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1. A crafty corner livens up The Makery. 2. Enchanté Boutique Hotel. 3. Breakfast treats like French toast are complimentary for guests at Enchanté.

LOS ALTOS

Silicon Valley gets an infusion of French culture, craftiness, and coffee from this tiny community.

Welcome to boomtown

This Bay Area suburb has been seeing quite a lot of excitement lately. Boutiques fit for San Francisco's hip Mission District are blossoming, a brand-new hotel opened its doors in February, and the Thursday-evening farmers' market (*through Sep*) is more bustling than ever. So what's behind all this activity? An ultra-private investment company, called Passerelle, started buying up property in downtown about five years ago, not long after Google cofounder Sergey Brin and his family moved to the area. Coincidence? No one involved is talking, so you decide.

A night in Paris

"When this town was founded, locals were promised a bank, a mercantile, and a hotel—it only took 109 years for the hotel to

arrive," quips Abby Ahrens, a 30-year resident of Los Altos and the person responsible for **Enchanté Boutique Hotel**—the village's first. The inn took over an empty lot on a covetable corner of Main Street, near the six-block triangle that makes up the heart of downtown Los Altos. "I love this town, but I'll never forget my travels in France, and I wanted to bring a little bit of that feeling to Los Altos," Ahrens says. Indeed, many of the French antiques decorating the 19-room, pet-friendly inn are her own, including the vintage Napoleon Bonaparte-style hats on display in the on-site bistro, where guests are treated to a complimentary breakfast and afternoon repast of wine, cheese, and charcuterie. At the front desk, Ahrens's Yorkshire terrier, Fleur de Lis, might greet you—almost like a

canine concierge. *From \$300; 1 Main St.; enchantehotel.com.*

Eternal good tastes

The Francophile vibe continues at **Voyageur du Temps**, a year-old cafe and bakery that opened in the city's 1913 train depot (hence the name, which means "time traveler"). The eatery is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, but it's the weekend brunch that draws the biggest crowds, for smoked salmon eggs Benedict and, as always, buttery fresh croissants. *\$\$; 288 First St.; voyageur.com.*

One big inspiration board

"It's like Etsy meets Pinterest—meets a greenhouse," says general manager Stephanie Dakin of **The Makery** and **The Botanist**, two DIY shops that last year moved into one trendy, combined space. "We kept getting people who wanted to spruce up their yard and their home at once," Dakin says. "Now we can inspire those indoor and outdoor makeovers in one place." The Makery channels the best-supplied arts-and-crafts room: Yarn, fabric, colorful tissue

paper, felt balls, markers, crochet hooks, and calligraphy pens. Plus cards, books, and gifty items that can solve any on-the-way-to-a-party emergency, whether it's a 7-year-old's birthday or a 67-year-old's retirement bash. The Botanist, meanwhile, feels like a lush oasis, with staghorn ferns, mossy pots, and perky succulents lining the shelves. If you need a little guidance in your green-thumb or crafty endeavors, two loft-like studios at the back serve as classrooms for projects. *Classes from \$10; 170 State St.; makerylosaltos.com; botanistlosaltos.com.* —Andrea Minarcek



GETTING HERE
Los Altos is about 42 miles southeast of San Francisco, between I-280 and U.S. 101.

LEFT: ALANNA HALE; MAP: MARGARET SLOAN