

NIGHT + DAY LOS ANGELES



Ins and Outs

Noteworthy Additions, Changes, and Closures
from publication date through September 30, 2008

Key to Night+Day Symbols

Restaurants

Singles-friendly


-  Communal table
-  Food served at bar

(G) Gourmet destination

Venues followed by an * are those we recommend as both a restaurant and a destination bar.




Nightlife

Includes bars, clubs, and entertainment

-  Cover or ticket charge (otherwise, entry is free)

Restaurants + Nightlife

Prime-time noise levels

-  Quiet
-  A buzz, but still conversational
-  Loud

Key to Pricing

Hotels

Best deluxe room

\$	\$100–\$199
\$\$	\$200–\$299
\$\$\$	\$300–\$399
\$\$\$\$	\$400 and up

Restaurants

Main course

\$-	less than \$10
\$	\$10–\$19
\$\$	\$20–\$29
\$\$\$	\$30–\$39
\$\$\$\$	\$40 and up

Attractions

Entry or service

\$-	less than \$10
\$	\$10–\$19
\$\$	\$20–\$29
\$\$\$	\$30–\$39
\$\$\$\$	\$40 and up

The Night+Day promise

Night+Day writers and editors use the same high standards in selecting and researching venues to be included in our Ins and Outs updates as we do for our books. Our local correspondents determine which new hot spots are the real deal and which are simply hype—just as you'd expect from Night+Day—to provide the kind of reliable information you need to make the best possible choices.

pulseguides.com

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Hot & Cool Los Angeles Hotels

The London West Hollywood • West Hollywood • Hotel (223 rms)

London calling? No need to cross the pond with this re-imagining of the infamous rock-star flop, the Bel Age, which clashes modern California chic with timeless British sophistication. Architectural maverick David Collins, best known for designing Madonna's home in London, headed the multi-million dollar articulation. The towering 10-story hotel offers 223 glamorous suites, all of which boast Italian linens, leather furniture, and Waterworks bathrooms, while keeping the striking Hollywood Hills views (the best being from the London Vista Suites) that made the Bel Age famous. Also retained is the 10th floor rooftop pool deck, now replete with English garden-style landscaping and luxury cabanas. Like its Midtown Manhattan forebear, it also features an eponymous restaurant from *Hell's Kitchen* star Gordon Ramsay. With a starting price of \$249 to \$299, it's a better deal than most of the surrounding hotels (and just steps from the Sunset Strip), making it a perfect base for shopping, nightlife, or red-carpet events. \$\$\$ 1020 N. San Vicente Blvd. (Sunset Blvd.), 310-854-1111 / 866-603-3696, thelondonwesthollywood.com

Sofitel • Beverly Hills • Trendy (311 rms)

The first of existing Sofitel hotels to be rebranded and refurbished into trendy lifestyle properties is, well, *magnifique!* The French chain's \$40 million stylish makeover fits in perfectly with Beverly Hills' own contemporaneous renaissance. Gone are the days of poodles, pinstripes, and Rolls Royces. Now it's all about iPhones, designer T-shirts, and hybrid cars. Although the box-like façade, opposite the Beverly Center, is conveniently located in the heart of the city, it has everything you need on-site. During the day you can shop at the SO Boutique, work at the space-age Internet bar, sweat at SO Fit (one of LA's largest state-of-the-art fitness centers), relax at the cabana-lined outdoor pool, or rejuvenate at Le Spa. At night, you can dine at SIMON LA, *Iron Chef* winner Kerry Simon's much-hyped restaurant, and unwind at Stone Rose Lounge by Rande Gerber (aka Mr. Cindy Crawford). Both standard and deluxe suites include large throne-like beds with lightweight feather comforters and the latest high-tech essentials (flat-panel, HD TVs, WiFi, and mp3-playing alarm clocks). The highlight, however, is the glass-enclosed rainfall shower. Rooms start at \$295, so convenience, especially at bobo-chic levels, can be had at a pretty good price. \$\$\$ 8555 Beverly Blvd. (La Cienega Blvd.), 310-278-5444 / 800-763-4835, sofitella.com

Thompson Beverly Hills • Beverly Hills • Trendy (117 rms)

New York sass meets Beverly Hills class at this metropolitan, jet-set getaway. Dodd Mitchell, who also designed its sister hotel, The Roosevelt, works a similar magic here, mixing the casual elegance of California modernism with the stylized indulgence of the late '70s to early '80s. The appropriately titled Bond St. sushi restaurant is a hot New York import, attracting a handsome and sophisticated clientele who like fast cars, beautiful women, and shaken martinis. The standard rooms aren't cheap or spacious, but are stylishly decked out in modern delicacies: glossy black panels, silver silk curtains, a flat-panel TV, and beds dressed in sumptuous Italian Sferra linens. Amenities include the ABH, a rooftop lounge offering dazzling views of LA, and a fitness center and salon. Most of the well-heeled travelers staying here

for business and/or pleasure spend their free time shopping on Rodeo Drive, less than a block away. There's a good deal of traffic noise from busy Wilshire Boulevard, so ask for a room near the back of the building. \$\$\$\$ 9360 Wilshire Blvd. (Crescent Dr.), 310-273-1400 / 800-441-5050, thompsonhotels.com

Hot & Cool Los Angeles Restaurants

Akasha • Culver City • American (G)

Chef/owner Akasha Richmond's eponymous, eco-friendly eatery on Culver City's white-hot restaurant row would make Al Gore proud. As seen on TLC's show, *Flip That Restaurant*, the historic building's original steel, wood, concrete, and brick arches were restored using recycled products and reclaimed fixtures. The LED lighting is energy efficient. The to-go boxes are compostable. Even the staff's cotton T's and Levi's jeans are organic. The New American menu uses sustainable ingredients from local farms to create health-conscious comfort food for carnivores and herbivores alike. Richmond's signature spin on sliders (lamb), lettuce wraps (pepper-seared albacore), and pork chops (with sambazon acai) will please both foodies and "greenies." The L-shaped bar (great Happy Hour) slings fresh fruit organic cocktails and biodynamic wines and beers, while the in-store bakery serves fair-trade coffee and organic teas, along with organic baked goods (cookies, apple tarts, carrot cake, and cupcakes). Doing good never tasted so good. *Mon-Sat 7am-11pm.* \$ 9543 Culver Blvd. (Irving Pl.), 310-845-1700, akasharestaurant.com

Anisette Brasserie • Santa Monica • French

Chef Alain Giraud (of Bastide fame) transports Paris to the Third Street Promenade with his delightfully authentic brasserie. The Parisian-born Giraud's long-awaited eatery in the historic Clocktower Building could double as a François Truffaut film set: open staircase, distressed mirrors, ceiling fans, red banquettes, mosaic-tiled floors, aged wood fixtures, and a zinc bar (shipped from France). Upstairs there are more compact tables and an open kitchen and bakery, where you can see rows of hanging copper pots and the marble counters of the patisserie station. The upscale-casual crowd bustling for tables is part accidental promenade-tourists and part locals in the know. The breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus utilize Santa Monica farmers' market ingredients to create classic French fare: steak tartare, entrecôte frites, duck confit, roast chicken, and French onion soup. Dinner reservations can be hard to come by, but you can always stop by during the morning hours to soak up the scene over a French-press coffee and crisp-soft croissant *au beurre.* *Daily 7:30am-12am.* \$\$\$ 225 Santa Monica Blvd. Santa Monica (2nd St.), 310-395-3200, www.anisettebrasserie.com

Beso • Hollywood • Tex-Mex

Get a taste of celebrity at Eva Longoria-Parker and Todd English's sizzling Hollywood eatery. Unlike many celebrity-owned restaurants, the *Desperate Housewives* star didn't just attach her name to Beso (Spanish for "kiss"), her imprint can be seen in everything from the sparkly chandeliers dangling from the high ceilings like diamond earrings to the Tex-Mex menu—the guacamole

and tortilla soup are family recipes. English (*Iron Chef*) is a star in his own right, as demonstrated by an eclectic menu that adds a taste of Latin spice to his signature Mediterranean dishes. The splashy loft-like venue opens up to a main dining room with faux crocodile booths, tufted leather chairs, and a square bar serving fresh-fruit cocktails. The open kitchen and ceviche station add a theatrical element to a "see-and-be-seen" scene where A-list clientele (Josh and Becks, Ryan Seacrest, and Jennifer Aniston) hang in the private upstairs lounge, high above the talking heads of a dressed-to-impress crowd of winers-and-diners looking to move up the Hollywood food chain. *Mon-Sun 6:00pm-11:00pm.* \$\$\$ 6350 Hollywood Blvd. (Ivar Ave.), 323-467-7991

