

MAR VISTA HISTORY

From farmland and Victorian architecture to farmers' markets and public art, the neighborhood of Mar Vista has transformed dramatically over the past 120+ years. This charming, laid-back community is now home to eclectic restaurants, independent shops, historic homes, and much more. Enjoy your exploration of Mar Vista's noteworthy art, architecture, and historical spots that make Mar Vista a wonderful place to visit and live.

TIMELINE

Starting 3,500 years ago, the Indigenous Tongva people lived in the Los Angeles Basin. The village of Saangna (Saan) was located by the river near Playa del Rey and Marina del Rey.

1819 The area we now know as Mar Vista was the center of a vast Mexican land grant named Rancho La Ballona.

1848 The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo formally ended the Mexican–American War and California falls under U.S. control.

1850 California becomes the 31st state of the Union.

1902 Los Angeles Pacific Railroad builds a line down the middle of what will become Venice Blvd. (for a time known as Electric Ave.), connecting downtown Los Angeles to the sea at Ocean Park. One stop along the route, known as the Venice Short Line, is located near modern-day Centinela Ave. and Venice Blvd.

1904 Ocean Park Heights became the first neighborhood near Venice/Centinela, featuring 196 acres of former farmland (mostly lima beans or celery) that are subdivided for homes. The subdivision was named after the resort community of Ocean Park just south of Santa Monica.

1916 Some community members vote to incorporate the area into a city, but the effort fails after a majority votes against the idea.

1924 A Chamber of Commerce was formed by local businessmen following the community's decision to establish a regional post office. Since Ocean Park had its own post office, it became evident that Ocean Park Heights needed to be renamed to avoid any confusion between the communities. Juanita Romero, a pioneer resident of Ocean Park Heights, proposed Mar Vista (which translates to "ocean view"). The name was derived from a new subdivision located two blocks west of the Chamber's headquarters, called Mar Vista Park.

TIMELINE Continued

1926 The community of Mar Vista voted to be annexed to the city of Los Angeles in 1926, the 70th community to do so, but it wasn't formalized until the following year.



1927 After Mar Vista is annexed to Los Angeles, the city takes over the county-operated library branch at 12117 Venice Blvd.

1940 The city of Los Angeles installs one of the first traffic signals in Mar Vista at what the newspaper the Venice Vanguard called "the dangerous intersection of Venice and Grand View."

1948 Architect Gregory Ain designs the Mar Vista Tract, consisting of 52 single-story homes featuring modern design with open floor plans and free-flowing landscaping.



1950 The famous Red Car trolleys make their last journey down Venice Boulevard on September 18, following the Pacific Electric Company's decision to replace rail service on the Venice Short Line with "motor coaches".

1951 Venice Blvd. becomes a divided four-lane highway with two lanes on each side, running east and west. Previously, both sides of the railway had traffic running in both directions. The former railway is converted into parking spaces.

2003 A new, 12,500-square-foot Mar Vista Library Branch opens with more than double the space of the former library to accommodate more books, people, and computers.

2007 The Mar Vista Community Council votes to create the Mar Vista Farmer's Market, an initiative developed by community members and local business owners. The market has since grown into one of L.A.'s most beloved and features dozens of farms and food vendors, plus DJs, live music, and more.

2017 Mar Vista is selected as one of the first Great Streets projects, an initiative that adds protected bike lanes, new and enhanced pedestrian crosswalks, community art installations, and other improvements along Venice Blvd.

Continued »

MAR VISTA SELF-GUIDED TOUR #1

ART ON VENICE BOULEVARD

July 2026

BEFORE EMBARKING

Prepare for your tour with sunscreen, proper footwear, water, and friends with four legs or two. Enjoy a snack along the way. Do not disturb tenants nor violate private property. Be mindful of your surroundings. This tour is approximately 1.2 miles and takes about one hour if starting and ending at #1. Information about the murals are from the artist, if available. The @ symbol is for Instagram contact.



MAR VISTA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Find us!

