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One of the most incredible things about L.A. is the fact that no matter how long you’ve lived here, there’s always something new to discover. This issue is dedicated to the culture and entertainment not to be missed, with listings throughout the paper.

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One of the most incredible things about Los Angeles is the fact that no matter how long you’ve lived here, there’s always something new to discover. Even natives like me can find opportunities to learn about the streets, meets and sites in the city — from the old familiar landmarks we often take for granted, to the backdrops that recall formative experiences we’ll never forget, to fresh new locales passed along by friends or via online recommendations, to places we haven’t even been to yet but mean to check out.

Los Angeles is seductive and mysterious but it can also be comforting and communal, even as it is continuously evolving. Just when you think you know it all, and maybe even have it figured out, Waze or Google Maps will send you on a new driving route through town, where you might see an amazing old deco building you never noticed or a funky new shop you’ve been hearing about.

Yes, often in L.A. discovery takes place through a car window. We spend too much time on the road in our cars (and these days, Lyfts or Ubers) for sure, but I think, when you’re not in a hurry, our infamous, infuriating traffic actually has a positive: It offers a moment to stop, be present and absorb the city with a new gaze.

Many of us curse new transplants and the overcrowding and gentrification that follow in their wake, but these newbies possess a special outlook that longtime residents and natives would do well to adopt. You know that flutter of excitement and possibility that comes with entering a new city? I try to find a little bit of that in my heart every time I go out. I make an effort to appreciate the colors, the warmth and the diversity that surrounds me as I “tour” my city every day, and let me tell you, it not only makes the hectic days and nights of living in L.A. a lot easier to bear but it evokes a true appreciation for it all.

I attempted to maintain the same perspective with this special Best of L.A. issue focused on culture and entertainment in Los Angeles. More “Best of” issues celebrating music, art and food & drink will be published later this year. But herein we focus on cultural amusements and things to do, buy and see, ranging from new and fresh to nostalgic and familiar, glamorous to gritty, flashy to freaky, and high to low (brow), with plenty of unique only-right-here stuff in between. Think of this issue as a tour guide that reflects the contrasts, the quirkiness, the coolness of our inimitable town.

I’ve been writing for the Weekly’s annual Best of L.A. issue for more than half of the paper’s (and my own) life, so curating and editing this one is a full-circle thing. Yes, it’s smaller than the ultra-thick volumes many of us remember from the past, but just as the city has changed and presented its challenges, so has the alt-weekly landscape and print journalism in general. A lot of us working in the city have been forced to adapt, adjust and accept changes to do what we love, but it doesn’t diminish our dedication or our drive.

Just like taking a great tour, it’s important to take note of every single stop, because as we all know, the best and most meaningful part of going anywhere is the journey, not the destination.

—CASELINA LECARO, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
Los Angeles always has something great to offer, and we’re here to help you explore our inimitable city.

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—LINA LECARO, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
Living in L.A., celebrity sightings are a normal part of life, and pretty much a passé one at that. Many TV shows are filmed here, big awards shows take place here, reality shows are set here, and velvet-roped “hot spots” and step-and-repeat backdrops are plentiful here. Visitors from the Midwest definitely want to see stars’ homes and hangouts, and guided bus tours provide all the goods, conjuring glitz and gossip while enforcing the mystique presented on film and television.

But celebrity is relative, and Esotouric Bus Tours has proven there’s an avid fan base for something darker, if no less dramatically driven. Esotouric is less about aspirational fantasies or fame-whoring, and more about historical documentation, artistic inspiration and literary representation.

Providing bus tours based on themes such as author, cultural figure or criminal genre, Esotouric’s husband-and-wife team Kim Cooper and Richard Schave since 2007 have been educating visitors and locals alike about the hidden history of places we might pass by every day. With multiple tours of Los Angeles–area crime-scene locations, architectural marvels and other notable sites, they offer experiences full of music, mayhem and murder that are educational, salacious and revelatory.

Beginning with episodic true-crime tours of South Los Angeles, loosely based on cases covered in their blog, 1947project.com, Esotouric Tours quickly flipped focus to become the most uniquely informative tour company in L.A. Complemented by the blog, it offers tours of Raymond Chandler’s L.A., Charles Bukowski’s L.A., the Real Black Dahlia, John Fante’s Bunker Hill and the Pasadena Confidential true-crime tour, to name a few.

“All of these tours have been rewritten many times since 2007 as our understanding of the city has evolved, but they are all still central to the L.A. story we tell on and off the bus,” Cooper says. “The Real Black Dahlia is the most popular tour, a true-crime exploration that is more interested in who Beth Short was than in who her killer was. The tour covers theories and one lesser-known suspect, but it’s really a celebration of Short’s life, providing a portrait of an anonymous American whose ordinary life is extensively documented because she was a crime victim.

“It’s a very moving experience to walk in this doomed woman’s footsteps and consider all the possible fates she missed out on,” Cooper says. “We’re always interested in exploring how people who live outside the mainstream use the city, and both Beth Short and Charles Bukowski are good examples of people whose lives took hard left turns at specific landmarks. Bukowski’s hard drinking almost killed him

COURTESY ESOTOURIC

An Esotouric tour group surveys the General Otis statues in MacArthur Park.

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“It’s a very moving experience to walk in this doomed woman’s footsteps and consider all the possible fates she missed out on,” Cooper says. “We’re always interested in exploring how people who live outside the mainstream use the city, and both Beth Short and Charles Bukowski are good examples of people whose lives took hard left turns at specific landmarks. Bukowski’s hard drinking almost killed him
as a young man, and it was at County General Hospital, when he got the fear of dying without having written one good poem, that he began to write in earnest."

While Bukowski’s persona conjures smoky dive bars and crusty crash pads, Short’s veers between visions of elegant nightclubs and lonely, low-lit hotels. Walking or driving past the Biltmore Hotel, Cooper says, the tour Short inspired leaves many with as many questions as answers, wondering, "What might have happened if she had only turned left?" She adds, "I wish she had and we never even knew her name."

These subversive tours of L.A. are, in fact, meant to be a sophisticated spin on the idea of the typical guided L.A. bus tour, and in recent years the tours have expanded their scope to include not only true crime and literary lore but "architecture, social history, urban planning, spirituality and a little bit of rock & roll," Cooper says.

When they created their best-known tour, exploring the haunts of lush literary icon Bukowski, his East Hollywood bungalow was a rent-stabilized dwelling in a fully inhabited bungalow court. "But when we did a last locations check before launching," Cooper says, "we discovered that the famed locale had been purchased by property flippers who evicted everyone, boarded up the buildings, and were advertising it on Craigslist as a tear-down site for a new condo development."

"We blogged about the demolition threat and were contacted by Lauren Everett, an artist and Bukowski fan who wanted to submit a historic landmark nomination," she continues. "We helped her with PR and research, and a passionate team coalesced to speak for this important literary site. The landmark hearings got international headlines when the landlords’ attorney falsely accused Bukowski of having been a Nazi sympathizer."

Thanks to Esotouric, Bukowski’s bungalow and the whole rent-stabilized bungalow court in which he lived was saved. "We learned that it was possible, and exciting, to use the lens of our guided tours, and the voice we had on social media, to advocate for and preserve places that matter," Cooper explains. And just like that, the company became both invested and embroiled in the historic preservation of Los Angeles landmarks.

Since then, they’ve continued to take on causes they care about, and to create channels to help get the word out about threatened places that other people around Los Angeles are fighting to save.

"We didn’t set out to fight City Hall, but unfortunately the interests of big property developers, who pay big money to lobby local leaders to support their needs, have intersected repeatedly with our interests in preserving and activating important and beautiful Los Angeles buildings, landscapes and signs," Cooper explains passionately. "Historic sites tend to take up a lot of land in central neighborhoods that are more highly valued than the outlying parts of Los Angeles. Our latest and most brutal preservation battles have been against development interests seeking to demolish and replace structures that seemed by their nature permanent and unlikely to ever fall to redevelopment schemes: Parker Center and the Los Angeles Times complex."

Another preservation battle concerned the orange 76 gas station ball signs that were ubiquitous at Unocal pumps around SoCal. Sadly those are gone now.
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Their focus downtown has driven the couple to combat political corruption in City Hall, and yes, they have a tour planned for that, too. “It won’t be launched until after the FBI completes its investigation, people are indicted and the secret history of power and its misuse is more clearly revealed,” Cooper says. “After that, in addition to giving a tour that sets contemporary corruption in context with historic L.A. noir narratives, we’re looking forward to seeing how Los Angeles puts itself back together again, ideally with better leadership and policies and much more engaged citizens. After all, José Huizar, who is currently under FBI investigation, was elected by only 11,000 people, to represent a quarter of a million citizens. That’s embarrassing, and Angelenos have to do better.”

Meanwhile, Esotouric has other new endeavors. It hosts quarterly forensic science seminars at Cal State L.A.; is working on an ongoing series of exploratory 3-D scans of hard-to-access Southland landmarks with photographer Craig Sauer; and hopes to create new episodes of its podcast You Can’t Eat the Sunshine soon. Of course, tours are what Esotouric is known for, and it continues to develop new ones all the time, such as Mansonland (with author Brad Schreiber) and Silent Echoes (with cinema locations sleuth John Bengtson).

Most people who hop on the Esotouric buses are locals, from L.A. or greater Southern California, though Cooper says some fly in from other states to take specific tours. “They’re passionate about California history and architecture, and eager to discover places and stories that aren’t in guidebooks or part of the standard Los Angeles narrative,” she says. “We have a lot of regulars who come back again and again, and have come to feel like extended family. Many of them have deep local roots and amazing stories to share.

“We feel incredibly privileged to be able to tell the stories of this amazing city, and provide a place where people who love Los Angeles can come together and explore with like-minded folks. If you love Los Angeles, and are ready to be surprised by what the city has to show, we’d love to see you on the bus.”

Book a tour at esotouric.com.

5 MORE TOURS FOR THE STARSTRUCK AND MACABRE

Explore L.A. with these specialized tour operators

BY LINA LECARO

Esotouric is the best tour company for putting L.A. history into context and highlighting the significance of preservation and the need for transparency when it comes to who makes decisions that might affect the future of L.A.’s urban landscape. But for those looking for a different tour focus — from freaky to frivolous — we recommended the following.

BEST L.A. TOUR GUIDE

His famous Disneyland-style field trip tours of downtown L.A. highlight the whimsical cool that many of us take for granted, framing city sites (Olvera Street, Clifton’s Cafeteria, Bob Baker’s Marionette Theatre) as theme park amusements to be treasured and visited often. His found-slower show presentations are as enlightening as they are hilarious, reflecting how American pop culture, and the local landmarks and attractions Angelenos grew up with, inform how we look at our surroundings, or should. And his books are guides to the wacky, weird and wonderful best that Los Angeles has to offer. Which all makes Charles Phoenix the best person we can think of to represent the real L.A. in its wacky charm and retro glory. Phoenix has been doing his thing in other places (Las Vegas, Palm Springs) but there’s no place like home. His next local exploration will celebrate the best of the San Fernando Valley with slides, a book signing and snack time featuring a famously over-the-top desert from the C.P. test kitchen, at the Valley Relics Museum, another perfect backdrop for his giddy glimpses at vintage L.A. charlesphoenix.com.

BEST CELEBRITY SPILLING TOUR

For those who don’t know, TMZ stands for “30-mile zone,” and on this branded TMZ Celebrity Tour, you will indeed roll throughout the area known for celeb sightings and popular film locations centered in Hollywood and Beverly Hills, but you get to go a bit beyond, too. There is a good chance you may even see an actor or two, or at the very least a B- or C-list reality star or social media “influencer.” Mostly you’ll see out-of-towners looking for the above, though you will be entertained by the hired guides, who tell stories in the vivacious fashion of the TMZ TV show and blog, which means they are often pretty funny even as they glorify and degrade their very reason for existence. Lawyer turned media mogul Harvey Levin pops up now and again to surprise fans in this immersive tour, complete with custom-designed busses with state-of-the-art audio/video and phone chargers at every seat, so you’re guaranteed your phone won’t die before you get the perfect Hollywood selfie! tmztour.com.

BEST TOUR FOR THE STARSTRUCK

All the obvious tourist traps and haps are covered by Starline Tours, which is probably the best-known tour company in L.A. Its ubiquitous open-air double-decker buses offer different themes for their guided rides around town, and even if you’re a native, it’s a fun thing to try at least once. The Celebrity Homes tour (offered since 1935) takes fans through Bel-Air, Beverly Hills and Hollywood, looking at the decadent domiciles of movie stars past and present. Even if you’re not a big star-monger, the architecture and luxe lifestyle on display is fun to look at. The two-day tour features a day at Universal Studios, sightseeing at Los Angeles attractions and a Madame Tussaud’s ticket (perfect for those visiting out-of-town relatives who want to see everything in one fell swoop), while Starline’s Haunted Hollywood tour takes you to Tinseltown’s oldest and most spirited buildings and venues (including the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel and the Viper Room), which seem to take on an eerie new guise even if you’ve been to them before. Take this tour if you appreciate supernatural lore and nostalgia and want to be with others who do, too. starlinetours.com.

