

Los Angeles

THE OFFICIAL VISITOR GUIDE

Shopping Dining Events Shopping Sports Culture Shopping Entertainment Events Sports Shopping Dining Entertainment Cruise Shopping Event



LA INC. THE LOS ANGELES CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

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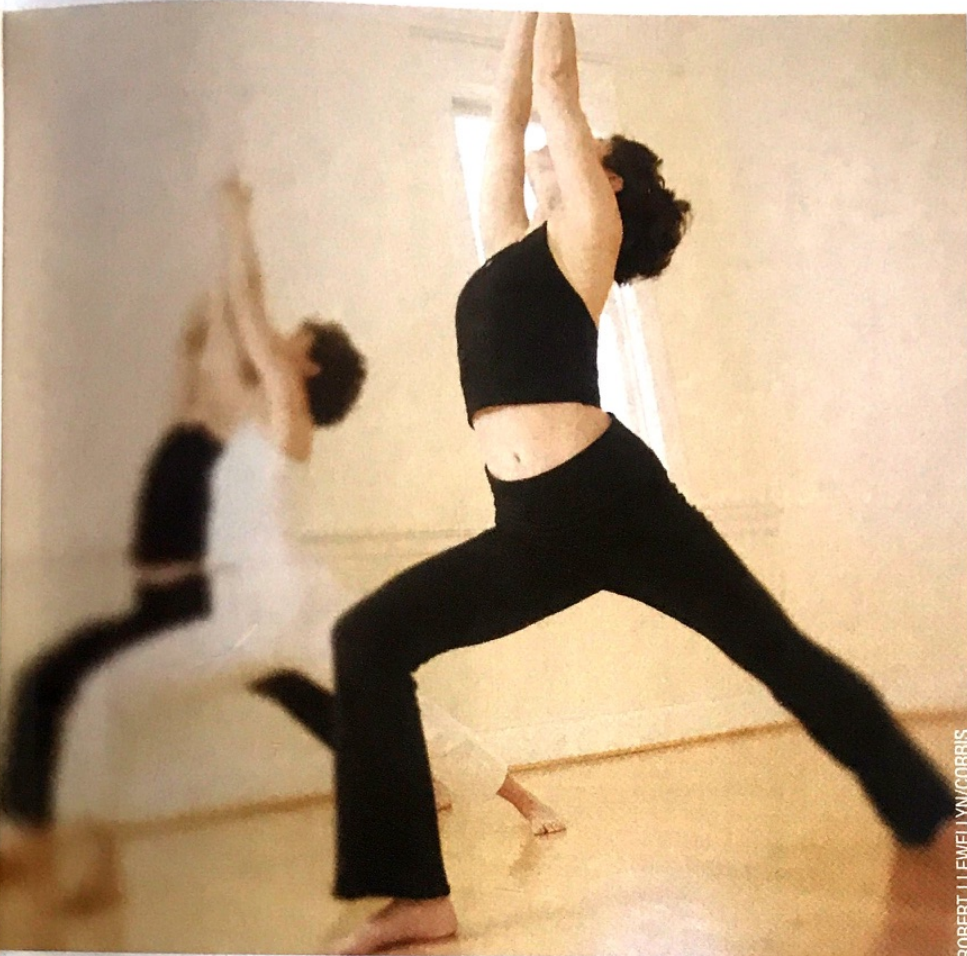
LESLIE BIRD

Bluefin tuna at Water Grill downtown



Ad along Sunset Boulevard traces typical LA career path

What makes a great city is in the eye of the beholder. New York and Chicago have their signatures and hallmarks, for better and otherwise. Beyond its status as a company town—for the entertainment industry—Los Angeles has its own distinguishing qualities. What gives LA its edge? Some would say its outside-the-box thinking. Certainly, in an informal competition among these great cities, the answer lies far beyond congeniality.



ROBERT LLEWELLYN/CORBIS

Getting centered in L.A.



