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# Beverlywood



CalRE # 01808926

BEN LEE

BENLEEPROPERTIES.COM  
(310) 704-6580



# TRAVELIN' MAN

By Ben Lee

When my wife and I started dating in our 20's, we were both working with no real overhead expenses. For a while after college I was living at home with my parents, she was in an apartment in Brentwood with her sister and her share of the rent for a two-bedroom/2 bath was only \$500 a month. Clearly, we were in our 20's a long time ago. But, likely due to the fact we were young, childless and somewhat fancy free, we had a tradition of taking each other on little trips for our birthdays. We went to New Orleans and stayed at a total fleabag hotel far from Bourbon Street. We went 'camping' at a place called Zaca Lake- so cold that even the enormous spiders accustomed to roaming in the fields sought shelter inside our non-insulated cabin. One year we took to the high seas and went on our first (and last) party-type cruise to Mexico. Considering our destination, it's odd looking back now to recall that at every turn we were encouraged to drink frothy, fluorescently colored 'Bahama Mamas,' but I guess nothing rhymed well with 'Cabo San Lucas.'

Our final trip during that phase of life was when we went to Hawaii in 1999 and got engaged. After our wedding, we honeymooned in Tahiti. After I took the bar, we went to Arizona and Jamaica. We started having kids and gone were the days of going away as a couple as we brought the boys with us from an early age. Obviously, traveling with young children is different. Tremendously fun, of course, but, well, different. Hauling car seats and strollers through airports, keeping fussy babies quiet on airplanes and chasing busy toddlers through crowded towns was challenging. Dealing with time changes, jet lag and general changes to the daily routine proved incredibly tough, too. But for parents, getting to witness the thrill their kids experience



by seeing something exciting and new makes the more torturous aspects of traveling with children fall by the wayside. It's often hard, but usually worth it.

Fast forward about seventeen years and suddenly, this April marked the first real trip my wife and I took without any of our children with us. They're basically young men now so even if one of them had joined, it would've been fun and easy. Long gone are the days of trying to track down food they'd eat in a strange land and holding their hands to keep track of where they were running. But traveling just the two of us harkened back to those days before the boys were born and it was like stepping back in time.

The occasion for the journey was to attend the wedding of my step-brother and his fiancé who both live in Boston but opted to marry in Lisbon. Since this was a destination wedding far beyond just a few hours away, we decided to bundle the Portugal trip with a few days in Paris, too. This felt right because, while Jake and Andrea were just beginning their marital journey, Lilli and I were about to celebrate our 25th anniversary. If that's not a good enough reason to go to the most romantic city in the world, I don't know what is.

My wife and I approach trips in slightly different ways- I am a planner

who wants to make the most of my time in a new city. That generally means I'm going to book several tours, buy museum tickets in advance, research restaurants and procure reservations months before our arrival. My wife, on the other hand, begged me to adopt more of a laissez faire approach this time around. She was more interested in following the Anthony Bourdain rule with regards to visiting Paris when he said, "Make the most of it by doing as little as possible... Lounge around drinking coffee. Maybe read a book. Drink some wine, walk around a bit more, eat, repeat. See? It's easy."

So, we compromised. I did make a few dinner reservations but the rest of the time we wandered. We got lost a few times, we ended up in Harry's Bar more than once, we visited a fabulous fine art museum (the unnecessarily long entrance line we suffered due to not purchasing tickets in advance was a real thorn in my side, but I tried not to let it drive me too crazy.) We struck up random conversations with fellow travelers and thoroughly understood why French cuisine sets the standard for fine food everywhere.

Next stop was Porto, Portugal- a town neither of us had ever visited. It was incredibly beautiful, with picturesque buildings and sidewalks covered in colorful tiles. The town is comprised of sloping hills which start at the Douro River and extend upward. There's no shortage of wine tasting one can do, given the fruitful Douro River Valley, but we opted out of that activity. We did, however, spontaneously book ourselves on a last-minute food tour which was fun, tasty and we incidentally learned a bit about the origin of Port wines which felt like an important lesson given we were in its namesake town.