Bond St. at Thompson Hotel • Beverly Hills • Japanese-Fusion

Restaurateur/hotelier Jonathan Morr's hot, sexy New York City import has gone Hollywood. Dodd Mitchell (Teddy's, Dolce, Roosevelt Hotel) designed LA's version of Morr's famed NYC Euro-Japanese and sushi restaurant, while stylist to the stars Rachel Zoe outfitted the wannabe-actor/model staff. It's also a tabloid magnet, having drawn the likes of "Brangelina," Kate Hudson, and Patrick Dempsey. The talented Dodd somehow turned a former Best Western lobby into a chic, classic, yet comfortable '70s inspired "scene" with organic earth tones and clean textures such as leather and suede. There's been much debate about Chef Hiroshi Nakahara's sushi menu (overpriced, average, undersized), but the communal dishes such as the sake braised short ribs and spicy crispy shrimp are untouchable. After a nice, long, expensive dinner or lunch, head up to the mezzanine-level lounge for cocktails among a crowd of aspiring Ari Golds, prowling *Sex and the City*-ish cougars, and packs of doe-eyed starlet veal. *Sun-Thu 7am-11am, 12pm-3pm, 6pm-11pm, Fri-Sat 7am-11am, 6pm-12am.* \$\$\$ 9360 Wilshire Blvd. (Crescent Dr.), 310-601-2255, thompsonhotels.com

Church and State • Downtown • French

Steven Arroyo's French brasserie has a lot in common with his slick Cobras & Matadors Latin tavern chain (three LA locations): All are versatile, fun, and affordable, though known more for their scene than cuisine. Church and State's gritty, urban location in downtown's Arts District is a perfect complement to Arroyo's signature noir interiors: Edison bulbs, floor-to-ceiling windows, exposed beams, and red-brick walls. The industrial look isn't manufactured—it comes from the eatery's former Biscuit Co. loading-dock digs (and the tile subway-tile floors are original). An aromatic open kitchen and a charming alfresco dining area give it a NYC aesthetic. Chef Greg Bernhard's menu dishes out organic, free-range Parisian fare: steak frites, beef bourguignon, French onion soup, and baguette sandwiches. It's competent, but only part of the equation. Service is warm, the atmosphere inviting. French wine flows, and multilingual conversations grow, making a meal seem more like a communal experience. *Daily 11:30am-11pm.* \$\$ 1850 Industrial St. (Mateo St.), 213-405-1434

Craft • Century City • American

Tom Colicchio, the reality TV star, award-winning chef, and best-selling author, brings his straightforward, simple, secure, modern American cooking approach to the West Coast. His sleek, high-powered professional restaurant is appropriately located in the shadow of entertainment-industry skyscrapers, within shouting distance from CAA's glossy new command center. The spacious, gold- and beige-toned interior offers the *Jerry Maguire* clones and their "show me the

money” clients plenty of table real estate, ideal for cutting deals as well as entrées, while an outside terrace offers more casual diners a less stuffy retreat. The intimidating, categorized menu changes daily, offering a wealth of raw, cured, marinated, and roasted meats, seafood, and vegetables. It’s also pricey and à la carte, but the huge portions can be shared family-style. The desserts are just as hearty and abundant, featuring classic takes on parfaits, pastries, ice cream, sorbets, and gelatos. There’s also a full bar and an impressive wine list, favoring California and French labels. *Mon–Thu 11:30am–2:30pm, 6pm–10pm, Fri 11:30am–2:30pm, 6pm–10:30pm, Sat 6pm–10:30pm, Sun 5pm–9pm.* \$\$\$ 🍷🍷 10100 Constellation Blvd. (Avenue of the Stars), 310-279-4180, craftrestaurant.com

Eleven • West Hollywood • Italian-French

Grade-A beef has an entirely different connotation along this wild WeHo strip that’s known more for its hot gay-club scene than its haute cuisine. Legendary children’s TV producer Sid Krofft and co-owner/designer Richard Grossi hope to change that stigma with their over-the-top supper club. Say what you will about the aerialist hanging from the rafters, or the staff that look like they walked out of an Abercrombie & Fitch ad, but chef Vincent Manna (L’Orangerie, Spago) brings instant credibility with a contemporary menu that combines his Italian-Cuban heritage with classic French technique. Enjoy the hamachi or crispy-skinned chicken from a comfortable loft-like dining area. The best seat, however, is next to the 10-foot flaming waterfall in the upscale bar area downstairs. It literally transforms (the hydraulic dining tables lower) at 11pm into a high-energy nightclub set against the backdrop of a raging Santa Monica Boulevard. *Daily 11am–2am.* \$\$\$ 🍷🍷 8811 Santa Monica Blvd. (Larrabee St.), 310-855-0800, eleven.la

The Foundry on Melrose • West Hollywood • Asian

Patina alum Eric Greenspan’s vibrant New York–style eatery offers “fine dining for the everyday man.” The omnipresent chef-owner’s goal was to create a classy, yet casual restaurant that gives guests a memorable experience rather than just a quick-fix meal. The handcrafted, industrial-inspired layout features fire-orange walls, wood and steel Art Deco accents, antique light fixtures, and Machine Age artwork. Greenspan’s sophisticated yet whimsical menu is lean (five entrees and five appetizers) and changes every two weeks (check the live webcam on the website to literally see what’s cooking). The 90-seat main dining room is abuzz as the hands-on Greenspan barks out food orders and plays host, while Christopher Dowd (founding keyboardist of LA cult band Fishbone) performs at the intimate piano bar. If you’re looking for something more low-key, then request a booth in the open-air patio in back where you can snuggle up beside a shady olive tree and warm fireplace. Sunday Be Bop Brunch features a live jazz trio along with a “fancy schmancy” tasting menu that includes mimosas and Bloody Marys. *Tue–Sat 6pm–2am, Sun 10am–3pm.* \$\$\$ 🍷🍷 7463 Melrose Ave. (Gardner St.), 323-651-0915, thefoundryonmelrose.com

Foxtail • West Hollywood • European Bistro

Where you stand on SBE Entertainment Group probably depends on which side of the velvet rope you find yourself at their notoriously exclusive nightspots (Hyde, S Bar, Area). Their modern take on a “supper club for a new generation” is no different. SBE’s dynamic duo of Sam Nazarian and Brent Bolthouse team

up with their most powerful Hollywood superfriends (director Brett Ratner, NBC Entertainment Co-Chair Ben Silverman, producer Scott Stuber, and agent Patrick Whitesell) to create a Hall of Justice for industry insiders fatigued with the industry-insider scene. If you’re not a part of that hallowed group and don’t have the cleavage to get you in through the side alley, there’s still hope for mere mortals. Although it won’t guarantee you entry into the ‘70s-glam rock lounge on the second floor, dinner reservations can be made at the restaurant downstairs. The opulent black, gold, and white dining area is Art Deco meets Art Nouveau, with curvy floral motifs, mirror-tiled ceilings, dark wood accents, and smoked glass windows. *Top Chef* Chicago contestant Antonia Lofaso’s no-nonsense, somewhat over-hyped European bistro fare includes steak frites, artisanal cheese plates, crispy croque monsieur, and beef carpaccio. But who eats in Hollywood anyway? The real action is upstairs, where the likes of Kate Hudson, Janet Jackson, Jeremy Piven, and the Olsen Twins can sip cucumber-pomegranate martinis before making their convenient photo-op getaways. *Mon–Sat 5:30pm–2am (kitchen until midnight).* \$\$\$ 🍷 9077 Santa Monica Blvd. (Doheny Dr.), 310-859-8369, sbeent.com/foxtail