L.A. style: fashions by Petro Zillia

Attribute	New York	Chicago	LA
TOWERS OF POWER	Empire State Building	Sears Tower	Outrageous billboards on Sunset Boulevard
ICONIC HOTELS	The Plaza, Waldorf Astoria	The Drake, Palmer House	The Standard, Chateau Marmont
WEATHER, FEBRUARY	20°, snow and freezing rain	15°, colder by the lake, wind chill	"Chilly" temps in the 60s and 70s
WEATHER, JULY	90° and humid	98°, mosquitos in the suburbs	Hot in the Valley, cool by the ocean
CELEBRITY ICON	Al Pacino	Joe Mantegna	Jack Nicholson
POWER BREAKFAST	Toasted bagel with cream cheese, or a shake	Day-old pizza, or a shake, or overpriced fruit and yogurt	Muffin and mocha, or a Jamba Juice smoothie with a side of people-watching
WORK ATTIRE	Tailored pants, fitted sweater, purse/shoulder bag for lunch, drinks, extra attire	Separates from Banana Republic; creatives opt for tailored pants and trendy top seen in Lucky magazine	Jelessy blazer, Juicy tee, Sage shawl, trouser-cut jeans from Citizens of Humanity, handbag from Mae & J
THE NEW "BLACK"	Black! Add pink for the bold	Brown, navy and burgundy	Hibiscus pink, orange, powder blue, lime
FINGER FOOD	Hot soft pretzels, knishes	Beef hot dogs, deep-dish pizza	Tuna tartare, satay, spicy dipping sauce
WAKE-UP BEVERAGE	Regular coffee, black	Frothy latte, skim milk foam	Boba loaded with tapioca pearls
DIRECTIONS TO SUBWAY	"Sorry, I'm in a hurry right now."	"A good place to learn about the EL is the State of Illinois Building—several routes stop at Clark and Lake."	"Start at Hollywood & Highland...Be sure to get a refreshing E-lix-ir drink and sneak in a game of bowling at Lucky Strike."

see my Bargains



Discount shopping, Assyrian style, at Citadel Outlets



Gold on display in the Jewelry District

High-concept boutiques and distinctive neighborhoods such as Larchmont Village and trendy Melrose Avenue are an important part of the Los Angeles retail scene, but many shoppers opt for the city's bargain wonderlands. They start at the Fashion District downtown, where they find great bargains on handbags, wallets, sunglasses, shawls, backpacks, T-shirts, luggage and jewelry.



Mannequins at Santee Alley

Find the Fashion District along Los Angeles Street between 7th and 12th streets. "Santee Alley in particular is a treasure trove," says the California Mart's Deirdre Mendoza, a downtown shopper for more than a decade, "Great for gifts on a budget." Stretching three city blocks between Olympic Boulevard and 12th Street, Santee Alley's shops and stalls overflow with deeply discounted clothing, shoes and accessories. It's cash only; go on weekdays or early Saturday mornings to beat the crowds.

If you prefer your deep discounts with fitting rooms, Citadel Outlets is a 20-minute jaunt from the Fashion District on the I-5 south. Worth-the-trip boutiques include BCBG/Max Azria, Izod and quintessentially Californian Quicksilver and Pacific Sunwear.

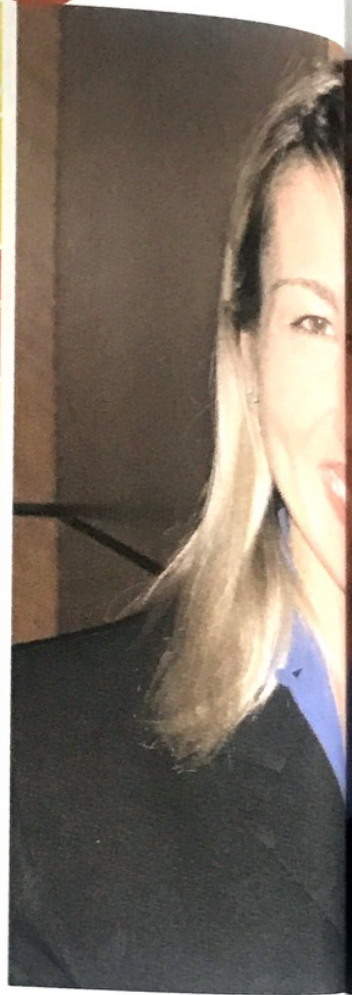
Though the mall opened in 1990, the nearly century-old building started out as the Samson Tire and Rubber Co., and was modeled after a 7th century B.C. Assyrian palace, complete with heraldic griffins and bas-reliefs of Babylonian princes.