A drive from Porto to Lisbon included an unplanned pause in the coastal town of Nazare which, for a dedicated, struggling surfer like me was really exciting. I had seen images

of its world-famous waves (including the documentary "The 100 Foot Wave,") so, when we realized Nazare was on the way to Lisbon, we decided to swing by. Given how renowned the surfing is there, I was expecting to see a busy, bustling town like Santa Monica or Malibu. It turned out to be the opposite- quiet, sleepy, and wholly unassuming in every way, yet charming in its non-touristy unpretentiousness. I was a big fan.

We finished up our vacation in Lisbon; a bigger city compared to Porto but equally walkable and full of interesting monuments and fun restaurants we found at random. It made us wonder why Los Angeles can't be more like the café culture of Europe where each block has two shops and 6 restaurants? Most of our time in Lisbon was spent enjoying wedding-related activities, primarily the main event which took place just outside of town at a centuries-old palace.

All in all, I'd say this first trip as soon-to-be-empty-nesters was a truly memorable experience. We compromised styles of travel, we sampled delicious local fare, we laughed a lot, walked a lot, missed our kids a lot but also remembered why we like hanging out together when it's just the two of us.

I'd say it was a perfect trip—right up until we were rushing to get through massively long lines to catch our flight home and there was an irate traveler in the Lisbon airport who broke past a barrier and attempted to punch me. Others in line quickly came to our defense before security intervened. That was a crazy end to an otherwise magical vacation but what great journey comes without just a bit of drama and adventure?

And now that we are safely back in Cheviot Hills, far from those hills of Portugal, I have the same thought I usually have after traveling: I'm happy to have visited but there's no place like home.

# My featured listings

## Santa Monica – FOR SALE!



**1921 6th Street – \$1,525,000**  
2 Bed / 2 Bath 1,215 Sq. Ft.

A bright and delightful California cottage just a stone's throw from the beach in Santa Monica. 2 bedrooms/2 bathrooms plus an upstairs loft perfect for studying, gaming or playtime, this classic clapboard home offers authenticity at its best. Fully gated and surrounded by privacy hedging around a drought-resistant garden, this 1,215 sq. ft. home provides hardwood floors with a romantic fireplace in the living room, an abundance of natural light, and plenty of storage spaces. The cheerful kitchen offers iconic black/white square flooring, stainless appliances, a cozy breakfast nook and generous prep/counter space. Located near the fun shops and restaurants of Main Street, Santa Monica, and just a short stroll to the famous Santa Monica pier, 3rd Street Promenade, and the Pacific Ocean, this lovely home is an ideal setting for tranquil, seaside living. No sign on property; please do not disturb occupants. Inside with accepted offer. Property delivered vacant on or after June 15.

## Pacific Palisades - FOR SALE!



**16485 El Hito Place – \$2,895,000**  
4 Beds + Office/Den / 3.5 Bath  
2,733 Sq. Ft., 0.62-Acre Lot

El Hito means 'the Milestone,' and that's what this home really is. A stunning property tucked into an idyllic cul-de-sac surrounded by natural beauty, this 4-bedroom + office/den and 3.5 bathroom in Pacific Palisades is as impressive as it is welcoming. The home, with a jaw-dropping view of the Pacific Ocean, has a one-of-a-kind style, presenting a seamless blend of Craftsman and Cape Cod. Surrounded by concrete and Hardie Shingle Siding, not only did the home escape harm in the fires, but miraculously, the entire street was almost completely untouched. Inside is an impressive array of heavy dark wood floors, exposed wood beams above, Bluestone tiles, an enormous stone fireplace in the formal Living Room, and Craftsman design details throughout. A patio with an exterior staircase could easily be used for morning yoga or midday meditation. The possibilities are endless. Additional amenities: 2-car garage, alarm system, filtered water throughout the home, extra-large generator, skylights, and outdoor shower. A truly special property- a milestone in the revitalized Palisades that is not to be missed.

