

MAKING IT HOME

LIVING IN THE **HEART** OF IT ALL

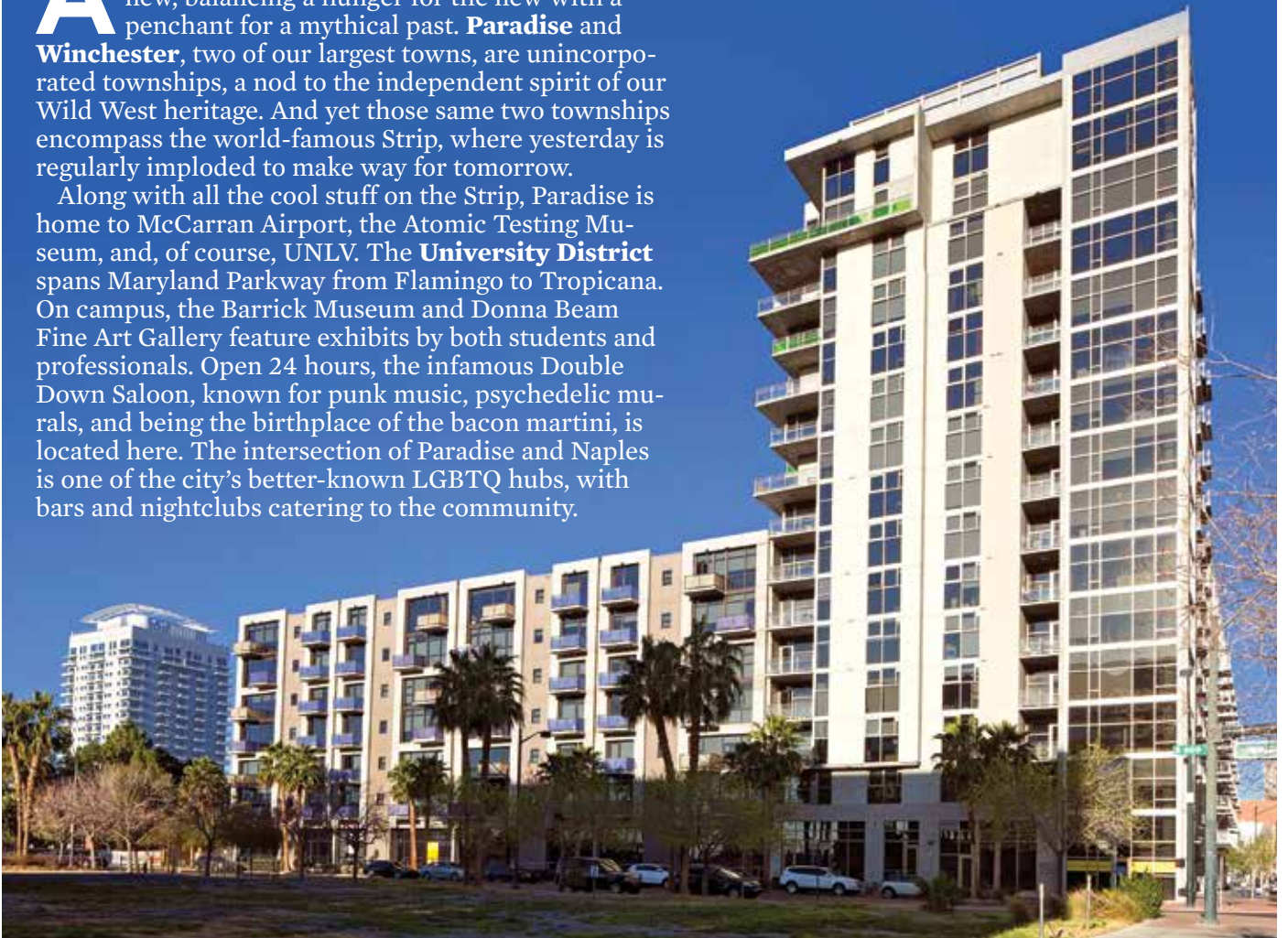
FINDING YOUR CENTER

URBAN RENEWAL IN CENTRAL AND DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS

The historic center and University District offer smart city amenities to adventurous urbanites
BY ELISABETH DANIELS

At its heart, Las Vegas is a quirky mix of old and new, balancing a hunger for the new with a penchant for a mythical past. **Paradise** and **Winchester**, two of our largest towns, are unincorporated townships, a nod to the independent spirit of our Wild West heritage. And yet those same two townships encompass the world-famous Strip, where yesterday is regularly imploded to make way for tomorrow.