The Jewelry District, near the Fashion District, is the ultimate place to get "more bling-bling for your buck." One historic structure, originally St. Vincent College, enters the 21st century as one of the world's largest jewelry complexes—a mind-boggling 350,000 square feet housing more than 500 independent vendors. Row upon row of display cases offer diamonds, precious and semi-precious stones, pearls, gold, platinum, silver and timepieces at up to 80% off mall and boutique prices. 👑

seemyPeople



Concierge Denise Van Eps, Visitors Information Center downtown



Concierge Julia Senter, East

Because visitors bring their personal preferences and tastes along with their baggage and itineraries, hospitality professionals need to be quick on their feet with recommendations and logistical information while retaining the warmth and congeniality typical of Los Angeles. Here are four professionals who meet those standards of ambassadorship, who take their jobs, and your needs, to heart.



Eric Espuny, Patina



Concierge Felecia Wesley, Four Seasons Los Angeles

Felecia Wesley worked as a model in France, Italy and New York before returning to her native LA to become a concierge. The Four Seasons Los Angeles is her catwalk now. "I lived in other countries, I lived in nice hotels," says Wesley, a member of Les Clefs d'Or. "I know what it's like to be in a place where people don't understand your language. How fabulous to help people in a city I know, my home that I love."

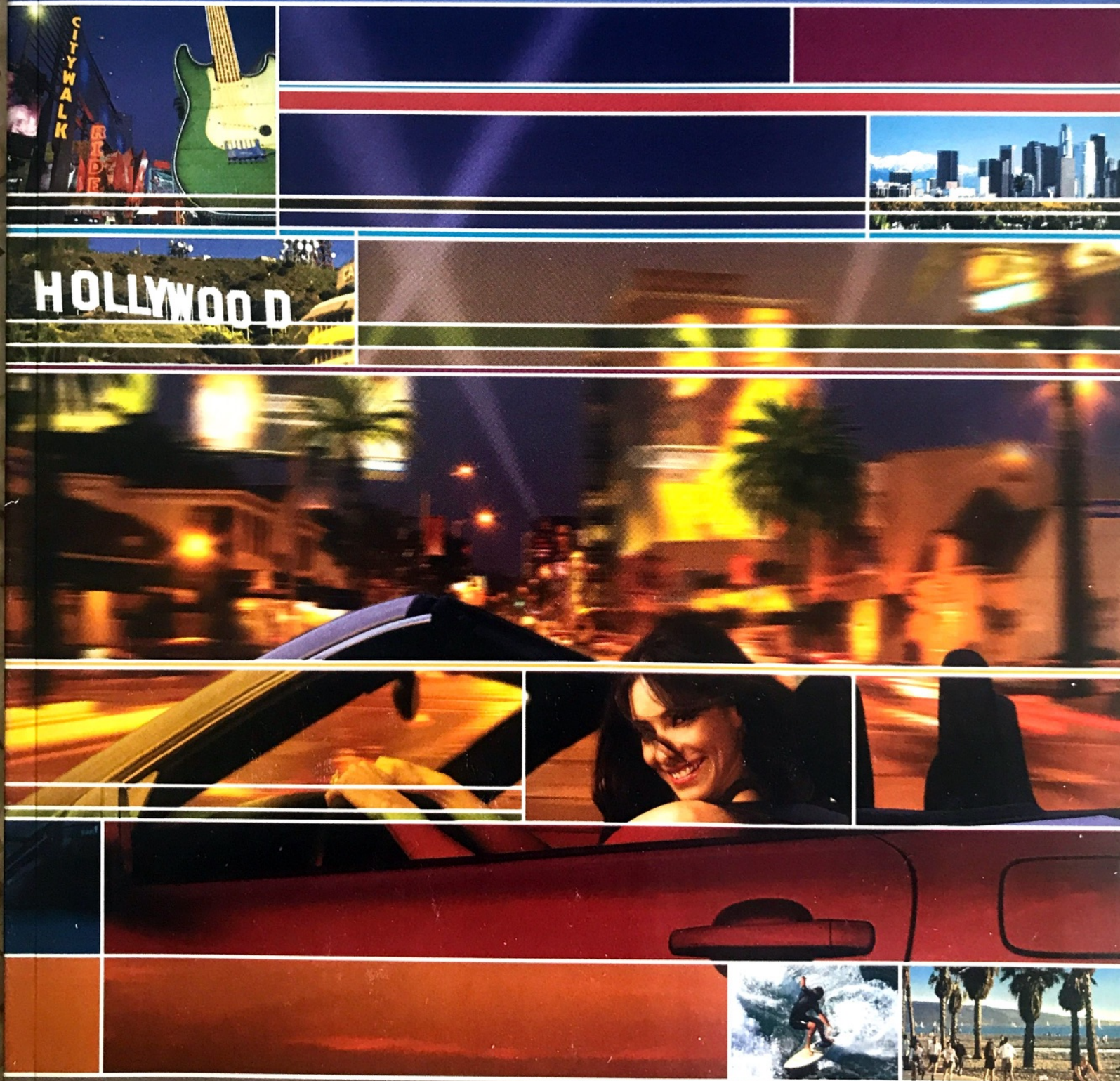
Sommelier Eric Espuny's passion for wine discoveries and for people was key to Patina's seamless move into Walt Disney Concert Hall. "I am not just coming up with wines to complement spectacular dishes," he says. "My job is to help savvy clients learn more about tasting and about smaller California vintners.... That makes a trip to LA more memorable."

