Composition and Mood: Mark Eberhard
Billy Schenck: An Artist at Home
Sod Roof Retreat in Montana

plus:
An Art Sanctuary in Utah
Sculptor Josh Tobey
Luke Frazier's Kinship with Wildlife
A Guide to Pueblo Pottery at Indian Market
For most of us, the town of Pasadena, California, is synonymous with the Rose Bowl and its legendary Tournament of Roses Parade, the exquisitely colorful annual extravaganza held every New Year’s Day. The intricately designed floats are decorated with thousands of vibrant flowers and organic materials, and they first rolled down the sun-soaked streets in 1890.

Pasadena, however, offers more than simply an abundance of multi-hued blossoms. With a name that means “crown of the valley,” it’s also an interesting destination for art and architecture. Connected to Los Angeles via the Arroyo Seco Parkway, Pasadena is 11 miles from downtown L.A., but far from Hollywood’s glitz. Instead, it offers a quiet sophistication and thriving community.

“The city of Pasadena was founded by culturally minded citizens who valued both art and architecture. As a result, there has been a huge sense of patronage that has been fostered throughout the years,” says Rochelle Branch, the city’s cultural affairs division manager. Branch points to a few specific examples, including music (the Pasadena Symphony), dance (the Pasadena Dance Theatre, which presents “The Nutcracker” each year in the historic San Gabriel Mission Playhouse; the modern dance company Lineage Dance; and the Pasadena Civic Ballet), and, of course, myriad ways to experience the visual arts.

With a population of about 142,000, the city is expansive and its neighborhoods are best explored both on foot and by car. Visitors may be pleasantly surprised by the robust offerings packed into this small town. For example, in the Old Pasadena district alone, more than 200 boutiques, cafés, and restaurants are spread across 20 historic blocks that includes the main thoroughfare, Colorado Street.

An ideal way to experience the city’s art is through one of several self-guided art walk tours that showcase...
Clockwise from top left: Pasadena’s popular Parkway Grill serves up delectable favorites. | Placing the finishing touches on a fragrant and colorful Rose Parade float. | A plate of delectable chilaquiles at the hip La Grande Orange Café. | Exploring Old Pasadena is an excellent way to enjoy the city’s history and distinctive architecture. | The exquisite Huntington Library, Art Collection, and Botanical Gardens’ award-winning exhibits are a must-visit destination in Pasadena. | Art lovers admiring the Pasadena Museum of California Art’s Someday is Now exhibit. | The Norton Simon museum’s outdoor sculpture garden is an art-filled retreat. Photos: Visit Pasadena.
various works by local and national artists, including murals and interactive sculptures. And while meandering through downtown, visitors can’t help but admire the 1920s Mediterranean Revival architecture of landmark buildings, such as Pasadena’s city hall and the Central Library.

Nearby, one of the city’s most impressive art destinations is the Norton Simon Museum. This private art collection, housed in a minimalist structure, features European art from the Renaissance to the 20th century, modern works, and a collection of South and Southeast Asian art spanning 2,000 years. It includes works by Cezanne, Degas, Picasso, Rembrandt, and many others. In a serene outdoor café set within a sculpture garden and pond filled with water lilies, guests can easily imagine that Monet would have felt right at home here.

Across town, visitors can easily spend a full day strolling through the world
famous Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Every year, this sprawling research and educational institute hosts more than 750,000 visitors. Recent enhancements include the new 8,600-square-foot, $10 million-dollar, glass-enclosed, American art wing that opened in late 2016. The Huntington’s art collections focus on European art from the 15th to the early 20th century and American art from the late 17th to the late 20th century. And each season, the botanical garden offers special experiences, so it’s best to plan accordingly. April, for example, is the ideal month to see the rose garden in its full glory and enjoy the splendor of the cactus garden’s brightly colored blooms. The gardens also feature several restaurants and cafés, including a dumpling house situated by the serene lake in the tranquil Chinese-inspired Garden of Flowing Fragrance. The gift shop offers items from local artisans, including jars of orange marmalade made with fruit from the gardens’ own grove.

When it comes to architecture in Pasadena, the city hosts a premier example of the Arts and Crafts movement, the famed Gamble House built by renowned architectural firm Greene and Greene. Tours are arranged in advance, and visitors can choose from an array of experiences guided by professional docents sharing behind-the-scenes stories. Nearby, design buffs can catch a glimpse of the town’s only Frank Lloyd Wright house — hidden in plain sight.