Along with all the cool stuff on the Strip, Paradise is home to McCarran Airport, the Atomic Testing Museum, and, of course, UNLV. The **University District** spans Maryland Parkway from Flamingo to Tropicana. On campus, the Barrick Museum and Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery feature exhibits by both students and professionals. Open 24 hours, the infamous Double Down Saloon, known for punk music, psychedelic murals, and being the birthplace of the bacon martini, is located here. The intersection of Paradise and Naples is one of the city's better-known LGBTQ hubs, with bars and nightclubs catering to the community.



MAKING IT HOME

Stretching past Paradise and Winchester, Las Vegas Boulevard winds into **Downtown**, the historic center of the city. Before the development of the Strip, it was also the core gambling district. Fremont Street remains the heart of downtown gaming — now framing a pedestrian mall underneath a 90-foot-tall canopy, 1,500-foot-long. With a nightly light show, loved-and-loathed SlotZilla zipline attraction, local bands and national acts playing on three stages, and exceptional people watching, it'd be easy to stay on Fremont.

But then you'd miss Fremont East, "an up-and-coming entertainment district catering to local hipsters," according to Geoff Schumacher, author of *Sun, Sin & Suburbia: The History of Modern Las Vegas*, with hotspots like the Beat Coffeehouse and Records, Atomic Liquors, and Downtown Cocktail Room. North of Fremont is the Downtown 3rd area, or dt3, best known for the Mob Museum and its Friday Downtown 3rd Farmers Market. South of Fremont is 18b Arts District, an assortment of art galleries, one-of-a-kind stores, and restaurants.

With an eclectic blend of history and art, a diverse range of activities and nightlife, and the appeal of an urban lifestyle, Downtown and Central Las Vegas bring a lot of verve to the city. *ED*



VARIETY PACK

SMALL, CLASSIC AND HIGH LIVING

From retro ranches to sleek mid-rise living

HIGH LIVING

Those craving a more urban lifestyle in the midst of Downtown's renaissance can choose from four high-rise condos — **Soho Lofts, Newport Lofts, Ogden and Juhl**. These properties offer easy walkability, luxury amenities,

minimal maintenance and great views. A 1,356-square-foot, one-bedroom, two-bath condo at Soho Lofts (900 Las Vegas Blvd. S.) was recently listed on Zillow for \$294,999. A one-bedroom, one-bath unit at the Juhl (353 E. Bonneville Ave.) was recently listed for rent on Zillow for \$1,250/month.

Downtown denizens-to-be will soon have another option to choose from. Construction is underway on **Fremont & 9th**, a 5-story, podium-style building that will combine 231 stylishly appointed rental units with 15,000 square feet of retail space along Fremont Street.



HELLO, NEIGHBOR! Heidi Swank is about two-thirds of the way through of an epic restoration of her historic home in Downtown's Beverly Green neighborhood — from the floor slab to the cabinets. It's a labor of love in more ways than one. Swank isn't just a mid-century modern fan, she's also executive director of the Nevada Preservation Foundation. The foundation raises awareness about historic preservation and helps shepherd neighborhoods through the process of obtaining historic status. "People think getting a historic designation is just a touchy-feely thing, but there are good economic reasons for doing so, too," says Swank. For instance, it boosts home values and buffers them against economic downturns, and gives the community a sense of historic connection. In the case of Swank's home, that connection became personal. Researching her home's history, she discovered it was designed by Hugh Taylor, a prolific mid-century architect known for his homes as well as his design work on the Moulin Rouge and Sunrise Hospital. Not only was Swank able to contact Taylor and get her home's original plans. The Nevada Preservation Foundation became the curator of Taylor's archives, a collection of thousands of architectural drawings and photographs. *Andrew Kiraly*

HEIDI SWANK AND PARADISE PALMS: BRENT HOLMES; HIGH RISE, BUNGALO AND JOHN S. PARK HOMES: CHRISTOPHER SMITH



CALL OF THE BUNGALOW

Near Fremont East, the **Biltmore Bungalows** (which aren't actually bungalows at all), were built in the 1940s as homes for civilians supporting the war effort. Homes in this subdivision are mostly two-bedroom cottages. An 832-square-foot, two-bedroom, one-bathroom Biltmore Bungalow home, located at 320 Bonanza Way, recently sold for \$30,000 on Zillow.

West of the I-15 and walking distance to Downtown, the upscale **Scotch 80s** features ranch estates on large lots. The well-heeled **McNeil Estates** neighborhood blends unique homes in a variety of architectural styles with a central location, west of Rancho Drive between Charleston and Oakey.

