



Bel-Air

A classic hotel, a happening jazz club, and some great eats welcome visitors

THANKS TO THE LANDMARK GATES on Sunset Boulevard, it's easy to assume that Bel-Air is off-limits to nonresidents. And the fact is, Bel-Air is mainly a secluded, residential enclave. But it also has hidden destinations open to the public, and summer is the perfect time to discover these diamonds in the not so rough. Start at the Hotel Bel-Air, sequestered north of Sunset Boulevard in a ravine where lush gardens blend with sycamores and other native plants to create a verdant paradise. Combine a walk through the grounds with lunch or one of the hotel's famous afternoon teas, and you'll have a memorable in-city escape. Up at Bel-Air's commercial area, the Glen Centre, you'll find outstanding shopping, as well as one of Southern California's top jazz venues. The location may be surprising, but if ever a place savored quality, it's Bel-Air.



Getting there

From I-405, exit at either Sunset Blvd. or Mulholland Dr. and go east. The Glen Centre is off Beverly Glen Blvd. just south of Mulholland. Hotel Bel-Air is just north of Sunset.

Make it an overnight

Hotel Bel-Air (91 rooms from \$375; www.hotelbelair.com or 800/648-4097) was part of the original Bel-Air Estates development in the 1920s. Summer is a glorious time to visit, and whether you stay overnight or just come for the day, the hotel is a step back into the relaxed elegance of a different era. With tables beneath a lovely arcade and around a patio, the **Terrace** (seatings 3-4 Mon-Sat) is an ideal spot for brunch or afternoon tea. For a completely different mood, the hotel's bar is a clubby and woody hideaway with a fireplace and live music nightly.

SHOP Dragon Books A must-stop for book lovers—and lovers of bookstores too.

INFO: Closed Mon; in the Glen Centre at 2954 Beverly Glen Circle; 310/441-8545.

EAT Vibrato Grill Jazz ... etc. Owner Herb Alpert's modern take on a classic jazz supper club. **INFO:** \$\$\$\$; closed Mon; in the Glen Centre at 2930 N. Beverly Glen Circle; 310/474-9400.

SHU (Sushi House Unico) Japanese fusion cuisine in a setting that blends traditional elements and contemporary design. **INFO:** \$\$\$; in the Glen Centre at 2932½ Beverly Glen Circle; 310/474-2740.

GO UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden This may be the most beautiful acre in Southern California. **INFO:** 10-3 Tue, Wed, and Fri; parking by reservation only, walk-ins welcome; www.japanese.garden.ucla.edu or 310/794-0320.

Fowler Museum at UCLA This ethnographic museum is just across Sunset from Bel-Air. Current exhibits include works by contemporary African artists. **INFO:** 12-5 Wed-Sun, 12-8 Thu; free, \$8 campus parking; enter off Sunset at Westwood and use lot 4; www.fowler.ucla.edu or 310/825-4361.

—MATTHEW JAFFE

ABOVE The UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden was originally modeled after the gardens of Kyoto and now contains a small Hawaiian garden behind the garden house. **LEFT** SHU (Sushi House Unico) blends Japanese, Latin, and Italian influences. **BOTTOM ROW** The hand-carved oak bookcases at Dragon Books house first editions, signed copies, and other rare tomes. Afternoon tea at the Hotel Bel-Air is a languid and leisurely affair.

