

Our Downtown



A Walk Through El Dorado Hills Town Center



*By Bill Romanelli
Photography by Maria H. Fotos*

Welcome to Town Center—a place to gather, socialize and call your own.

Turning onto Town Center Boulevard off Latrobe Road in El Dorado Hills, you're in for a treat.

It could be Main Street U.S.A. or Main Street Disneyland—it doesn't matter. There's just something special about this place—from the sidewalk shops you pass on your way to catch the latest blockbuster at the gleaming 14-screen Regal Cinemas at the end of the boulevard to the manmade lake and leisurely walking trails.

"The problem with most shopping centers is they're boring," says Doug Wiele with Foothill Partners, which, together with The Mansour Company, designed Town Center to be a lifestyle center. "We didn't want to create another Roseville Galleria or Arden Fair. We wanted to offer great independent retailers to give people something special." With Town Center at a mere 50 percent build out, the vision continues to grow. Come see what awaits you in downtown El Dorado Hills.

Heading south on Latrobe Road, turn onto Post Street and enter the Marketplace at Town Center. Park—you won't need your car again. This area of Town Center offers almost every necessary resource for your day-to-

day needs: Market Place Veterinary Hospital, Longs Drug Store (with its friendly, helpful pharmacists), Luxury Nails for a relaxing pedicure, Fresh Cleaners, Salon De Lucia for a stylish hair cut, and Tan Central. Don't feel like waiting in line at the post office? A+ Mail Center sits next to Tan Central with Cingular Wireless, The Golden 1 Credit Union and Supercuts completing the block.

If you are hungry, try Asahi Sushi. Hot Peppers Taqueria serves good crisp tacos or Sunday brunch. Zip over to Togos for a quick sandwich. Save room, because you might want to top off your meal with a mint chocolate chip ice cream cone from the Togo's/Baskin Robbins counter. Then, you might want to head next door to Bob's Cycle Center!

If it's coffee you're craving, Starbucks sits to the left of Togo's. Round Table Pizza and Debbie Wong's Express Chinese food also are great dining options for on-the-go sports-minded families.

It's not all just about the food and the must-have ice cream. As one of the two art galleries in Town Center, Our House Defines Art dishes up gourmet cuisine for the mind and spirit. Owners Mary and Michael Donnelly promote a welcoming atmosphere and a very diverse art display.

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On most weekends, you may enjoy food and refreshments while watching a guest artist develop new, original works at the gallery's entrance. Stop in, linger and enjoy.

If it's kid-fun you are after, stop in next door at WOWZA, which owners Betty Williams and Denise Ondrof bill as a "creative kids company." With more than 30 classes, camps, birthday party packages and clinics, WOWZA leaves no chance for kids from preschool through eighth grade to be bored.

If you feel like carousing while your kids frolic at their best friend's birthday party, head back south toward Town Center Drive. Just past Hollywood Video, you

for its fine French cuisine (and an awesome chocolate martini). Owned and operated by Mary Chalaye, Cafe Campanile lures patrons outdoors to the lovely garden patio overlooking a serene manmade lake.

This \$2.5 million "luxury" runs 600 feet long, 8 feet deep and 200 feet wide. Take a stroll along the walking trail or just enjoy the scenery. If you're lucky, you may even spot a river otter or turtle. The outdoor amphitheatre features live entertainment in the summer.

If it's bling bling you seek, turn right out of Cafe Campanile and step into Tramonto Jewelry. Preview custom-made novelties while enjoying great conversation with



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will be drawn in before you realize why. Suddenly it will hit you—Quiznos and Strings Italian Cafe sit nestled side by side with Chantara Thai Cuisine next door. You've now discovered the origination of those appetizing aromas. A great place for lunch or dinner, Chantara features authentic décor and ambiance. If it's your first visit, try the Pad Thai. It's the house specialty—ask for peanut sauce on the side. The restaurant also offers a nice selection of wines from local vineyards.

If it's not the food aroma that has drawn you over to this side of Town Center, but the smell of good leather, head over to the Mercedes Benz dealership across the parking lot. Great dining and classic automotive beauty—either is good reason not to miss this side of Town Center.

After you have resisted the temptation to purchase a C230 Mercedes sport sedan (or maybe not!), head back out along Town Center Boulevard to Cafe Campanile, known

owner Elmira Gevorkian. Tramonto's stores in Southern California have put custom watches on the wrists of some of the entertainment world's biggest stars. Be sure to stop in and ask Gevorkian who they are!

Continuing up Town Center Boulevard, you'll come to the second art gallery in Town Center. Hang It Up Gallery features a variety of original and limited edition art, custom mirrors, glassworks and bronze, pewter and wall sculptures. If you see something you like, ask owners Dave Williams and Susie Baggett about a try-it-to-see-if-you-like-it test drive. Seriously.

As you come out of the gallery's door, don't miss Mama Ann's Italian Deli, Bakery and Market. Tina Morabito, who owns the restaurant with her brother Tony, recommends the family-recipe meatball sandwich. A tip for busy families desperately searching for an already-prepared, well-balanced meal after one of those five-nights-a-week soccer games: Grab one of the fresh





or frozen dinners to go. In fact, get a bigger freezer and pick up two.

Before you leave Town Center, go take a peek at the fabulous vintage furniture and home décor displayed throughout Mama Ann's neighbor, The Olivetree. While there, have a look at what may be the world's biggest armoire.

For trendy eyewear, head up the street to Eyefunk Optix. For home theater entertaining, stop into Signal Service. It's a "don't miss" spot in Town Center.

If a wedding or 50th anniversary party is on your horizon, you'll be ecstatic to discover Philosophia nestled along that same block. Providing hard-to-find custom

the Monte Cristo and others have been overheard at dinner parties discussing the French dip. Add a couple of scones and some "wedding tea" to top it off. Or, if you prefer a quick rejuvenation, pop into Juice it Up next door for a healthy dose of vitamin C and a power boost in a refreshing fruit smoothie.

All these adventures should bring your caloric intake for the day to somewhere around 20,000. Fear not, the El Dorado Hills Sports Club is just across the street. A few hours on the treadmill and a couple hundred pool laps should burn it off and earn you a massage at neighboring Asante Spa.

Do you have company coming to town

Go just once, though, and you'll see why so many of your neighbors call Town Center "our place."

stationery and invitations, Philosophia strives to "evoke a simple elegance." Next door, Looks features fun and functional women's fashions and unique outfits from casual to the dressy.

Finally, to relax after a hard day's shopping, head to A Maad Tea Party. The name alone should pique your interest. Bring your appetite and get ready to peruse a full menu of salads, pastries, soups and sandwiches. Many patrons swear by

who prefer their own digs? Head across the street to the Holiday Inn Express.

How you experience Town Center depends on where you start and when you go. Stores and restaurants will continue to open throughout the next several months, which, naturally, means multiple visits might be in order.

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