RETRO CHARM

Fans of retro charm will appreciate the **Huntridge** and **John S. Park** neighborhoods, both located south of Charleston and east of Las

Vegas Boulevard. In 2003, the residents of John S. Park successfully petitioned to have their neighborhood designated as a historic district, so the homes here have to stay true to their original designs. Built between the early 1930s and the late 1950s, the homes in John S. Park are predominantly Colonial-Revival or Ranch. The difference is easy to spot. Instead of the L- or U-shaped floor plans, covered patios and rustic exteriors that characterize ranch houses, Colonial-Revival homes are rectangular, with multi-pane windows and entrances accented with columns, pediments or hoods. (Many of the area's last remaining Tudor-style houses are here, too.) A 2,960-square-foot, one-story, single-family home with three bedrooms and three bathrooms, located at 1311 S. 7th Street in the John S. Park neighborhood, was recently listed for \$339,900 on Zillow. *ED*

In the Neighborhood

It's no surprise that Paradise Palms was named the Valley's "Hottest Neighborhood of 2015" by real estate website Redfin. Popular in its heyday, this quaint vintage neighborhood is seeing a resurgence of interest.

Situated between Downtown and the University District, Paradise Palms was Las Vegas' first master-planned community, developed in the 1960s by Vegas developer Irwin Molasky. Close to the Strip, the curved streets and cul-de-sacs made it feel private, which is why stars like Johnny Carson, Debbie Reynolds, and Phyllis Diller had homes here. Mob associate Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal, the inspiration for the protagonist in the movie *Casino*, was a resident as well.

The houses at Paradise Palms had multiple designers, which lent the community



a playful, quirky feel. Homes designed by architects Dan Palmer and William Krisel were characterized by open, ranch-style floor plans, post-and-beam construction on concrete slabs, clerestory windows, decorative block walls, and seamless indoor-to-outdoor spaces. Desert Inn archi-

tect Hugh E. Taylor had an edgier style. He favored angled butterfly roofs and coarse concrete, stretches of glass, wood and stone, and ornamental shutters. The variety of rooflines and colors are just as appealing today as they were back then. *ED*



PublicUs



CROWN JEWELS

TILTS AND BUZZES

Street smarts: Maryland

There's something old and something new on our "other" main street

Maryland Parkway is an unsung main street. Spanning from Downtown to midtown, the street features cheap eats, dive bars and cool cultural quirks. Let's start on south Maryland Parkway and Fremont Street at new downtown cafe **PublicUs** (publicuslv.com). This place is so artisanal, you'd suspect even the unerringly cheery baristas are free-range. Its design might be called Martha Stewart Industrial; the food and drink, painstaking and precise but rich and generous, too. Up the street is **The Center** (thecenterlv.org). It's the social HQ of the LGBTQ community, offering classes and services, but it feeds bodies as well as souls: Check out the can't-believe-it's-vegan dishes at the Center's **Bronze Cafe**, helmed by the inventive chef Peter Bastien.

Okay, including the entirety of **Commercial Center** (Sahara just west of Maryland) on a street crawl may be cheating, but, it's necessary to give a proper shout-out to its Thai comfort food (**Komol**, komolrestaurant.com), Northern Thai cuisine (**Lotus of Siam**, lotusofsiamlv.com), its edgy plays (**Onyx Theatre**, onyxtheatre.com), not to mention its celebrated trans dive bar, **Las Vegas Lounge** (702-737-9350).

Maryland Parkway also has some of the best dive

bars in the city, from the rapidly hipsterfying **Hunt-ridge Tavern** (702-384-7377) at Charleston to the nautically themed **Smuggle Inn** (702-731-1305) on Vegas Valley Drive, with its strangely comforting, dim, smoky, subsea murk, to **Champagnes Cafe** (702-737-1699) at Twain, a literal and figurative brick house of no-frills drinking. Finally, grizzled blue-collar rub elbows with equally grizzled grad students at the **Stake Out** (702-798-8383) — and the burgers, wings and various fried things are surprisingly good.

Across the street is UNLV, but for a different kind of book-learning, check out **Alternate Reality Comics** near Flamingo and Maryland (alternaterealitycomics.net), a volcano of pop culture that features everything from smash-'em-up superhero tales to underground comic to action figures. *AK*



CENTER PIECE *On Maryland Parkway just south of Charleston is The Center, a place devoted to providing services and support to the LGBTQ community. But it's so much more: It's a hangout, a social hub, resource center and, in many ways, the heart of the gay and lesbian community in Southern Nevada.*

• Behind the doors of a nondescript warehouse next to a strip mall, a multi-sensory repository of popular culture awaits. The **Pinball Hall of Fame** (1610 E. Tropicana Ave.) houses the largest collection of pinball machines in the world. Unlike most museums, you can touch (and play) the hundreds of pinball machines, classic arcade games and other novelty machines. It's a nonprofit with a volunteer staff, and every quarter you drop into a machine goes to charity. Considering that games cost between one and four quarters to play, \$20 will go a long way for you — and a good cause.

