

AUGUST 2011 [WHERELA.COM](http://WHERELA.COM)

Los Angeles

# Where



Celebrating  
75 years  
of Where

## DIG IN!

GROWN-UP JUNK FOOD,  
TOP CHEF'S MICHAEL VOLTAGGIO,  
BEST BRUNCHES AND MORE  
IN OUR DINING ISSUE

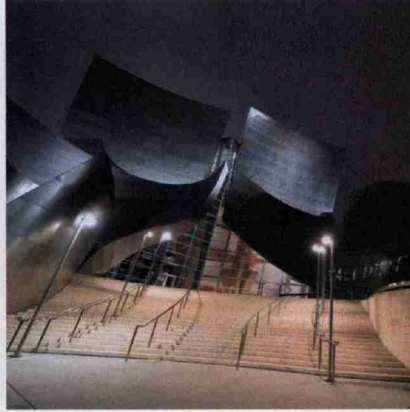
SUNSET  
JUNCTION  
STREET FAIR

NEW BARS:  
SAINT FELIX  
AND £10

CHIC HATS AND  
BEAUTY BUYS



## EXPLORING Downtown



From left: James Irvine Gardens in Little Tokyo; Walt Disney Concert Hall; Olvera Street.

L.A.'s urban center reflects the cultural diversity, world-class architecture and dynamic commerce that makes the city a superstar on the international stage.

Beverly Hills and Venice Beach may be favorite tourist attractions, but downtown should not be overlooked. Historic Art Deco structures share the streetscape with glass- or titanium-clad masterpieces, and even movie stars are snapping up hip lofts carved out of turn-of-the-century structures. The city's arts scene roars to life in downtown, a place where the usual image of L.A. as "laid-back" hardly applies.

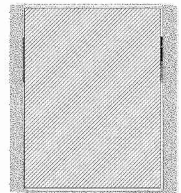
### UNION STATION

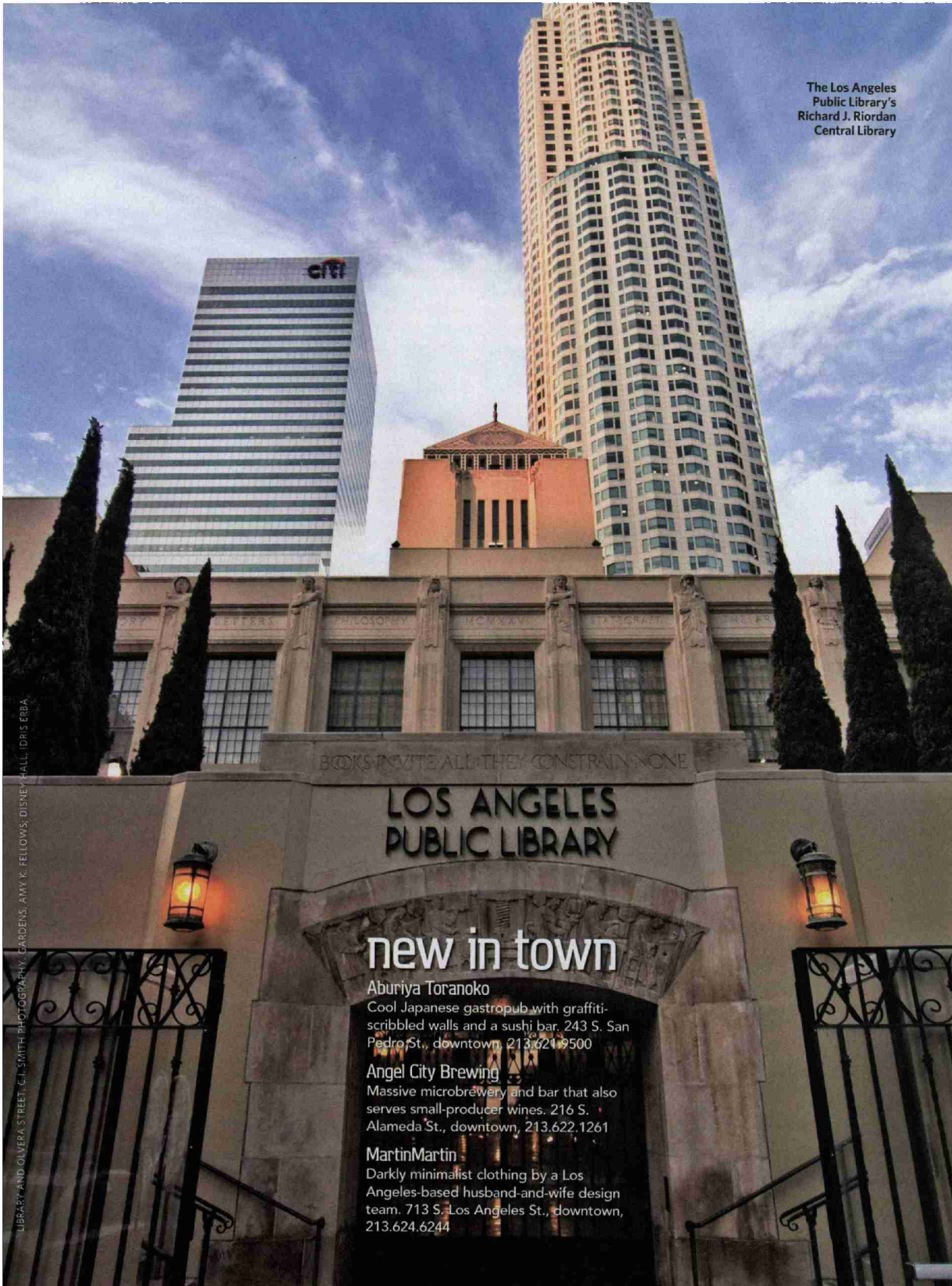
The ornate Union Station was the last of the grand railroad terminals built in the U.S. Its importance faded as the automobile began to dominate life in L.A., but Union Station has staged a comeback, thanks to a renovation and downtown's new energy. From Union Station, the hub of the **Metro** system, you can board the Red Line to Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley or the light rail Gold Line to Pasadena and Blue Line to Long Beach. From here, nonstop bus service to LAX is available 24/7, **Metrolink** commuter trains connect distant suburbs and you can jump on an **Amtrak** train for a scenic journey along the coast.