Julia Soifer, concierge at the Renaissance Hotel in Hollywood, arrived from Kiev in 1994; her English is flawless, her knowledge of LA's nightlife, restaurants and cultural offerings comprehensive. "We're helping people take home memories of something that's unique or different," she agrees.

Denise Van Eps assists visitors at LA Inc.'s Visitor Information Center downtown, helping to ensure that every individual's experience is as close to perfect as possible. "Los Angeles is a city in constant motion," Van Eps says. "All of it—the shopping, dining, nightlife and culture—contributes to LA's status as one of America's most celebrated destinations. For me, a highlight of my job is hearing a visitor say, 'You've been so helpful.'" 🐦

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"see my LA"

"LA is a recipe made with the best ingredients -
great restaurants, great people, and great weather."

Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger -

"Too Hot Tamales"

see my Cuisine

The flight of seasonal soups at Noé, "Poise, Elegance, Grace," the sautéed hand-harvested diver scallops, Medjool date and brown butter puree with coco nib cracker at Patina—these are the stuff of culinary dreams. But that's the beauty of LA: The same could be said of the taut, garlicky, unimaginably juicy fare at Pink's Famous Chili Dogs.

Jer-Ne
Restaurant + Bar



The refined setting at Cézanne

A closer look reveals the most vibrant restaurant scene in the country. Joachim Splichal has Pinots in Las Vegas and Napa Valley, but Patina, his crown jewel, is at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Wolfgang Puck has Spagos as far afield as Tokyo, but his flagship is here. LA is the sushi capital of America and the tacos may be better than Mexico's.

Look west. La Golondrina offers traditional Mexican fare at Olvera Street. Fogo de Chao brings Brazilian cuisine to Restaurant Row. Find updated Latin American dishes at Ciudad and Hawaiian fusion fare at two new Roy's.

Look east. Find some of the best sushi in the nation along Ventura Boulevard. On Sunset Boulevard, Katana offers Japanese grill fare amid gorgeous décor and people. Julian Lennon owns Blowfish—Sushi To Die For.

Look all around. Noé offers an American-French-Japanese mélange Downtown. Sumptuous Jaan in Beverly Hills combines the best of California and Indonesia.

