

44 SAWASDEE

os Angeles is a multicultural mosaic of a city with a vibrant nightlife, culinary innovations and style to spare. If you take time to explore the patchwork sprawl of neighbourhoods - from the buzzing and revitalised Arts District to Eastside's hip Silver Lake or the breezy beach culture of Venice's Abbot Kinney - LA is full of hidden gems and plenty of homegrown charms. As the stars descend on Hollywood for the awards show shuffle in the lead up to the 86th Academy Awards, this is one of the most thrilling times of the year to be here...



EAT & DRINK

LA is known for its world-class food

scene - from its alfresco bistros to fine-dining eateries - that is fired up by its ethnic diversity and continually reinvented by some of the country's most exciting chefs. Among the buzziest new hot spots is Acabar (acabar-la.com), a decadent restaurant/lounge set in a palatial Moroccan-style riad. Its imaginative menu is a culinary adventure, following the fabled spice route through Southeast Asia, India, Lebanon and Northwest Africa. For a sumptuous brunch, check out Fig & Olive (figandolive.com), whose menus are centred around farm fresh and locally sourced seasonal ingredients try the blood orange mimosas and fig and walnut pancakes. The perennially packed RivaBella (innovativedining. com/restaurants/rivabella) dazzles with streamlined Italian classics such as seared swordfish, black truffle ravioli and cannoli in a sophisticated, sun-dappled space with soaring citrus trees and a retractable roof. The hardto-get-into NYC transplant Rao's (raosla.com), famous for its old-world elegance and uncomplicated cooking,

