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A DAY IN SANTA MONICA

by Jessica Gelt

SHOPPING SPREE



Montana Avenue strikes an improbable balance between village-like neighborliness and international elegance. The 225 businesses—from boutiques to mom-and-pop shops to bustling cafés—are where the locals really shop.

Our picks include the green-conscious Hey Kookla, with a focus on local designers such as Amy Hall, whose

amykathryn handbags are animal-product-free, and Paige Mycoskie's Aviator Nation clothing line, which benefits charitable causes. Sculpture to Wear, an inventive gallery and jewelry store, hosts designers whose artwork incorporates stones and precious metals as well as unexpected materials such as neoprene and coffee cans. Every Picture Tells a



Story sells original illustrations from children's books, and L'Atelier's specialty is the art of knitting. The latter—along with clothing boutiques Citron

and Weathervane—helped establish the avenue as a place to be. Finally, duck into the tiny back patio at Il Dolce Café, where a trickling fountain and flowers make eating a prosciutto sandwich with broccoli soup a delight.

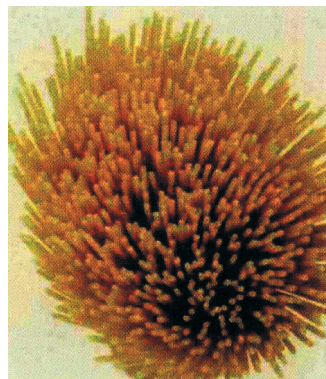
ONE THING TO DO

Color Splashes
In a Green Sea

“Do you like my office?” asks groundskeeper Johnny Roach, gesturing to the pale blue ocean behind him, the bright orange roses next to him, the towering palm trees above him and the lime green expanse of grass under his feet in Palisades Park. The park stretches along Ocean Avenue from the pier to Adelaide Drive, but its most intriguing part exists between Alta and Montana avenues where Roach tends the roses, elderly men play chess, women practice tai chi, families picnic and sundrowsy couples lounge, their books dangling lazily from relaxed hands. If Southern California has an answer to the feel of the

Luxembourg Gardens, this could be it.

MY FIND



Latini, the pasta of choice for foodies-in-the-know, can be found in about 10 varieties for \$5 to \$8 at Bay Cities Italian Deli & Bakery. Since 1925, this has been Santa Monica's go-to place for all things Italian, including fresh sandwiches, flavorful sausages, limoncello and exotic cheeses. 1517 Lincoln Blvd., (310) 395-8279

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