Steakhouses get a whole new look at hip new Hollywood spots, including Sterling Steakhouse and Dakota.

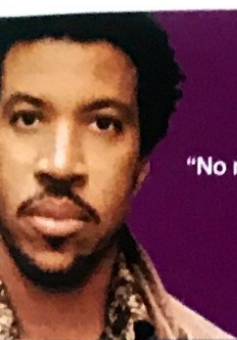
Looking for an ocean view? The Lobster overlooks Santa Monica Pier. Elegant hotel restaurants such as Cézanne, One Pico and Ocean and Vine line the coast like a string of pearls. In Malibu, the Gladstone's fish house draws a million visitors a year; Geoffrey's offers the prettiest patio in paradise. 🐟



Oysters and caviar at Nine Thirty



Hawaiian martini at Roy's

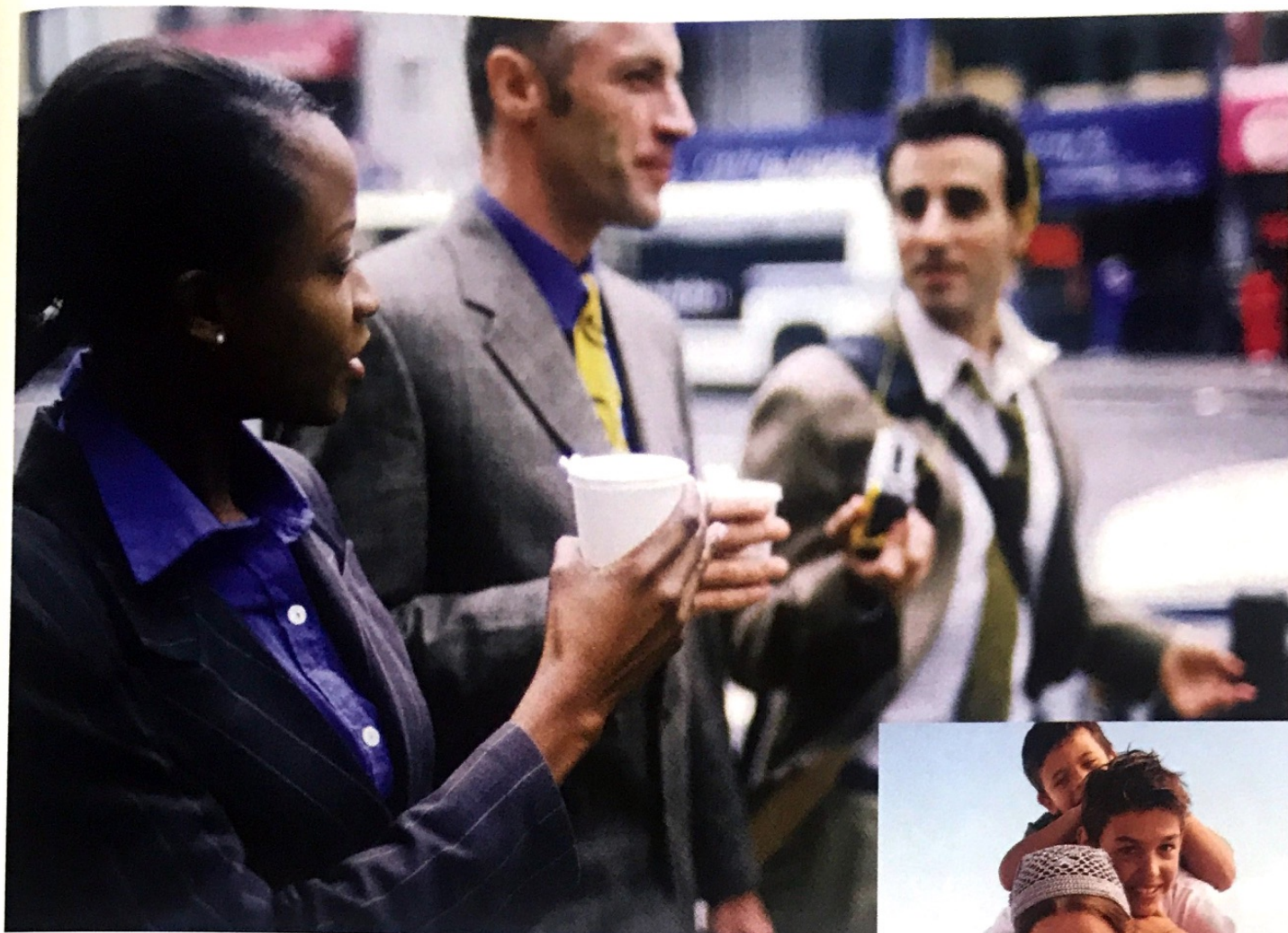


"see my LA"
"No matter who I meet in the world,
they all show up in LA."
Lionel Richie



see my Diversity

Diversity is LA's greatest asset, the one that city leaders believe will make us the most prosperous city on the planet. Los Angeles is, after all, a city where nearly half of its residents are Hispanic, one in 10 are African American, and well more than 100 languages are spoken, each a potential avenue of trade to the country of origin.



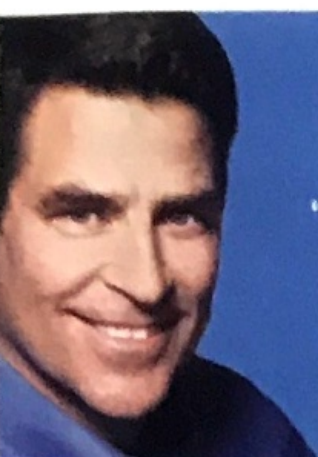
Official blue signs announce ethnic districts such as Little Tokyo, Koreatown and Little Ethiopia. Shop signs in Persian, Spanish or Chinese are locators in a landscape in which neighborhoods such as Thai Town and Little Armenia transition seamlessly. Vendors at Grand Central Market Downtown offer local produce, exotic spices and a dozen world cuisines.

Persian bookstores, Japanese boba parlors and chain retailers cohabitate Westwood Boulevard, and Fairfax Avenue is the destination for Ethiopian restaurants and kosher delicatessens. Rabbis and punk kids alike wear black on Melrose Avenue. LA's gay community and one of the largest Russian immigrant populations in the U.S. call West Hollywood home.

