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LAND LOUGHED

In Praise of the Irish Midlands



GRAPHIC GREATS

WE MEET IRISH ILLUSTRATORS

TRUE NORTH
Mouthwatering Manchester

ROMAN CONQUEST
Acing the Italian Capital

WEST COAST COOLER
Los Angeles Beach Life

The Right Moves

JAMES VINCENT McMORROW GETS HIS GROOVE ON

A Shore Thing

Counterpoint the la-la of Los Angeles with the chill-zones of Santa Monica, Venice Beach and Malibu.

WORDS LUCY WHITE **PHOTOGRAPHY** KRISTIN TEIG





Malibu, with a squeeze
of lime ... surf's up on
the west coast.

Santa Monica and Venice are so laid-back, they're not so much horizontal but supine on a sun lounger, Aperol spritz in one hand and yoga mat in the other. West of Downtown LA, they're both an antidote from the starry hustle and bustle of Beverly Hills, the commercial hub of Pershing Square, the LGBT-buzz of West Hollywood and Fairfax, and the old, genteel money of Brentwood.

While LA is known for its car-centricism, Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade is pleasingly pedestrianised. In contrast to the blockbuster fashion brands of Rodeo Drive (Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Cartier, etc), the Promenade's *raison d'être* is considerably casual, with shops including Madewell, lululemon, J.Crew, GAP and Banana Republic dotted along its wide, leafy streets that become a purple haze of jacaranda blooms in spring. Street-spilling cafés, restaurants and cinemas also make this a place to linger.

Elsewhere, on Wilshire Boulevard, is **Huckleberry** (huckleberrycafe.com), whose virtuous, "superfood" salads are beautifully negated by unctuous lemon squares, cookies, cheesecake, tarts, sponges and doughnuts a-go-go. "I think my date might be gay ..." confided an older lady as I waited in line for the bathroom, adding, "so

maybe I'll make a new friend?" Which says everything you need to know about this optimistic, liberally-minded city.

And then there's the seafront, famous for both its funfair-boasting pier and also Muscle Beach, where biceps are curled and vanity flexed. Channel Hollywood's golden age by checking into the **Hotel Shangri-La** (see 'Sleep at', page 92) before hiring a bike, Segway, rollerblades – or just plain old walk – to **Venice Beach**, less than five kilometres away. There, all the stuff of legend is true: the artists, the writers, the rubberneckerers, the surfers, the stoners, the freaks, the hypnotic rise and fall of the skate-parkers. If you've seen the listless Netflix series *Flaked*, you'll be sure to recognise the low-rise backdrops of Abbot Kinney's coffee shops, clapboard bungalows, surf dudes – and even Googlers, whose LA outpost is in an office designed by Frank Gehry and fronted by a **giant binocular sculpture** by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen.

No Venice editorial is complete though without a deserving mention of **Gjelina** (gjelina.com) – a notoriously good neighbourhood bar and restaurant – and **The Butcher's Daughter** (thebutchersdaughter.com), a relaxed, "rustic", bleached-wood vegetarian hip-spot, both on Abbot Kinney Boulevard. We love you, man. 🍀





1 Channel your inner starlet, or matinée idol, at the Hotel Shangri-La's glamorous pool in Santa Monica. shangrila-hotel.com

2 Gallery assistant Erica Entrop, who works at the Lois Lambert Gallery, which is part of the Bergamot Station arts complex on Santa Monica's Michigan Avenue. loislambertgallery.com

SLEEP AT ...

ART DECO Built in 1939 and awarded a preservation gong by the Santa Monica Conservancy in 2009 for its faithful restoration, **Hotel Shangri-La** epitomises the Deco era. Its clean, white, Streamline Moderne lines evoke a luxury cruise-liner, while rooms are distinctly mod-con, some of which overlook the Pacific Ocean. Added bonus: its bathrobes are among the plushiest you'll find and it has

ONYX, a rooftop bar with beach panoramas. Rooms from \$319. (1301 Ocean Avenue, Santa Monica, +1 310 394 2791; shangrila-hotel.com)

GROUPS Angelenos are infamous for their health-kick regimes, making **Calamigos Guest Ranch** the perfect spot at which to go native with friends or family. A two-hectare hideaway a ten-minute drive away from Malibu

Beach, it offers a beach club, horse trekking, yoga, surfing, golf, whale watching, wine tours and spa treatment diversions. Cottages from \$415. (South, 327 Latigo Canyon Road, Malibu, +1 818 889 6280; calamigosguestranch.com)

VALUE Formerly the Inn at Marina del Rey, **The Kinney** made its debut this summer and has Millennials firmly in its sights (but

don't let that put you off), for its Insta-worthy, contemporary take on 1960s Pop. And in the unlikely event you get tired of the bright decor (teal, yellow, oranges), games room and heated outdoor pool, the storied Venice Beach is less than a ten-minute amble away. Rooms from \$204. (737 West Washington Boulevard, Venice, +1 310 821 4455; thekinneyvenicebeach.com)



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3 The street life of Abbot Kinney in Venice, backdrop to the Netflix series *Flaked*.