Fraiche • Culver City • California-Mediterranean

The Fraiche prince vying for the Culver City culinary crown is perhaps the most elegant and charming of the recent restaurant openings along the up-and-coming Downtown strip. The indoor-outdoor brasserie is clad in farmhouse stone, warm wood paneling, and Tuscan terra cotta, evoking the rustic feel of the European countryside. Chef/co-owner Jason Travi’s one-page California-Mediterranean-flavored menu is sophisticated, yet reasonably priced, living up to the restaurant’s name (Fraiche translates to *fresh*) by using market-fresh, seasonal ingredients to prepare the succulent, herb-laden seafood, pasta, and meat dishes. The impressive, Euro-centric wine selection (200-plus) can seem intimidating, but sommelier/co-owner Thierry Perez is more than willing to help. The high-spirited and carefree scene has something for food-lovers and lovers alike. Order a blood-orange martini, and a “bar chef” will flambé it tableside. Sit near the open kitchen, and get some cooking tips from the chatty chefs. If you want more intimacy, try the intimate garden terrace. *Tue–Sun 6–11pm.* \$\$\$ 🍷 9411 Culver Blvd. (Washington Blvd.), 310-839-6800, fraicherestaurantla.com

Hadaka Sushi • West Hollywood • Japanese Sake Lounge

Sex sells, but can it convince you to try a “Threesome”? Chef-owner Edward Brik’s bringing sexy back to the Sunset Strip with a Japanese restaurant, sushi bar, and sake lounge that aims to tease and please. The “naughty” menu is laced with more sexual innuendos than an episode of *Three’s Company*, with names like “G-Spot” (shrimp-covered California roll) and “Sex Beads” (ginger-glazed edamame). The vintage Parisian bordello interior, with its dim lanterns and chandeliers, red vinyl booths, black leather couches, sweeping Bordeaux drapery, and pin-up artwork, sets a sensual mood that offsets the limp Soju martinis that don’t live up to their salacious names “Spit or Swallow” and “Trisexual.” The curtained-off Harem Suite is where food and fantasy meet. That is, if you’ve ever fantasized about eating sushi off a naked female model. This one-of-a-kind experience known as *nyotaimori* “body sushi,” has bachelor party written all over it, but starts at \$1,100, so be sure to chew slowly and watch where you put those chopsticks. *Mon–Thu 6–11pm, Fri–Sat 6pm–midnight, Sun 6–10:30pm.* \$ 🍷🍷 8226 W. Sunset Blvd., 323-822-2601, hadakasushi.com

Ketchup • West Hollywood • American Classic

This ain't your grandparents' diner. No, it's (gulp) Tara Reid's! Fear not, 'cause Reid is just one of the celebrity investors in the Dolce Group's 21st-century take on the classic American diner. Splashes of red punctuate a red-hued, white-on-white dining hall that pays stylish tribute to America's favorite condiment with kitschy paintings, pictures, and collages of vintage ketchup bottles. Diners can sink into plush oversized leather booths or reserve the more intimate two-person tables, each with its own encased tomato centerpiece. The floor-to-ceiling walls offer a bird's-eye view of the Sunset Strip, but the pretty people-watching inside is much more fun, as random celebs pig out with the common folk during the busy evening hours. Chef Chris Tunnell's gourmet kiddie-food menu puts a playful, modern (albeit overpriced) twist on comfort-food favorites such as: mac 'n' cheese (with Dungeness crab), Kobe-beef hot dogs and burger sliders, and French fries (topped with parmesan) served with five different ketchup flavors, from chipotle to mango. Be sure to leave room for the ice-cream sandwich. Wash it all down with a drink from the roving cocktail cart, which serves up school-day faves (Tang, Yoo-hoo) with an alcoholic kick. *Mon–Thu noon–3pm and 6–10pm, Fri noon–3pm and 6pm–midnight, Sat 6pm–midnight, Sun 6–10pm.* \$\$ 📍 8590 Sunset Blvd. (Alta Loma Rd.), 310-289-8590, dolcegroup.com

Kitchen 24 • Hollywood • American Diner

LA will never be considered a city that never sleeps. It's a virtual ghost town after 2am. What's a night owl to do? For late-night eats, swoop into Kitchen 24, an around-the-clock diner-lounge, conveniently located along the Cahuenga Corridor. The upscale eatery's pink décor, host station/candy counter, and white/brown leather booths are odes to the "mom and pop" shops of the '50s, while the DJ booth behind the u-shape bar, two giant LCD-TVs, and cutlery lampshades are clear reminders that you're not in Mayberry anymore. The classic American diner menu is big on taste, value, selection, and substitutions (order the sides you want)—plus it's organic! Coat that alcohol-soaked stomach with gingerbread pancakes with spiced apple compote, vegetable frittata, herb crepes, a tuna burger, "smack 'n' cheese," or pork chops. Not only can Kitchen 24 alleviate hangovers, but it also enables them with a full bar (closed from 2am to 6am). The light, fun vibe attracts neighborhood hiptards (DJ Steve Aoki, Danny Masterson, *The Hills'* Audrina Patridge) for breakfast and lunch, and the post-/pre-club riff-raff at night, which can be a good or bad thing, depending on how many drinks you've had. *Daily 24/7.* \$ 📍 1608 N. Cahuenga Blvd. (Selma Ave.), 323-465-2424, kitchen24.info

Il Sole • West Hollywood • Italian

Hollywood's latest obsession is this pretty little trattoria, known more for its Tuscany-style meat sauce than its trendy scene. If it weren't for the curbside paparazzi lingering in front, you might drive right past the understated Italian eatery. Compact and often booked well in advance, the serene, antique- and art-filled setting is a relaxing, warm contrast to the outdoor-café madness along nearby Sunset Plaza. Stars and mere mortals alike come here to indulge in Northern Italian specialties such as the homemade porcini ravioli (Cameron Diaz's favorite), 7-layer lasagna (George Clooney's usual), and Robespierre steak (favored by Iron Man himself, Robert Downey Jr.). The prices are more Bel-Air than WeHo, but the slightly cramped tables and constant industry chatter among Hollywood's power players allow for TMZ-worthy eavesdropping, which

can be a good or bad thing depending on whom you're sitting next to. *Mon–Sat 6–10pm, Sun 5:30–9pm.* \$\$\$ 📍 8741 W Sunset Blvd. (North Sherbourne Dr.), 310-657-1182

Osteria Mozza • Melrose District • American Classic

Local legend Nancy Silverton and celebrity chef Mario Batali's fine dining phenomenon arrived with as much fanfare as the Apple iPhone. Their highly anticipated follow-up to the more casual, yet just as amazing Pizzeria Mozza (next door) delivers on all the hype. The stylishly contemporary dining space features high ceilings, crisp linens, and a chocolate brown and pale blue color scheme. The comfortable yet vibrant setting is buzzing with activity and aromas, giving it a New York City vibe. Batali's huge footprints are all over the place—literally, from his enshrined orange Croc to the can't-miss menu of pastas, seafood, and meat dishes that pay homage to the culinary classics of Bologna, Italy. Reservations are as hard to get as Lakers floor seats, so be patient and open to early or late dining. If you cannot secure a seat among the foodie scenesters, power couples, and Hollywood Hills households, you can take your chances at the "No Reservations" mozzarella bar, where you can munch on delectable cheeses, breads, and antipasti as well as order from the full dinner spread. *Mon–Sat 5:30pm–midnight.* \$\$ 📍 6602 Melrose Ave. (Highland Ave.), 323-297-0100, mozz-la.com

Parc • Hollywood • French-Asian

Parc is the place. Flashing more game than Parker Bros. and dropping more names than *Entourage's* Ari Gold, this fun, food-driven "celebaurant" is a rare commodity in "Hollowood," a hot spot that actually lives up to all the hype. The stunning park-inspired décor is earthy, yet luxuriant, a Ralph Lauren ad come to life. The ultra-modern dining room (lacquer bar, mirrored glass columns) is filled with organic elements (grass cloth, walnut wood) and a 14-foot tree with smoked crystal globes hanging from it. Chef J's French-Asian tapas-style menu includes claypot Chilean sea bass, Kobe-style cheeseburgers, and artichoke fritters. Those looking for something more extravagant and expedient can wine and dine at the oyster, caviar, and champagne bar. The see-and-be-seen crowd is a well-heeled wash of cute coiffed couples, girls' night out-of-towners, heirheads (Paris Hilton, Brody Jenner), and the usual *US Weekly* suspects (Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Piven, and Justin Timberlake). After 10pm, the lighting dims, tables shuffle, and the downtempo grooves are replaced by a hit-spinning DJ. *Daily 7pm–2am.* \$ 📍 6683 Hollywood Blvd. (Las Palmas Ave.), 323-465-6200, parchollywood.com