BEST “WALKING IN L.A.” TOUR

For their private tours, the people at Downtown L.A. Walking Tours can customize and tailor adventures for parties, groups and corporate or social events, with rates set per hour. Often these tours explore a certain part of town and expand upon the company’s public tours of regions such as L.A.’s Fashion District and Flower District or “neighborhood discoveries” in areas such as Koreatown, Culver City or Echo Park. Movie sites and filming locales, “L.A.’s Beginnings” and “Haunted Tales” are some of the more popular group outings, and all are as informative as they active. Wear comfortable shoes, shades and a hat and get ready to become one with the city. dtlawalkingtours.com.

BEST DEATHLY DRIVES

Focusing on everything dead and deadly in Hollywood, Dearly Departed Tours takes you to the resting places of Marilyn Monroe, Natalie Wood and Farrah Fawcett, to name a few, but also includes a multimedia component with crime-scene photographs and audio clips (911 calls and all) to flesh out the experience. There’s also a museum featuring stuff like Rock Hudson’s deathbed, a piece of the fireplace from Sharon Tate’s home and Jayne Mansfield’s “Death car.” Founder Scott Michaels is the authority on the subject of murder and untimely demise, so expect to hear all the gory details on Dearly Departed’s various package tours, themed and inspired by Charles Manson, Karen Carpenter, James Dean, Jean Harlow and The Doors, to name a few. Legendary local rock band manager Vicky Hamilton just got her own tour, inspired by her book Appetite for Dysfunction, which chronicles “the jungle” aka pivotal places that played a part in the success of rock icons Guns N’ Roses, all thankfully not departed, no thanks to their debauched lifestyles. dearlydepartedtours.com.
BEST OF L.A.: ENTERTAINMENT AND NIGHTLIFE

BEST CINEMATIC VENTURE

If you’re looking for something outside your parents’ movie collection and want a history lesson in the cinema of strange, look no further than Cinematic Void. Created by Egyptian Theatre manager and cult film aficionado James Branscome, CV is a journey into the underbelly of exploitation cinema, mostly from the ’70s and ’80s. “I want it to be an experience, not just another night at the movies,” Branscome says. “And I don’t show the same film twice.” From ’80s teen romps (Secret Admirer) to splatter horror gems (The Mutilator) to the just plain weird (The Sinful Dwarf, anyone?), CV amp it up with hilarious intros (usually curated by Branscome himself), onstage celebrity interviews, prizes and more. You might be offended, grossed out, enlightened, even permanently changed, but that’s exactly how Cinematic Void wants it. Cinematic Void screenings are usually at the Egyptian Theater and sometimes at the Aero Theater. Check out the American Cinematheque calendar for upcoming screenings. 6715 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; americancinemathequecalendar.com/content/enter-the-cinematic-void. —CHAD BYRNE

BEST MESSED-UP MOVIE EXPERIENCE

In a dark club in Hollywood during a live production of cult favorite Labyrinth, a highly inebriated actor playing Jareth the Goblin King and sporting a jock strap the size of a lumbar pillow nearly tumbles from the stage as the audience chants “Dance, Magic Dance.” At the Pantages this might call for a refund, but at the Comedians Cinema Club’s Live on Stage, this is a highlight. The premise of the troupe’s drunk performances series is simple: Funny folks drink while they ad-lib their way through the pop culture zeitgeist. And while they may miss a crucial quote, the audience participation, the DIY costumes and the tipsy actors’ enthusiasm make up for the lack of a script. Started in 2014 by Club founder Eric Lampaert, the troupe’s first official parody was Ghost. Since moving the outfit to Los Angeles from across the pond, Lampaert has had no trouble finding a following of folks who share his love of movies and pints. The troupe looks to have a long career in Hollywood ... depending on how long their collective livers can withstand repeat performances. Regular shows at Black Rabbit Rose and Hayworth Theater; comedianscinemaclub.com. —ERIN MAXWELL

BEST ALTERNATIVE TO THE MAGIC CASTLE

Is your magician connection to the Magic Castle M.I.A.? No worries. For a fraction of the price and none of the membership restrictions, you can see wizardry that wows with a steampunk twist at the latest magic trick from the Houston Brothers, Black Rabbit Rose Lounge & Theater. Featuring Instagram-ready bewitching beverages such as the Dark Arts and Smoke & Mirrors, the dimly lit Hollywood parlor offers a time-warp trip to the turn of the century with its brass fixtures, brick interior and posters promoting bygone sideshow sorcerers from the past. The intimate theater features secret stages and hidden entrances to give audiences an immersive experience during shows, while wandering illusionists create tableside sleight-of-hand miracles as you dig into Thai food. Aside from the magic tricks and concoctions, the occasional jazz night with Fred Durst or a late-night appearance by Lana Del Rey is reason enough to make this gin joint a regular stop. The music, the drinks and the ambiance make Black Rabbit Rose a great escape. 1719 N. Hudson Ave., Hollywood; (323) 461-1464, blackrabbitrose.com. —ERIN MAXWELL

BEST COMEDY BRIGADE

There’s a reason for the continued success of UCB, undoubtedly the biggest name in live comedy today, especially in improv. They’re just that good. What began as the Upright Citizens Brigade troupe founded by Amy Poehler, Matt Besser, Ian Roberts and Matt Walsh in the 1990s has become a comedy institution, with theaters and schools in New York and L.A. where famous alumni have performed, trained or coached, among them Adam McKay, Aziz Ansari, Kate McKinnon, Aubrey Plaza, Ellie Kemper, Horatio Sanz, Paul Scheer, Donald Glover, Nick Kroll, Ed Helms, Jason Mantzoukas and Jack McBrayer. Even bigger names occasionally appear at the two Hollywood locations but — if you’re willing to wait in a long line — you can just pop in most days of the week and catch either sketch or improv performances, even live podcasts — either affordably priced or free — including the theaters’ staple shows, Assscat and Harold
BEST OF L.A. : CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

Shitshow Bingo must be seen to be believed.

Night. 5919 Franklin Ave., Hollywood; 5419 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; (323) 908-8702, ucbtheatre.com. —SIRAN BABAYAN

BEST NEW ALT-COMEDY VENUE

When Trepany House at the Steve Allen Theater and NerdMelt at Meltdown Comics closed in 2017 and 2018, respectively, fans missed having a comedy venue that also staged music, film screenings, podcast tapings and variety acts. Luckily, Dynasty Typewriter opened in March 2018 and filled the void, becoming the new home for previous Trepany and NerdMelt resident shows, including the Bob Baker Marionettes, Ron Lynch’s Tomorrow! and Dan Harmon and Jeff B. Davis’ podcast, Harmontown. Jamie Flam, who was previously artistic director of the Hollywood Improv, co-operates with Vanessa Ragland the 200-seat space located inside the Westlake District’s Hayworth Theatre, which was designed in 1926 and also houses the offices of Orange Is the New Theatre and NerdMelt at Meltdown Comics. Flam has hosted Conan O’Brien, Sarah Silverman, Bob Odenkirk, Marc Maron, Eddie Izzard and, most recently, Hannah Gadsby’s whop-a-long running at Dynasty Typewriter.

BEST CAMPY DINNER THEATER

Cabaret has a long and smoky history, frequently conjuring thoughts of absinthe, clove cigarettes and top hats, sometimes Champagne, Chanel No. 5 and feathered boas. Rockwell Table & Stage is a more casual, often super-campy, modern-day cabaret in the heart of Los Feliz, functioning as a restaurant, bar, dinner theater and performance space all rolled into one. From 1944 to 2000, the space held Sarno’s Italian Pastry Shop, a popular neighborhood family-owned bakery, and the spirit of fresh-baked bread, tiramisu and cannoli still hangs in its aura. Eclectic acts regularly appear, such as actor Jeff Goldblum’s witty and talented jazz band; musical parodies based on the likes of Edward Scissorhands, Jurassic Park and Stranger Things; and a Sunday mimosas-filled Dragtastic Bubbly Brunch, featuring a bevy of glimmering drag queens, hosted by Ross Mathews (RuPaul’s Drag Race). The history of the room emanates from the walls along with the lively sound of entertainment.

BEST CAMPY DINNER THEATER —JONNY WHITE SIDE

THE CANYON @ SABAN THEATRE OPENING APRIL 5!

When insurgent magician Christopher Wonder breaks out his 75 balls for an edition of long-running local sensation Shitshow Bingo, literally anything is possible. A raucous swarm of boozy, bawdy hijinks invariably ensues, and Wonder’s offbeat update on the classic retiree pastime has become a local institution. It goes down every Saturday at La Cita and every third Friday at Footsie’s, with play enhanced by Wonder’s witheringly wacky patter, midway snack fare and a wild trove of novelty gag prizes including whoopie cushions, sex toys, oversized plushies and, of course, booze. Not for the faint of heart but a definite kick in the head for salty thrillseekers. Saturdays at La Cita, 336 S. Hill St., downtown; every third Friday at Footsie, 2640 N. Figueroa St., Highland Park; and the last Sunday of the month at the Short Stop, 1455 W. Sunset Blvd., Echo Park; facebook.com/christopherwonder. —JONNY WHITE SIDE

BEST PLACE FOR A NIGHT OUT OF ADULTING

Tired of crowding around a stage trying to glimpse a favorite band while scarfing down a Danger Dog? Why not give adulting a try? Give up the ghost of your former music-going experiences and upgrade to the Rose in Pasadena, where watching retro acts of yesteryear has been refined to suit its fans. Operated by Sterling Venue Ventures, the Rose offers an alternative to the usual small concert-going event with sit-down dining, state-of-the-art sound quality and plenty of eye-candy visuals thanks to projections and an accompanying light show. In addition to lush amenities, the venue provides four nights a week of diverse acts, which range from Stone Temple Pilots to Dwight Yoakam to Big Bad Voodoo Daddy. It tends to fill the calendar with one-
hit wonders and Baby Boomer to Gen-X faves such as Missing Persons, Vince Neil (sans his Mötley bandmates) and Tower of Power.
245 E. Green St., Pasadena; (888) 645-5006, wheremusicmeetsthesoul.com/rose-pasadena.

—ERIN MAXWELL

BEST PLACE TO SING WITH ELVIS

The first permanent hologram theater in the world, Hologram USA was the brainchild of Owen Phillips, who founded the theater shortly after Tupac made his posthumous debut at Coachella. “Hollywood is the perfect home for it,” Phillips says. “The entire Hollywood mythos is about bringing dreams to life, like we do everyday.” Since its debut, Hologram USA has boasted more than 700 performances using cutting-edge technology, offering unique experiences for fans and tourists alike. Featuring iconic performances from Elvis to Billie Holiday, as well as karaoke nights and immersive experiences with current artists and features, the theater offers daily shows as well as a Swissx CBD chill lounge. “We want people to be able to come experience the power of holograms,” Phillips says. “Magic is happening every day at the theater.” 6656 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; (213) 277-7072, hologramusa.com.

—ERIN MAXWELL

BEST POP-CULTURE CANNIBALISM

Specializing in a deliriously unorthodox combination of multimedia mayhem via a revue-style presentation combining spoken-word, live musical performances, projected visuals and props, Captured Aural Phantasy Theater is a singular no-holds-barred style of live-wire caba-vaude theatrics. Often featuring collaborations with the equally unpredictable Bob Baker Marionettes, the theater is proudly ballyhooned as the only company officially authorized to draw from the lurid annals of EC Comics (Tales From the Crypt, Weird Science, First Love Illustrated, etc.). This wild troupe guarantees plenty of the greatest dialogue and action ever. Entering its 10th season this year, CAPT throws down propulsive, dynamic pop-culture cannibalism at its very finest. capturedauralphantasy.com.

—JONNY WHITESIDE

BEST EGYPTIAN THEATER NOT IN HOLLYWOOD

In some ways, the Vista Theater in Los Feliz is more of an Egyptian-style theater than the Egyptian Theatre a couple miles to the west in Hollywood. While both theaters have beautiful exteriors that evoke ancient Egypt, only the Vista Theatre has an interior that continues the theme with such dramatic visual flair. Large inverted-pyramid lamps dangle from the ceiling, while rows of pharaoh heads line the walls like solemn sentinels, glowing in the dark during film screenings. Opened on Oct. 9, 1923, the Vista has undergone various changes over the past century but, in an era when so many people now experience films at home, it remains a crucial destination for cinephiles who want a fully immersive experience. At times, the setting itself is more memorable than the films flickering on the screen. 4473 Sunset Blvd., Los Feliz; (323) 660-6639, vintagecinemas.com/vista/index.html.

