



DISCOVER CLAREMONT

Due east from Hollywood, at the edge of Los Angeles County, lies a town that a studio executive might have ordered up as a real-life Main Street USA movie set.

It might look like an Eastern seaboard village with blocks of bustling, locally owned shops. Or maybe a small Midwestern, railway town with a train depot within walking distance of trendy restaurants and hearty pubs. Or even a Southern community with its tree-lined streets of well-kept craftsman homes providing the ideal setting for a leisurely bicycle ride.

Beyond the beaches, but not quite to the mountains or desert. Beyond the master-planned suburbs, but not quite to sprawling bedroom communities. Beyond the Kellogg Hill interchange, but not quite the Inland Empire. It's the kind of town that you fell in love with on a vacation to Indiana – or was it Maine? – but never thought you'd find again in Southern California.

It's Claremont.

The City

The eastern-most city in Los Angeles County, Claremont is 30 miles east of downtown Los Angeles along Interstate 10. It's a destination quite unlike any other in Southern California: A hidden gem within the sprawling, urbanscape of the L.A. basin.

Some still call it The City of Trees and PhDs, a legacy born more than 100 years ago with the founding of Pomona College amidst acres of foothills adorned with citrus ranches. In fact, it was only in 1889 that the town's "shade tree committee" reported a gift of 250 trees, which were planted throughout the community shortly thereafter.

But the city is so much more than its six nationally renowned colleges and 23,000 city-owned trees: It's a true getaway from the everyday bustle of commuter Los Angeles, and a gateway to the mountains and deserts.

Claremont Village

It begins with a walkable – and yes, tree-lined – downtown. Claremont Village is adorned with more than 150 locally owned boutiques and galleries, restaurants, eateries and pubs with entertainment and music. The Claremont Depot, a California historical landmark, greets visitors at the south end of downtown, servicing the Amtrak and Metrolink trains that stop there daily.

From the depot, pleasant strolls along Yale and Harvard avenues and Claremont Village's numbered streets await visitors, calling to mind a classic New England cape town or a mid-American

downtown. The architectural features of the downtown buildings reflect a city that came to rise in the early 1900s, with its classic bank and shop facades, and then grew with the rise of the automobile as seen in some of the more modern storefronts.

Across Indian Hill Boulevard are two unique shopping and arts centers – the modern Village Square Public Plaza, built in 2007, and the sharply retrofitted Packing House, a tribute to the city's citrus roots that reopened in 2007.

The Public Plaza is surrounded by shops, restaurants and the boutique hotel, Hotel Casa 425, and is home to the Laemmle's 5 Claremont Theatre. A modern public art fountain meanders through the square, providing both soothing water sounds as well as space for outdoor picnicking and music.

The College Heights Lemon Packing House is one of four working packing houses that lined the railroad tracks during the city's citrus heydays. Claremont citrus growers were among the first to organize a cooperative method for marketing their fruit, a coop which later became known as "Sunkist." Art galleries, night clubs, a wine bar and dining now call the Packing House home.

Historic Route 66

While much of Claremont was built close to the train depot, Historic Route 66 runs along Foothill Blvd., 12 blocks to the north. The businesses and restaurants along this district include the Doubletree Hotel, and the popular Candlelight Pavilion dinner theater that is housed within the gymnasium of the Old School House, Claremont's original 1911 school building that now is home to additional, unique retail shops and eateries.

Just up College Ave. from Route 66 is the famous Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, the largest botanic garden dedicated exclusively to California's native plants. Encompassing 86 acres, the Garden displays about 2000 taxa of California plants and includes those native to the California Floristic Province as a whole – from southern Oregon to Baja California. In addition to featuring a world-class botanical library and graduate-level education program, the Garden offers horticulture and community education programs to the public to encourage the use of California native plants in home landscapes.

The Colleges

Internationally recognized, locally admired and academically respected, the Claremont Colleges define the city in multiple ways – from the contagious intellectual capital that is nurtured by a traditional American educational system to supporting retail establishments to the overall lifestyle and commitment to community preservation.

Clustered both geographically and academically, the seven Claremont Colleges – five undergraduate and two graduate campuses – enable their students to attend a small, tightly-focused college even as they enjoy the benefits their "big school" seven-college consortium offers: cross-enrollment in classes; participation in a host of multi-campus social, academic, political, creative and religious organizations; all-campus dining privileges; and participation on a host of highly competitive NCAA Division III men's and women's athletic teams.

The Culture, the Arts

Naturally, the colleges foster the arts and independent studies. Museums include The Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology, the Claremont Museum of Art, the Folk Music Center Museum, and multiple galleries both at the colleges and around town. Walks about the Village and on the campuses will reveal dozens of pieces of world-class public art.

A Way of Life

To visit Claremont is to be welcomed into a town that embodies the phrase “community spirit.”

Its annual Village Venture Arts & Crafts Faire each October welcomes more than 20,000 visitors to Claremont Village. Community-oriented events such as the Depot Jazz Series (Fridays, in fall), Claremont Farmers and Artisans Market (Sundays), and classic-car Cruise Nite in the Village (second Saturdays, March-October) reflect a true slice of Americana in Southern California.

At just 14 square miles Claremont is easily navigated on bicycle, and the city takes great pride in being a leader in providing bicycle-friendly initiatives for visitors. The League of American Bicyclists has awarded Claremont as a Bronze-Level Bicycle Friendly Community, noting Claremont’s funding of bike lanes, road diets (reducing the number of vehicle lanes), and intersection improvement. The Claremont Wilderness Park has an additional ten miles of mountain bike trails and five miles of shared-use pathways.

It’s no wonder the AMGEN Tour of California has selected Claremont as a host city for the 2011 tour, with stage 7 of the tour from Claremont to Mount Baldy taking place on May 21, 2011.

And indeed, Claremont is still a city of trees: It has been a winner of the National Arbor Day Association’s Tree City USA award for more than 20 years.

A Surprising Retreat

With its lush, European village-like setting, Claremont is an ideal destination for intimate, relaxing getaways. This “city” in the middle of urban Southern California quickly transports couples into an idyllic, romantic setting, perhaps taking them back to a different era, where they stroll tree-lined streets adorned with charming shops, outdoor cafés and historic neighborhoods. And Claremont’s thriving community of spas, yoga and pilates centers, such as Essentials Day Spa & Salon, are ready to provide visitors with an array of personalized services and treatments to make their getaways complete.

Now, you get the idea why many chose Claremont to live, to learn, to enjoy nature...and to relax.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Be In The News, Inc. – Emanuela Cariolagian, 323-644-2111