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# THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

## The battle over Iran

Can Netanyahu and the GOP smack down Obama's deal?  
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MEBLL



## This week's dream: Full-immersion Hollywood

"Hollywood today is not the place it was 50 years ago"—but "so what?" said Adam Nagourney in *The New York Times*. If you'd like to visit, you should, because as hard as it is to define the actual borders of this Los Angeles neighborhood, the idea of Hollywood remains "a particularly useful prism" through which to explore a "vastly interesting" city. No, you won't see film stars traveling in packs from nightspot to nightspot anymore. The actors' homes are more scattered, and those who might otherwise reprise the Brat Pack act "have been scared off by the rise of the paparazzi." But if you seek the essence of contemporary Hollywood, you'll find it—and no doubt run into a celebrity or two along the way.

Start with the "shopworn touchstones" on Hollywood Boulevard: the TCL Chinese Theatre, the Dolby Theatre where the Oscars are handed out each year, and the



Hollywood Boulevard near the TCL Chinese Theatre

2,500 brass stars laid into the sidewalk of the Hollywood Walk of Fame. There's "no need to dawdle," though, because you'll see mostly other tourists, and you need a few hours for a driving tour of the stars' homes. I recently took the Starline tour, a "lively two-hour whirl through Beverly Hills, Hollywood, and West Hollywood." Along the way, we caught glimpses of the homes

or past homes of Shirley Temple, Al Pacino, and Justin Timberlake, and even spotted part of Jay Leno's antique-car collection.

You should stay at the Sunset Tower or the Chateau Marmont. The two hotels "have long been in competition to be the town square for Hollywood," and they remain "as romantic and happening as ever." Even a drink at the Tower Bar or off the lobby at the Chateau Marmont affords a chance to gawk at passing stars and monitor the deal-making.

Once you're acclimated, though, "the best way to see Hollywood is to get lost." Drive up into the canyons off Sunset or Laurel Canyon Boulevard, then turn into any street that "grabs your sense of mystery." If it's nighttime, you might imagine you've entered a Raymond Chandler novel. *At the Sunset Tower (sunsettowerhotel.com), doubles start at \$325.*

### Hotel of the week



Waking to paradise

#### Belle Mont Farm

St. Kitts, West Indies

"For those who imagine that resort sustainability means open-air tents and backpacks, Belle Mont Farm offers a pleasant surprise," said Hannah Seligson in *Forbes*. The 84 guesthouses at this new Caribbean resort feature Frette linens on the four-poster beds plus private plunge pools and verandas. Owner Val Kempadoo serves only food grown on-site or sourced locally and hires mostly locally too. Even the chemical-free golf course lives up to his high ecological standards, and all amenities—including a planned open-air cinema—will use only renewable energy. [bellemontfarm.com](http://bellemontfarm.com); doubles from \$2,250

### Getting the flavor of...

#### Two days in Mexico City

"Start early!" said Becca Hensley in the *Toronto Star* (Canada) because two days go fast when you're trying to soak up all there is to offer amid "one of the greatest cityscapes in the world." Beat the crowds to the Teotihuacan Pyramids that first morning so you'll be steeped in the region's pre-Columbian history. You can hit two early Christian sites—the 16th-century monastery of Acolman and Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe—on your way back to the city's historic heart. You'll want to see Diego Rivera's murals at the National Palace, and squeeze in the Templo Mayor ruins and the palaces on Madero Avenue before nightfall. On day two, get to Casa Luis Barragan, the colorful home of one of the world's most influential 20th-century architects. The Frida Kahlo Museum comes next, but you'll have time for the Mayan artifacts at the National Museum of Anthropology. Celebrate with a good dinner: You are no longer a Mexico City novice.

#### St. Patrick's testing ground

Forget the green beer, said Helen O'Neill in the *Associated Press*. Anyone serious about honoring St. Patrick tries to make a pilgrimage to Ireland's Croagh Patrick, a "remote, rugged" mountain that overlooks the Atlantic. The story goes that the fifth-century preacher who converted Ireland to Christianity fasted and prayed on the peak for 40 days as he wrestled with demons and eventually banished snakes from the entire island. Visitors climb to the summit year-round, often barefoot, including on the saint's feast day, March 17. Though the mountain is just 2,500 feet high, "even seasoned hikers are surprised by its steepness and difficulty." On the day I climbed to the top last year, many hikers were barefoot, and "all around, thick Irish brogues mingled with languages and accents from around the world." In County Mayo, "St. Patrick is big business," but it is the mountain—"majestic, mysterious, and a little foreboding"—that remains the main draw.

### Last-minute travel deals

#### European river cruises

Avalon Waterways is offering a \$1,000 savings on European river cruises, including trips in France, Holland, Germany, and Austria. Cruises start at \$999 with the discount. Book by March 24 for departures through October. [avalonwaterways.com](http://avalonwaterways.com)

#### Explore Bhutan

Save \$250 on a 13-day tour of Bhutan led by the country's former U.N. ambassador Lhatu Wangchuk. The \$3,440 package includes all meals and lodging, plus activities like a trek to the Tiger's Nest Monastery. Book by March 15; depart Oct. 21. [geringerglobaltravel.com](http://geringerglobaltravel.com)

#### Hudson Valley getaway

Enjoy a midweek escape to the historic Mohonk Mountain House, which is offering doubles from \$195 a night, including dinner, through April 2. The New Paltz, N.Y., resort specializes in winter activities like skating and cross-country skiing. [mohonk.com](http://mohonk.com)