The San Fernando Valley is LA's most racially diverse area—and one of its most economically vibrant. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the first Hispanic mayor of Los Angeles in more than a century, encourages residents to learn at least one other language. LA is a crossroads, the Venice of the 21st century. It offers an appreciation of world cultures and, in the spirit of a truly great metropolis, lessons in tolerance. 🏆

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"see my LA"
"Multi-cultural, exciting,
beautiful, LA has it all."
Ted McGinley



see my People

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Su-Elise Odom



Carol Levin



Jonathan Mitchell

John Cantlay, Millennium Biltmore Hotel chef concierge and Les Clefs D'Or member, believes that to be an effective ambassador for the city, you need to get out and about and to pass what you see and learn along to the guests. "This job gives me the flexibility to lead tours as a docent with the LA Conservancy," he says. "There is a lot of history to share, and doing so makes the visit more meaningful."

Su-Elise Odom was once a legal secretary who "planned [my bosses' lives], from booking flights and making restaurant reservations to providing suggestions on where to order flowers and how to entertain clients." Now she's a concierge at Loews Beverly Hills Hotel, responding to every request from a wide range of individuals: "Guests range from the ultra-high-end, who want to be catered to, to independent types not afraid to make discoveries on their own."

Like Odom and Cantlay, Carol Levin has had a "lifelong love affair" with LA. She was a tour guide before joining LA INC.'s Visitor Information Center. "This city is so multifaceted," she says. "Helping visitors plan their stay makes us feel good."