—FALLING JAMES

BARNES & NOBLE EVENTS

AMBER TAMBLYN in conversation with ROXANE GAY

Discussion / Book Signing
Saturday, March 16th, 2pm
189 Grove Drive
Los Angeles (323) 525-0270

The acclaimed actor explains how an intense period of personal reflection about her career aspirations fueled her activism for gender equality and women’s rights.

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DINNER IN A MOVIE

The best munchies make for the ultimate date night

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

The one-stop, all-inclusive night out experience of dinner and a movie is in every corner of L.A., with everything from food service at your seat to rooftop cocktails under the stars while you watch classics like Thelma and Louise or current Oscar winners like Black Panther. Thankfully, the days of settling for greasy popcorn or packaged nachos and warmed-over hot dogs glued to pasty buns are over. Call an Uber, grab your date and sit back and relax at these venues.

Melrose Rooftop Theater is located one floor up from E.P. & L.P., which features executive chef Louis Tikaram’s modern Asian cuisine. The VIP seated experience and dinner is $65 and includes a three-course meal and movie ticket. Guests coming for dinner and a movie will have a beanbag reserved for them under the stars. The rooftop express menu includes sticky spare ribs (pork ribs, five-spice caramel, pickled Serrano chili and roasted rice) or salt-and-pepper tofu to start. Entree choices are yellow curry chicken (or squash) with pickled mustard greens and crisp egg noodles or twice-cooked short rib with ginger and yellow beans. Dessert options are coconut sorbet or a ginger crunchie. If you want to go à la carte and like it hot, try Tikaram’s new secret off-menu Szechuan-style fried fish, so spicy he claims it will numb your mouth.


The newly opened Studio Movie Grill in Downey has a full-service bar and offers salads, flatbreads, bento boxes and bowls and sliders from the grill in various configurations, such as sriracha chicken and three-cheese. The Megaplex burger offers a protein of your choice (seasoned beef, char-grilled fajita chicken, seasoned turkey or Southwestern black bean burger) and toppings such as applewood bacon, mushrooms, cheddar and pepper jack cheeses, lettuce, tomato or sweet red onion; it’s a reasonable $13 that includes fries or chips and salsa. The sesame seared ahi tuna bowl comes with edamame, mango, snappy slaw, forbidden rice, crispy wontons and sesame lime dressing. And there’s a kids menu for those taking in the latest Lego movie.

8200 Third St., Downey; (562) 622-3999, studiomoviegrill.com/quicktickets/california/downey/2019/3/2.

Located in the iPic Theater in Westwood, Sherri Yard’s Tuck Room Tavern provides an elevated food and cocktail service seatside as well as table dining and a lounge with a cozy speakeasy feel. In addition to first-run films, the restaurant offers signature house-made breads from Yard’s patisserie repertoire, Reuben croquettes, brioche-crusted Maryland crab cakes, Tuck Room Tavern Cobb salad and seared Atlantic salmon. “At iPic, we decided to disrupt the industry and do away with traditional ho-hum movie theater grub,” iPic chief operating officer Yard tells LA Weekly. “Our unique Dine in the Dark menu delivers a fresh, chef-driven gourmet dining experience inside a luxury theater where comfort and personal service is key. Plus, our restaurants like the Tuck Room Tavern serve as dining destinations before or after the movie or just because. People love to see movies and dine out — by combining these two forms of common entertainment we’ve created an easy night out that’s exclusively yours to experience.”

10850 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; (310) 307-7004, ipic.com/dining.

Rooftop Cinema Club at NeueHouse in Hollywood and Level in downtown L.A.
Dinner in a Movie

The best munchies make for the ultimate date night

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Rooftop Cinema Club at NeueHouse in Hollywood and Level in downtown L.A.
LA WEEKLY

has just released the upcoming lineup for its fifth season, which kicks off with a Music Month at NeueHouse beginning Wednesday, March 20, with fan favorite La La Land. Both rooftop locations will host sing-alongs with screenings of Bohemian Rhapsody and Grease.

Music-related movies being showcased during the month of March include A Star Is Born, The Greatest Showman, Singin’ in the Rain, Moulin Rouge, Purple Rain, Dirty Dancing and Enchanted. Food and drink options at Level include rotating food trucks such as Chef Cesar Cuisine, Bánh Mì, Bison Burger and the Berlin. At NeueHouse, guests will have culinary options including mashed avocado, cheese and charcuterie boards, Impossible burgers and signature cocktails.

NeueHouse, 6121 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Level, 888 S. Olive St., downtown. Food options vary by date, so check the website for schedule and availability: rooftopcinemachub.com/los-angeles.

The AMC Dine-in Theatre in Marina del Rey is adults only at 21 and over, offering cocktails, burgers, flatbreads and the ultimate nachos with spicy queso, jalapeños, black beans, pico de gallo, house-made guacamole and lime crema. Leave the kids at home to enjoy an R-rated movie and an A-rated meal for date night. 13455 Maxella Ave., Suite 280, Marina del Rey; amctheatres.com/movie-theatres/los-angeles/amc-dine-in-marina-6.

New kid on the block: The brand-new Bay Theatre by Cinépolis Luxury Cinemas in Palisades Village is a throwback to the glamour of the classic moviegoing experience. The Bay features five screening rooms, each with 60 or fewer automated leather recliners, with reserved seating and call buttons for full food and bar service. Designed as a neighborhood joint for before or after the movies, Hank’s is next door, with a full bar and a juicy selection of burgers and fried chicken, as well as favorite dishes from the iconic, now-closed local Palisades favorite Mort’s Deli, like matzo ball soup, 1035 N. Swarthmore Ave., Pacific Palisades; palisadesvillageca.com/dining/bay-theatre-cinepolis-luxury-cinemas.

Street Food Cinema has released the lineup for its April 27 to Oct. 26 season and it includes classics like The Princess Bride and The Wizard of Oz as well as recent hit Crazy Rich Asians. The eighth outdoor season runs every Saturday in 15 locations throughout Los Angeles and features dozens of food trucks. Expect to see Cravin Crab Cakes, Fettes Schwein German sausages, Flaming Kebab, Goshen Cuisine, the Green Truck, Kalamaki Greek, Thai Mex Cocina, Afters Ice Cream and Astro Doughnuts & Fried Chicken, among others. streetfoodcinema.com.

And finally, the ArcLight Cafe in Hollywood is always a reliable option for a quick dinner before catching the latest hot flick, offering cheeseburgers, popcorn chicken, some decent salads and even dessert. But the main draw is the bar, which crafts very tasty cocktails — often there are promos and signature drinks tied to the latest blockbuster — that you can take into the theater for a fully themed experience. 6360 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; arclightcinemas.com/en/locations/los-angeles/hollywood.
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BEST SIMULATED FLIGHT
The Wizarding World of Harry Potter’s Forbidden Journey, the new experience based on J.K. Rowling’s iconic stories and settings, is worth braving amusement park crowds and chaos, and even mystical monsters, to enter and ride. You’ll join wand-carrying kiddies sporting black robes and red and yellow scarves, meandering about Hogsmead Village as they shop for magical supplies, drink Butter Beer (there’s real beer for grown-ups) and absorb the otherworldly charm of Universal Studios’ Wizarding World of Harry Potter. But entering this re-created universe is really all about Forbidden Journey, the centerpiece ride inside Hogwarts Castle. You’ll actually enjoy waiting in line for the ride, with so much to look at (3-D holograms along the line actually set up the story you will experience on the ride) and absorb. The ride itself — which is like a roller coaster meets simulator meets 4-D movie — is one of the most thrilling experiences in the game, employing new robotic technology and design that no thrill ride out there does. You’ll follow Harry and his friends on flying broomsticks throughout the castle, out into the sky and into creepy-crawly and spooky realms. The stunningly re-created academy is as awesome outside as it is inside, with elaborate light shows on its exterior nightly. 100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City; (800) 864-8377, universalstudioshollywood.com. —Lina Legaro

BEST VIRTUAL VORTEX
At this point, virtual reality is no longer a strange new form of entertainment. Pretty much everyone has at least donned a VR headset and felt the sensation of being immersed into lifelike, fantastic new worlds. But there are different levels of hyper-reality, and if you want the latest and greatest, you must check out the Void. Located inside popular shopping malls in Glendale and Santa Monica, the innovative, themed experiences here are whole-body, collaborative and basically mind-blowing, with 4-D touches (a breeze on your face or a startling rumble behind you) that make it feel astoundingly real. You join your family and friends or other patrons as avatars inside these cyber-adventures, which adds a level of interaction and fun, and sometimes competition, too. With the horror-themed walk-through “Necodemus” and lively activations tied into popular movies such as Rogue One: A Star Wars Story and Wreck-It Ralph, the Void is a stunning high-tech escape from the real world. thevoid.com. —Lina Legaro

BEST BAR TO LEAVE YOUR MOM’S BASEMENT FOR
Every Wednesday at 8 p.m., self-proclaimed Jedi Masters trek to Hollywood for a chance to show off their pop culture prowess thanks to trivia night at Scum & Villainy Cantina’s Geeks Who Drink Pub Trivia. The rules are simple: Teams answer 10 questions for each of eight rounds. Winners can earn a $60 bar tab, collectibles and bragging rights. Debuting in 2017, the trivia game offers more than peer praise and adult beverages, as the Cantina also gives like-minded individuals the chance to mix and mingle. “The great thing about Los Angeles is that it has the best, most talented and creative nerd community in the whole world — of course, I might be biased,” says owner J.C. Reifenberg. “There’s a real passion that comes from the people who play.” 6377 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; (424) 501-4229, facebook.com/scumandvillainycantina. —Erin Maxwell

BEST BAR TO SPREAD YOUR WINGS ON THE WESTSIDE
The Westside may not be the Mecca of L.A.’s gay scene but, thanks to one gay bar in particular, LGBTQ Westsiders and their allies have a local place to go: the Birdcage. Perched atop the Victorian on Main Street in Santa Monica, the Birdcage features a lounge area, a dance floor and a great outdoor patio. It’s only been open for a couple of years, but the owners are still intent on keeping it fresh: They’re doing a full redesign of its furniture, music and cocktail list. Currently, winter hours have the bar open only on Friday and Saturday nights, but once it gets warmer, in May, it will return to its usual hours on Thursday through Sunday nights as well as Sunday Funday during the afternoon. Out and proud owner Garrett Gerson is considering having RuPaul’s Drag Race viewing parties (possibly as soon as the upcoming 11th season) so that Westside RuPaul fans can watch the show with other fans from the Westside. Can we get an amen up in here for that? 2640 Main St., Santa Monica; (310) 396-2469, thebirdcagesm.com. —Michael Cooper

BEST GAYBORHOOD BAR
West Hollywood may be the biggest gay neighborhood in Los Angeles but a lot of the bars can get a little repetitive: same house beats, same $14 drinks, same music videos playing on the screens. There’s one bar on the east end of the strip, however, that’s a little more traditional and a little less pretentious: Fubar. Its name, which began in the U.S. army and stands for “Fucked up beyond all repair” (or recognition), is very fitting for the strong drinks made there. With porn on the screens, barely clad go-go dancers and dirty events like BFD (Big Fat Dick) and Unloaded Friday, this gay bar is definitely not the Abbey. Some call it a little “ratchet,” but really it harkens more to the less mainstream gay bars of yesteryear before they started getting taken over by bachelorette parties. 7994 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood; (323) 654-0396, fubarla.com. —Michael Cooper

BEST PLACE TO REHEARSE FOR TEA WITH THE QUEEN
Anglophilia abounds at Rose Tree Cottage, a true temple to all things British. In the cottage’s victuals shop, English expats swoon over Heinz baked beans and frozen bangers. The real immersion into the customs of the green and pleasant land occurs thrice daily when tea is served. Rose Tree Cottage is so deeply steeped in authenticity that Meghan Markle arranged a practice tea-sipping session to learn proper etiquette (“The napkin is left on your seat if you are returning to the table” and “Pinky in always” stand out as memorable tips, per proprietor Edmund Fry) with gal pals before meeting her future grandmother-in-law, HRH Queen Elizabeth. Think finger sandwiches, scones with preserves and clotted cream, petit fours and, of course, a variety of teas served in rooms abloom with floral patterns. 801 S. Pasadenan Ave., Pasadena; (626) 793-3337, rosetreecottage.com. —Lisa Derrick

BEST PLACE TO GET A STRIKE WITH STYLE
There are many places to bowl around L.A. but not many that were around in the 1920s. Highland Park Bowl first opened as
a bowling alley, music store, doctor’s office and pharmacy in 1927, during Prohibition. People would get a doctor’s note upstairs, then head downstairs to the pharmacy, which was the gateway to bowling and illegal booze. In the 1980s and ’90s, it was the much-beloved music club Mr. T’s. The current owners, the 1933 Group, restored the bowling alley and turned it into what it is today, a splendid place to knock down pins and perfect cocktails. Recently, they’ve also been focusing on restoring the underground rock spirit of Mr. T’s with a "music venue within a venue," which has its own stage and bar next to the bowling alley. As many as five nights a week, guests can enjoy live music from local up-and-comers as well as nationally touring bands. With a Neapolitan pizza program and the signature craft drink menu for which 1933 has become known, Highland Park Bowl elevates the bowling to a class that’s posh but still punk.

