

Sunset

Fall beach
escapes P. 106

Grilled
steak P. 98

How to
grow
sweet
peas P. 57

Easy
fence
facelifts P. 78

Resort Style at Home

Great ideas to
create serenity
both indoors
and out P. 112

SEPTEMBER 2004

www.sunset.com
AOL KEYWORD: SUNSET
\$4.99/\$6.50 in Canada

A small town in the big city

Near Griffith Park, L.A.'s Atwater Village is all grown-up

BY LAURA RANDALL
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ZAITZ

Residents of Atwater Village want you to get one thing straight: Their neighborhood is *not* part of Silver Lake, Los Feliz, or Glendale. It's a stand-alone community of 16,000 people that happens to border better-known neighborhoods near Griffith Park.

For years, the neighborhood was known as just plain Atwater. Its two main thoroughfares, Glendale and Los Feliz Boulevards, offered a practical but unsightly string of medical offices and a shoe-repair shop. The Tam O'Shanter Inn (\$\$\$; 2980 Los Feliz Blvd.; 323/664-0228), a Scottish-themed restaurant that was the favored lunch spot of Walt Disney, was one of Atwater's few stand-out destinations.



Where it's Atwater

Atwater Village is at the southeastern edge of Griffith Park and borders the Los Angeles River and Glendale. From I-5, exit at Glendale Blvd. or Los Feliz Blvd.

Residents banded together in the late 1970s to add "village" to the name. And, especially in the last few

years, the neighborhood has begun to live up to its moniker. Today Atwater Village has a yoga studio, a candle boutique, a couple of cool coffeehouses, and Bigfoot Lodge (3172 Los Feliz; 323/662-9227), a cocktail lounge that attracts hipsters from all over. In May locals rejoiced when India Sweets & Spices (\$; 3126 Los Feliz; 323/345-0360), a popular Indian grocery chain and vegetarian restaurant, opened in a long-abandoned billiards parlor.

Visitors quickly pick up the village's close-knit, neighborly vibe. At Jill's Paint (closed Sun; 3534 Larga Ave.; 323/664-9067), a high-end paint store, coffee is brewing every morning, and owner Peg McCloud



hosts afternoon wine-tasting sessions at the back-room bar at 4:30. "Atwater Village still has that cute, kind of quaint small-town feel," McCloud says. "We wanted to be a neighborhood store, and this had the neighborhood feel."

Besides the still-thriving Tam O'Shanter Inn, eating options include modest, two-year-old Baracoa Cuban Café (\$; 3175 Glendale Blvd.; 323/665-9590) and Tacos Villa Corona (\$; closed Sun; 3185 Glendale; 323/661-3458), a popular taqueria. For a casual lunch and a dose of 1940s architecture, head to the shady back patio of Eat Café (\$; 3207 Los Feliz; 323/661-2355), where you can watch golfers tee off at the adjacent nine-hole course while digging into short-order standards like a patty melt and a root beer float. ●

Village life: Try Jill's Paint for surprisingly good wine-tasting; the Tam O'Shanter Inn for prima rib; and the new India Sweets & Spices for unusual snacks like spiced cashews.