### GRAND AVENUE + MUSIC CENTER

The heart of L.A.'s performing arts scene and the site of its most dramatic architecture, Grand Avenue is beginning to live up to its name. On Bunker Hill, once filled with Victorian mansions, four venues comprise a formidable collection of stages at **The Music Center**. The 3,200-seat **Dorothy Chandler Pavilion** is home to the Los Angeles Opera, and the **Ahmanson Theatre** and **Mark Taper Forum** host theatrical productions.

The flashiest Music Center venue is architect Frank Gehry's curvaceous, jaw-dropping **Walt Disney Concert Hall**, home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Its young music director, Gustavo Dudamel, exudes an energy that rivals the building's audacious design. Also housed at Disney Hall, with a separate entrance around the corner, is REDCAT, which offers performance and visual arts productions. **Patina** offers elegant feasts inside Disney Hall.





The Los Angeles Public Library's Richard J. Riordan Central Library

LIBRARY AND OLIVERA STREET, C.J. SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY; GARDENS, AMY K. FELLOWS; DISNEY HALL, IDRIS ERBA

## new in town

**Aburiya Toranoko**  
Cool Japanese gastropub with graffiti-scribbled walls and a sushi bar. 243 S. San Pedro St., downtown, 213.624.9500

**Angel City Brewing**  
Massive microbrewery and bar that also serves small-producer wines. 216 S. Alameda St., downtown, 213.622.1261

**MartinMartin**  
Darkly minimalist clothing by a Los Angeles-based husband-and-wife design team. 713 S. Los Angeles St., downtown, 213.624.6244

## DESCENDING BUNKER HILL

Steps from the Music Center is the **Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels**, designed by Spanish architect José Rafael Moneo. A short walk south on Grand is the **Museum of Contemporary Art** (MOCA), Southern California's premier contemporary art museum. The Omni Hotel and California Plaza are adjacent. Nearby Angels Knoll is a welcome patch of greenery amid the concrete jungle.

Angels Flight, a vintage funicular that climbs to California Plaza from Hill Street below, is billed as "The Shortest Railway in the World" (just 298 feet!); a ride costs 25 cents. At the foot of the hill, the Bunker Hill Steps rise five stories at the U.S. Bank Tower, the tallest building west of the Mississippi. Across the street is the Los Angeles Public Library, an Art Deco masterpiece.

## OLVERA STREET

The origin of the city of Los Angeles, dating back to 1781, is El Pueblo de Los Angeles, a collection of 27 buildings along festive pedestrian concourse Olvera Street. The city's oldest building, Avila Adobe (circa 1818), is located here, along with Mexican restaurants, mariachi bands and merchants offering art and crafts. A few blocks away is the city's oldest restaurant, **Philippe the Original** (1908), where a cup of joe is still just 9 cents.

## HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Often overlooked by tourists is the Broadway Theatre District, home to once-opulent movie palaces ablaze in neon. A few, like the Orpheum Theatre, have been restored to their original grandeur. Historic structures are being converted into lofts; Johnny Depp owns a condo in Broadway's Eastern Columbia Building. The Bradbury Building (304 S. Broadway), built in 1893 in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, was featured in the film *Blade Runner*.

Spring Street, from 4th to 7th Streets, is a rapidly awakening area once referred to as the "Wall Street of the West." Steps from this historic district is a row of hip bars on 6th Street (between Main and Los Angeles streets) that includes **Las Perlas** and **Mignon**.

## SHOPPING DISTRICTS

Downtown's heritage as a mercantile center can still be experienced in its historic shopping districts, popular with bargain hunters. The **Jewelry District** draws shoppers to markets like St. Vincent Jewelry Center (650 S. Hill St.), where 500 merchants offer gold, diamonds and baubles. In the neighboring **Fashion District**, 115 blocks centered around the California Market Center, you can find designer clothing items. At **Santee Alley**, an open-air bargain bazaar, designer trends breed low-priced knockoffs. The Flower District offers blooms at wholesale prices. And for an awesome array of produce and international foods, Grand Central Market, near the foot of Angels Flight, is the place to go. Many vendors here deal in cash only.

## CHINATOWN

Chinatown remains a great destination for sampling dim sum or browsing for authentic clothing, tea or home furnishings. Cultural highlights include the ornate Thien Hau Temple (750 Yale St.) and the **Chinese American Museum**. Pedestrian-oriented Chung King Road and Gin Ling Way are now home to galleries and **Mountain Bar**, while Broadway boasts cool boutiques. **Dodger Stadium** is a short drive away, as is **San Antonio Winery**, which offers tours and tastings.

## LITTLE TOKYO

Little Tokyo is still a proud ethnic enclave, but it, too, is emerging as an up-and-coming hipster 'hood. The dining scene is popping, led by newer restaurants such as **Aburiya**

and you can still nibble on traditional sushi prepared by veteran chefs at **Japanese Village Plaza**. Just a few steps down 1st Street is the sleek, glass-enscined **Japanese American National Museum**. The Geffen Contemporary, a Frank Gehry-renovated branch of **MOCA**, is located next door. At 2nd and Main streets is the historic Cathedral of Saint Vibiana, formerly home of the Los Angeles Archdiocese.

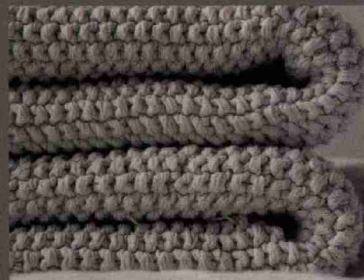
## L.A. LIVE

The \$2.5 billion L.A. Live project has been called the epicenter of the downtown renaissance. **Staples Center**, home to the Los Angeles Lakers, Clippers and Kings, hosts top pop acts. As does **Nokia Theatre L.A. Live**, which boasts state-of-the-art acoustics. The adjoining **Grammy Museum** honors myriad music genres with videos, artifacts and interactive exhibits. A dozen restaurants and clubs—**Katsuya**, **WP24** and **The Conga Room**, to name a few—face a massive urban plaza lined with towering LED screens. The Los Angeles Convention Center, encompassing 16-plus acres of exhibition space, is also here.

## EXPOSITION PARK

Just south of downtown is Exposition Park, whose grounds hold major museums and the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The seven-acre **Exposition Park Rose Garden** is legendary, and the Beaux-Arts-style **Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County** offers insight into prehistoric giants. Other attractions include the **California African American Museum** and **California Science Center** with its 3-D IMAX theater. The science center is also the future home of space shuttle Endeavour. Farther west of Exposition Park is the jazz and blues capital of Leimert Park; south is Watts, home of the Watts Towers. **w**

For **bold** items, see listings in the *where* guide. For a detailed map of downtown, see page 125.



great find

## SLEEPER HIT

You'll spend one-third of your life in bed—you might as well sleep in style. Since 1996, L.A.-based **Matteo** has been turning out sumptuous, ethically produced, impeccably tailored bedding that blends European elegance with California cool. In the company's downtown Arts District workshop, three bedding collections, plus bath and table linens and apparel, are constructed of the finest materials from around the world, then dyed locally to achieve a perfect vintage look and soft feel. Whether your home's style is downtown loft, '20s cottage or Tuscan villa, visit the workshop-adjacent showroom/retail space to find your match among the earth-toned, ticking-striped, ruffled and plaid offerings. Don't miss the back room, which has dreamy deals. 912 E. 3rd St., downtown, 213.617.2813, matteohome.com