Tucked away in a residential neighborhood is another unexpected gem, the Storrier Stearns Japanese garden, located across the street from the lovely Arlington Garden. For design fans,
At Attractions and Events

Art Night Pasadena
artnightpasadena.org

Lineage Dance Company
lineagedance.org

Pasadena Chalk Festival
pasadenachalkfestival.com

Pasadena Civic Ballet
pcballet.com

Pasadena Dance Theatre
pasadenadance.org

Pasadena Public Art Walking Tours:
cityofpasadena.net/art

Pasadena Showcase House of Design:
pasadenashowcase.org

Pasadena Symphony
pasadenasympop.org

San Gabriel Mission Playhouse
missionplayhouse.org

Rose Bowl and Tournament of Roses Parade
tournamentofroses.com

Galleries and Museums

The Gamble House
4 Westmoreland Place; 626.793.3334
gamblehouse.org

The Huntington Museum and Gardens: 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino 626.405.2100; huntington.org

Pasadena Museum of California Art: 490 E. Union St. 626.568.3665; pmcaonline.org

Norton Simon Museum
411 W. Colorado Blvd.; 626.449.6840
nortonsimon.org

The Armory Center for the Arts: 145 N. Raymond Ave. 626.792.5101; armoryarts.org

Galerie Gabrie: 597 E. Green St. 626.577.1223; gabrie.com

Tirage Fine Art Gallery
1 W. California Blvd.; 626.405.1020
tirageart.com

Storrer Stearns Japanese Garden
270 Arlington Dr.; 626.399.1721
japanesegardenpasadena.com

Dining

La Grande Orange Café
260 S. Raymond Ave.; 626.356.4444
lgostationcafe.com

Maestro
110 E. Union St.; 626.787.1512
maestropasadena.com

Parkway Grill
510 S. Arroyo Parkway; 626.795.1001
theparkwaygrill.com

Prawn Coastal
1 Colorado Courtyard
16 Miller Alley; 626.219.6115
prawncoastal.com/pasadena-ca

The Raymond
1250 S. Fair Oaks Ave.; 626.441.3136
theraymond.com

Union:
37 E. Union St.; 626.795.5841
unionpasadena.com

Lodging

The Langham
1401 South Oak Knoll Ave.
626.568.3900; langhamhotels.com

Hotel Constance
928 E. Colorado Blvd.; 626.898.7900
dusit.com/dusitd2/pasadena

Hilton Pasadena
168 S. Los Robles Ave.
626.577.1000; hilton.com

Premier San Miguel House
Rental & Concierge:
Aldama
10-B Zona Centro; 626.536.7634
premiersanmiguel.com

From above: The Pasadena skyline shines brightly at night. Photo: Jamie Pham. | Pasadena’s Maestro restaurant is a known for its creative cuisine, craft cocktails, and lively ambiance. | The elegant and historical Langham Hotel is a city landmark offering five-star service. Photos: Visit Pasadena

the quiet neighborhood surrounding the historical luxury hotel, the Langham, is perfect for viewing a multitude of Craftsman homes built by Greene and Greene and their contemporaries.

The Pasadena Museum of California Art shines a spotlight on modern artists unique to the Golden State. The 30,000-square-foot building was developed by architect Johnson Favaro and opened in 2002. Every museum has its surprises, so peek in the parking garage for a glimpse at the Kosmic Krylon Garage exhibition of street art painted by artist Kenny Scharf.

Exhibiting innovative revolving shows, the cavernous Armory Center for the Arts features awe-inspiring contemporary art and performances. It also offers a robust roster of weekly classes for both children and adults.

And although Pasadena shines brilliantly when it comes to outstanding large-scale museums and its public art collection, there are also notable small galleries in town, including Galerie Gabrie and Tirage Fine Art Gallery. Both feature plein air works as well as diverse pieces from international artists.

For those with a thirst for creativity, Pasadena is an under-the-radar escape from the big city of L.A. and is very much worthy of several days of exploration. With the delightful wealth of art and architecture in this city, it’s no wonder visitors leave feeling artistically inspired.