The Penthouse at the Huntley Hotel • Santa Monica • French-Asian

An extreme "drab to fab" makeover by famed designer Thomas Schoos (Koi, NY, and LA's Tao) has turned this once-glum Happy-Hour hangout into a glam restaurant and ultra-lounge. A hotel elevator takes you up 18 floors to a chic penthouse awash in white and gold tones, Murano glass chandeliers, flickering fireplace, lacquered tables, and cushy booths separated by sheer white curtains. About the only thing it has retained from its former Topper's incarnation are the stunning panoramic views overlooking the Santa Monica beaches and pier. Too bad Schoos couldn't do anything about Chef Michael Reidt's twist on contemporary California cuisine, which is all sizzle and no steak. The (con)fusion entrees sound and look good, but are overpriced, bland, and served curiously

quickly (reheated?). The single and ready-to-mingle scene more than makes up for it, as the well-heeled and well-connected exchange “F\$\$k me eyes” and business cards around the 360-degree bar. If you’re in the mood for love, rather than looking for it, then cozy up to the first-come, first-served cabana booths, where you can take in the romantic views in private. *Daily 6:30am–1am.* \$ \$ [📍](#) 1111 Second St. (Wilshire Blvd.), 310-393-8080, [thehuntleyhotel.com](#)

Pink Taco • Century City • Mexican

Playboy restaurateur Harry Morton must not have gotten the “whatever happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas” memo. The son of Hard Rock founder Peter Morton has taken his scintillating Sin City eatery with the X-rated brand name west . . . to the Westfield Century City shopping mall that is. The “see-and-be-seen” eatery serves white-washed Mexican food with a funky, fairly flavorful flair. Dishes such as the Sabana de Pollo and Cabo Enchiladas are moderately priced and filling, though the Mexican baby-back ribs and the namesake *panuchos* are the house favorites. The kitschy pop-art interior is born in East LA: Virgin Mary statues, *lucha libre* murals, low rider bikes, pattern-pierced tin chandeliers, and naughty pin-up-girl posters. The party-hearty spot is anything but mall material, drawing 90210 WASPs, pubescent Paris-ite shoppers, one-straw margarita-sipping couples, and preppy assistants from nearby CAA and ICM, nursing their post-traumatic stress disorder around the oversized bar, which offers over 70 tequila choices. *Ay dos mio, mio! Sun–Thu 11:30am–midnight; Fri–Sat 11:30am–1am.* \$ [📍](#) 10250 Santa Monica Blvd., 2nd Floor/ (Westfield Century City Mall), 310-789-1000, [pinktaco.com](#)

Pizzeria Mozza • Mid-Wilshire • Italian

Pizza is a lot like sex. When it’s good, it’s really good. When it’s bad, it’s still pretty good. If you live by that motto, then the pizza at this lively East-West coast all-star collaboration between award-winning celebrity chefs Mario Batali (Food Network’s *Molto Mario*, *Ciao America*) and Nancy Silverton (La Brea Bakery, Campanile) is like multiple orgasms. The hotly anticipated eatery is one of the toughest reservations in town, yet everyone waits, including Jake Gyllenhaal, Gwen Stefani, and Ray Romano (Steven Spielberg even orders to-go). The lively 65-seat pizzeria favors earth tones and high ceilings. If you’re brave enough to show up without a reservation, you might get lucky and find a spot at the pizza bar or wine bar. Although there are a handful of antipasti, panini, and piatti del giorno dishes, the aforementioned pizza is the main attraction. The mystic pizzas that come out of the wood-fired oven are topped with top-notch ingredients (cured meats, buffalo-milk mozzarella), and the superlative crust is crispy, soft, sweet, bitter, and chewy—all at once. *Daily noon–midnight.* \$ [📍](#) 641 N. Highland (Melrose Ave.), 323-297-0101, [mozza-la.com](#)

Simon LA • Beverly Hills • American (G)

Kerry Simon, dubbed the “rock ‘n’ roll chef” by *Rolling Stone*, has a kitschy-chic new restaurant that is like the “guitar hero” of fine dining: frivolous, fun, and addictive. Located inside the jet-set Sofitel Hotel, Simon’s namesake is a sleek, yet playful concept that’s impossible to categorize—and that’s part of the appeal. With its open kitchen and curved booths, it could be labeled a high-end coffee shop, but the cocoon-like transparent screens, marble waterfalls, and

intimate outdoor patio hint that it’s much more. The mix-and-match menu is just as enigmatic: Think pricey comfort cuisine. American classics such as his 4-ounce burger (which won him the *Iron Chef* contest), filet mignon Cobb salad, and truffle oil-enhanced mac ‘n’ cheese are must-haves. For those looking for something exotic, there’s the tandoori wild Pacific salmon or the Thai red-curry chicken. Don’t dare leave without indulging in the infamous junk-food sampler: homemade cupcakes, pink snowballs, cotton candy, warm cookies, and a milkshake. The scene is what you would expect: slick schmoguls, occasional famous faces, pampered fashionistas, and globetrotting socialites. After dinner, head next door to the Stone Rose Lounge for cocktails. If you end up partying like a rock star, nurse your Sunday hangover at the “Rock ‘n’ Roll Brunch,” featuring a live DJ and a build-your-own Bloody Mary bar. *Daily 6:30am–11pm.* \$ \$ [📍](#) Sofitel Hotel, 8555 Beverly Blvd. (La Cienega Blvd.), 310-278-5444, [simonlarestaurant.com](#)

South • Santa Monica • Southern

If you’ve never been to Bourbon Street, South is the closest thing to it west of the Mason-Dixon Line. This Westside sports bar and restaurant oozes quirky southern charm, showcasing all things fried, sweetened, and sauced. It’s loud and a bit obnoxious, but lovable and entertaining in a *Larry the Cable Guy* kind of way. The multiroom interior resembles an SEC college bar, with flat-screen HD-TVs on every wall and windows opening up to an expansive patio. The brick walls display photos of Southern scenes, and the gentlemanly owners are often staffing the curved bar. Southern specialties such as the fried green tomatoes, hush puppies, mac ‘n’ cheese, po’ boy sandwiches, and chicken and waffle sliders sound oh-so-good on paper, but don’t live up to the billing. Take comfort in the stiff drinks, which include the mint julep and Pimm’s Cup, or have an Abita beer on tap. The crowded scene is lively and loose, especially during Lakers games, drawing young and tight UCLA coeds, beach-burnt locals, and 30- and 40-year-old cougars and silverbacks on the prowl. *Daily 11am–2am.* \$ [📍](#) 3001 Wilshire Blvd. (Stanford Ave.), 310-828-9988, [southsantamonica.com](#)

Takami Sushi & Robata • Downtown • Japanese

The Downtown culinary scene is moving on up, thanks to this deluxe penthouse in the sky. Foodwise, Takami doesn’t do anything better, different, or cheaper than, say, Katana or Katsuya. Where it does rise above its competition is its unique location on the 21st floor of a Financial District high-rise. The modern metropolitan restaurant straight outta Tokyo is a sight in itself. The 14,000-square-foot venue offers a unique indoor-outdoor dining experience with wrap-around tables on a massive outdoor patio overlooking the city, and glass walls, so even if you’re eating inside you will still experience the memorable 360-degree view. The best seat is on the far side where you can also spy on the Standard rooftop bar. The mystery menu (no prices are shown) offers sushi, robata, and Japanese fusion originals: Pop Art Crab, Tropical Avocado Bowl, and the Sweet Scallop Present. The early evening-crowd of 9-to-5 suits eventually gives way to packs of nightlife denizens who come for dinner and stay for Elevate, the sleek, Las Vegas-style ultra-lounge next door. *Mon–Thu 11am–11pm, Fri 11am–midnight, Sat 5pm–midnight, Sun 5–11pm.* \$ \$ [📍](#) 811 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 2100 (Flower St.), 213-236-9600, [takamisushi.com](#)

Terroni • Los Angeles • Italian

This long-anticipated Italian import is from Canada, of all places. Before you say “Eh,” keep in mind that Shereen Arazm (Parc, Dolce, Les Deux) is the one behind it, teaming up with Cosimo Mammoloti to bring his cool, yet casual Southern Italian brand (a staple in Toronto) to LA. The inviting interior features vintage Eames chairs, theatre chandeliers, and butcher block tables. An open kitchen dishes out traditional, fresh Italian fare at moderate prices and functions as an in-house grocer. The paper-thin pizza crust has just the right crispy crunch, but they’re skimpy on the fine meat, veggie, and cheese toppings. The home-made pastas are more consistent, while the handmade stuffed tortellini and ravioli are just like mama used to make. They don’t take reservations, which can be feast or famine, depending on your party size and arrival (before 8pm is good). If you have to wait, make it worthwhile at the cozy bar, where you can imbibe some of the 200 handpicked wines, while checking out the revolving door crowd of fashionably un-tucked hiptards, Ken and Barbie replicants, and random The Grove run-off. *Daily 11am–11pm.* \$\$ ☎ 7605 Beverly Blvd. (Curson Ave.), 323-954-0300, www.terroni.ca