## Cheviot Hills - COMING SOON!



**10359 Monte Mar –**  
6 Bed / 7.5 Bath 6,635 Sq. Ft.

Set on coveted West Monte Mar Drive in Cheviot Hills, this newly built 6-bedroom, 7.5-bath estate offers sweeping golf course views and exceptional luxury at every turn. Thoughtfully designed in tranquil earth tones, the approximately 6,635-square-foot residence blends warmth and sophistication with soaring ceilings, skylights, and disappearing floor-to-ceiling glass sliders that open seamlessly to the backyard. Built by B Homes Design & Development, the home evokes a serene, spa-like retreat filled with natural light and effortless indoor-outdoor flow. A light-filled foyer welcomes you into expansive living spaces that include a private office, elegant formal living room with fireplace, formal dining room, guest suite, and an impressive great room anchored by a custom state-of-the-art kitchen and breakfast nook with banquette seating crafted from rift white oak millwork. Additional highlights include two laundry rooms, attached two-car garage, privacy fencing, sound and security systems, smart home wiring, and placement within the highly sought-after Overland Avenue Elementary School district. A rare offering of modern elegance, scale, and location in one of Los Angeles' most desirable neighborhoods.

## Encino – FOR SALE OR LEASE!



**GREAT NEW PRICE!**

**16879 Mooncrest Dr -**  
\$4,895,000 or \$20,500 p/mo.  
5 Beds / 8 Bath, 5,900 Sq. Ft. 10,890 Sq. Ft. Lot

## Cheviot Hills - FOR LEASE!



**2890 Forrester Drive – \$21,000 p/mo.**  
4 Bed / 5 Bath 4,438 Sq. Ft., 7,204 Sq. Ft. Lot

## Beverlywood - IN ESCROW!



**1716 S. Durango Ave. –**  
4 Bed / 3 Bath 2,811 Sq. Ft., 7,110 Sq. Ft. Lot

## Beverlywood - SOLD OVER ASKING!



**9124 Beverlywood St. - \$1,795,000**  
3 Beds / 2 Bath, 1,513 Sq. Ft.

## Cheviot Hills - SOLD OVER ASKING!



**3388 Manning Ct – \$2,595,000**  
4 Bed / 3 Bath 2,388 Sq. Ft., 7,204 Sq. Ft. Lot

## Rancho Park – SOLD!



**2831 Malcolm Avenue - \$3,795,000**  
4 Beds / 5 Bath, 3450 Sq. Ft., 6324 Sq. Ft. Lot

# Beverlywood happenings

## STEPS THAT CARE



For the past several years, the Castle Heights School community has participated in, “Steps that Care,” to raise money for cancer research. This movement was started by 3rd grade teacher Annie Casady after a particularly tragic time on the school’s campus when a handful of mothers lost their battles with cancer. Since that time, hundreds of students, parents, staff and alumni have participated in this fundraiser which has contributed thousands of dollars to help find a

cure for cancer. This year’s event will be on May 2 from 9-10am, participants will meet on the Castle Heights campus and then take a two-mile walk through the neighborhood to raise both funds and awareness. If you would like to contribute to this meaningful cause, here’s the donation link: <https://standuptocancer.org/?form=FUNXFHYSCSF&undraiser=NMEESEGV&member=SVQVZFGC&modifyDesignation=no&sharingVendor=email>



## PHOTO CONTEST 2026

By Ben Lee

This month we are kicking off our annual summer fun Photo Contest! Beginning Memorial Day Weekend and continuing through the Labor Day holiday, take Ben Lee Properties with you on vacation! Simply snap a picture of yourself, your kids or your pets with any Ben Lee Properties newsletter or former giveaway in the shot. Whether you’re heading somewhere far away or staying close to home, pack a newsletter,

spoon, whisk, guitar-shaped cheese grater or any of the many items you’ve gotten over the years and take a picture of it on vacation. Then, submit the picture to me and write PHOTO in the subject line: [ben@benleeproperties.com](mailto:ben@benleeproperties.com). The most creative picture wins and the photographer will get a \$500 cash prize! Let me know if you have any questions or need an extra pair of sunglasses or frisbee flyer- my garage is full of them. Have fun and happy travels!

## RAFFLE

We had 100s of entries for this month’s raffle to one of our neighborhood’s most treasured cantinas: La Serenata de Garibaldi on Pico. Jim Ulmer, you are the lucky winner of the \$50 gift card. I hope you enjoy a delicious lunch or dinner at this fabulous restaurant on Pico.

