

The Los Angeles seen in 'Transparent' is for locals only



A Venice condo subs for Shelly Pfefferman's Marina del Rey home. Production designer Catherine Smith bought the 1990s-era furniture that came with the condo. (Amazon Studios)

By **Glenn Whipp**

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Yes, Randy Newman, from the South Bay to the Valley, from the West Side to the East Side, everybody loves Los Angeles these days. Television, especially. In this recurring feature, *L.A. Stories*, we look at what TV is saying about the City of Angels in 2016.

"Transparent" follows the Pfeffermans, a narcissistic, neurotic family of affluent, secular, very L.A. Jews led by Maura (Jeffrey Tambor), a transgender woman.

The Amazon series zigzags across Los Angeles County, moving from the striking, mid-century modernist Pfefferman home in Pacific Palisades (but shot in Pasadena) to hipster enclaves like Silver Lake and Echo Park to the upscale, peaceful (*yaaaawn, excuse me*) Marina del Rey.

Where it doesn't land is any spot on L.A. tourist maps.

"When I started out," says "Transparent" production designer Catherine Smith, a seven-time Emmy nominee, "you'd get a show set in Los Angeles and all anyone would want is Rodeo Drive and Hollywood Boulevard. Now there's a demand for the authentic L.A."

Here are three spots where you'll find just that on "Transparent." Smith and actor Jay Duplass, who plays music producer/middle child Josh Pfefferman on the show, provide commentary.

Pfefferman family home, 919 La Loma Road, Pasadena

You can feel the history in the modern lines and dark woods of this spacious house, built in 1957 and designed by the architectural firm of [Buff, Straub and Hensman](#). Smith says she knew the minute she walked in the front door that it was the ideal place for the show's central location.

"Every space in that house makes you feel something," she says.

"It's my favorite house in the world," Duplass adds. "It's magical. And it's about a mile away from my house in Eagle Rock, so that's a double win."

Duplass believes Beck recorded an album in the home, possibly "Odelay," though, sadly, this claim might be more [fanciful than credible](#). What's undeniable is that it looks like a house that has lived through several decades and yet still looks, in Smith's words, like a "work of art from every angle."

(It should go without saying, but if you drive by, please don't disturb the real-life residents.)

Shelly's Pfefferman's condo, 690 Harbor St., Venice.

Shelly (Judith Light) moved to this gated community after her divorce from Mort/Maura. Though the location's address is in Venice, the vibe is very much Marina del Rey, where the show has her living.

"It's a very insular world that's two blocks from the beach, but you get the feeling that no one there goes to the beach," Duplass says of the location. "They might as well be in San Bernardino. It'd be a tenth of the price."

Smith purchased the furniture that came with the condo because "it's easier to find an antique from the '50s than a '90s coffee table." Like most people, Smith says, Shelly's decorating aesthetic comes stamped from the time period she bought her first place.

The condo community boasts, among other amenities, a duck pond, though Duplass cannot emphasize enough that it looks better on screen than it does when you're walking through it.

"There's a lot of duck and goose [excrement] around," Duplass says. "That's the main feeling you have. 'How much is going to get on me?' And the answer is usually: a lot."

Canter's Deli, 419 N. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles

Shelly Pfefferman has a standing order at this iconic Jewish-style delicatessen, which has been around in one form or another since 1931. (Order the coleslaw!)

Smith: "I used to get notes on shows where they'd write in things like: 'The characters go to a hot dog stand and buy a hot dog.' And I'd try to explain that we don't have hot dog stands here. But we do have places like Canter's. Everybody's been to Canter's."

Duplass: "I love the routine of the place, the fact that you know what to expect from a classic Jewish deli. I almost always order a pastrami sandwich and pickles and eat it with a knife and fork."

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