5621 N. Figueroa St., Highland Park; (323) 257-BOWL, 1933group.com/#/highland-park-bowl.

—MICHAEL COOPER

BEST DANCING AND DECO SPLENDOR

Set in the historic Oviatt Building in downtown L.A., Maxwell DeMille’s Cicada Club is a magical time machine to the past. Friday, Saturday and some Sunday nights, the art deco landmark comes to life with music, dancing and glamorous fashion from the 1920s through the ’40s, both onstage and in the crowd. Cicada Club is the place where vintage lovers get dolled up (women with pin-curl waved hair, ruby-bow lips and swinging big skirts or flapper-esque frocks, men donning suits, hats or military uniforms depending on the evening’s theme). Popular for milestone celebrations and parties (they provide a free bottle of bubbly for birthday parties of eight or more), the old-timey radio show–style entertainment features trios busting out bugle boy boogie and big band crooners such as Johnny Holiday (Bing Crosby’s nephew), plus others such as Tino Productions’ swing and salsa night, Ginger & the Hoosier Daddys’ sexy, Bettie Boop–ish bop, Chester Whitmore’s vivacious orchestral jams and the Jive Aces’ cool swing. The Oviatt, built in 1927 and designed by the Los Angeles architectural firm Walker & Eisen, is a wonder to visit even without the flashbdack music and dance, with breathtaking interior design touches and gilded grandeur that harkens back to a simpler but no less spectacle-driven time in nightlife. 617 S. Olive St., downtown; (213) 488-9488, cicadaclub.com.

—LINA LECARO

BEST NAKED INSPIRATION

Jennifer Fabos Patton’s Gallery Girls turns sketching and painting into sensual communal events that are lacking in our disconnected age. Instead of admiring the female form on Instagram, guests of all artistic levels can render it live in person, while drinking a glass of wine or beer, mingling and sharing ideas. Usually held at galleries, bars, clubs and other nontraditional spaces, Patton started doing
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events in Pasadena. She now hosts her ongoing late-night drawing sessions and workshops at various venues across town, including Kline Academy of Fine Art, Jackie’s Art Studio Cafe, “Drink & Draw” night at San Fernando Brewing and the Original Drink & Draw Nights at Casey’s Irish Pub. You bring the supplies and Patton provides the models, either nude or semi-nude, who pose for five to 25 minutes and dress according to monthly themes, whether it’s “Sailor Girl Pinup,” “Red Sonja” or “Vampirella.” Gallerygirls.org. —SIRAN BABAYAN

BEST PLACE TO GET TURNED ON AND A LITTLE TERRIFIED AT THE SAME TIME

Deep in the trenches of Reseda, beautiful girls dressed like Pennywise, Vyvyan from The Young Ones and Ted Bundy strip down to their skivvies with style and grace, exuding enough sexual confusion to make David Lynch leave the room in bewilderment. Since 2015, the WTF-lesque burlesque comedy troupe have been taking off their clothes in homage to (Stephen) King and Queen (the Freddie Mercury kind) in pop culture. Started by Tiffy Twister and Brandy Snifter, WTF-lesque bucks conventional burlesque rules and adds the absurd to turn sexy on its ear. Past themes have included serial killers, ’80s primetime television, Stephen King characters and a tribute to the Pope of Trash, John Waters. It’s fun for the whole (Manson) family. facebook.com/wtflesque/. —ERIN MAXWELL

BEST BOOB BONANZA

OK, not those kinds of boobs! Boobie Trap is a bawdy comedy spectacle that tickles the senses with its funny, fast pace and freaky acts. To say it’s an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink show is to limit its scope and excess. This variety show is the sink and it’s filled with every kind of dish you can imagine — plastic novelties, sassy glasses, twisted sipping straws … you get the idea. It’s a hodge-podge of talent, all culled from host Scot Nery’s formidable friends list. The contortionist-juggler-comedian curates the wacky weekly Wednesday event, and he seeks to outdo himself every time. For his recent 200th show, he booked the usual procession of 15 four-minute acts — circus performers, magicians, musicians, dancers — and then threw out 20,000 bags of potato chips into the crowd, because why not? This boob is all about bounty, because when it comes to entertainment, too much is not enough. 6555 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Wed., 8-9:30 p.m. (doors 7 p.m., bar open until mid.); $20. boobieila.com. —LINA LEGARO

BEST CONCERT HALL THAT’S NOT DISNEY

Perched atop the remains of Bunker Hill like a collapsible suit of armor, Walt Disney Concert Hall remains one of the more striking visual symbols of modern Los Angeles, its lumpy silver curves and layers of metallic lava frozen in place mid-eruption as if by magic. But there is another amazing performance space just across the street that should not be overlooked — Zipper Concert Hall, which is part of the Colburn School. Named after the late composer-educator Herbert Zipper, who survived experiences in Nazi concentration camps and incarceration by Japanese forces in the Philippines during World War II, Zipper Hall is a cozy, intimate 415-seat theater with good sound. When not being used by faculty and students of the Colburn School, the little hall is also the site of the venerable Monday Evening Concerts series and has been used for performances by various local ensembles. 200 S. Grand Ave., downtown; (213) 621-2200, colburnschool.edu/calendar/locations/zipper-hall/. —FALLING JAMES

To learn more about the Zipper Hall, Colburn School, and Zipper Concert Hall, visit the website at colburnschool.edu. Enjoy the city’s vibrant arts and entertainment scene! —ERIN MAXWELL
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April 13 at 8:30 PM
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BrockusRED
ROSANNA GAMSON /WORLD WIDE
Kybele Dance Theatre
Backhausdance
Arrogant Elbow/Sarah Elgart
HD Theater

April 14 at 6:30 PM
Acts of Matter
Kevin Williamson+Company
CARLON
Bryn Cohan + Artists
Rosanna Tavarez/ LA DANSA DANSA
PENNINGTON DANCE GROUP
Iris Company

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Gilberto Godoy
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Lifelong Learning Can Benefit Your Career, Social Life—Even Your Health

BY PAUL ROGERS

The arcs of our lives are no longer clearly divided into school in our youth followed by work—often the same work—until retirement. In today’s competitive employment market, in which workers change jobs (and even careers) much more frequently than in years past, lifelong learning has become almost the norm. Rapid developments in workplace technologies have further elevated the importance of constantly acquiring new skills and updating existing abilities.

In response, all manner of lifelong learning options have emerged, many of which are specifically intended to fit around the busy lifestyle of working adults. With longtime mainstays like community colleges and technical schools lately augmented by upstart options like microlearning apps and YouTube tutorials, there’s an educational tool to suit every ambition, budget and schedule. These can give a boost to not just your career and income, but also to your social life and cognitive health.

We tapped five adult education experts to learn more about the myriad boons of lifelong learning.

In today’s competitive job market, is lifelong learning more pertinent than ever?

BJ Gallagher, Los Angeles-based adult education expert, author and speaker: In decades past, a working adult might expect to change jobs two or three times over the course of their career. Today, they can expect to change jobs at least a half dozen times, maybe more. Many people don’t just change jobs, they change careers.

Dr. Kat Cohen, New York City-based college admissions expert and CEO/founder of IvyWise: So many positions require employees to wear multiple hats and manage several different responsibilities simultaneously … it’s not enough to only know how to perform all of the tasks associated with a particular job; to stand out in today’s market, employees also need to understand how to learn and the mechanics that go into picking up information quickly. Employees who are lifelong learners, and who really seek intellectual challenges inside and outside of the office, are at a huge advantage.

Phil La Duke, Detroit-based consultant with a degree in Adult Education: If you think of all the disruptive innovation that has gone from the theoretical to applied in business, from drones to blockchain to cryptocurrencies and more, lifelong learning is more than just pertinent — I would say it’s essential.

What types of lifelong learning are available to adults?

Dr. Evan Shelton, Director of the Center for Brain Health of Menorah Park in Beachwood, Ohio: The type of lifelong learning opportunity that you choose will depend on your learning goals. I think of these, generally, as being in one of two categories: personal and professional learning … If you are looking to build a specific skill for your job, consider a certification or training program. If you are currently employed and want to stay on top of what’s happening in your field, consider professional conferences, workshops, and seminars. If you’re looking for an advanced degree, there are multiple options now beyond heading back into the classroom. Online degrees are common and can be completed on one’s own schedule.

Cohen: Another option for adults looking for instructor-led opportunities is to explore MOOCs, or massive open online courses. Students of all ages and backgrounds can audit these classes, often for free, and it can be an excellent chance to explore a new subject or idea. Similarly, there are a variety of apps that provide learning experiences, such as Duolingo, which is designed to help users master a new language.

Karen Garback, retired community college dean and teacher at Conejo Valley Adult School in Thousand Oaks: While taking classes in your pajamas at the kitchen table is convenient, successful online learners need buckets of tenacity to complete their goals through online learning alone. Another option is hybrid learning, which combines in-house coursework/test taking with distance education, providing greater structure and accountability for serious learners.

Can you offer any lifelong learning options specific to the Los Angeles area?

Garback: Look for educational programs through adult education, senior centers, public libraries, and community education classes at community colleges. Check out the Santa Monica College Emeritus College; the College of Professional and Global Education at Cal State LA; the Tseng College for Graduate, International, and Midcareer Education at CSUN; the variety of classes at the Skirball Cultural Center; and the expansive program through UCLA Extension.

Gallagher: The greater Los Angeles area has an especially wide, rich array of learning opportunities [including] author events and workshops offered by local bookstores, for-profit colleges who offer curriculum scheduled to meet the needs of working adults, lectures at our fantastic local museums, lectures offered in conjunction with concerts at the Disney Concert Hall, conversations with exhibiting artists at local art galleries, cooking classes at local culinary institutes, and more.

How do these fit around the existing commitments of an adult with a job and maybe a family?

Gallagher: Organizations that offer lifelong learning opportunities know their audience. They design their curricula to meet the needs of today’s busy Americans. Academic institutions offer intensive programs — for certificates as well as degrees — that fit nicely into the schedules of working adults. Workshops and seminars are often offered during evenings, after work, and on weekends as well … And of course, audio books, webinars, podcasts, how-to videos on YouTube, and the like are available anytime you want them.

Shelton: Online classes probably offer the most flexibility with regard to scheduling. MOOCs are often self-paced.

Cohen: For professionals considering going back to school for an advanced degree, it may be worthwhile to discuss your academic plans with your current employer. Some companies offer tuition reimbursement benefits, which can help you save on education costs, and it may also be possible to rearrange your work hours to accommodate your class schedule.

La Duke: How does bowling, or golf, or watching football, or having a beer out with friends fit with those same commitments? … I won’t lie, going to school, working full time and being a parent (especially a single parent) isn’t going to be easy – I know; I did it. But it also isn’t going to be a lifetime commitment.

How can the above impact someone’s career arc? And when in someone’s life or career is continued education most appropriate?

Gallagher: The short answer to your question is “any time and all the time.” Don’t wait until your job is outsourced to learn new skills. Keep current on what’s happening in your industry and think about what new technology it might be helpful to learn.

Shelton: If you’re considering a career change, lifelong learning might help you make that jump. If there is upward mobility and you’re looking to climb the ranks of your current company, a degree-granting lifelong learning opportunity might help you do that. In general, being well-credentialed is going to open doors for more and better job opportunities.

Cohen: Ideally, every employee should be striving to continue their education throughout their entire career and even after they retire. Adopting a lifelong student mentality helps professionals maintain mental sharpness and agility, which is essential, especially in today’s ever-changing job market.

Is there evidence that participating in lifelong learning can also positively impact someone’s income?
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Gorback: I have studied employment data for many years and have always seen a positive correlation between educational attainment and income. [Economist] Elka Torpey notes in “Measuring the Value of Education” (https://www.bls.gov/ careeroutlook/2018/data-on-display/education-pays.htm), “It’s hard to quantify the full value of an education. But U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data consistently show that, in terms of dollars, education makes sense.

Can lifelong learning also be good for a participant’s social life?