Hot & Cool Los Angeles Nightlife

ABH at the Beverly Hills Thompson Hotel • Beverly Hills • Hotel Bar

ABH is literally “above Beverly Hills,” as the clever acronym professes, but does it really offer something beyond the stuffy and superficial? The answer is as convoluted as a *90210* plot line. Without a doubt, no one does swank quite like hotelier Jason Pomeranc, who made a splash with his stunning revitalization of the Hollywood Roosevelt. Designer Dodd Mitchell was enlisted once again, and his bi-level rooftop pool and lounge are as eye-popping as the 360-degree views of the LA skyline they offer. Imported Sabal Blackburniana palm trees, an ike wood patio deck bar, and a Swarovski crystal-encrusted pool flanked by luxury cabanas set a surreal tropical getaway scene, but the steep drink prices (\$13 and up), not-so-hospitable service (18 percent gratuity added to poolside orders), and the petty “hotel-guest list-only” policy (which is randomly enforced) remind you that Rodeo Drive is just down the block. An abridged menu from the hotel’s excellent Bond St. restaurant is available, but a better bet is to come here after dinner for a nightcap. *Daily 11am–1am.* ☎ Thompson Hotel, 9360 Wilshire Blvd (Crescent Dr.), 310-598-2806, thompsonhotels.com

Area • West Hollywood • Nightclub

Think of this party playground for Hollywood’s young and restless as an expanded version of SBE Entertainment’s super-exclusive sister club, Hyde. The white-on-white, mid-century modern design resembles a lush, expansive, Rat Pack-era living room with its terrazzo floors, brick walls, wood columns, low-slung sofas, and retractable glass walls. Mod-inspired cocktail servers strut around in Nancy Sinatra boots providing pricey bottle service (\$600 and up) to the reserved tables flanking the hot-and-heavy dance floor, while two slick bars supply pricey drinks. Like all co-owner/party promoter Brent Bolthouse’s events, getting past the Gestapo-like doorman is all about who you know or how much you’re willing to pay, so come strapped with either cash (guys) or

cleavage (girls), or you’ll be on the outside looking in. *Mon, Wed, Thu, Sat 10pm–2am; Fri 9:30pm–2am.* ☎ 643 N. La Cienega Blvd. (Melrose Ave.), 310-652-2012, sbeent.com/area

Hyde Lounge • West Hollywood • Lounge

A celebrity-gossip legend (TMZ.com posts a nightly videographer outside), this Hollywood hot spot is as much a part of “celebutard” culture as sex tapes, rehab, and crotch-shots. Nightlife czar Sam Nazarian and über-promoter Brent Bolthouse have created a super-exclusive, intimate clubhouse feel where everyone knows your name, as well as your IMDb credits. Brave alphabet-soup-listers and Paris-ites can gauge where they rank in hot young Hollywood by their admittance or denial by the hypercritical Simon Cowell–like doorman. In fact, the valet won’t even park your car until it’s absolutely clear you’re getting in. Inside, you will find a gold-lit, cylindrical-shaped lounge decked out in crocodile-covered ottomans, black-lacquered floors, and banquette tops ideal for table dancing. Renowned chef Katsuya Uechi cooks up Asian-fusion munchies, while celeb DJs such as Samantha Ronson and Steve Aoki supply the sing-along flashback classics. If you aren’t an industry player or don’t belong to a celebrity entourage, then your best bet to get in would be to reserve a high-priced table. *Sun–Thu 7:30pm–2am, Fri–Sat 8:30pm–2am.* ☎ 8029 W. Sunset Blvd. (Crescent Heights Blvd.), 323-656-4933, sbeent.com

Opera • Hollywood • Nightclub

This off-Hollywood Boulevard venue has seen more face-lifts than the Jackson family (most recently Club 1650). New owner David Judaken appears to have broken the location’s longtime curse with an innovative and costly renovation that has transformed it into not one, but two hot spots. While the intimate Crimson caters to a more select crowd, Opera is anything but discreet. Packs of privileged patrons lucky enough to stumble past the velvet rope douchebaggery, step through billowing smoke clouds into a luscious open-air smoking patio. Inside, the dark, cavernous interior is adorned in carved archways, curved booths, and flattering candle lighting, setting a rich, exotic tone similar to nearby Mood (Judaken’s other club). Aside from the occasional Kim Kardashian booty sighting, Hollywood’s A through C lists have already pillaged these parts, leaving it to the high-spirited club commoners—barely legal hotties, haughties, and noughties who flash ass, sass, and cash like they’re celebs nonetheless. *Thu–Sun 10pm–2am.* ☎ 1650 Schrader Blvd. (Hollywood Blvd.), 323-960-3300

S Bar • Hollywood • Ultralounge

The “S” stands for Sam, as in Sam Nazarian, the nightlife mogul behind Hyde, Foxtail, and other A-list establishments that tend to restrict their guest lists to SAG and black AMEX card-carrying members. S Bar, on the other hand, was conceived as a neighborhood watering hole where locals can grab a drink without all the Hollywood hoopla. Sure, right? Well, the hypercritical doorman standing beside the curtained entrance is more Randy Jackson than Simon Cowell, but your odds of getting in past 11pm (when it reaches capacity at 100) go down quite considerably, unless you’ve got IMDb credentials. If you do step into the whimsical Philippe Starck–designed interior, it’s like going down the rabbit hole in *Alice in Wonderland*. The Mad Hatter aesthetic permeates through the fairy-tale clutter of mismatched furniture, upside-down table lamps, gothic candleabras, a T-style table centerpiece, and wall-size photo canvases depicting

Versailles. The specialty drinks are as eclectic and trippy as the décor, with organic ingredients such as celery, ginger, and bell peppers. The “neighborhood” crowd is an intimate mix of Katsuya after-dinner partiers, Adderall-fueled scene-whores, and occasional paparazzi filler (Jamie Foxx, the *Entourage* crew, and the cast of *The Hills*). *Mon–Thu 10pm–2am, Fri–Sun 9pm–2am.* ☎ 6304 Hollywood Blvd. (Vine St.), 323-957-2279, sbeent.com/sbar

Sidebar at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel • Beverly Hills • Ultralounge

If you can't cut it at Wolfgang Puck's star-studded steak house across the way, don't feel bad; neither can most of LA. Think of this hotel ultralounge inside the Beverly Wilshire Hotel as a worthy consolation prize, a b-side byproduct of Puck and architect Richard Meier's award-winning collaboration. The sophisticated space is much like its well-heeled clientele: sleek, elegant, and designer-branded. The flood-lit, monochromatic interior is tight, but not tawdry, with high ceilings, blanched-wood floors, velvet-lined seating, and a flat-panel television. Best yet, you can order from the streamlined “rough cut” menu, which includes a smoky-sweet appetizer of maple-glazed pork belly, Kobe beef short ribs peppered with Indian spices, and French sea bass with Moroccan *chermoula*. There are also custom cocktails such as the Crash and Sidebar (Peruvian grape brandy Barsol Pisco, Cointreau, and house-made sour mix). It's generally known as an industry meet-and-greet (a favorite setting in HBO's *Entourage*), so expect a mix of post-work agents and studio execs, weary writers searching for liquid courage, martini-swigging cosmopolitans, nipped and tucked socialites, and fashionable foodies on a budget. *Daily 5pm–2am.* ☎ 9500 Wilshire Blvd. (Beverly Drive), 310-275-5200, fourseasons.com/beverlywilshire

Stone Rose Lounge • West Hollywood • Hotel Bar

Entrepreneur Rande Gerber's nightlife destinations (Skybar, Whiskey Lounge) cater to the jet set. This highly anticipated hotel bar, located in the revitalized Sofitel Hotel, is no different, boasting a cutting-edge design, high-class clientele, and strict door policy. Dark-orange couches weave their way around the intimate interior marked by an accessible U-shaped bar staffed by a sultry waitstaff. An adjacent outdoor patio offers another bar, private cabanas, a trickling waterfall, and a burning fire pit. As for the crowd, hype doesn't always equal hip, as the usual mix of mature 30- and 40-somethings flashing business cards and cosmetic smiles far outnumbers the occasional A-lister (Gerber BFF George Clooney and wife Cindy Crawford) sighting. It's easier to get into than, say, Skybar if you aren't a hotel guest; just be sure to dress the part and come with some sweet “arm candy.” *Daily 4pm–2am.* ☎ Sofitel LA, 8555 Beverly Blvd. (La Cienega Blvd.), 310-228-6677, sofitella.com

