



Happy Birthday, Hollywood!

On December 8, 1923, in the hills above the home of Los Angeles' film industry, a massive white sign saying 'Hollywoodland' was lit up for the first time. Erected by a real estate company, it was to become the most famous billboard in the world - with the word 'land' being removed during renovation in the 1940s.

For its 100th birthday, it's had a fresh lick of white paint, and the plan is to reilluminate it - using projected light - on the anniversary date. Hollywood Hikes has a 2.5-hour walking tour which takes you as close as you can get to the sign (Hollywoodhikesla.com, £20pp).

Go Barbie girl in Venice Beach

Images of Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling in lurid, 80s-style neon lycra, rollerblading along Venice Beach in a scene for the Barbie movie are bound to bring visitors to this cult hangout.

The area is a heady mix of street art, laid-back beachfront, and cool cafes, bars and restaurants. Make a beeline for Abbot Kinney Boulevard, lined with indie boutiques and hotspots like

STORIES

Hollywood sign's 100th birthday, says **Laura Millar**

Salt & Straw, for the best ice cream in LA (saltandstraw.com) o try a walking tour of Venice to reveal the history and hidden corners of this hip neighbourhood, (around £55pp, bikesandhikesla.

Park and ride(s) LA's theme parks are having a moment; this year Warner Bros turned 100, as does Disney, and Universal

Studios has

just launched Super Nintendo World. Take a Warner Bros studio tour to learn all about the practical side of moviemaking, see the sets where Gilmore Girls and Big Bang Theory were made, and get a photo on the sofa in front of the Friends' fountain (£56, wbstudiotour.com).

Next, dive into the toadstool-filled surrounds of Mario, Luigi and Princess Peach at Universal; take the interactive Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge and see how many gold coins you can bag on a race for the winning cup (one-day admission from £87, universalstudioshollywood.com).

Museum madness

As well as entertainment, LA can also do culture; check out the recently opened Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, dedicated to the history

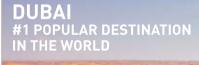
of film-making. Ever-

changing exhibits about costume, screenwriting, set design and more include the likes of how The Godfather was filmed, a homage to Spanish filmmaker Pedro



Almodóvar and the making of Casablanca. Grab the opportunity to miss the sight of Bruce, one of the only remaining models of the shark from Jaws (tickets £20, academymuseum.org).





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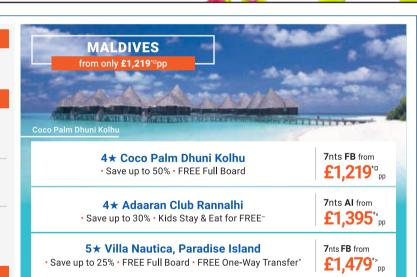
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