



Mathieu Young

Scenic views and local attractions lure mariners to the protected waters of Marina del Rey Harbor.



Robert Landau

A picturesque harbor view from Burton Chace Park.

QUICK Escape: Marina del Rey

STAY:

Guest docks are available at **Marina del Rey Marina**, 13524 Bali Way; (310) 822-0316 or visit marinadelreymarina.com.

Cruisers can also tie up at the **Burton W. Chace Park** guest docks (13650 Mindanao Way). To register, call (310) 305-9595 or visit marinadelrey.lacounty.gov. Spots are available on a first-come first-served basis.

EAT:

Local and visitor favorites include **Café Del Rey** (4451 Admiralty Way); (310) 823-6395; cafedelreymarina.com. **Shanghai Red's** (13813 Fiji Way) serves up tasty lunch and dinner items; (310) 823-4522; shanghaired-restaurant.com. For California/Mediterranean dishes

The Warehouse offers a variety of plates, 4499 Admiralty Way; (310) 823-5451; mdrwarehouse.com.

Tony P's Dockside Grill offers many courses (4445 Admiralty Way); call (310) 823-4534 or visit tonypps.com.

DO:

From shopping, to sightseeing to walking paths, the city and harbor have something for everyone. For more on things to do, visit the **Visitor's Information Center** located at 4701 Admiralty Way, (310) 305-9546, or visit visitmarinadelrey.com.

Boating With Seniors in MdR

Harbor offers something for guests of all ages

BY CAPT. WILSON SHEPPARD

AN OLDER GUEST ONCE TOLD ME that he was a better person because he owned a boat. We were sitting on his 36-foot Uniflite with our backs to Marina del Rey's main channel, enjoying a day on the water.

The harbor's hustle and bustle is contained inland, allowing mariners to leave the city life behind and relish in the peace of the harbor. Marina del Rey could be a boater's fountain of youth. It is an ideal port for entertaining older guests with its variety of boating options, restaurants and walking trails.

GETTING THERE

Marina del Rey has a T-shaped jetty system that allows entrance to the harbor from the north or south. Both entrances are appropriately marked with red and green buoys. There is an 8 knot speed restriction when entering the harbor. Once inside the harbor, speed is reduced to 5 knots.

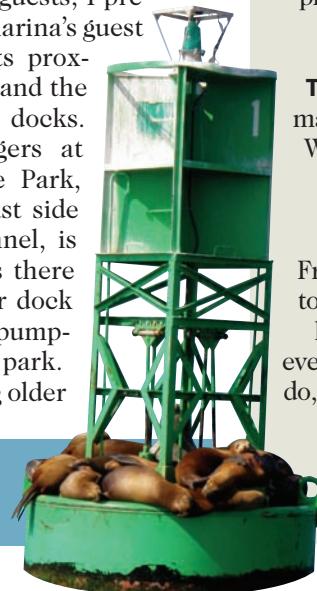
Mariners are advised to keep a watchful eye on the harbor traffic, as it is separated into inbound and out-

bound lanes. Powerboaters are to stay to starboard of channel markers. At the jetties, the middle of the channel is a "Sail Only" lane.

WELCOME ABOARD

When I pilot boats for older boat owners and their guests, I prefer to utilize the marina's guest parking due to its proximity to the boat, and the condition of the docks. Boarding passengers at Burton W. Chace Park, located on the east side of the main channel, is another option as there is a free four-hour dock located near the pump-out station at the park.

When boarding older



Jaime Meier

Trivia Marina del Rey Harbor is the largest man-made harbor in the United States, with more than 5,300 small-boat slips.



Paved walkways provide guests with easy access to waterfront restaurants and harbor views.

friends, I use two sets of dock steps, because my boat does not have a transom door. One set is used on the dock to step over the gunwale, and the other set is used to step down into the boat.

TAKING A CRUISE

With everyone on board and settled in, I often choose to cruise inside the harbor's several miles of protected waters, which offer ample cruising conditions for my guests. On a typical harbor cruise, I take them past UCLA's Marina Aquatic Center, the sheriff's station, Fisherman's Village, yacht clubs and Mother's Beach.

Cruising at night is just as safe and enjoyable as a day cruise. I am friends with a couple in their 80s who are lifelong sailboaters and rarely board powerboats. But one night I caught them in a cruising mood, and they agreed to board my 24-foot Bayliner Ciera. We left my slip in F-Basin, headed southbound in the main channel, turned to port toward the sheriff's station and returned to my slip. The entire cruise was only about 45 minutes, but they still talk about that cruise to this day.

GOING COASTAL

If the weather and sea forecasts are accurate and favorable, I cruise near shore either north or south. As we motor at 10 to 12 knots, my older guests can comfortably enjoy a scenic coastal cruise and be back to the docks within two hours.

North of the breakwater, my guests enjoy seeing the Santa Monica Pier and its famous ferris wheel. I also pass the Santa Monica Bell Buoy (identified as SM1) so my guests can see sea

lions lounging on the buoy.

Heading south from the breakwater, I set a course for the El Segundo Buoy (identified as 2ES). This heading takes us past Los Angeles International Airport where departing airplanes often fly overhead. The 2ES buoy and surrounding moorings host numerous sunbathing sea lions. Large vessels, tugboats and marine authority vessels can also be seen in the area.

FROM DOCKS TO DINING

After a few hours on the water, guests begin to seek out one of the many waterfront restaurants. Both local and franchise restaurants allow older guests to dine on their favorites or try out a new dish. Tony P's Dockside Grill and Café Del Rey are two local favorites. On Sundays, Shanghai Red's and The Warehouse are local hangouts for a delicious brunch.

WALK IT OFF

If my guests are in the mood for a stroll around the harbor, I recommend a path around Marina del Rey Hotel. The hotel is located at the end of Bali Way and is popular among older guests because of the hotel amenities and limited vehicle traffic.

The harbor's size and proximity to a plethora of restaurants, scenic views, open parks and local businesses makes it an ideal place to travel with older guests as it allows me the opportunity to share beautiful in-harbor cruises.

Captain Wilson Sheppard has worked as captain of a sportfishing boat in Alaska and as a crewmember on passenger vessels in Southern California. ♥

BOATER'S PARADISE



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