La Duke: Absolutely, learning about something in which you are genuinely interested puts you in the company with other people who share that interest and you become part of your social circle and you part of theirs. It’s a great way to make friends and even a romantic interest, but that should not be your primary motivation.

And can participation in lifelong learning even be good for your health?

Shelton: Lifelong learning is most certainly good for your health! Although the specifics are still not entirely understood, research is increasingly supporting a theory of cognitive reserve. As we build knowledge and “exercise” our brains over the course of our lives, we build up cognitive reserve … We can also build cognitive reserve by staying engaged and learning across the entire lifespan. In late life, this cognitive reserve serves as a buffer against cognitive decline.

Gorback: Ongoing research in neuroplasticity suggests that our brains can continue forming new connections throughout our lifetimes, clearly debunking the old wives’ tale about being “too old to learn.”

Finally, how can participation in lifelong learning help to create well-rounded, well-informed citizens, and in turn have a positive effect on the quality of life for individuals and their families?

Gallagher: Learning communities are healthy communities, strong communities. People with open minds are much better equipped to meet the challenges and changes of the future – political changes, demographic shifts, climate change, development of new technology, and more. Well-informed citizens make better decisions about things that affect everyone.

La Duke: Lifelong learners train themselves to question everything, not in a defensive or hostile way, but in a way that makes them verify facts that don’t seem accurate or flawed logic. They seek out opinions that are not their own and engage in intelligent, non-emotional discourses with people with whom they disagree … When we stop learning we stop thinking. Life is dynamic, our thoughts and skills must be too. It’s a matter of survival.

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“It is the distillation of articulate animals calling to each other across a great gulf.”
—Lawrence Ferlinghetti, “Poetry as Insurgent Art”

spoken word is more popular than ever these days, with a seemingly endless array of live performances that pop up in a wide variety of formats and settings in the Los Angeles area. But what used to be a mainly underground pursuit — in which obsessive wordsmiths parsed and divined the arcane properties hidden meanings and cryptic allusions buried in each loaded syllable of oblique poetry before a small crowd of like-minded true believers — has long since turned into a fairly mainstream spectator sport.

We don't use the word “sport” lightly, as popular events such as the Moth and other poetry slams are more competitions in which storytellers compete for prizes and attention and are, more often than not, judged and ranked for their comedic abilities and personal charisma rather than their actual literary depth.

For those who crave to hear more artistically ambitious poetry and short fiction performed live, there are nonetheless a dizzying variety of places where subtle wordplay is appreciated, although one sometimes has to search carefully to discern the more adventurous and experimental spoken-word artisans amid the overriding clamor of actor types and comedians manqué shouting over one another in telling their personal anecdotes at generic storytelling events.

When it comes to spoken-word performances of genuine literary merit, choosing SoCal's best venues can be a highly subjective experience, based as much on the power and immediacy of hearing a favorite writer breaking down her well-turned phrases in an intimate room as much as the setting itself. But a spectacular location doesn't hurt.

“The Annenberg Community Beach House rocks with Red Hen and other hybrid events in the most glorious sunset-at-the-beach environment,” marvels local poet Peggy Dobreer (Drop and Dazzle) about Red Hen Press’ recurring readings at the coastal enclave in Santa Monica. “Love so much of what Red Hen does: cross-cultural, cross-genre, always classy and kind to everyone.”

Dobreer also cites Patrick O’Neill’s readings at Kaffebaren in downtown L.A., the Moonday Poetry Series at Flintridge Books, Julia Ingalls “It's 5 O’Clock Somewhere” series, the Library Girl readings in Santa Monica and Avenue 50 Studio's readings in Highland Park.

Poet (and occasional L.A. Weekly contributor) Shonda Buchanan says the World Stage in Leimert Park continues to champion the art of spoken word in addition to its vibrant ongoing jazz performances. “One of the best venues still for African-American writers and all writers of color, and all writers actually, is the Anansi Writers Workshop Wednesday night series,” notes Buchanan (Equipoise: Poems From Goddess Country and the upcoming Black Indian: Memoir).

“In fact, the World Stage Press has transformed what is seen, heard and represented by African-American authors in L.A. However, the space itself still provides writers of color with a safe space to express their social, cultural and political lives.” She also recommends F. Douglas Brown and “fierce bruja” Rocio Carlos’ provocative “Un::fade::able” series downtown at Art Share L.A., in which writers use the incisiveness of poetry not as an airy escape but as a way to shine a light on social injustice.

Novelist Janet Fitch (White Oleander, The Revolution of Marina M.) has more than one favorite venue. “I like Stories [Books & Cafe] in Echo Park. With their little outdoor patio and mural, it's really charming and neighborhood-y,” she shares. “Skylight [Books in Los Feliz] is phenomenal, with their tree and their cat. They have readings almost every night, very well attended, and they cater wonderfully to the writers. … Chevalier’s [Books in Larchmont] has become very active in the last couple of years. There's something very easy about Chevalier's; you feel you can just drop by. Vroman's [in Pasadena] is the big daddy of L.A. bookstores. The store has a big and loyal following and room for a good-sized audience. Book Soup is fun, on the Strip, a rock & roll feel. … The Last Bookstore also has a real stage — makes a reading there special. … I love the Conrad Romo ‘Tongue and Groove’ series at the Hotel Cafe, more of a nightclub feel with full bar.”

Poet Mike Sonksen (Letters to My City) also cites a plethora of venues all over L.A. County, including Da Poetry Lounge at Greenway Court Theatre, Gatsby Books
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There are so many choices in Los Angeles when it comes to exemplary spoken word, but the best venue of all remains Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center in Venice, the Beat-minded cultural nexus founded in 1968. It has hosted Patti Smith, Michael McClure, Wanda Coleman, Raymond Carver, Amiri Baraka, Bob Flanagan, Philomene Long, Holly Prado, S.A. Griffin, Gerry Fialka, Amélie Frank, Doug Knott, Laurel Ann Bogen, Allen Ginsberg and many others. Its Wednesday-night workshops have attracted such folks as Dennis Cooper, Tom Waits and Amy Gertler, and punk poet Exene Cervenka reportedly picked up much of her morbidenly entrancing style in workshops in the 1970s led by the oft-brilliant poet-novelist Kate Braverman.

“Beyond Baroque is a favorite because it’s a real theater, with theater chairs on risers and a sound booth,” declares Fitch, echoing the sentiments of several of the writers quoted earlier. “And it’s a clubhouse vibe, a cultural hub for all of literary Los Angeles. Its Beat history imbues it with a very special atmosphere, and it’s easy to hold people’s attention there.”

Utilitarian and minimalist in design, but the lack of visual ornamentation only serves to focus attention on the words cast aloft by such stellar writers as Mary Gaitskill, James Merrill, Margaret Atwood, Adrienne Rich, John Ashbery, Louise Glück, Robert Pinsky, Aga Shahid Ali, Czeslaw Milosz, John Kinsella and countless others. “The mission of the Hammer Poetry Series is to bring to the museum poets representative of the outstanding work being done by poets of diverse backgrounds and various technical strengths,” says the Hammer’s Stephen Yenser. Unfortunately, the Hammer tends to showcase writers who aren’t from Los Angeles, which — however unwittingly — reinforces the ancient stereotype that Hollywood is just a film town and that legitimate writing only comes from the east of this Eden (and, perhaps more specifically, east of the Hudson River).
BEST OF L.A.: CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

BEST BOOKSTORE ESCAPE

You know you’re in a unique bookstore when there’s a comfortably at-home cat roaming the aisles. The cat’s name is Zeus, and the store is the Iliad Bookshop. Tucked away in a quiet nook of North Hollywood, with a mural of literary giants on the building, the Iliad specializes in used books. And unlike other bookstores and libraries, which tend to be so spacious you’re forced to concentrate over the din of the crowd, the Iliad is practically archaic in its tranquility. With countless aisles of books, classic and modern, the Iliad’s inventory is vast (and incredibly affordable).

Opened in 1987 by owner Dan Weinstein, this resale shop an experience as fun as anything seen on TV. A new Westside location soon will join the Burbank original. 3315 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank; itsawrphollywood.com. —HALLING JAMES

BEST TV FAN FASHION

With a bountiful selection of wardrobe items and props from your favorite TV shows, It’s a Wrap is a treasure trove with a sensational range of cast-off costumes — everything from street clothes to high fashion to period exotic. Janet Dion established the store in 1981 as a resource for studios to liquidate stuff in big volumes, so new stock is always coming in. That means It’s a Wrap frequently has deeply discounted sales — 75 percent off, and it’s literally as good as new. Many shows buy multiples for backup continuity, so you’ll find lots of items with tags still on. Everything from footwear to jewelry, all manner of accessories, swimsuits and a kiddie korner make a visit to this resale shop an experience as fun as anything seen on TV. A new Westside location soon will join the Burbank original. 3315 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank; itsawrphollywood.com. —HALLING JAMES

BEST PROOF THAT EVERY DAY IS HALLOWEEN IN L.A.

A true destination for goths, ghouls and monster fans, Halloween Town is a massive shadowy emporium with an absolutely mind-bending array of all things Halloween and horror-related. Chock-full of shock monster gear — apparel, home decor, fine art, novelties, bric-a-brac, literature, DVDs, statuary, headlights and lighting and FX stuff — it’s a comprehensive stock of beastly merchandising. A walk away is an entire other store with masks, costumes, props and accessories, and two doors down is another costume shop exclusively for children. Need a Forbidden Planet lunch bucket or a sculpture of the Creature from the Black Lagoon? Head to Halloween Town and run amok. 3021 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank; (818) 848-3644, halloweenstown.com. —JONNY WHITESIDE

BEST FUNHOUSE FOR SEX FREAKS

The LGBTQ community is arguably a little more open-minded about sexuality, so oftentimes you’ll find some unique sex shops within the gayborhood. This is definitely the case in West Hollywood, where Chi Chi LaRue’s provides a more vibrant environment than WeHo’s better-known Pleasure Chest. You can find anything that fits your sexual fantasy amid the store’s huge selection, including sex toys, lubricants and porn. Whether you’re gay or straight, there’s something for everyone in the store, located at the center of the WeHo strip, whether you’re looking for a bachelorette party gift (Bride’s Last Ride is a bridal bar scavenger-hunt pack) or a six-piece “Deluxe Drilldo Set.” The store even hosted a meet-and-greet with Stormy Daniels in 2018 when she stopped by to promote her new line of shirts. There’s also plenty of fetish gear and tons of different condoms, because safe sex is key. A second store, Chi Chi LaRue’s Circus, will be opening on the east side of WeHo near Hamburger Mary’s, in the former Circus of Books space. The plan is to combine the current feel of the original LaRue’s with the history of Circus of Books; the new store will feature a Tom of Finland store-within-a-store. At Chi Chi LaRue’s, sex is about being explorative and definitely not vanilla, unless there’s sprinkles. 8861 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood; (323) 337-9555, chichilarues.com. —MICHAEL COOPER

BEST STORE TO GET LOGO

“Latina,” “Latina,” or simply “Latin” — however Mexican-Americans and Hispanics in general choose to identify themselves, one thing is for sure, we are a proud people. We’ve had to be. In reaction to marginalization and racism of the past (sadly the present, too, thanks to Trump), Latin pride has become not only a badge of honor but a hot trend, especially in L.A. You’ll find the best raza style and firme fashion at Mi Vida. From “chimgona” bags (it’s a term of empowerment), to T-shirts emblazoned with the Virgen de Guadalupe, Selena and Aztec art, to the must-have big gold hoop earrings, nameplate necklaces and other chola accessories, Mi Vida will give you life if you grew up exposed to barrio culture, no matter what ethnicity you might be. But Chicana chicas and chichas in particular will want everything from this vibrant hub of handmade items, crafts and clothing — to adorn yourself, your car (air fresheners, stickers) and your casa (candles, lots of art with attitude). 5159 York Blvd., Sherman Oaks; (818) 993-3030, chichilarues.com. —LUIS LEAGRO

BEST CLASSY POT PALACE OVER THE HILL

With a waiting area that features walls covered in high-end art, luxurious furniture and even a gold-throne selfie area, Sherman Oaks’ Higher Path began raising the bar for cannabis shops back in 2013. Free tea and coffee set the scene as you are greeted by the knowledgeable staff, who are patient, pleasant and well-versed in the ways of weed, happy to explain everything from the product to the latest laws. This is due in part to the philosophy of founder Jerred Kiloh, an entrepreneur with a background in design who attempted to bring his Northern California roots to the
Valley. As part of his mantra, Kiloh believes in elegance, experience and education so his customers can get the most out of each visit. Keeping consumers well versed on cannabis culture while elevating the elegance of local dispensaries will serve Kiloh well as he plans for future expansion. 14080 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks; (818) 385-1224, thehigherpath.com. —ERIN MAXWELL