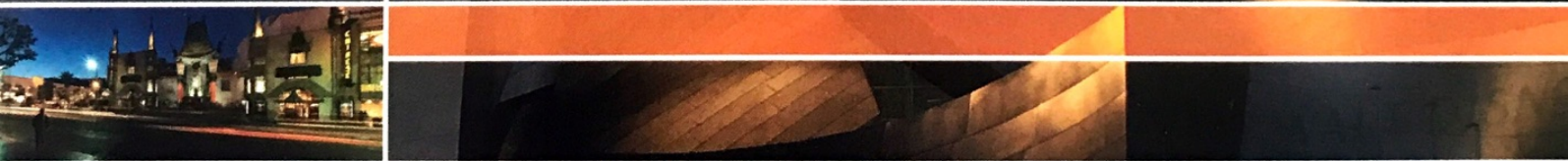
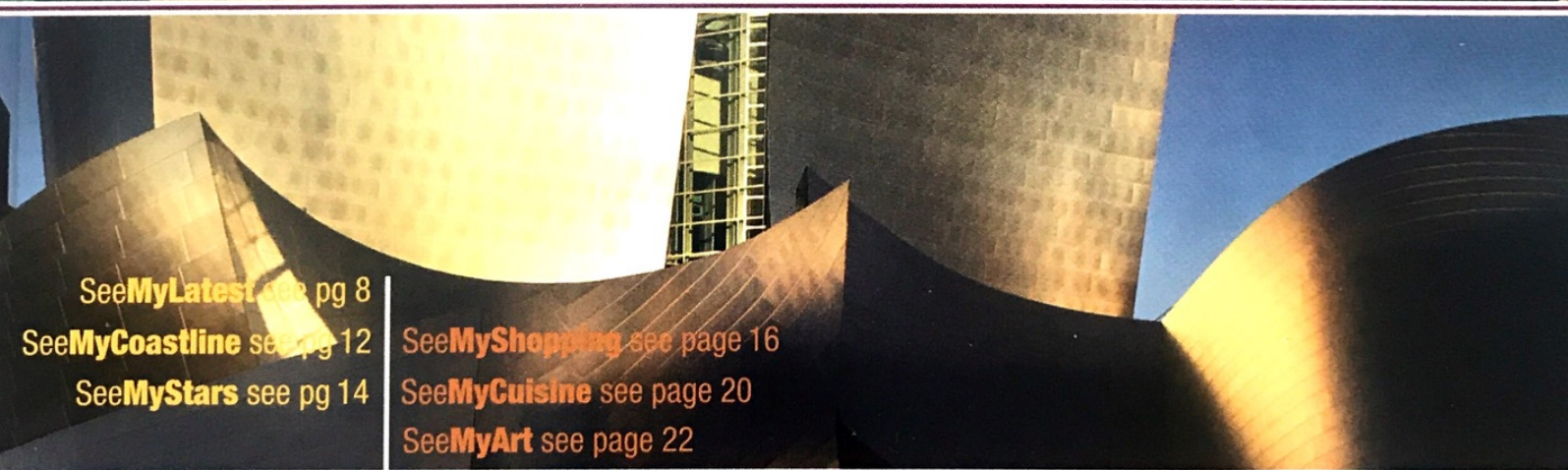
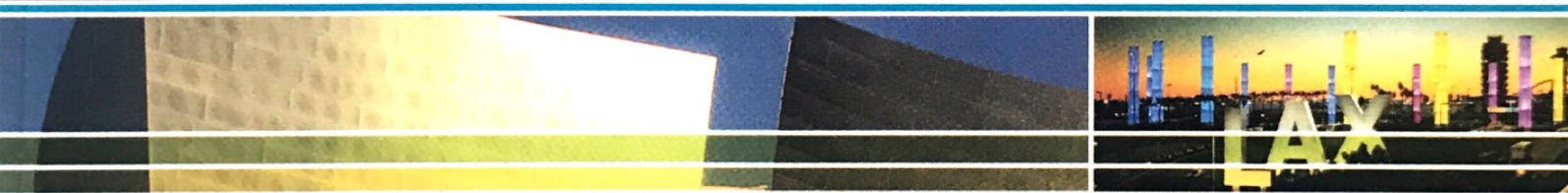
Jonathan Mitchell is sommelier at hip, new Sterling Steakhouse in Hollywood. His concept, he says, is to "go beyond educating the guest about wine.... I want to ensure that visitors not only have a great food and wine experience but also a great experience in LA." When asked, he's quick with recommendations for "other places to eat, drink and shop to get the most out of their visit." 🏆



