If Pacific Palisades seems apart from the city, more retreat than urban neighborhood, that's because it is — and has been for nearly a century.

Formally founded in the 1920s by a Methodist organization, Pacific Palisades in the years since has also been a place of shelter for Jewish artists and intellectuals fleeing the horrors of the Third Reich, and later for privacy-chasing celebrities.

But before the Methodists put it on the map, the Palisades cycled through a number of different identities, none of which stuck: resort town (done in by the land bust of the 1890s), candidate for the site of L.A.'s new port (lost out to San Pedro) and primary home of Thomas Ince's movie-making empire (nudged aside by Culver City).
Once the church’s development bonds were sold and Founders Tracts 1 and 2 were laid out, Pacific Palisades’ future as a sought-after residential neighborhood was assured.

From traditional clapboard homes and Spanish Colonial Revival mansions to a collection of Midcentury-Modern masterpieces by architects such as Cliff May, Richard Neutra, Charles and Ray Eames, and Eero Saarinen, the Palisades has architectural eye candy for everyone. Even the Olmstead Brothers had a hand in making the neighborhood by creating the layout of many of the original 1920s tracts.

**Neighborhood highlights**

Seaside living: Wherever you are, you’re going to enjoy the benefits of coastal living, including cool sea breezes, easy access to the beach and plenty of spectacular sunsets.

Village feel: It’s only one portion of the Palisades, but the walkability and small-town feel of the Village and adjacent Alphabet Streets and Huntington Palisades neighborhoods is a strong draw. The area is also the site of a redevelopment project from Grove developer [Rick Caruso](#), which is slated to bring more retail to the neighborhood.
The great outdoors: With three large parks, hiking and biking trails, the beach and the Riviera Country Club golf course, there are plenty of ways to get out and enjoy the mild coastal climate and beautiful scenery of the Palisades.

Seaside living with a Mayberry feel is what you can get, if you don’t mind a rough commute—and if you can afford a home there.

**Neighborhood challenge**

High-water mark: Buying into this bedroom community for Hollywood elite will come at a premium. The area saw 46 closed sales of $5 million or more in 2015, an 18% increase from the previous year, according to a recent luxury market report by Coldwell Banker Previews International. There were 10 sales of $10 million or more, a 43% increase year over year.

Challenging commute: There are basically two ways in and out the Pacific Palisades, and neither is ideal. Sunset Boulevard’s traffic is notoriously bad, particularly at its intersection with the 405. Pacific Coast Highway, meanwhile, offers iconic scenery, but one rock slide or car crash can bring the whole thing to a grinding halt. On the other hand, this isolation is seen by many residents as a plus.

**Expert advice**
Nicole Howard, a veteran real estate broker with Gibson International, has lived in the Pacific Palisades for two decades.

"There's no place like it. It's where the mountains meet the sea," she said. "You can walk six minutes one way and be at a trailhead, and 10 minutes the other way to get to the beach."

Howard said prospective buyers should learn about the different pockets of the community to figure out if they want to be walking distance to the Village, or up high with "dead-on ocean views."

Sellers, meanwhile, should price their homes right and consider staging. Some people like to have a home inspection before listing.

"Choose an agent who knows who would want to buy your house, and market to them," she said. "There are so many architectural styles here, you want to find someone who is interested in your home's style."

**Market snapshot**

In February, based on 18 sales, the median price for single-family homes in the 90272 ZIP Code was $2.69 million, down 7.6% from February 2015, according to CoreLogic. The median price for condos was $1.168 million, based on four sales.

**Report card**

Canyon Elementary tops the charts for the area with a score of 977 out of a possible 1,000 in the 2013 API ranking system. Other bright spots include Palisades Charter Elementary, with a score of 952; Marquez Avenue Elementary, with a score of 934; and Paul Revere Middle, with a score of 903. Westside Innovative School House came in at 895, and Palisades Charter High scored 861.