**BEST SILVER LAKE NEO-PUNK**

The gentri/fication of Silver Lake is shame-ful to those who grew up there, but amid the $7 juices and $200 jeans, there are some newbies we just can’t hate. Good coffee, pricy or no, is always appreciated, for example. And if any more “chain” stores must come into the ‘hood, let them please have the cool cred (and great product) that the Doc Martens Store does. Opened last year, the S’Lake Docs shop has a fine selection of the U.K. company’s classic combat boots, shoes and accessories for men, women and children, in signature and new colors and some snazzy new materials and styles (the “platform sole” is all the rage with the teen set). Y-Que Trading Post builds dynamo lighting systems and custom wheels, does repairs and builds custom bikes. But it’s Lizard’s people- and pedal-powered crusade against L.A.’s ingrained car culture (and its related urban sprawl, pollution, obesity and community dysfunction) that sets it apart. Relámpago’s monthly “BiciParranda” karaoke nights are festive gatherings of bike riders but also political parties that elevate the humble bicycle to a medium of expression and a tool for change. 140 Binini Place, Koreatown; (213) 216-2132, Facebook.com/RelampagoWheellery. —PAUL ROGERS

**BEST ONE-STOP SHOP FOR NOVELTY STATEMENT T-SHIRTS AND ODD GIFTS**

The small Vermont store has been a staple of the Los Feliz shopping district since the early ’80s, and now almost 30 years later, Y-Que Trading Post is still the to-go shop for the knick-knacks and whatnots needed for any hipster household. From T-shirts that proudly boast local L.A. neighborhoods (the Silver Lake one has the ‘hood’s famed happy foot/sad foot sign) to novelty gifts from a bygone era, Y-Que has been keeping Angelenos weird for three decades. Since its inception, the store has gone through many transitions — from punk/cholo clothing store to botanica-esque candle haven to dead-stock retro gift-o-rama to art gallery with a T-shirt shop and record section. But over the years, the spirit of the store has remained the same. “It’s like walking into another time, part of the old boutique thing combined with currently relevant and political items whose shelf life is not determined by a sales metric,” says owner William Wyatt. “Y-Que seems to capture the nonchalant nature of being a small store lost in a big city.” 1770 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz; (323) 664-0021, yque.com. —ERIN MAXWELL

**BEST ENERGY BOOST**

The power of crystals is no longer looked upon as new age mumbo-jumbo, mostly because their ability to help people with healing, focus, love or making life changes has been proven to work for so many people on a personal level. Crystal energy makes you feel good, and the process of learning about and purchasing these transformative items should, too. At Spellbound Sky, you will be enlightened, entertained and educated by knowledgeable owners Mark Phillips and Martin Anguiano and their staff, learning what each crystal does and how to use it, which combinations work well together and the best way to set your intentions while using them. Jewelry, candles and oils that aid in combating negative energy (which is often the first step in making positive changes) complement the crystal stock here, all of which is not only metaphysically uplifting but gorgeous to look at. Whether you buy the wares for decor, fashion or something more meaningful, the result is the same — pleasing visions and joyful vibrations. 4210 Santa Monica Blvd., Silver Lake; (323) 284-8115, spellboundsky.com. —LINH LEGRO

**BEST GIFT SHOP FROM THE DARK SIDE**

The go-to shop for goth gifts and gloomy interior decor, Memento Mori breathes a refreshing yet sepulchral mist across this hipster-dense strip of Sunset Boulevard in Echo Park. Constantly changing collections of vintage funeral and mourning items share space with gloomy jewelry, death-centric books and lugubrious gifts. Ethical taxidermy, poison bottles and morbid barware are just some of the items to be spotted on the shelves, along with funerale clothing and ephemera. Whether you’re looking for embalming tools, an assemblage of wee mice bones or another memorable collectible, Memento Mori’s selections turn death’s sting into pure consumptive pleasure. 2209 Sunset Blvd., Echo Park; (323) 962-7834, mementomori-la.com. —LISA DERRICK

**BEST STORE TO SHOP & STAY, SHANTYE**

Most production companies don’t have their own retail store, but World of Wonder isn’t just any production company. It’s the company behind RuPaul’s Drag Race, and the flagship store on Hollywood Boulevard has all the RuPaul and drag-queen merch you could want; it’s even host to some special events. “World of Wonder is more than a media company, it’s an experience. … We thought it was important to create a destination for our tribe,” World of Wonder founders Randy Barbato and Fenton Bailey say. “The World of Wonder Flagship Store is more than a retail experience, it’s part of a larger entertainment outlet featuring art exhibits, performance spaces and panels for like-minded people to connect.” Past events have included Two Girls One Yard Sale last December, where drag queens Trixie Mattel and Kim Chi allowed fans to “snatch” wigs and other merch from their drag wardrobes, and the WOWIE Awards, also in December, which celebrated the year in pop culture. Don’t be a drag, just be a queen and head down to the space in Hollywood to make your biggest French Vanilla drag fantasies become a reality. 6650 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; store.worldofwonder.net. —MICHAEL COOPER
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7PM & 9PM RUNWAY SHOWS

MARCH 22ND
6PM DOORS OPEN
7PM & 9PM RUNWAY SHOWS

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Online radio stations The Independent FM, Luxuria, idobi are going strong

BY BRETT CALLWOOD

The internet has pretty much taken over popular culture since the '90s, defining all corners of entertainment. It stands to reason that radio would be similarly impacted, and it has. But there are factors that complicated the growth of online radio when compared with the rapid rise of streaming music and TV/movie services, online newspapers and magazines, etc.

It's well known that people often (not exclusively but often) listen to the radio in the car. That's why the morning rush hour spot is so in-demand. And here in Los Angeles, where many of us spend hours each week sitting in traffic, the radio can be a sanity saver. So online radio really had to wait for mobile technology to catch up, which it finally has. The combination of Bluetooth in cars and smartphones allows online radio to blast us into some semblance of contentment while dealing with stand-still traffic jams.

Another significant issue has been the means of presentation. Everybody knows how terrestrial radio works. A series of DJs and hosts rattle through a playlist and entertain us in between. But in the modern world, where people can find any song in seconds, finding a place for that "appointment radio" online wasn't without its challenges.

"In the Spotify era, appointment radio doesn't make a whole lot of sense, but then vinyl records don't make a whole lot of sense in the digital download era either," says Jose Maldonado, program director at The Independent FM. "Here we are with people going after the vinyl records for that retro style. What we're doing at The Independent FM is trying to keep that retro on-air DJ, personal approach."

The Independent FM, focusing on indie music, was born out of traditional FM radio station Indie 103.1 which went off the air almost exactly 10 years ago.

"When Indie 103.1 was on the air, the frequency 103.1 FM had very poor reception in most of Los Angeles," Maldonado says. "So a lot of people were taking to listening to the stream that the station was using. When they went off the air in FM, the idea was that we have enough of a listenership that listens via streaming, so why don't we see what happens if we just keep it going. And so they did."

While some existing stations were gradually making the switch from terrestrial airwaves to a streaming platform, others were watching from the sidelines and making the leap to the online radio world without prior broadcasting experience. That lack of instant brand recognition might have proved to be a stumbling block, but the strong survived. One of those was and is Luxuria Music.

"It was launched back in 2000 by a consortium of music nerds who were interested in seeing what a digital platform could become," says Kat Griffin, Luxuria's program director. "They rallied a bunch of their friends. They just wanted to feature music that was widely ignored but celebration-worthy. That's why they went on for an instrumental, pop music kind of thing in the wake of the lounge revival."
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Clear Channel purchased Luxuria but, soon afterward, it was allowed to slip out of existence. Then in 2005, current owner Cliff King found that the domain name had become available again and purchased it. Luxuria was back and it has thrived since, boasting names as revered as Howie Pyro and Kristian Hoffmann in the ranks.

“There’s been growth and there’s also been transformation, a morphing into another kind of an entity,” Griffin says. “In 2006, people would listen on their computer. What’s changed is the way our audience uses media. We reach our audience through our live stream. We also have a podcast page, so we archive our live shows.”

Similarly (kinda), idobi Online Radio launched in 1999 when founder Tom Cheney was working on internet radio for MTV. The network abandoned the project but Cheney kept at it and idobi (the lowercase is intentional) was born. That was incredibly early in the birth of online radio, and idobi has led a lot of the subsequent growth.

“We’ve really helped to mold and create the industry,” says Sherin Nicole, idobi’s chief creative office. “This is pre-Pandora, pre-Spotify, this is before all of that. The growth of idobi over that time has been very similar to the growth of streaming. It’s been exponential. What started as a project in Tom’s basement, more or less, has become a thriving business.”

Idobi was born on the East Coast but has had an L.A. office for about five years, and it recently moved into a larger North Hollywood space just this year as it continues to expand. For idobi, the specificity of the content has been key to its success.

“I think what’s great about us is we’re really grounded in the pop-punk scene, and we’ve grown into an alternative-rock network,” Nicole says. “So that audience knows that we are with them. We’re fans of the music like they are, and we get excited about the music just like they do.”

Online radio is obviously available to anyone, anywhere, who has a connection, a fact that redefines what it means to be a local radio station when broadcasting exclusively on the web. That means thinking hard about your approach.

“What I do with The Independent FM is I still try to keep it live,” Maldonado says. “I still try to keep it where there is a physical human being answering the phones. So if somebody is making a request, whether it be via the 888 number or Twitter, they can still get that instant contact that we used to get back in the old FM days.”

For Griffin, Los Angeles is where Luxuria belongs.

“We were born in L.A., the people that built Luxuria were a part of the communities here,” she says. “Grow where you’re planted. There are a lot of people here who want to work and do things. Once you come to L.A., a lot of people don’t stay. They go back to where they came from. But no one ever talks about the people who come here, look around and say, ‘Oh my God, I’m home. I’m never leaving this place.’ That’s what we did.”

Of course, The Independent FM, Luxuria and idobi are not the only online radio stations in town. There are the rich histories of KChung, Dublab, NTS, KPJK, KNAC and others to consider, and we had finite space here. But it all points to a healthy future for online radio in L.A. moving forward.

Find these stations at theindependentfm.com, luxuriamusic.com and idobi.com.

Disclosure: The author works with idobi Online Radio and culture editor Lina Lecaro works with Luxuria Music.
Upcoming Events at Amoeba!

**THURSDAY • MARCH 14 • 6PM**

**Dexter Story**
Dexter Story celebrates his new album, *Bahir*, with a live performance and album signing at Amoeba Hollywood! *Bahir* vinyl LP will be available March 14th at Amoeba Hollywood. Buy your new EP at Amoeba to meet the band & get it signed!

**FRIDAY • MARCH 15**

**used & open box turntable sale**
Ammo Hollywood's sidewalk sale returns! We'll have great deals on Blu-ray, DVDs, vinyl, CDs, posters, t-shirts, collectible toys & more. Everything is priced to move fast and is conveniently located just outside the store.

**TUESDAY • MARCH 19 • 6PM**

**Liily**
L.A.'s own Liily celebrate their new EP, *I Can Feel Anybody In This Town* (Flush Records), with a live performance and signing at Amoeba Hollywood! Buy their new EP at Amoeba to meet the band & get it signed!

**WEDNESDAY • MARCH 20**

**Enamel Pin Day! Buy 2 & Get the 3rd Free!**
Amoeba Hollywood's sidewalk sale returns! We'll have great deals on Blu-ray, DVDs, vinyl, CDs, posters, t-shirts, collectible toys & more. Everything is priced to move fast and is conveniently located just outside the store.

**FRIDAY • MARCH 22 • 4:20PM**

**Jenny Lewis**
Kicking off her new album, *On The Line*, with a live show at Amoeba! Purchase your copy, in-store only, at Amoeba Hollywood March 22nd to receive guaranteed/priority admission ticket to live show + limited edition poster, pre-signed by Jenny Lewis!

**MONDAY • MARCH 25**

20% off all Aretha Franklin & Elton John Music & Merch!

**TUESDAY • MARCH 26 • 5PM**

**Enamel Pin Day! Buy 2 & Get the 3rd Free!**
Amoeba Hollywood's sidewalk sale returns! We'll have great deals on Blu-ray, DVDs, vinyl, CDs, posters, t-shirts, collectible toys & more. Everything is priced to move fast and is conveniently located just outside the store.