is the new A-list haunt. With celebrity

from above Firing up a cocktail

Enjoy beverages and

Old-style glamour at The Beverly

The raw and arty

French-Moroccan

Sunset Boulevard

46 SAWASDEE

Casbah Cafe on

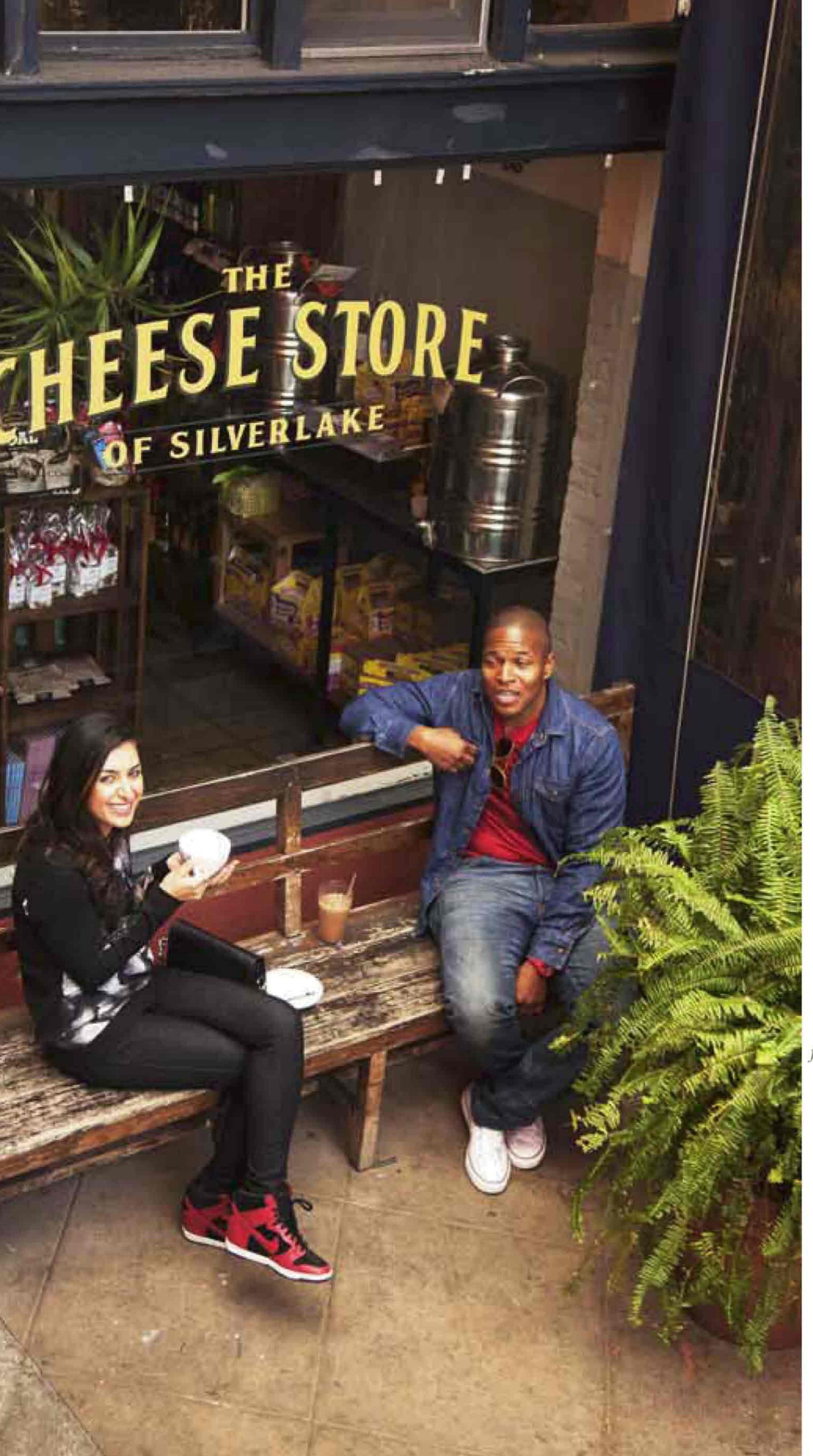
Hills Hotel

Line Hotel in

Koreatown

snaps on the walls and golden oldies on the vintage jukebox, the chops-andmartinis joint evokes a Mad Men vibe.

The latest weird and wonderful entry to LA's nightlife scene is dance club/exhibition space DBA (dbahollywood.com) in the heart of West Hollywood. Standing for "doing business as", DBA is touted as a "blank canvas" brought alive by a revolving set of curators - expect everything from art displays, cabaret and avant-garde performances to go with your cocktails. Reservations are essential. Another sexy new nightspot is Warwick (warwickla.com) - with its multiple bars, oversized chandeliers and cushy couches, it is becoming known for its fashionable crowd as much as its cocktails. The Powder Room (powderroomla.net), a slip of a diner and cocktail parlour, is the late-night place to chill out over classic tunes, handcrafted cocktails and its signature spiked milkshakes. Feeling especially indulgent? Try the US\$500 Velvet Goldmine alcoholic milkshake that is topped with edible gold leaf and comes with a Swarovski ring. For a mellower scene, Bar Stella (cafestella. com) is all dimly lit cosiness, friendly folks and lovely drinks.