Vice • Hollywood • Ultralounge

In a tiresome nightlife scene always trying to sell superficial sophistication, Vice keeps it real. The sleek ultralounge focuses on fun, putting a moratorium on velvet-roped attitude and gratuitous celebrity sightings, and offering reasonably priced bottle service. Candles dot a runway-like front room lined with black leather booths, which snake around into two split bars and a dance floor in back. The zebrawood floors, faux snakeskin trimmings, and sexy schoolgirl-attired cocktail servers are nice additions, but glimmering (annoying) color-shifting ceiling beads still hang from above. There's also a glass-enclosed VIP room upstairs with an open skylight to allow for smoking. DJs spin the latest

and greatest hip-hop and '80s flashbacks for a frivolous, wide age-ranging crowd of doe-eyed barely legals, local “guest-list boycotting” wayfarers, and slick-talking big-game hunters looking to track down random packs of “girls' night out” cougars and—or kittens. *Mon–Sat 9pm–2am.* ☎ 6364 Hollywood Blvd. (Ivar Ave.), 323-462-7827, vicehollywood.com

Hip Los Angeles Restaurants

Charcoal • Hollywood • American Comfort

Hollywood mogul Adolfo Suaya and his partner-in-dine promoter-restaurateur Michael Sutton's sequel to the Lodge is a casual complement to their sizzling, upscale steak house. Charcoal's rustic, homey vibe and reasonably priced comfort food is a perfect fit for the local crowd that frequents the ArcLight Cinemas where the swanky grill is located. The all-American char-grill menu is hot and heavy, featuring classic takes on steaks, burgers, and seafood. The Aspen lodge-like interior (lots of cushy leather, dark woods, stone, and an antler chandelier) is relaxed and comfortable. The dinner-and-date crowd can snuggle up to a booth near a fireplace for a bite and drink before or after a movie, while packs of late-night-hunting singles can pull up a seat at the well-stocked bar and kick back to a live DJ. *Daily 11am–2am.* \$ ☎ ☎ 6360 Sunset Blvd. (Ivar Ave.), 323-465-8500, charcoalhollywood.com

The Delancey • Hollywood • Italian

More Mulberry Street than Sunset Boulevard, this Italian bar and café is just down the block from owner George Abou-Daoud's other East Coast-inspired gastropub, The Bowery. Like its sibling restaurant, the vibe is big-city casual (no reservations, chalkboard menu, late-night kitchen, buzzing with Guppies)—ideal for a date, dinner, or drinks. Behind the neon marquee and glazed brick façade is a cozy interior that evokes the West Village: tin ceilings, chestnut leather banquettes, brick arches, cast-iron windows, and a stately oak bar. The moderately priced pizza-pasta-panini menu (only one item more than \$20) is more Paul Anka than Frank Sinatra. The vibe is low-key, yet lively enough to stop in for a cocktail and a cannoli. There's a full bar with a well-curated wine list and 20 beers on tap (Fat Tire, Boddingtons, and Delirium Tremens). The crowd ebbs and flows, but generally grows as the night goes on. *Mon–Fri noon–2am, Sat–Sun 6pm–2am.* \$ ☎ 5936 Sunset Blvd. (Tamarind Ave.), 323-469-2100, delanceyhollywood.com

8 Oz. • West Hollywood • American

In this year of the gastropub, Govind Armstrong's burger bar ranks near the top of the ever-growing list. His place on Melrose is all about comfort, adding gourmet twists to childhood classics (Kobe corn dogs, albacore tuna melts) in a neighborhood pub setting. The *Iron Chef* winner's made-to-order, half-pound, humanely raised and hormone-free burger (a custom 8oz. blend of Black Angus sirloin, tri-tip, and short rib) is a worthy contender to the carnivore crown, but it's not the best burger in town, nor even the best thing on the menu. That prize goes to the Oprah-approved short-rib grilled cheese. And the fancy sides (green peppercorn aioli, fried green tomatoes, cave-aged gruyere) sound intriguing, but are superfluous, especially at \$1–\$2 a pop. The tasty add-ons might be more warranted for the veggie, filet of fish, and turkey burgers. As for the vibe, it's as

comforting as the food, with friends and families gathered around black banquettes and high-top bar tables, sharing slabs of onion rings and heavenly banana splits. Flat-screen TVs bookend an extended bar, which serves micro-brew drafts, fresh-fruit cocktails, and “adult shakes,” making it an ideal pit stop (day or night) for relaxation or revelry—just leave your calorie counting at the door. *Daily 3pm–2am.* \$ ☎ 7661 Melrose Ave. (Stanley Ave.), 323-852-0008, 8ozburgerbar.com

Kado • West Hollywood • Japanese

At first glance, Kado has “chain restaurant” written all over it. It’s located at a touristy mall (the Grove), above a Bath & Body Works no less, but boasts a Japanese-fusion menu, and claims to be “hip, trendy, upscale, and fun.” But, before you say “*no arigato*,” take a closer look. The sprawling three-room design offers three distinct dining experiences to choose from. Need a quick bite? Go for Kai-Ten, which features fresh sushi plates on a rotating conveyor belt that chugs around a breezy bar. Planning a party? Reserve a Teppan table where chefs “eatertain” you with a slice and dice, toss, and shake dinner show. Looking for something more traditional? There’s an indoor-outdoor restaurant complete with sushi bar and patio. The sushi is familiar, but reasonably priced and quite good (try the popcorn lobster roll) and the sake menu is above average, although the best drink may be the lychee mojito. This isn’t Nobu, but it offers something different, and that’s more than you can say about the Cheesecake Factory, which incidentally is across the way. *Sun–Thu 11am–11pm, Fri–Sat 11am–1am* \$\$ ☎ 6333 W Third St. (Fairfax Ave.), 323-933-0055, kadoreastaurant.com

Lamill Coffee Boutique • Silverlake • French-American

Coffee-infused restaurant? Coffee boutique? Whatever you call it, Lamill is changing the way coffee-junkies get their caffeine fix. Nestled in the bohemian village of Silverlake, the bustling hipster haven is an extension of a popular local premium-coffee company. That would explain why the individually handcrafted coffees and teas earn their superhero names (Midnight Jazz and Black Onyx). The charmingly pristine two-room interior is decked out in deep teal, charcoal black, and blood red with French toile walls, faux crocodile chairs, black Lucite tables, and gold brass chandeliers. Artsy indie iconoclasts and gastronomic gurus sit, brood, and muse over Chef Michael Cimarusti and pastry chef Adrian R. Vasquez’s (both of Providence restaurant fame) avant-garde, yet petite and pricey breakfast, lunch, and dinner dishes. The servings are debatably small, leaving room for decadent caffeinated concoctions such as the “liquid tiramisu” and “coffee and a jelly donut.” Reason enough to pull up a seat next to the multi-pane windows and channel the inner caffeine connoisseur in you. *Sun–Thu 7am–10pm, Fri–Sat 7am–11pm.* \$ ☎ 1636 Silver Lake Blvd. (Effie St.), 323-663-4441, lamillcoffee.com

Nova Express • West Hollywood • Café

Last call doesn’t mean the party has to be over. At least not at this sci-fi café where the ambient beats and munchie eats go well into the night. This longtime hipster hang along the Fairfax District strip is the anti-IHOP, a cool, chill after-hours destination where one can unwind with a pack of friends after a night out in Holly-weird. Gen-Xers will reminisce when they lay bloodshot eyes on Voltron, Omnibot 2000, and the towering action figure display. Nightly DJs supply the

backdrop beats behind a wall of vintage comic book reprints. Soak your liquored belly up with the thin-crust, topping-heavy Cosmic Pizzas, focaccia-breaded Celestial Sandwiches, and fresh salads. Wash it down with a fresh fruit smoothie or chocolate-banana Black Dot milkshake. The late-night scene kicks into hyperspace when the clubs close, so grab a control deck/table before 2am. *Tue–Sun 7pm–4am.* \$ ☎ ☎ 426 N. Fairfax Ave. (Oakwood Ave.), 323-658-7533, novaexpresscafe.com