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3/21 Time to Dance: PANIC! AT THE DISCO CIRCUS DANCE PARTY
3/22 Club 90's Presents
3/22 Tryvul - Dance Africa / Ritmo Triblal W/ Blaq Pages + Canyon Cody
3/22 Peppaseed - La's Throwback Jamaican Party
3/23 Pesadilla Y Tommy Real Tour USA
3/24 Asterism Live in LA
3/24 Pa Lante Live!
3/26 Aguias Los Angeles

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3/30 Cuffing Season La Finale 3/30 feat. Parisa Surprise Special Guests!
4/6 Griffin
4/7 Sean Healy Presents
4/25 Vamos A Gozar!
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BEST PARAMEDICAL BODY ARTIST
Working from her immaculate Gilded Lily studio at the back of a faded mixed-use building in Newhall, Holly Feneht is the only paramedical body artist in Los Angeles. She specializes in decorative nipple and areola tattooing for breast cancer survivors as well as figurative scar cover-ups (such as after mastectomies and C-sections). Whereas paramedical tattoos are normally performed by surgeons with little artistic training, using only semi-permanent cosmetic pigment, the soft-spoken Feneht has long experience in traditional tattoo shops and uses permanent ink. Palpably passionate and compassionate in her mission (inspired by the experiences of cancer victims in her own family), she views paramedical art as the last healing stop for breast cancer survivors, and regularly meets with prominent surgeons to further their understanding of her life-changing art. 23550 Lyons Ave., Suite 103, Newhall; (661) 523-8623, GildedLilyDesign.com. —LINA LECARO

BEST PLACE TO GET PINNED
Hippie-dippy acupuncturists have nothing on Tamara Joy Rettino, aka “the Acupunktrix.” During sessions at Rettino’s Atwater studio — or her house calls — you can listen to whatever music feels right (even heavy, noisy stuff). Her style is real, honest and no-BS, even as she emanates comfort and support. Specializing in OB-GYN and pediatrics, with experience as both a birth and death doula, Rettino’s services include adult and pediatric acupuncture (needles or needleless acupuncture for adult or kids and babies, the latter with calming toys and play to help them relax), cupping (fire-free to treat muscle and joint pain and increase circulation), bedside palliative care and home hospice help (focused on gentle touch!) come pretty darn close. 4237 W. Avenue 40, Glendale Park; (213) 787-4799, electroyogielectrolysis.com. —LINA LECARO

BEST ELECTRIC HAIR REMOVAL
Shaving is tiresome, waxing hurts like hell and laser ing is pricy, painful and not always permanent. But what about electrolysis? Though some may look upon it as an old-school method, ElectroYogi is breathing new life into the hair-removal procedure. Owner Nicole Policicchio touts a “mind-body-spirit philosophy” to her practice with the end goal being hair-free beauty and self-confidence both in and out of your clothes. Using the latest technology, ElectroYogi destroys your hair follicles for good (which usually takes multiple sessions per area as the hair growth cycle completes), resulting in smooth skin, even for those with stubborn growth. Hair removal of any kind is not something to look forward to, but ElectroYogi’s homey Eagle Rock bungalow provides a sanctuary where relaxing sounds and atmosphere as well as friendly technicians (with a

PHOTO BY LISA DERRICK

PHOTO BY LINA LECARO

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PHOTO BY LINA LECARO
Doll Face Skin Studio has welcomed clients who include some of L.A.'s most gorgeous gals. Castellanos’ 13 years working with women of all races, ages and skin types means personalized service that delves deep into each individual's skin needs, and customizes treatments to solve issues such as dryness, acne and aging. Skin consultation explores cleansing regime and other factors like seasonal changes, stress, etc., for the best plan of action, which can include facials, treatment masks and products. But it's the skin expert’s attentive nature and focus on pampering here that make anyone who enters Doll Face feel special. 2019 Riverside Drive, Elysian Valley; (323) 632-5500, dollfaceskincarestudio.com. —LINDA LEGRO

HIPPEST DOCTOR’S OFFICE

No one really wanted to give out his name because there is a four-month waiting list to see Dr. Dean Manus, the board-certified plastic surgeon responsible for maintaining the many visible visages of the “California 40.” But after a couple bottles of Cristal, secrets spill. Yes, there is true magic in his hands, but what everyone really wants to talk about is the office, and for good reason. Designed by Dr. Manus and TV personality/fashion designer Josie Stevens (Married to Rock), the waiting room feels more like the bottle-service section of a VIP club than a surgeon’s waiting room. Glowing glass tiles, vegan black python couches, LED mood lighting and lots of sparkles and sequins give way to exam rooms with torso-shaped chairs and modern art including a piece by Colin Christian. The artful atmosphere complements the doctor's artful work and the whimsical touches make beauty upkeep fun, so instead of thinking about the needles coming near your face you can marvel at the decor, such as ceramic jars that store his swabs and cotton but are labeled “Quaaludes” and “LSD.” 9201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 611, West Hollywood; (310) 859-2627, drmanus.com. —LISA DERRICK

BEST AND GROOVIEIEST INTERIOR DESIGNER

If your bungalow has got you feeling low or you need to customize your condo, Los Angeles DJ turned interior designer Señor Amor will design and implement a setting that expresses your inner self in ways you’ve never dreamed. When The Go-Go’s Jane Wiedlin wanted to celebrate her love of sci-fi, Señor turned her Little Tokyo loft into a playful and sexy space-age pad complete with a sparkling gold dining room; a turquoise staircase and sleeping loft; and a glowing bathing cave with a bath/shower pod. Señor’s first gig, drag legend Jackie Beat’s Altaadena Brutalist-inspired showroom complete with a Linda Blair-themed guest room, landed the decorator and his client in The New York Times. senoramar.design.com. —LISA DERRICK

BEST WRITERS WORKOUT

For 13 seasons, Paul Shirley battled in the paint among the greatest players in the world. Eleven years after he last got paid to play basketball, he’s in a place he hardly could have imagined, running a writing incubator keenly named Writers Blok. Bizarre as it may have initially seemed, it has been remarkably successful. Shirley has attributed qualities he learned as a professional athlete — attitude, discipline, accountability and teamwork — to writing, long considered a solitary act. Peer pressure and competition, driven by “sprint” and “extended” writing sessions, along with group interaction and Q&As with luminary authors, make this a writer’s Valhalla. Imagine a Starbucks without all the pretension and annoyances, with great coffee, tea and snacks at a price point that’s less than what you’d be giving Howard Schultz. 2677 S. La Cienega Blvd., Mid City; writersbloc.com. —ROY JURGENS

BEST PLACE TO BUY SHARON TATE’S LIPSTICK

Possessions sometimes seem to possess us; whether we are cleaning out our closets or going on a shopping spree, things seem to have a life of their own. For most of us, when we die, our worldly effects are left to family and friends, donated to thrift shops or given to the garbage man. But when it comes to dearly departed celebrities, this stuff is elevated to collectible status, and it’s big business. From Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson to George Harrison, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Mackie and Jerry Lewis, Julien’s Auction House takes care of the business of dealing with famous (usually dead) people’s stuff and finding new owners based on the highest bidder. With a large showroom in Beverly Hills and a worldwide reaching website, it has handled Marilyn Monroe’s convertible, Hugh Hefner’s bed, Sharon Tate’s wedding dress and thousands more personal, historical and cultural items of the rich and famous. A visit to the showroom is almost like visiting a museum. Subscribe to Julien’s emails for updates on exhibitions and current auctions. 257 N. Canon Drive, Beverly Hills; julienssauctions.com. —NIKKI KREUZER
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Los Angeles is blessed with its share of public art, cultural monuments, civic statues and landmark murals, from the abstract to the narrative, interactive, commemorative and cause-based. The popular appeal of the Hollywood Sign, the lore of the Watts Towers, the creativity in appropriating billboards, and the grandeur of the city’s many historical murals from Crenshaw to Historic Filipinotown to Olvera Street are all undeniable. But some sculptures and statuary activate space on a more human scale, by simply imagining folks moving through it. So from Chinatown to Staples Center, the Huntington to Hollywood, Venice to Westwood, here are some of our favorite real and symbolic people to encounter in the landscape.

At the Hall of Justice downtown, artist Alison Saar’s powerful sculpture *Embodied* has commanded poetic attention since the building’s renovation in 2015. Standing a regal 12 feet tall, its depiction of the Lady of Justice archetype reflects, as does all the artist’s work, a profound and spiritual appreciation for the beauty and strength of women in history, and especially women of color. As a dove takes flight from one hand and the other holds a law book, her garment is stitched with hundreds of words on justice, in a plurality of locally spoken languages including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese. The message is clear in its image and artistry, emphasizing diversity and inclusivity in all
aspects of public life as being always worth striving for.

Nearby, Chinatown is home to two particularly popular statues. First, on Sun Mun Way, a 7-foot-tall bronze likeness of Bruce Lee in a power-pose signature stance, which at its installation in 2013 was the first and only such statue recognized by the Bruce Lee Foundation. It’s photographed about a million times a day, especially when the Grand Star is lit or the plaza hosts a music festival. Just around the corner in Chinatown Central Plaza is an equally popular selfie-stick opp, tour bus stop and ceremonial site destination; one with a deep geopolitical backstory. Installed in 1966, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, founding father of the Republic of China, is represented in a 6-foot-by-4-foot bronze statue atop a 6-foot-high base, in recognition of the role the neighborhood played in planning the revolution that brought him to power.

Staples Center’s Star Plaza has been home to an ever-growing family of statues of L.A. sports world greats, since it first installed likenesses of Wayne Gretzky and Earvin “Magic” Johnson, who, although they played at the Forum, are early pillars of the city’s sporting legacy. In 2008 they were joined by boxer Oscar De La Hoya, and Lakers announcer Chick Hearn — complete with his broadcast desk — arrived in 2010. Continuing their work with the impressive Rotblatt-Amrary Studio family of artisans, Jerry West mid-dribble (2011), Kareem Abdul-Jabbar mid-hook shot (2012), Luc Robitaille joyfully post-goal (2015) and Shaquille O’Neal in a gravity-defying dunk (2017) all have taken up residence. In 2018, they were joined by Kings announcer Bob Miller and, most recently, Lakers great and longtime Clippers general manager Elgin Baylor in a rather avant-garde, futuristic sort of melting-ball motif that expresses the speed and power of his throw. Up next, perhaps LeBronze?

At the UCLA campus, a 5-acre oasis of rolling lawns contains the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden at UCLA. Pursuing a second master’s degree in studio arts, Los Angeles artist Enrique Martinez Celaya has been installed on the grounds. The Gambler depicts a new variation on one of the artist’s recurring characters, a young boy who fights through his pain, explores the world but keeps his own council, sometimes long to be king or, as in this case, is weighed down by the memory of a home he carries on his back. It’s a pensive, literary work that will be right at home at this classics-centric collection.

Elsewhere on the grounds, The Landmark promises something rather more surreal but no less romantic. A sleeping head of monumental scale with the rough-edged broken neck of a ruined colossus, an Ozymandian treasure barely rescued from the sands of time, The Landmark has a weathered texture and mysterious expression; its appearance in any setting has the disorienting spatial effects of a Dali or de Chirico painting. Despite its postmodern scale, its iconography derives from the same spirit of the classics that inspired Mr. Huntington in the first place. In fact, it’s on long-term loan from U.K. collectors Stuart and Bianca Roden, who themselves began as connoisseurs of antiquity but have, like the library itself, recently branched out to the contemporary.