• **Tenaya Creek Brewery** (831 W. Bonanza Road), is a buzzy new arrival downtown — literally. Formerly a suburban brews-and-food operation, the new location marks a renewed focus on its well-respected craft brews, from crisp pilsners to heavies like its God of Thunder, a thick, rich, sweet Baltic porter with a nice kick.

• When you see the motorcycles out front, you'll know you've arrived at **Hogs & Heifers Saloon** (201 N. Third St.). Order a beer or a shot of whiskey, but don't ask for wine — or blended drinks. They do serve lots of fun attitude. The bartenders scream out orders over megaphones, and the girls dance on the bar, wearing strategically placed stickers in case they decide to take their tops off. Be sure to look for Jim Morrison's mug shot and arrest report on the wall. *ED*

PUBLICUS: THE CENTER AND PINBALL HALL OF FAME: BRENT HOLMES; GET OUT PHOTO COURTESY OF SPRINGS PRESERVE



MAKING THE GRADE

Area schools of special note

Founded by Wharton School of Business graduate Connie Yeh in 2013, **9TH BRIDGE SCHOOL** (310 S. Ninth St.) is a private preschool with an entrepreneurial focus. Enrolling infants through second-graders, the curriculum at 9th Bridge centers on “social-emotional learning” along with science, reading and math.

Number of Students: 45
Ages: 6 weeks through 7-9 years
Indoor/outdoor classroom environments

VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL (2839 S. Burnham Ave.) is a public school that offers two well-regarded magnet programs. The curriculum for the International Baccalaureate program is considered to be among the most rigorous in the world. Through the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism, students gain experience from internships at Las Vegas resorts and a partnership with the Hotel Administration College at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Graduation Rate: 66.06%
Average Class Size: 22-27
The class of 2014 earned \$8.8 million in scholarships, with students now attending colleges such as Princeton, Tulane, Brown, and Cornell.

Now 23 years old, **LAS VEGAS ACADEMY OF THE ARTS** (South Ninth Street and East Clark Avenue) quickly become an educational institution, turning out world-class musicians, dancers and more. The school has received 12 Grammy awards, more than any school in the country.

Average GPA: 3.742
Graduation Rate: 98.2%
Average Class Size: 27-29
Awarded a 5-Star School rating for the past two years

GET OUT (OR PLAY IN)

Quench your thirst for culture, learning and fun

Embrace your competitive side at the **Gold Spike** (217 Las Vegas Blvd. N.). Play ping pong, pool and oversized cornhole in air-conditioned comfort in the Living Room. Or soak up some Vitamin D over a round of giant chess or Jenga in the Backyard. The more introverted among you will gravitate toward the hotel’s media library, stocked with books to borrow and vinyl records to play on a portable Crosley turntable.

The 180-acre **Springs Preserve** sits on the Las Vegas Springs, the city’s original water source. If the wide range of exhibits and two museums (Nevada State Museum and Origen Museum) don’t quench your thirst for knowledge of the area’s history and culture, follow the 3.65 miles of trails through 11 acres of native habitats and archeological sites.

Stroll through the Las Vegas’ luminous past at the **Neon Museum** (770 Las Vegas Blvd. N.). Meet your guide at the clamshell-shaped Visitors Center, which is the former La Concha Motel lobby. From there, you’ll walk through one and a half acres piled high with donated and rescued signs. Go at night to see several signs illuminated. And keep an eye out for a few fully restored signs that have been mounted throughout DTLV. *ED*

Amenities & Attractions

The fun begins before you set foot in the **Downtown Container Park** (707 E. Fremont St.) when you’re greeted at the entrance by a

flame-throwing, 40-foot-high praying mantis. Inside, repurposed shipping containers housing retailers and restaurants line the perimeter, and a large playground and stage fill in the center.

Displayed throughout **Main**

Street Station Casino Brewery Hotel (200 N. Main St.) is an eclectic assortment of antiques and curiosities. Pick up a brochure and map from the front desk or bell desk in the lobby and take a self-guided tour through

history. The most unusual attraction? A graffiti-covered section of the Berlin Wall located in the men’s restroom off the main casino floor. It’s not just for men’s eyes only. Women can ask to be escorted in by security to see this

pivotal piece of the past, too. **Winchester Cultural Center** (3130 McLeod Drive) is Clark County’s only full-service arts facility. Programming covers the usual dance, theater, and the visual arts, but also more unexpected

areas like fitness and skateboarding. There are offerings for adults as well as youth. The center has a gallery that exhibits the work of local artists, an indoor theater, a desert demonstration garden and a skate park. *ED*

MAY: SUMMERLIN AND ENVIRONS