4 Zest laid plans ... a visit to Santa Monica's Farmers Market on Main Street every Sunday is a must for foodies. smgov.net

5 Boards ahoy in Malibu.

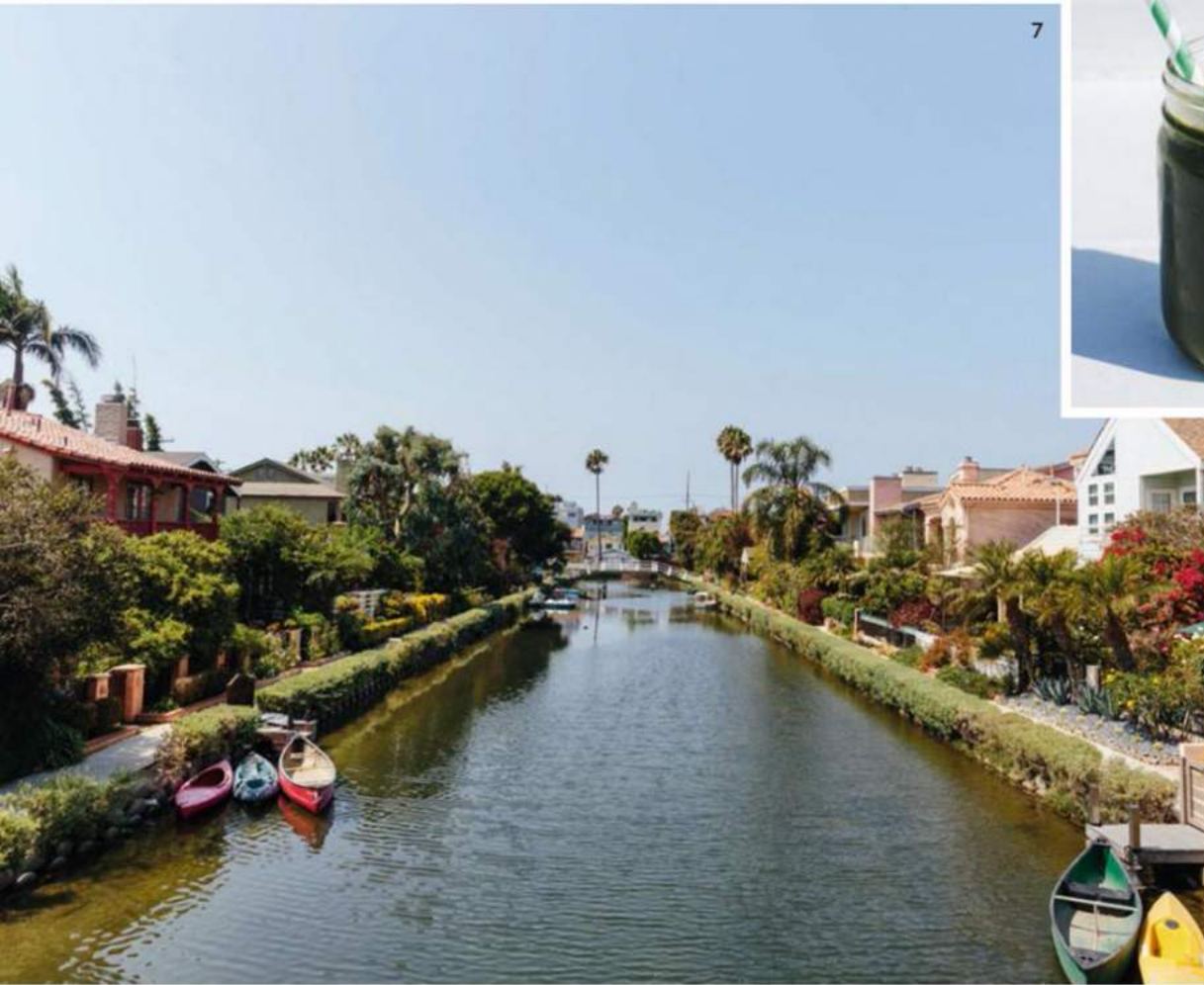
6 Farm eggs and toasted soldiers are among the many delights at The Butcher's Daughter restaurant in Venice. thebutchersdaughter.com



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7 Go green with envy at how the other half live on the Venice canals.

8 When in Rome ... Malibu Farm's apple and kale juice, the drink of choice for many a health-kicking Californian.

9 Pedal power on Venice's bustling Abbot Kinney Boulevard.



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SMART TIPS

- WHEELY GOOD** Get the lay of the land of Santa Monica and Venice on an electronic-bike **Pedal Or Not** tour. A chipper guide will show you the sights over three hours, from \$68 per person. pedalornot.net
- UNITED FRONT** From the outside, a Modernist home; from the inside, **Shulamit Nazarian's** eponymous gallery is a treasure trove of contemporary art from the Middle East and Arab/Iranian/Jewish diaspora. shulamitnazarian.com



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10 Every first Friday of the month, Abbot Kinney hosts a food truck festival. abbotkinneyfirstfridays.com

11 The herbivore's favourite, The Butcher's Daughter.

12 California gold - watching the sun melt over the Pacific Ocean never gets old.



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SMART FLIERS

AER LINGUS flies from Dublin to **LOS ANGELES** four times per week.