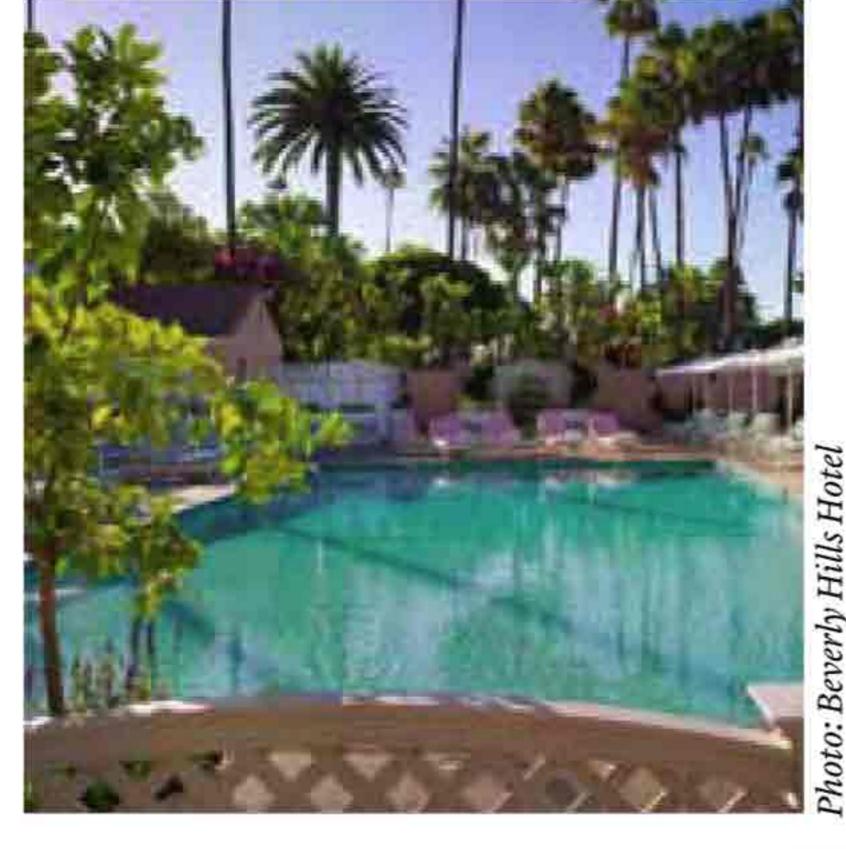


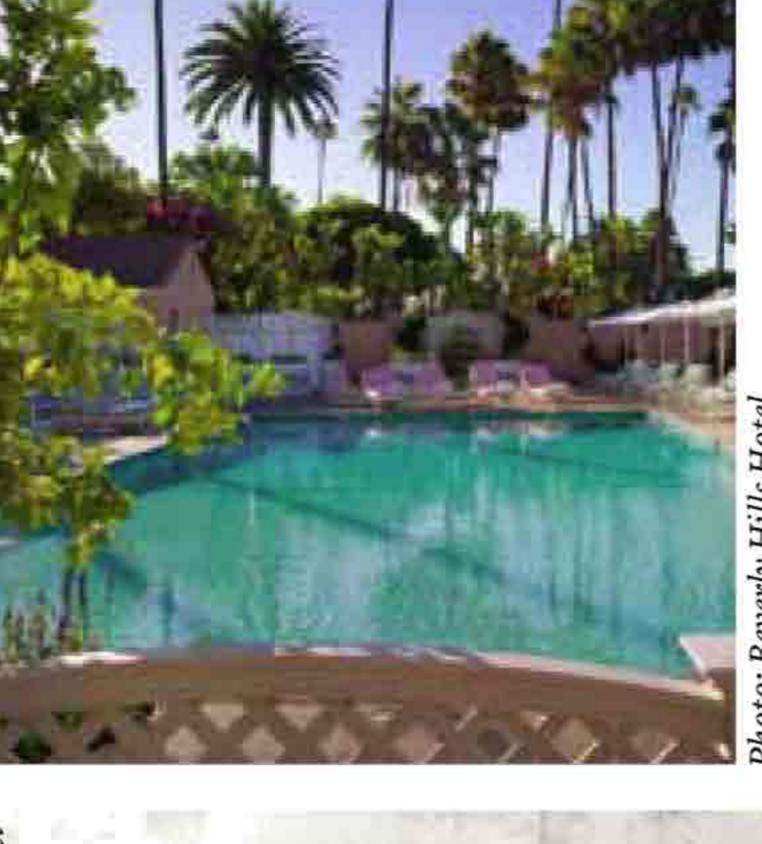
STAY

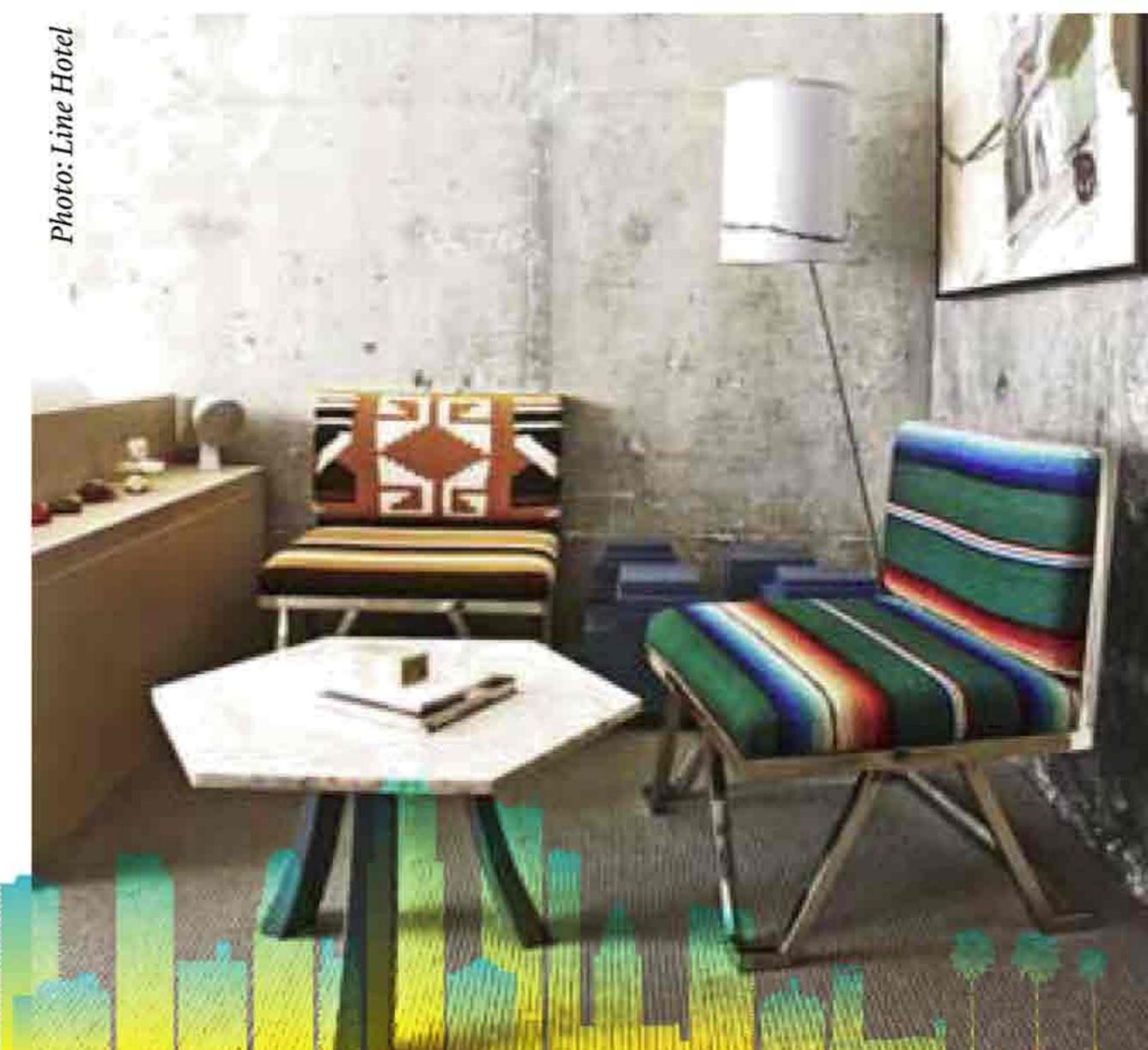
The Beverly Hills Hotel

(dorchestercollection.com/en/beverlyhills/the-beverly-hills-hotel) is the starriest crash pad in town. The fabled "Pink Palace" has played host to many superstars and still sizzles with oldtime glamour. Fun and frivolous, W Hotel's (wlosangeles.com) star-studded poolside bar, destination restaurants and lavish spa are made for lingering. Hipster chain Ace Hotel (acehotel. com/losangeles) brings its brand of retro-chic coolness to the iconic United Artists Theatre. This 182-room boutique hotel boasts swanky touches, like a rooftop bar, screening room and retro turntables.

The arty Line Hotel (thelinehotel. com) in Koreatown is set to be an allhours social club, with a rooftop pool, restaurant serving hotpot-style street food, vegetarian canteen, bakery, and a nightclub all open into the wee hours. A boutique B&B set in an ivyclad mansion, Venice Beach House (venicebeachhouse.com) offers low-key luxury amid rolling lawns and a seaside locale. Expect polished wooden floors, Oriental rugs, four-poster beds and shelves of vintage books. >







THE LOCAL WORD



Bradley Tuck, lations consulta

SOME FAVOURITE **IIDDEN GEMS?**