MARVISTA.ORG

MAR VISTA COMMUNITY COUNCIL EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

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Thank you and sources:

Danny Jensen, Los Angeles City Historical Society; Lenore French, TransformationArts.org; Carole M. Kealoha, Los Angeles Public Library; www.tongvapeople.org

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All art descriptions in quotes are from the artist. Those marked with * are part of the Downtown Mar Vista Beautification Project, developed on behalf of CD-11 and LAM- Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative with Transformation Arts.

Sacred Flower & Law (2021)*

MERAKAI ART COLLECTIVE

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS - CAN YOU FIND THEM ALL?

Five streetlights were installed on the pandemic. Based in Los Angeles, artist Erick Reyes' career began circa 2015 showcasing digital art pieces influenced by sacred geometry. He later developed his own style of subconscious abstract art painting. @merakiartcollective

Also be sure to check out the words of wisdom underneath the official bike lane signs along the route.

1. Whale Tail* (2021) SEI SHIURA

An interpretation of the theme of the Mar Vista neighborhood as "Ocean View" (from Spanish). Sei Shimura is an award-winning designer and artist born in Tokyo, raised in New York, and now based in Los Angeles. @seishimura

2. Coral Reef (2021) JESSICA SHANDLER

A beautiful coral reef, in keeping with the theme the Mar Vista "Ocean View" henna artist based in Los Angeles. The influence of her henna works can be seen in her murals. @jshan_art596

3. LAX 293 (2022) JULES MUCK

4. Untitled (2022) THAO FRENCH

12601 VENICE

12567 VENICE

8b. (Mariachi! player)

"Thao French is a multidisciplinary artist known for her brutalist floral art and for founding Mindful Murals", a creative social enterprise with the mission of bringing communities together through the power of art."

Mindfulmurals@gmail.com

5. Venice Energy (2025)

TOMMY WONDER & NASE POP

12525 VENICE

"The bright and vibrant energy of LA—especially Venice Beach—inspired the palette and the way we combined our names. The result is a fusion of Wonder and Pops." @nasepop / @tommy_wonder

5b. (unknown) (2016)

Peek behind the liquor store to see another wondrous mural.

6. Awesome Clouds (2017) DJ NEFF

"This client commission was inspired by cartoons and video games. The smiling cloud sign was the inspiration to imagine the world surrounding it. A full of love and growth." @DJNEFF

7. Octopus (2016) DJ NEFF

"This pole shape became the concept of a tank containing a giant Pacific red octopus. It has an emotional awareness as it investigates a small fish, lending empathy to another despite its own captivity." @DJNEFF

8. Elephant (2015) DJ NEFF

"With a combination of Holi elements and geometric designs, the artist Neff creates a bold and colorful juxtaposition. At the time of painting he lost a dear friend and fellow artist, Krush TWS. Can you spot the hidden letters KRUSH in honor?" @DJNEFF

12511 VENICE

12. The United Workers (2021)

"I was very sad to paint [this], as the owner made me paint over the memorial of [musicians] Lemmy, Bowie and Lou Reed, all of which were painted on or the day after each died." @muckrock

12a. Little Reminders (2019)

A collaboration with Mitchehito Orquiola up after tagging in 2024. poetrylane.art

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13. (Mar Vista Bowl retrospective)

JONAS NEVER

The Grand View facing exterior mural features a colorful visual history of the Mar Vista Bowl. @NEVER1959

14. Freedom (2015) CRISTALLINA FISCHETTI

"A colorful, vibrant piece meant to heal, uplift, and inspire from this LA and Long-based artist." @abstract_medicine

15. Mar Vista Branch Library

Shiny Day (2025) LUCRETIA TORVA

"I like to spread good cheer with my murals using colorful, shiny, eye-catching objects." @torvram

Kaleidoscope Kelp (2025)

"This piece highlights the critical role that kelp forests play in marine ecosystems, as a joint initiative between Beauty Earth and Blue Robotics, community." @beautyearth.com / evanmeyerio

11. (unknown) (2025) KENNY SCHAFAR

The grandchild of the original owners of this 1964 self-serve car wash comments Scharf to do two new murals for their fall reopening.

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