2015 Best of L.A.

Los Angeles Magazine

Ballona Freshwater Marsh

Best Bird-Watching for Beginners
BEST OF LA
83 of our FAVORITE THINGS
multilevel patio, hedged in by greenery and festooned with strands of lights, to elevate the enchantment. 
» 3626 W. Sunset Blvd., Silver Lake, 323-666-6116 or cliffedgecafe.com.

BAR HOUSE ACT

→ HAIR METAL? 
Came and went.
G-funk? A relic. But MARTY & EALYNE, the headlining duo at the Dresden, are L.A. constants. For 34 years the crooners have held court at the Los Feliz lounge, playing jazz standards along with their kitschy cover of “Stayn’ Alive” (immortalized in the film Swing). Marty’s Sinatra-lite vocal stylings and Ealyn’s jazz scat have provided the soundtrack for everything from birthday parties to double dates; the twosome can be either the main attraction or pleasant background music, depending on where you sit. » 1760 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz, 323-665-4294 or thedresden.com.

BIRD-WATCHING FOR BEGINNERS

→ BRING AN early-morning repast and binoculars, grab a bench facing the BALLONA FRESHWATER MARSH, and voilà: avian TV. Songbirds settle on nearby sycamores, coots skimp the water’s surface, egrets fly through the reeds, and great blue herons stand as if posing for portraits.

More than 240 species have been spotted in this Playa del Rey preserve. A public jogging path offers additional viewpoints to track the airborne residents—just go to the Friends of Ballona Web site for a birding checklist. Better still? Show up on the second or fourth Saturday of the month for an Audubon tour into normally verboten zones. » Jefferson Blvd. at Lincoln Blvd., Playa del Rey, 310-306-5994 or ballonafriends.org.

STORYTELLING NIGHT

→ DEAR DIARY: MORTIFIED LIVE is the coolest touring storytelling show in L.A. Performers share embarrassing childhood relics—journals, art, song lyrics—in front of a live audience (but unlike in middle school, the crowd laughs with the victims, not at them). With this sort of reaction, it’s surprisingly fun to relive youth’s most awkward moments. Thank goodness dorky kids document their naive, angry, confused, and lustful thoughts. Now they have something to read aloud to folks who will surely understand why, if Scott Baio really knew us, he would love us as much as we love him. » getmortified.com.

GO-KARTING

→ THE KIDS WILL gladly forgo their Grand Theft Auto and Mario Kart when they see the six outdoor tracks at GO KART WORLD. For less than the cost of a tank of gas ($30 per person if you buy online), drivers enjoy unlimited rides for two hours. Give drifting a try on the Slick Track, or if the need is for speed, head to the Super Track, where cars go up to 45 mph. Lines can be long on weekends, but the pros outweigh the cons. With the wind in your hair, the experience recalls what driving was like before you became a commuter: exhilarating. » 21530 Recreation Rd., Carson, 310-834-3700 or gokartworld.com.

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