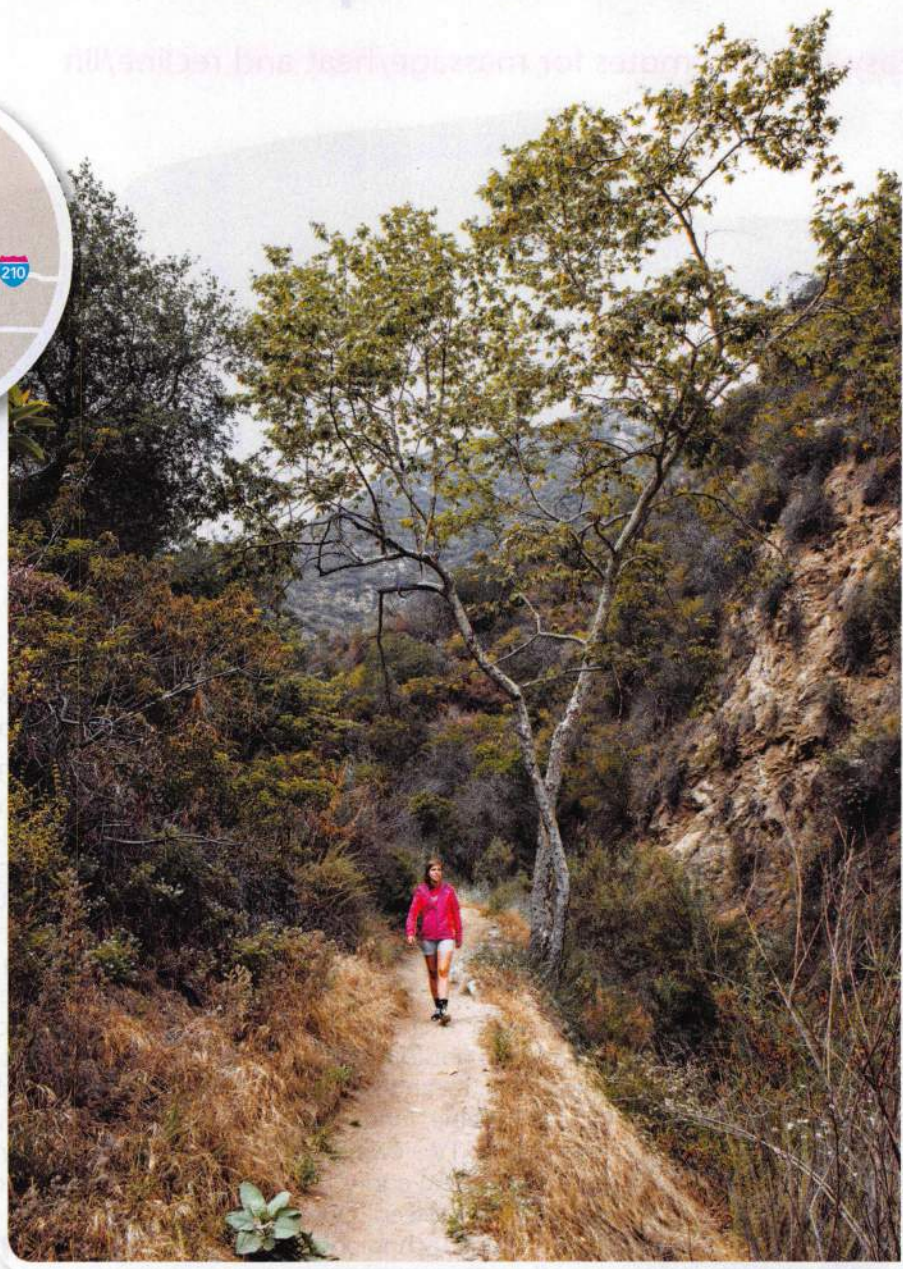




Sierra Madre

BY NANCY SOKOLER STEINER

It's hard to be stressed in Sierra Madre. With its pastoral tree-lined streets, charming diminutive downtown, and nary a traffic signal in sight, this hillside hamlet at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains beckons visitors to slow down and unwind. Here, many homes are listed as historical monuments, and most shops and restaurants are locally owned. Tucked between Pasadena and Arcadia, Sierra Madre boasts an approximately 250-ton wisteria vine deemed the world's largest flowering plant by the Guinness Book of World Records, providing the town its unofficial symbol.



FROM LEFT: ALAZROS/STOCKIMO/ALAMY; VANESSA STUMP; LORI ANDERSON

BY THE NUMBERS



1 GALLON

Size of the container holding what has grown into a **250-ton wisteria plant** when originally purchased by Alice Brugman in 1894

1917

Year that Edwin Waldo Ward Sr. began selling **Seville Orange Marmalade**, still produced and sold by the family-owned E. Waldo Ward & Son gourmet food company





T-NEER TEA ROOM

Carrying on the tradition of her grandfather who had a tearoom in Sri Lanka, owner Aruna Kumar opened this hot spot last year. The daily soups get high marks, and tea selections include more than 100 varieties. 142 W. Sierra Madre Boulevard. (626) 355-3999; tneer.com.

BAILEY CANYON

Hikers can choose from trails of varying lengths and elevation gains in this wooded canyon at the edge of the Angeles National Forest. Climbing partly up the trail toward Jones Peak offers spectacular views of the San Gabriel Valley and beyond. 451 W. Carter Avenue at Grove Street. (626) 355-5278; tinyurl.com/p25wpmz.

SIERRA MADRE PLAYHOUSE

This 99-seat theater, which was first called the Wistaria Theater in the 1920s, stages well-reviewed musicals such as Stephen Sondheim's *Putting It Together*, along with mysteries and comedies generally suitable for the whole family. 87 W. Sierra Madre Boulevard. (626) 355-4318; sierramadreplayhouse.org.

BELLE'S NEST

Sister duo Gloria Prins and Elena Alonzo curate a collection of handcrafted creations (including their own candles and jewelry), along with other locally made goods and vintage finds. Workshops are offered on-site for those who want to bring out their inner artist. 55 N. Baldwin Avenue. (626) 355-0200; bellesnest.com.



SAVOR THE FLAVOR

Stocked with specialty foods and gifts, this gourmet emporium tempts with tasty jams, sauces, spices, and confections, along with serving pieces and cooking gadgets. 11 Kersting Court. (626) 355-5153; savortheflavor.net.

EAT



BEAN TOWN COFFEE HOUSE AND BAKERY

Comfy couches invite customers to relax while enjoying hearty egg breakfasts, sandwiches such as the chicken and pesto panini, warm pastries, and Sierra Madre Roasting Company coffee. 45 N. Baldwin Avenue. (626) 355-1596; beantowncoffeebar.com.

MOTHER MOO CREAMERY

This popular spot offers ice cream in tempting flavors such as salty chocolate (pictured), caramelized honey, and rosewater, all made on-site using organic ingredients. 17 Kersting Court. (626) 355-9650; mothermoo.com.



WISTARIA RESTAURANT AND BAR

Try the lemon-ricotta pancakes (pictured) or the buttermilk crispy chicken sandwich. 44 N. Baldwin Avenue. (626) 355-3155; wistariarestaurant.com. **W**



2,160 FT.

Elevation traversed by those who complete the annual **Mount Wilson Trail Race**



DOWNLOAD our printable Sierra Madre map from AAA.com/daytrip.