Red Pearl Kitchen • Hollywood • Asian

As far as Far East authenticity goes, Tim and Liza Goodell’s (Dakota, 25 Degrees) Asian-fusion eatery is more David Carradine than Bruce Lee. Food isn’t necessarily the focus at this kickin’ Melrose place that’s perfect for a laid-back date or a girls’ night out. The Shanghai kitsch design (kimono chandeliers, Maoist artwork) favors sensual shades of red and orange, slick black lacquer, and metallic gold-stained flooring. The charming multi-room interior features a main dining area with a view of the open kitchen, a comfy bar, a secluded lounge with a billiards table, and a communal outdoor dining patio. The price is right and the family-style portions are plentiful, but note that the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Thai dishes lack that down-home taste you would find in Chinatown or the San Gabriel Valley. The late-night happy hour (9 to close Sun–Thu) is one of the best in town. *Mon–Wed 5:30–10pm, Thu–Sun 5:30–11pm; bar open nightly to 2am.* \$ ☎ ☎ 6703 Melrose Ave. (Citrus Ave.), 323-525-1415, redpearlkitchen.com

Tender Greens • Culver City • American

Health-conscious fast food sounds like an oxymoron, but it’s the ethos of this eco-friendly café. Huge plate glass windows bring the outdoors into a light, warm, airy space, where you make your order, watch an assembly line of “cooks” prepare it, then pay for it. Once you find a seat in the sunny outdoor patio, your food will be delivered in 10 minutes (give or take). The salads range from inventive (Ahi tuna nicoise, Chipotle barbeque chicken) to the traditional (Cobb, Grilled-chicken Caesar). There’s also “Hot Stuff” (Angus flatiron steak sandwich), “Comfort Soups” (chicken soup with lemon thyme) and “Sweet Stuff” (carrot top frosted cupcake). They also serve organic wines, microbrews, coffee, and tea. Most of the fresh and earth-friendly ingredients come from nearby Scarborough farms, and no menu item is more than \$10. Still, it may seem a bit much for lunch, and the food, although artistic in look, tastes a bit manufactured. But, its prime location in the middle of Culver City’s restaurant row makes it a comforting, casual complement to some of the finer dining establishments surrounding it (Fraiche, Akasha). Ideal for brokering deals, first dates, or lunch with the friends or co-workers. *Sun–Thu 11:30am–9pm, Fri–Sat 11:30am–10pm.* \$\$\$ ☎ 9523 Culver Blvd. (Irving Pl.), 310-842-8300, tendergreensfood.com

Hip Los Angeles Nightlife

Bar 86 • Hollywood • Lounge

Historic Hollywood and modern nightlife come together as Rudolph Valentino’s infamous gin joint is reborn as a glamorous supper club. It’s sign-less and hidden in the basement of the Hillview apartment building down a dark street,

which may be why it was the “it” speakeasy during Prohibition—as evidenced by the sliding peephole in the front door. Inside, the remodeled lounge and cabaret would make “the Great Lover” proud with its smoky, sexy, retro aesthetic that harkens back to the Jazz Age. Plush tables and wraparound booths face a center stage showcasing burlesque dancers throbbing to the lively beat of nightly jazz bands. The simplistic dinner menu is pretty good (the steaks are great), but the so-so service is a bit slow. The amicable door policy is a welcome retreat from the velvet rope douchebaggery around town, drawing an eclectic crowd that tends to clear out after 11pm. That can be a good or bad thing as Hollywood hepcats, pin-up girl revivalists, and random revelers are left to party like it’s 1929, getting pissy on classic cocktails (Grasshoppers and Sazeracs) and lighting up cigarettes in the swanky smoking lounge. *Tue-Sat 7pm–2am.* ☎ [6533 Hollywood Blvd, 90028 \(Hudson St.\), 323-871-8634, 86hollywood.com](http://6533 Hollywood Blvd, 90028 (Hudson St.), 323-871-8634, 86hollywood.com)

Bar Lubitsch • West Hollywood • Bar

This Bolshevik-chic vodka bar comes from nightlife czar Sean MacPherson (Good Luck Bar, Jones, Swingers) with love. Shelved in the heart of West Hollywood’s Russian émigré community on the fringes of Boy’s Town, the Marxist-era speakeasy will have vodka connoisseurs singing *Fiddler on the Roof*’s “If I Were a Rich Man” with an impressive 200-plus selection of international, potato, grain, and soy vodkas ranging from \$9 to \$25. Specialty drinks include the cucumber gimlet and the flaming-hot Molotov cocktail. The low-lit, avant-garde interior is decked out in Mao-red walls, white tile floors, vintage yard-sale chandeliers, and propaganda art. Commandeer a seat at the handsome wood deco bar for some liquid courage before unleashing the Barynya (Russian boot dance) on the (odd) disco dance floor. The festive crowd consists of fashionable would-be iconoclasts, scenesters seeking refuge from Winston’s iron-curtain door policy, and closet film and art geeks candidly noting the namesake’s nod to filmmaker Ernst Lubitsch. *Sun-Thu 6pm–2am, Fri-Sat 7pm–2am.* ☎ [7702 Santa Monica Blvd. \(Stanley Ave.\), 323-654-1234](http://7702 Santa Monica Blvd. (Stanley Ave.), 323-654-1234)

Broadway Bar • Downtown LA • Bar

Owner Cedd Moses and designer Ricki Kline have played a major role in Downtown LA’s renaissance. Their collaboration began with the ground-breaking Golden Gopher, and now the Broadway Bar firmly establishes them as the top contenders vying for the lucrative downtown LA nightlife crown. The dashing decadent, dimly lit, two-level interior has a grandiose “old school” NYC vibe straight out of a Coppola or Scorsese mobster movie. The main room is decked out with a circular bar, gleaming chandeliers, Victorian paintings, and a streetside smoking patio. A spiral staircase leads up to the mezzanine level, complete with couches, a bar, and an outdoor balcony. There’s no food, but you can order pizza delivery from a nearby pizzeria. Corporate suits let loose during the weekday happy hour, eventually giving way to loft locals, spirited USC coeds, East LA club commuters, and Hollywood refugees looking for a night out with “no list or line drama.” The easy-going, hassle-free vibe is accented by a jukebox stocked with everything from Bloc Party to Burt Bacharach. *Mon-Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 8pm–2am.* ☎ [830 S. Broadway \(Eighth St.\), 213-614-9909, broadwaybar.la](http://830 S. Broadway (Eighth St.), 213-614-9909, broadwaybar.la)

The Edison • Downtown • Ultralounge

This ambitious ultralounge lights up Downtown LA with a retro look and feel that’s refreshingly new and original. Located in the basement of the historic Higgins Building, this polished, chrome-copper-laced “industrial cathedral” is divided into a multitude of theme rooms (Boiler Room Bar, the Furnace, Generator Lounge) that retain many architectural and mechanical artifacts (turbines, cranks, coal bins) from its past as the city’s first private power plant. Movie theatre-size screens flash black-and-white clips, while a dancing troupe of flapper girls further enhances the ‘30s speakeasy ambience. A classic bar-food menu complements an extensive Scotch, wine, and drink special list—we suggest you try the Edison (honey-infused liquor and fresh-squeezed pear nectar). The diverse, sharply dressed crowd is a hit-or-miss mix of cubicle cliques, private party patrons, and artsy loft dwellers who prefer to chill out over cocktails and conversation rather than hit up the near-empty dance floor. There is a wait if you aren’t on the guest list, so come before 10pm. *Wed-Fri 5pm–2am, Sat 8pm–2am.* ☎ [108 W. Second St., #101 \(Main St.\), 213-613-0000, edisondowntown.com](http://108 W. Second St., #101 (Main St.), 213-613-0000, edisondowntown.com)

