high with the most decadent entrees."

**MAMA'S ORIGINAL PIZZA AND PASTA** "The best. And they deliver! After that, we need to walk a lot!" **W**

**WHERE TO GO**  
**Cheviot Hills Recreational Center** 2551 Motor Ave., Cheviot Hills, 310.837.5186  
**Koutoubia** 2116 Westwood Blvd., Westwood, 310.475.0729  
**Landmark Theatres** 10850 W. Pico Blvd., West L.A., 310.281.8223  
**Mama's Original Pizza and Pasta** 3311 Motor Ave., West L.A., 310.204.6262  
**Pastina Trattoria** 2260 Westwood Blvd., Westwood, 310.441.4655  
**Rancho Park Golf Course** 10460 W. Pico Blvd., Cheviot Hills, 310.838.7373  
**Scarpetta** Montage Beverly Hills, 225 N. Cañon Drive, Beverly Hills, 310.860.7800  
**Westfield Century City** 10250 Santa Monica Blvd., Century City, 310.277.3770  
**Westside Tavern** 10850 W. Pico Blvd., West L.A., 310.470.1539