

Southern California weekend

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Instead of afternoon tea ...

Make a pit stop at **Pop Champagne & Dessert Bar**, where the exposed brick walls, crystal chandeliers, and granite tabletops create a sexy spot for a glass of prosecco paired with bites like truffle mac 'n' cheese and flatbread pizza. For dessert, try the tangy Meyer lemon-curd tart with basil ice cream or the house-made churros rolled in sugar and served with chocolate, dulce de leche, and strawberry dipping sauces. \$\$; closed Mon; 33 E. Union St.; popchampagnebar.com

BY JENNIE NUNN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREA M. GÓMEZ

Day trip Pasadena

Why go now: It's Pasadena season—the weather is nearly perfect, and the lilacs are blooming. Plus, new surprises popping up in town make it anything but the sleepy burg you remember. (In fact, Pasadena made our “20 Best Towns of the Future” list; see page 68.)

What it's famous for: Palm tree-lined avenues, sprawling lawns, Craftsman-style homes, and the Rose Bowl. **What it should be famous for:** Its collective IQ. Einstein lived here. Idealab launched here. NASA space robotics are made here. Right brain and left brain were discovered here at Caltech.

Hottest new ticket in town: Watch a flick in style with recliners, pillows, and wine at Gold Class Cinemas (42 Miller Alley; goldclasscinemas.com).

Best place for a local brew: La Grande Orange Café (\$\$; 260 S. Raymond Ave.; lostationcafe.com) in the restored 1930s Santa Fe train depot.

Worth a scene: Old Pasadena, a 21-block historic district where movies like *Pulp Fiction* were shot. **We still love:** 115-year-old Vroman's Bookstore (695 E. Colorado Blvd.; vromansbookstore.com).

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Southern California Day trip



The most unexpected shopping in town

Tim Burton would love **Gold Bug's** whimsical collection of artist-crafted oddities, like chandeliers made from emu eggs, taxidermy gone wild, and unusual jewelry. Expect such curious objets d'art as a pair of chipmunks wearing jewels and gothic crowns. 22 E. Union St.; goldbugpasadena.com



Getting to Pasadena

From L.A., take State 110/Pasadena Fwy. north 11 miles and exit on E. Colorado Blvd.—or hop on the Light Rail (metro.net).



Our new favorite at an old classic

Botanical and zoological prints decorate the **Dibner Hall of the History of Science** at the Huntington. Cool finds: rare volumes of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and a replica of Galileo's telescope. \$20; 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino; huntington.org



Make it a weekend

Arroyo Vista Inn, a quaint nine-room B&B, is hidden on an oak tree-lined hill overlooking Pasadena. Awaiting you in the Craftsman home are four-poster beds, hot tubs, and fresh chocolate chip cookies. From \$175, including breakfast and afternoon snack; in South Pasadena; arroyovistainn.com



3 more Pasadena surprises

Lining the shelves at **Beyond the Olive** are jars of extra-virgin olive oils from all over California, olive oil-infused body butter, blue cheese-stuffed olives, and rich tapenades. Difficult to choose? Then try a few varietals in the tasting area first. 10 N. Raymond Ave.; beyondtheolive.com

Stop by the adorable and teeny Old Pasadena location of **Dots Cupcakes**. Flavors range from peanut butter and banana (with peanut butter frosting) to cookies and cream (a Valrhona chocolate cake topped with crushed cookies). 21 N. Fair Oaks Ave.; dotscupcakes.com

Beer hounds will love **Quadrupel**, a new brewpub with Belgian specialties in an Old World library vibe. Don't miss the homemade Belgian frites, steamed mussels in lobster sauce, and potato gnocchi with wild mushroom ragù. \$\$\$; 43 E. Union St.; quadrupelbrasserie.com



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