

# Neighborhood Guide: Los Feliz

*LA's happy village may appear hipper than a man bun, but it's a down-to-earth enclave of old-school history, good food and pinewood-derby-racing locals.*

Words by [Belinda Gosbee \(/profile/belindagosbee\)](/profile/belindagosbee) 25 May 2016

Quit monopolizing the spotlight, Hollywood. There's a leafy village three miles east of you that has nurtured some of Tinseltown's best talents and tales for well over a century.

Those cringe-tastic elephants at [Hollywood & Highland](#)? They're a recreation of the mammoth mammals that sat for 20 years on the set of D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance* in Los Feliz. A wee DiCaprio once dreamed of golden statuettes tucked in bed where the [Los Feliz library](#) now stands. Ever wonder why there's a mural of him on Russell Ave? Frank Lloyd Wright built both the [Ennis](#) and [Hollyhock House](#) here. Local magnate Griffith J. Griffith bequeathed LA with Griffith Park, [The Greek Theatre](#) and [The Griffith Observatory](#), all located in Los Feliz' vicinity. (Don't get too hyped on Colonel Griffith—he shot his wife in the face.) But the crème de la crème? Everyone's favorite mouse was born right here—sketched in the garage of Walt Disney's uncle's place on Kingswell Avenue. Hey Mickey, you're so fine!

At the foothill of Griffith Park, LA's biggest and best, Los Feliz hums with nature and creativity. It's a place where vintage-aged sculptors drink whiskey with vintage-clad actors; where you can write your screenplay in a cafe next to a Duplass brother or confuse the coyote in the driveway as your neighbor's dog. A touch bougier than

Silver Lake, Los Felicians are an eclectic mix of upscale hipsters, young families and struggling artists, all of whom are reflected in the mix of trendy restaurants, favorite old dives and family-friendly wine spots. But all can agree it hasn't been a proper a night out if you didn't wind up in the depths of *The Drawing Room* for a 6 a.m. shot.

Los Feliz is all fun and games until you try to find its politically correct pronunciation. Most Angelenos find the proper Spanish Los Fe-LEASE a bit pretentious over an American Los FEEL-uss, but the choice is yours—and a hot topic of contention (<http://www.latimes.com/local/great-reads/la-me-los-feliz-20130507-dto-htmlstory.html>) at that. Ah ... must be time to grab that whiskey shot.

Here's where to find your happy place in the neighborhood:

## EAT

### *Messhall Kitchen*

Part tavern, part upscale whiskey saloon, part summer camp cafeteria, Messhall is a roomy place for serious cocktails, California craft-beers and innovative comfort food all of which can be enjoyed on an outdoor patio. There's an epic whiskey selection (with an 18-year-old Thomas Handy Rye) and weekly events like legendary \$1 Oyster Tuesday. You're not living if you don't elect to "Roll the Dice" and let the bartender pick your drink. Perhaps she'll mix you up the killer Mint Julep. Hungry? Try the Short Rib Poutine, or if you're brunching, go for the Bananas Foster French Toast.

### *Figaro Bistrot*

With its French antiques, rustic chandeliers and legit patisserie, Figaro will have you humming *La Marseillaise* as you bite into your garlic butter escargot. Madonna once draped herself on these seats for Louis Vuitton and you may find yourself buttering croissants with local Gary Oldman. There's a cozy enclave to nestle with your bowl-sized café au lait, an airy *bistrot* to sip your Kir Royale or watch the sun go down on the highly coveted patio. Happy Hour—one of LA's best—runs 4-7 p.m. daily. Think \$6 beef carpaccio and \$5 champagne.