

Clockwise from right:
Tanque Verde Ranch,
Holman Ranch,
Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa

Dreamy and Drivable

Get away on a single tank of gas

Vacation excitement generally wanes the moment the word “airport” comes into the conversation. But for those of us lucky enough to live in Los Angeles, there are countless top-notch getaways — from spa retreats to luxury campgrounds — within easy driving distance. Here are a few of our favorites.



RANCHO VALENCIA RESORT & SPA

Miles from Los Angeles: 100

Del Mar. Pulses quicken at the mention of this horse racing town. Those who've discovered Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa have a different reaction — a sense of peace. Reopened last October after a major renovation, Rancho Valencia is a haven for those in need of an escape from the chaos of everyday life.

Find your Zen in the Yoga Pavilion overlooking an infinity reflecting pool. Close at hand is the spa, which offers numerous bliss-inducing treatments. But it's within the walls of your peaceful villa that tranquility truly dwells. Return after dinner to find a fire warming the living room. Another fireplace is out on the patio, where a private plunge pool awaits.

KORAKIA PENSIONE

Miles from Los Angeles: 107

Desert heat and the romance of Morocco combine to glorious effect at the Korakia Pensione in Palm Springs. Sweeping guests away to another world, these villas were built in 1924 by Scottish painter Gordon Coutts in homage to Tangiers.

Days start in the courtyard over a homemade breakfast. The perfect follow-up? Yoga, bocce ball or a lazy cycle through downtown Palm Springs. Prime lounging can be found beside one of Korakia's two saltwater pools. Follow this with a snooze in a Balinese daybed in the gardens.

EL CAPITAN CANYON

Miles from Los Angeles: 95

Though El Capitan Canyon is located on the Santa Barbara coastline, this luxury campground — set amid soaring oaks and sycamores — is a world

apart. There are myriad options for bunking down, from creekside cabins to adventurous yurts.

You can explore the 300-acre property on foot or complimentary bicycles. Staff can also arrange off-site adventures like surfing, ocean kayaking, horseback riding and whale watching.

HOLMAN RANCH

Miles from Los Angeles: 318

Any place where you can pick up your room key while enjoying a glass of wine is OK by us. A fixture in Carmel Valley since 1928, the 400-acre Holman Ranch is spectacularly quiet. For a livelier scene, visit the property's stone hacienda, which offers billiards, darts and, every morning, breakfast. Roam through a sweet-smelling courtyard and an intimate chapel appears.

There are wine caves to visit, as well as skeet shooting, archery, bocce ball, horseshoes, bonfires and — why not? — exchanging vows over the view.

TANQUE VERDE RANCH

Miles from Los Angeles: 488

Angelenos' hybrids and electric cars don't flinch at the mileage to Tucson's Tanque Verde Ranch. There's a lot to see on this 144-year-old dude ranch that abuts Saguaro National Park. If you don't have a passion for horses when you got here, you will by the time you check out.

The 600-acre property's trails are also perfect for hiking and mountain biking. Visitors get to know one another over cocktails at Dog House Saloon and at the dining room's communal tables.

— BEKAH WRIGHT
Custom Publishing Writer