John Cantlay

Los Angeles

MEETING AND TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS GUIDE



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"see my LA"
"It doesn't get better than
driving down Sunset Boulevard
and catching a comedy show
like 'Hot Tamales Live.'"
Eva Longoria

see my Nightlife

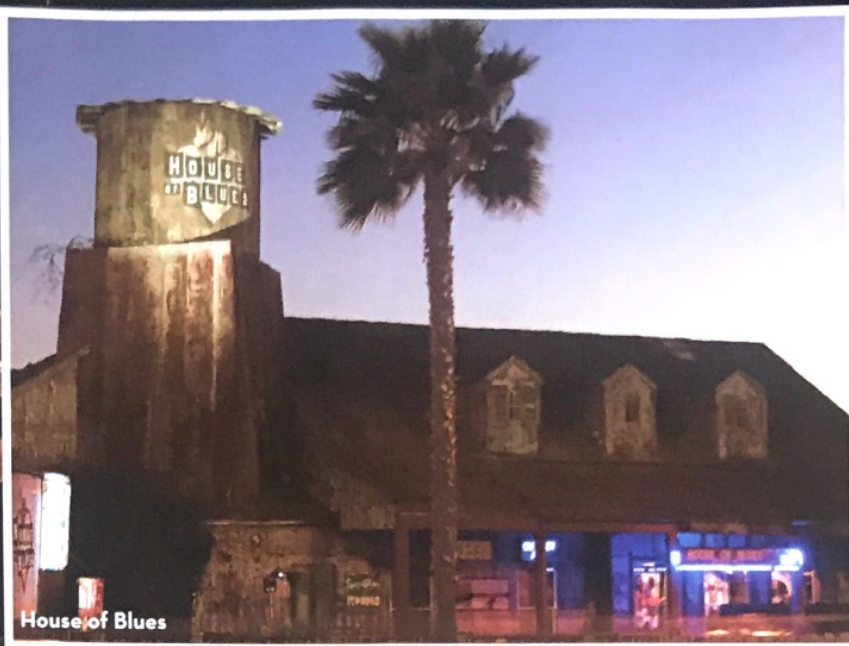
A flurry of new venues make LA's hottest night scenes hotter still. The buzz is at Tropicana Bar at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, where the Hollywood crowd lounges on cubiform cushions on the lawn and at VIP setups poolside. Sip champagne, listen to the baby grand at elegant new Tower Bar at the Art Deco-style Sunset Tower Hotel on the Sunset Strip. The Golden Gopher, a neighborhood joint Downtown with PacMan tables and exposed brick walls, is another new gem.

Cuban-inspired Nacional and Asian-inspired White Lotus, also hot in Hollywood, began the shift towards destination-themed clubs. Hollywood Boulevard and its cross streets offer dozens of clubs and bars; venues up the hill at Universal CityWalk include Howl at the Moon, a dueling piano bar.

Historically, the Sunset Strip's been LA's nightlife locus; live music venues and cocktail lounge scenes still line the famed stretch. The faux bayou House of Blues again earned Pollstar's Nightclub of the Year award. Sweeping city views—and the beautiful people in the foreground—are the draw at hotel Mondrian's rooftop Skybar. Hipsters flock to the modish lounge at The Standard.

The popularity of the Rooftop Bar at the Standard Downtown shows no sign of waning, thanks to its breathtaking skyscraper views and red waterbed pods. The revolving Bonavista Lounge, atop the nearby Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites, is one of LA's best tour guides; you get a 360-degree view without leaving your seat.

Sports fans head to the Millennium Biltmore Hotel's Grand Avenue Sports Bar. The Fox Sports Sky Box at STAPLES Center is only open on game nights, but there isn't a better place to catch a Lakers game—unless you have tickets to the event inside. 🐾



House of Blues

ROBERT LANDAU



White Lotus



Tropicana Bar