

weekend

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Marin Brewing Company's sunny beer garden in Larkspur, CA.

Larkspur, CA | Marin Brewing Company

One of the best things about a trip to the Marin Brewing Company is that you can leave your car in San Francisco. The Golden Gate Ferry sails across the bay to Larkspur, and from there it's just a five-minute walk to the brewpub (by car, Larkspur's about 10 minutes over the bridge). So you can sit in the cobblestoned garden and quench your thirst with as much of the award-winning beer as you care to imbibe. The list includes an easy-drinking Tiburon Blonde Ale and the slightly sweet Bluebeery Ale, flavored with real blueberries. Also on the menu: burgers, nachos, pizzas and sandwiches, such as the zesty blackened chicken sandwich with avocado and jack cheese. When the weather's clear, there's live music in the beer garden: rock and blues on Saturday afternoons, acoustic sets on Sundays.

1809 Larkspur Landing Circle; 415-461-4677; marinbrewing.com

Santa Monica, CA | Library Alehouse

No blaring TVs, an inviting shelfful of books and so many types of beer you need a card catalog to keep them straight—it's no wonder this SoCal pub is called the Library. Everyone from surfers to suits gathers in the woodsy craftsman-style room or on the patio, sampling from among 49 bottled and tap beers, most produced by West Coast craft breweries. The menu puts a California spin on typical pub food: it's not just a quesadilla but a papaya and goat cheese quesadilla with roasted poblano chilies; besides the Angus beef hamburger there's an ahi burger (with daikon sprouts, no less). While the vibe isn't monastery-hushed, it's tranquil enough to read a book. If you forgot yours, you can always borrow one from the shelf—no card required.

2911 Main St.; 310-314-4855; libraryalehouse.com