Hotel Café • Hollywood • Live Music

LA’s tight-knit and talent-rich singer-songwriter community calls this quirky, intimate music café home. Fittingly, it’s hidden down an inauspicious alleyway off the raging Cahuenga Corridor. The cozy, dimly lit interior is just as low-key as its backdoor entrance, with a narrow roomful of rickety tables and chairs surrounding a tiny corner stage. There’s a modest menu (panini, salads, desserts, and espresso drinks) as well as a full bar, but don’t open your mouth other than to eat or drink during a performance or you will be shushed by the loyal crowd. Big names (John Mayer and Jenny Lewis of Rilo Kiley), as well as breakout stars (Lykke Li and Jose Gonzalez), drop by for stripped-down shows, but it’s the unknown artists and their character-driven songs that give this folksy venue its indie cred. In fact, it’s become a sort of brand, with its own house-curated concert tour and upstart record label. *Daily 7pm–2am.* \$ ☎ [1623 1/2 N. Cahuenga Blvd. \(Hollywood Blvd.\), 323-461-2040, hotelcafe.com](http://1623 1/2 N. Cahuenga Blvd. (Hollywood Blvd.), 323-461-2040, hotelcafe.com)

Les Deux • Hollywood • Nightclub

The house that TMZ built is a Warholian fantasy land where everyone is a star. The ever-present paparazzi document the nightly celeb sighting, but inevitably catch the anonymous commoner nipple slip, catfight, crotch shot and/or drunken confessional as well. You might recognize the sprawling French burlesque-themed indoor-outdoor layout from *The Hills* (it was practically a location set for Season 3), with its peach-tinted mirrors, flattering candelabras, supple black leather sofas, and alfresco area with an overlooking, voyeur-friendly balcony. The Italian dinner menu is largely ignored in favor of dessert treats (mini-cupcakes) and \$10-plus cocktails. Celebrity DJs spin hip-hop, flashbacks, and mix-ups for the crowd of designer-branded glamazons and metrosexuals. Guests are hand-picked by doormen who favor the beautiful, blond, and busty, leaving sulking have-nots tapping away at their BlackBerry, while yelling “I’m on the list.” If you’re in the latter group, then your best bet is bottle service (\$1,500 and up) or the only way you’re going to see the inside is on MTV or in *US Weekly*. *Tue-Sat 10pm–2am.* \$ ☎ [1638 N. Las Palmas Ave. \(Hollywood Blvd.\), 323-462-7644, dolcegroup.com](http://1638 N. Las Palmas Ave. (Hollywood Blvd.), 323-462-7644, dolcegroup.com)

Library Bar • Downtown • Bar

"I am a drinker with writing problems," said Irish dramatist Brendan Behan. Indeed, booze and books go hand-in-hand in so many writers' lives, from Ernest Hemingway to Oscar Wilde, so why not bring them together? The owners behind the 4100 Bar do just that with this downtown watering hole. The low-key, literary-minded lounge, located on the ground floor of the Library Court Lofts, adjacent to the LA Library, takes its cues from neighborhood pubs in London and New York City. The parlor-style interior features gothic mood lighting, exposed brick walls, custom-crafted furnishings, elegant brocade upholsteries, an Italian marbled bar, and a floor-to-ceiling library full of books, including classics, self-help books, and astrological guides. So what goes with Tolstoy or Kipling? Pick and choose from an extensive list of Belgian beers, ports, wines, champagnes, and specialty cocktails made with freshly squeezed juices. The mood is first-class, yet unpretentious, with a steady stream of Financial District suits giving way to USC coeds, The Standard run-off, and local loft-dwelling intellectuals all looking to fulfill their sexy librarian fantasies. *Mon-Fri 3pm-2am, Sat-Sun 7pm-2am.* ☒ 630 W Sixth St., 116A (Hope St.), 213-614-0053, librarybarla.com

Mission Cantina • Hollywood • Bar

Tequila worshippers flock to this off-the-beaten path Mexican cantina to drink their holy water. Looking more like a vintage church than a *borracho* watering hole, it comes courtesy of George Abou-Daoud, the gastropub guru behind The Bowery and the adjacent The Delancey. The path of righteousness will lead you through wrought-iron gates into a narrow, dimly lit bar with stained-glass windows, indigo-blue walls, cozy booths and banquettes, and a handcrafted oak (altar) bar stocked with more than 150 tequilas. The holy trinity of "Ta-Kill-Ya" is here (Patron, Cazadores, and Jose Cuervo) along with 150 lesser-known artisanal producers. Fundamentalists prefer their "liquid gold" straight up, but those of lesser faith go for the strawberry-guava or grapefruit-lavender margaritas. The Oaxacan *mole* chicken and slow-cooked beef and smoked pork tacos top-line a straightforward, yet uneven "street food" menu (\$3 for house-made chips and salsa? Not right.) But, most of the Eastside hipster run-off and boho-chic Guppies who come here are only hungry for salvation in the form of the almighty agave plant anyway. *Daily 5pm-2am.* \$\$ ☒ 5946 W. Sunset Blvd. (Tamarind Ave.), 323-469-3130

Seven Grand • Downtown • Nightclub

William Faulkner once said, "There is no such thing as a bad whiskey. Some whiskeys just happen to be better than others." If you live by this credo, then Seven Grand is your seventh heaven. The retro-saloon pays homage to the classic American whiskey-bourbon bars of the '30s and '40s, offering an impressive selection of more than 170 of the finest distilled and blended versions from around the globe. If that's not enough to whet your palate, the cocktails also come with slow-melting nitrogen ice cubes that don't water down the drinks (\$6-\$125). Don't fret if you aren't a hard-liquor connoisseur, because the personable barkeeps are well-rehearsed in offering suggestions. The old-fashioned hunting-lodge interior is accented in dark woods, rich leather, plaid carpeting, and mounted antelope heads. There's an outside smoking patio, a pool table, and a digital jukebox favoring classic and modern rock. The crowd is a random mix of loft-dwelling indie-lectuals, emo-hipsters, and Happy Hour stragglers,

who bar hop to and from owner Cedd Moses' other nearby downtown destinations, Golden Gopher and Broadway Bar. *Mon-Fri 4pm-2am, Sat 8pm-2am.* ☒ 515 W. Seventh St. (Olive St.), 213-614-0736, sevengrand.la

The Woods • Hollywood • Lounge

Night owls looking for something well off the pretentious Hollywood path will hoot over this forest-themed lounge. Located in a Russian-Armenian strip mall, the former Lava Lounge has been re-imagined as a chill-out neighborhood spot, carving out a much-needed nightlife niche in a city overrun with velvet-rope envy, bank-account-breaking cocktails, and carbon-copy clubs. Hand-cut cedar block walls, teak tables carved from tree trunks, and elk-antler chandeliers give the narrow lounge a cozy lodge-like feel. Grizzly bearded hipsters in ironic tees and granola glam girls in Lily Allen dresses camp out around the candlelit bar, trading Republican jokes and/or reviewing the latest indie release, while nodding their bed-heads to the rock-heavy jukebox. The only thing missing are Smores, but it does offer mint Juleps and a signature shot called the Hollow Point that "only takes one to kill you." *Daily 8pm-2am.* ☒ 1533 N. La Brea Ave. (Sunset Blvd.), 323-876-6612, vintagebargroup.com/thewoods.html

Hip Los Angeles Attractions

Museum of Neon Art (MONA) • Downtown • Art Museum

Los Angeles was filling tubes with argon gas and hanging them all over town before the rest of the country caught on to this novel advertising—and, yes, art—form. The neon tradition is honored in this small gallery's revolving collection of electric media, along with classes that teach you to make your own. To get a taste of what's still out hanging around town, book a Neon Tour on MONA's open-air, double-decker bus for an evening's exploration of LA's coolest, brightest, gaudiest signs (tours run between April and October). *Wed-Sat 11am-5pm, Sun noon-5pm.* \$ 501 W. Olympic Blvd. (Grand Ave.), 213-489-9918, neonmona.org

Redcat • Downtown • Museums

This underground experimental art center showcases groundbreaking, cutting-edge artists confronting vital issues, inventing new forms, challenging traditions, and inspiring audiences. Located in the basement of the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater presents a full range of visual, performing, and media arts at low cost (often free). The intimate, innovative Frank Gehry-designed gallery space is modular, multipurpose, and one of the most technologically advanced gallery spaces in the world, featuring 14-foot-high walls, an advanced high-tech lighting and sound system, and a 250-seat theatre. This unique versatility allows the presentation of everything from photography exhibits to live theatre and literary readings to film series. The burgeoning scene has become an important part of the lives of the city's creative class, an alternative breed of tattooed and pierced patrons who gather around the lively lounge area post-show, discussing topics such as the evolution of graphic design over Jack-and-Cokes or triple espressos. *Tue-Sun 12pm-6pm. Lounge: Tue-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat-Sun 12pm-9pm.* 631 W. Second St. (S. Grand Ave.), 213-237-2800

