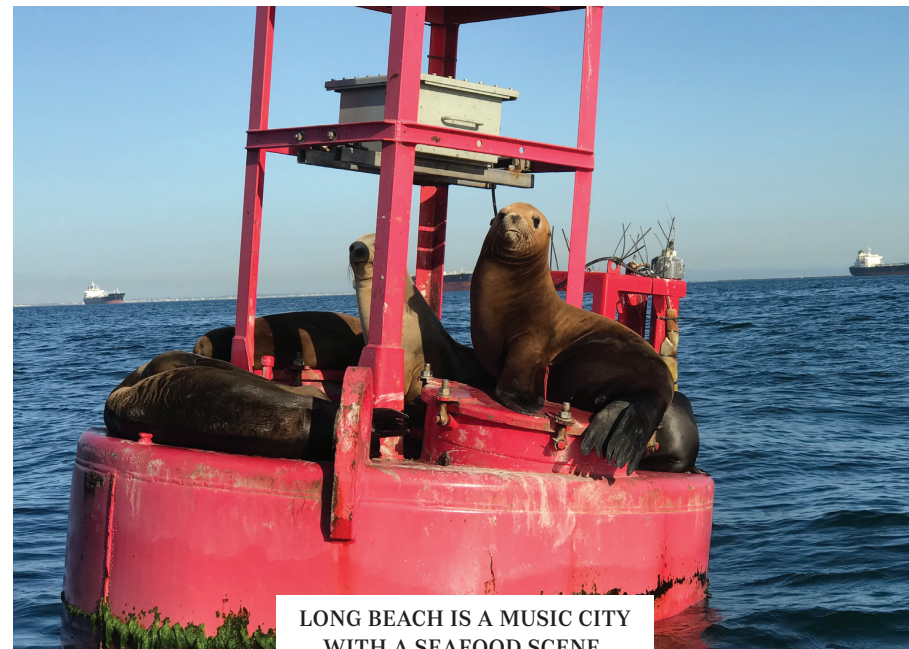


LONG BEACH. CALIFORNIA

MORE

THAN
MEETS
THE

EYE



LONG BEACH IS A MUSIC CITY
WITH A SEAFOOD SCENE.
RIGHT NOW, IT'S HAVING
A MOMENT.

WORDS BY RICK MARINO | PHOTOGRAPHS BY RHIANNON COOPER

The world-class city of Long Beach is located a mere 25 miles south of downtown Los Angeles. But it's a world of its own.

With the signature red smoke stacks of the Queen Mary off in the distance, and a skyline full of cargo cranes and bridges, there are lots of tall buildings both new and old in town. Long Beach is home to one of the largest man-made shipping ports in the world.

This place brings back memories as my family had a boat in Naples Bay when I was a teenager and one of my chores was to wash the boat once a month! I miss that! But the area has changed.

One of our old shopping villages is now hipped up with a Ballast Point Brewery and restaurant to catch a sunset along the jetty entrance to the bay.

Long Beach is a great music city that provided us with Snoop Dogg and Sublime, to name a few. There are also dozens of live music venues around town that always have something going on. Check out Alex's Bar, Di Piazza's, the Prospector or Gaslamp – where you can find everything from punk and reggae to rock 'n' roll and jazz.

While it's also known for the Long Beach Grand Prix, I discovered so much more that make this town worth checking out. »

Rick Marino is a veteran band tour manager who documents his travels at rickmarinotravels.com and on Instagram @rickmarinotravels. You can also write to him with questions at rickmarino@att.net.



WHERE TO EAT

THE CHOWDER BARGE

I love a great seafood joint, the older and dive-y-er the better. If it's floating? Forget about it! Just west of downtown, this floating café is located in a small marina deep in the harbor, paradise found. They've got seafood and burger, plus clam chowder that you can upgrade with double clams or fried clams on top. Even crazier is the "The Rev's Special," which is a 5-ounce cheeseburger swimming in a bowl of chowder. This really is a hidden gem. The ambiance and décor alone are worth a cold beer stop!

JOE JOST'S

This old-school dive bar and pub has been serving up eats and pool tables since 1934! Apparently it's world-famous, as Joe's shirts are spotted all over the globe. Joe's got the coldest beer in town, always served in giant chilled schooners. They are known for their pickled eggs – they even sell the pickling mix so you can make your own. Not a beer drinker? Joe's has been serving draft root beer since Prohibition, so grab yourself a bag of in-house roasted peanuts, some pickled eggs and a "Joe's Special" – their own Polish sausage split with a wedge pickle and served on rye bread with Swiss cheese and mustard.

CHIANINA STEAKHOUSE

Located on Naples Island, this restaurant has \$1 oyster night on Thursdays, plus really great steak!

FROM TOP: One place to stop for a bite is the Chowder Barge, where you can get a 5-ounce cheeseburger in a bowl of chowder; or, you can go thrift shopping on Retro Row; Rick Marino enjoys king crab in Alamitos Bay; the Roller Skate Shop on Retro Row



WHERE TO PLAY

AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC

You can pet stingrays and anemones, and walk through an aviary of parrots. I especially loved seeing the California sea lions being silly with one another. Just up the hill from the aquarium, Pine Street is within walking distance, and you can find a lot of great restaurants and night life, all accessible by foot.

RETRO ROW

This is a perfect example of local shopping and eats, located on Fourth Street. There are several great vintage shops, furniture and antique shops, record shops, bars and cafes! It feels like an entire area of businesses still affordable to be owned by locals. It represents the Long Beach lifestyle.

QUEEN MARY

The boat is reported to be haunted, and they have nighttime ghost tours into the decks below. Or, you can take a basic tour for the history and feel what it was like to cross the Atlantic before air travel. Check Groupon, as I was able to get on board for \$20. Or you can make a dinner reservation at the onboard restaurant Sir Winston's (locals do love it) and avoid that fee altogether!

OCEAN BOULEVARD

Perched above the beach, this street has walking and bike paths, and classic California craftsman homes to check out. The Long Beach Museum of Art is located in one of them. The beach here is long and lovely, but you may notice there are no waves! A man-made break protects the ships anchored in the harbor. Bluff Park and the Belmont Shore Pier are fun places for a beach day.

NAPLES ISLAND

Located in what is called Alamitos Bay, there are several large marinas. You can book a gondola cruise around the island at The Gondola Getaway (gondolagetawayinc.com) or rent a Duffy boat to drive yourself. This a small, electric boat that seats up to 12 people – wine and cheese parties seem to be the way to go as you head around the island. Try London Duffy Boat (londonboatrental.com) for as sunset ride.



WHERE TO STAY

Most of the hotels are located downtown and near the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center. The big brands are there, and what's best about that is how easy it is to walk around that area. I'm sure we will start to see some boutique hotels pop up soon!

You can also stay at the Queen Mary. Some years back, the state rooms were transformed into a hotel. Be careful: It's haunted! 🍷



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