Tucked down an alleyway in the Arts District is The Daily Dose Inc (dailydoseinc.com) a tiny café with a flower-filled outdoor patio. The walls are covered in vines and you feel as though you're in an old town in Europe. There's always a cool-looking crowd enjoying fab cappuccinos and some of the best sandwiches in town. I also like Abbot Kinney for the quirky shops,

beach-shack cafés and people watching.

WHERE DO YOU SHOP? Douglas Fir (facebook.com) douglasfirstore), a brilliant little menswear store, which carries carefully selected labels geared for men over 30. Nothing is too "trendy" and unwearable, but it's always fresh and current with pieces from designers like Martin Margiela and Paul Smith. And you spot the shopping too. Mohawk Man (mohawkgeneralstore.com), is a recently opened eclectic boutique and art gallery that's an offshoot of Mohawk General Store, which stocks everything from vintage clothing, under-the-radar designers, and rare music and books in Silver Lake.

occasional male celeb in there

RECOMMENDATIONS?

High up in the Malibu Hills is the Old Place (oldplacecornell. com), a bar-restaurant that looks like a frontier saloon from a movie set. It's quaint and cosy with homespun cooking like macaroni and cheese bake, mushroom skillet and berry cobbler. In the '70s, it was a backwoods pit stop for stars laying low like Jason Robards and Steve McQueen. These days all the locals and showbiz folks crowd the bar. The woodland setting and country air, pines and horses make it the perfect oasis in a busy city.

