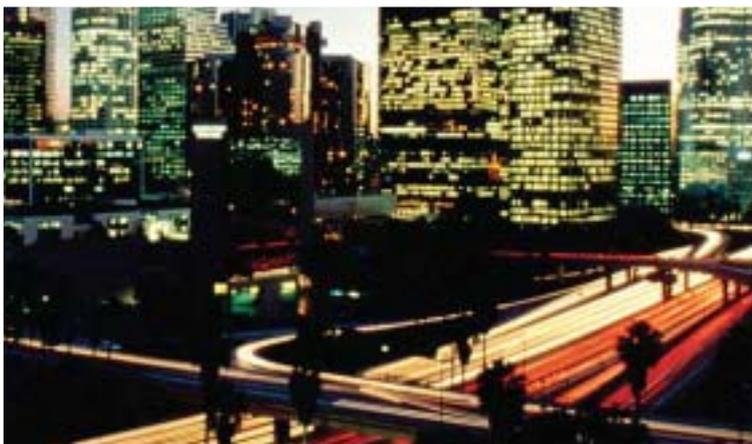
A full-page background image of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is a bright yellow circle in the upper right, casting a shimmering path of light across the water. In the lower left, two silhouetted figures are walking along the beach. The overall color palette is warm, dominated by oranges, yellows, and reds.

California • Dreaming

Fancy a place in the sun where you share the boulevards with household names? We look at the homes of which dreams are made near the dream factory of Hollywood



Charlie Chaplin, Cary Grant, Alfred Hitchcock, Catherine Zeta Jones... No, it's not an easy game of odd-one-out – in fact all of them have played a part in the long history of Brits decamping for the sunny boulevards of California the moment they achieve a little success or money. Indeed, as Los Angeles is home to the dream factory of Hollywood, it's no surprise that people in search of a new image or career jump-start should head there. But if you're not interested in changing your name, reputation or even physical attributes, then the exclusive communities of LA still have lot of offer, from the prim Beverly Hills to the beachfront glamour of Malibu. Given that more American films are shot in Canada and Europe than in Hollywood these days, it's obvious that all these movie people aren't just living there just easy commuting. The 360 sunny days a year might have something to do with it, not to mention the laidback lifestyle and bang-for-buck you get from a top-dollar Californian property.

It's a commonplace that the first-time visitor to the United States finds everything 'just like the movies'. It's not that the hucksters in Hollywood have devoted their time to slavishly documenting the reality of American life, just that things seem... well, bigger there. Wider streets, insanely tall buildings, grand design and sunshine that provides beautiful three-point lighting – and this is pushed to the limit in LA where movie life and real life feed into each other.

Hollywood will probably never lose its image as the home of the stars, but that's pretty much a myth these days as most celebrities have moved on to trendier coastal locations. This does mean that prices near Sunset Strip are fairly reasonable – and that pretty much every home will come with a Golden Age star-story. Some examples might help; Humphrey Bogart's home in the 1940s, just off Sunset Strip, recently sold for around £1,000,000 – and the same price could get you a very respectable home in the Hollywood Hills with views of the city lights. For around £2,800,000 you can find yourself with a state-of-the-art glass home on stilts. Your neighbours may not be household names – though a few big-name musicians still have homes in the area – but you'll be compensated with (relative) value for money and the thrill of owning a true Hollywood address.



One of the most prestigious addresses in the entire country (perhaps the world – even the zip code, 90210, is famous), Beverly Hills is the place for those who've made it big. The grand reputation for high living and luxury is belied by the fact its only 5.7 square miles in size, it's the concentration of famous names and addresses – Rodeo Drive, Wiltshire Boulevard – that have made it such a renowned area. Prices rarely drop under £1,200,000 for a house and can stretch as far as £15 million for a 15-bedroom mansion. David Geffen – current media mogul and partner in Dreamworks – set the record in 1990 by paying around £30 million for the 10-acre estate formerly owned by movie producer Jack Warner.

In recent years there's been a drift of celebrities away from Beverly Hills towards more low-key oceanfront neighbourhoods like Malibu, Brentwood or Pacific Palisades. The latter is perched on a cliff between Santa Monica and Malibu and already home to Arnold Schwarzenegger as well as more respectable players like Steven Spielberg and Anthony Hopkins. If you're considering joining them (and the tight-knit community feel could make neighbourhood meetings a hoot) then be prepared for the prices – a standard family home without view or pool will still set you back almost £1 million.



Market madness

Property prices in the city have soared recently – by 15% in the last seven years and then by a staggering 30% in the last year in most areas. Anthony Marguleas, owner of AM Realty, based in Pacific Palisades, says that the madness in the LA market peaked in March – after months of up to 30 people making offers greatly in excess of asking prices, the market has calmed down with more property becoming available and interest rates creeping up.

So, you may think it's a bad time for Pacific buyers. But consider two things; the dollar is at an all-time low against the pound making it the best possible time for the British to buy American – and demand for homes is set to outstrip supply for a long time to come meaning, if you buy now and stay with the investment for three to five years, then you're likely to come out ahead.

We've selected a range of properties in areas frequented by the rich and famous – each is richly equipped in those LA essentials of pool and spa, set in landscaped gardens and has enough room for the biggest family or the busiest cast and crew party.



Malibu

Mediterranean-style villa situated in an exclusive gated community. Along with access to 27 miles of gorgeous coastline this property has five bedrooms, six bathrooms, sitting room, lounge with fireplace, walk-in wardrobes, gourmet kitchen, spa, pool and barbecue facilities.

Price: £1,858,515 Contact: +44 (0)1245 358877 and quote IH1106/S80



Beverly Hills

Wallace Neff – architect of California’s Golden Age - designed this villa on an acre of land. It has all the original features with huge courtyard, landscaped gardens, pool, detached office suites, state of the art security systems and detached guesthouse – in one of the best locations in California.

Price: £5,336,995

Contact: +44 (0)1245 358877 and quote IH1106/S81



Hancock Park

Registered landmark family home dating from the 1920s. Fully restored, with tremendous attention to detail in the wooden interiors, this has eight bedrooms, six bathrooms, ozone-filtered pool, landscaped garden, pond and wine cellar.

Price: £3,009,283

Contact: +44 (0)1245 358877 and quote IH1106/CB82



Pacific Palisades

In the stomping ground of the celebrities this modern villa gives clear views of the coastline, mountains and city lights and is regarded as a local architectural landmark. Five bedrooms and bathrooms, family room with fireplace, gym, complete office and maid’s quarters surrounded by landscaped gardens.

Price: £1,505,310

Contact: +44 (0)1245 358877 and quote IH1106/CB83



Bel Air

A touch of England in the luxury suburbs of Bel Air, this Tudor manor has an acre of verdant garden, grand gallery and entrance hall, family and dining rooms, five bedrooms, library, bar, gym, large pool, sauna and spa.

Price: £6,541,010

Contact: +44 (0)1245 358877 and quote IH1106/S84