The works are on-site already but, in a sense, they will not be fully realized until later this spring, when the grasses, ground-cover and flowers currently seeded in the surrounding soil bring forth their promised bloom. Martinez Celaya tells L.A. Weekly that although he worked with the curators to site the works, the true collaborative aspects of the installation happened with the garden and landscape staff. “They are true scholars,” he says. “Experts beyond anything I could come up with.” The grounds staff did multiple studio visits with Martinez Celaya, and they talked through every choice, building on their knowledge to create an informed intervention in this beloved public space. “The die-hard Huntington visitors,” as Martinez Celaya discovered, are a dedicated community. “There are so many people who really feel it’s their garden. The community is intimate with it, they have a mind-blowing affection for it, and we worked to honor that.” For now, use your imagination, but do plan a trip for late spring, when nature’s own exuberance will truly complete these sculptures.
BEST OLD-SCHOOL PLACE TO PUTT

Sometimes we all need to regress. Hitting one of the four delightfully kitschy 18-hole mini-golf courses at Golf N’ Stuff in Norwalk will surely help you get in touch with your inner child or even help you connect with your own flesh-and-blood offspring. Opened in 1969, and still featuring most of its original vintage sculptures, Golf N’ Stuff lets you tee off toward a crooked haunted mansion, a replica of Big Ben, several magic castles, pirates protecting a gold-filled treasure chest, sparkling blue ponds or a Dutch-style windmill. A 15-foot-tall tree house was the winning spot for a tree-sitting Guinness World Record in 1983, after a publicity-seeking actor lived there for 431 days, 2 hours and 30 minutes. Movie buffs will dig that scenes from The Karate Kid were filmed here in 1984. To round it all off, there’s a miniature race car track, bumper boats and a video arcade, all perfect for an unexpected adventure with friends or family. 10555 Firestone Blvd., Norwalk; golfnstuff.com. —NIKKI KREUZER

BEST TRIP BACK IN TIME BEHIND THE COLD WAR IRON CURTAIN

Culver City may be a quite unexpected place to find a museum dedicated to Soviet political propaganda, but since 2002 the Wende Museum has accepted the mission to preserve and teach the art and culture created by Eastern Bloc countries during the Cold War era of 1945 to 1991. “Wende” in German translates to “turning point,” and this free museum gives an inside glimpse into the Communist world before the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. The museum showcases more than 100,000 artifacts — often bizarre and intriguing — from a time when everything behind the Iron Curtain was viewed with suspicion, fear and secrecy. From home design such as tableware, telephones and radios to toys, paintings, uniforms, huge chunks of the Berlin Wall and political banners celebrating Communist ideals, the Wende Museum may cause some to reflect on the value of free ideas in our own country and how important it is to question who is controlling us and why. 10808 Culver Blvd., Culver City; wendemuseum.org. —NIKKI KREUZER

BEST PLACE FOR LATIN LOVE

Located near El Pueblo de Los Angeles, where the city was founded back in 1781, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes celebrates the influence of Mexican culture on Los Angeles and beyond with art exhibits, educational programs and a plethora of evolving public events. The project, created by L.A. County and a Smithsonian affiliate, includes the inviting plaza area as well as historical landmarks the Vickrey-Brunswig Building and the 1883 Plaza House, both of which showcase Mexican culture by celebrating the past and cultivating the future. There is nowhere better in Los Angeles to learn and understand the history, traditions and accomplishments of Mexicans, Mexican-Americans and Latinos in general. Permanent exhibits (“L.A. Starts Here!” and “Calle Principal: Mi Mexico en Los Angeles”) provide a personal look at families recruited from New Spain in 1781 to colonize Los Angeles, sharing their immigrant journeys via photos, touchscreens, video and artifacts. Regular bookings complement the exhibits, and recurring events (Pláticas y Pruebas, Molcajete Dominguero, Family Day) incorporate food, shopping and music, so it’s informational and fun for all. 501 N. Main St., downtown; (213) 542-6259, lapca.org. —LINA LEGARO

BEST OF L.A.

CULTURE: PLACES

The Flight Path Learning Center & Museum has more than 500 original flight attendant uniforms.

BEST PLACE TO LEARN THE HISTORY OF MASKED MANIACS

For fans of slashers and video nasties, the Los Angeles branch of the Miskatonic Institute of Horror Studies offers the opportunity to study up on the culture of cinema carnage. Started in 2016 by Kier-La Janisse, the institute began in Winnipeg as a workshop before launching branches in London and New York. Now in Los Angeles, classes use local scribes, directors and experts to help enlighten the masses on the art of the onscreen kill. However, the goals of the institute are not just to educate but to help the genre as a whole. “The long-term goal is to have more frequent classes making up more in-depth courses, and some kind of internal accreditation … which may be helpful to people hoping to establish a career as writers or filmmakers in the genre,” Janisse says. With topics such as “History of Splatterpunk” and “Big Scares on the Small Screen,” the institute offers regular classes, as well as hosting special events worldwide. The Philosophical Research Society, 3910 Los Feliz Blvd., Los Feliz; miskatonicinstitute.com. —ERIN MAXWELL

BEST POWERED PICNIC SPOT

High atop San Vicente Mountain, just west of the 405 off Mulholland, at the end of a gravel road sits a relic of the Cold War, Missile Control Site LA-96C, also known as the Nike Radar Station, in all its Strangelovian glory. Operational from 1956 to 1968, local U.S. Army Nike radar batteries (named for the Greek goddess of victory, not the sneaker company) would scan the heavens looking for Soviet aircraft, with the intent of ordering counterstrikes before their payloads could be deployed. Yes, Angelenos were living gleefully among hundreds of nuclear missiles, humming along to “Duck and Cover” with Bert the Turtle. Today LA-96C is popular among mountain bikers, hikers and dog walkers. It’s a most unusual place to picnic and from which to enjoy a glorious panoramic view of the San Fernando Valley and downtown Los Angeles. San Vicente Mountain Park, 17500 Mulholland Drive, Encino; coldwarla.com/la-96.html. —ROY ARGENS

BEST FLIGHT FLASHBACK

In the shadow of LAX, the Flight Path Learning Center & Museum has a spectacular collection dedicated to the history of aviation and also gives flight simulator lessons. Spread over several large rooms, colorful exhibits and timelines trace the evolution of flying and display fun memorabilia including model planes, historic photos and airline swag, fascinating to both aviation enthusiasts and vintage aficionados. Probably most impressive is the extraordinary assortment of 500-plus original flight attendant uniforms, including bags and hats; it’s the largest public conglomeration of them in the United States. From the very first “stewardess” uniform, a 1930 United Airlines hat; it’s the largest public conglomeration of them in the United States. From the very first “stewardess” uniform, a 1930 United Airlines company would scan the heavens looking for Soviet aircraft, with the intent of ordering counterstrikes before their payloads could be deployed. Yes, Angelenos were living gleefully among hundreds of nuclear missiles, humming along to “Duck and Cover” with Bert the Turtle. Today LA-96C is popular among mountain bikers, hikers and dog walkers. It’s a most unusual place to picnic and from which to enjoy a glorious panoramic view of the San Fernando Valley and downtown Los Angeles. San Vicente Mountain Park, 17500 Mulholland Drive, Encino; coldwarla.com/la-96.html. —ROY ARGENS

BEST URBAN FOLK ART MANY

Forget about but shouldn’t

Sparkling mosaic spires rising from the
Watts Towers are a beautiful piece of folk art and land in Carson.

PHOTO BY NIKKI KREUZER

BEST PLACE TO BLIMP OUT
Spotting the iconic Goodyear Blimp is both fun and lucky, and Southern Californians are fortunate to have one of the three USA blimp docking stations right in our midst (the other two are in Ohio and Florida). Opened in 1968 and covering 27 acres, the Carson base, which can be seen to the east while driving on the 405 freeway, has a large wooden viewing deck and convenient parking built specifically for blimp lookie-loos. The newest blimp, Wingfoot Two, began flying in late 2017, and its impressive inflatable hanger is the largest air-filled structure standing in North America, measuring 337 feet long and nine stories tall. Though blimp rides are nearly impossible to get — a pair of tickets recently sold for $14,000 at a charity auction — the Wingfoot Two usually makes about 10 flights a day, and viewing and photographing it during takeoff and landing can be pretty memorable. 19200 S. Main St., Carson; goodyearblimp.com. —NIKKI KREUZER

BEST PLACE TO BLIMP OUT

In a city with a still-anemic public transit system, Griffith Park’s pair of miniature train rides conjure sensations of both warm nostalgia and outright novelty. While kids relish the sheer innocent fun of trundling along on the one-third-scale Griffith Park & Southern Railroad or the slightly smaller, similarly retro Travel Town Railroad, adults — depending on their background — can discover or rediscover, albeit briefly, the bonding experience of communal travel so rare in car-centric L.A. At the park’s southern edge, the mile-long Griffith Park & Southern has been entertaining children, literal and inner, since the 1960s, while up on Zoo Drive the Travel Town Railroad runs loops around the eponymous SoCal railway museum. Griffith Park & Southern Railroad, 4400 Crystal Springs Drive, Griffith Park; (800) 438-1297, ext. 805. Travel Town Railroad, 5200 Zoo Drive, Griffith Park; (800) 438-1297, ext. 806. GriffithParkTrainRides.com. —P.AUL ROGERS

BEST PLACE TO BANG YOUR HEAD (OF LETTUCE)
Whole Foods, Sprouts and Erewhon are where yoga moms and overpaid Hollywood types go to fulfill keto needs and buy stuff for their latest organic diets, while Trader Joe’s attracts hipsters on the go, snacking salads and unique frozen fare. But most grocery stores in L.A. aren’t so easy to peg. Chains like Vons, Albertsons, Gelson’s and Ralphs vary widely depending on where they are in the city. One, however, reigns when it comes to evoking a specific slice of life like no other: Rock & Roll Ralphs. Located on Sunset just blocks east of Guitar Center, this mythic supermarket offers lots of eye candy, especially on the weekends, thanks to its proximity to the Strip, but it’s the hairspray and leather quotient of its past that gives it nostalgic appeal. Anyone who walks in wondering about the big “rock & roll” entryway sign should know that the place really did live up to the name on late nights in the ’80s and ’90s, with band dudes, groupie gals and random Hollywood freaks stocking their fridges, hooking up, throwing up and meeting up, sometimes in life-changing ways. Designer Maggie Barry met David Lee Roth in the frozen aisle after he admired her jacket one night, and she ended up becoming his personal stylist. 7257 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; (323) 512-8382, ralphs.com. —L.M. LEGRO

BEST BUILDING PERSONIFICATION ON FACEBOOK
Will the Target store at Hollywood Boulevard and Western Avenue ever be finished? Who knows, but one thing is for sure, those of us who drive past the incomplete structure every day think of it as more than just an eyesore. It’s a sad and suffering friend in need of love and attention but caught in limbo due to circumstances beyond its — or our — control. If the big dingy shell of a shopping mecca could speak, what stories would it tell? How would it view the bureaucracy that continually prevents it from growing up into a real store? What kinds of music and books does it like? Is it funny? Thousands of people who follow Target Husk on social media know these answers. T.H. has feelings.
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This study will enroll people who are currently using methamphetamine and are not looking for treatment to help them stop or reduce their methamphetamine use. Participation includes taking study medications and completing study assessments during continuous overnight stays at the hospital and an outpatient follow-up visit. The inpatient portion of the study involves staying in the hospital for approximately 10 consecutive nights. Participants may be compensated up to $1000.

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Call 310-985-2670 for information on the available meth study or to make an appointment at our research clinic in Santa Monica or visit www.uclamed.org/meth

UCLA 1510-1904 - The UCLA research study is being conducted by the UCLA Dept of Family Medicine (910 Health Science Rd), Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.
Welcome to L.A. Weekly’s Movie Guide, your look at the hottest films in Los Angeles theaters this week — from indie art-house gems and classics to popcorn-perfect blockbusters and new movies garnering buzz. Check here every week before you make your big-screen plans.

Wide release
Friday, March 15

Five Feet Apart is a romantic drama (or dramatic romance, depending on your outlook) about two teens with cystic fibrosis who fall in love yet must remain six feet apart at all times. Will Eros triumph over the fear of an infectious disease? Like the 1976 made-for-TV classic The Bay in the Plastic Bubble, this premise has built-in emotional power, and if Justin Baldoni’s film is as good as the trailer makes it out to be, Lionsgate will have a winner on its hands. The film stars Haley Lu Richardson and Cole Sprouse as the star-crossed lovers, and they make a cute couple.

Bonita Granville will always be my Nancy Drew, but Sophia Lillis, with her red hair and pert manner, looks like an entirely adequate substitute for the millennial generation. Nancy Drew and the Hidden Staircase, based on the perennially best-selling kids mystery series, is a remake of the 1939 film of the same name, and comes with an Ellen DeGeneres producer credit. The movie, directed by Katt Shea, was shot in Georgia in the summertime and involves a haunted house. PG-rated mayhem ensues.

Wonder Park, a collaboration between Paramount Animation and Nickelodeon Movies, is a precursor to a television series that will premiere later in the year. The story involves a teenager who discovers that the amusement park of her childhood imagination in fact exists, and she teams up with the articulate animals therein against an invasion of Chimpanzombies. Spain’s Ilion Animation Studios (Planet 51) is the artistic engine behind this 3-D family adventure, which took almost five years to make it to the screen.

Also opening Friday, March 15: Captive State; Chimera Strain; Combat Obscura; Faith, Hope & Love; Finding Steve McQueen; The Hummingbird Project; Iceman; Knife + Heart; Mission of Honor; Never Grow Old; The Mustang; The Sex Trip; Superpower Dogs

Limited/art-house
Friday, March 15

In The Aftermath, Keira Knightley plays the wife of a British officer (Jason Clarke) stationed in Hamburg after WWII. The colonel has no problem sharing their home with its original owner, a German widower (Alexander Skarsgård), and his daughter. Luckily, the father of the troubled child is handsome, available and not a Nazi. Sparks fly, with sumptuously lit love scenes inevitably following. This tale of adulterous forbidden attraction was produced by Ridley Scott and directed by James Kent, who previously tackled the theme of young love in wartime with Testament of Youth. ArcLight Hollywood, 6360 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Fri.-Sun., March 15-17, showtimes vary; $16-$18. (323) 615-2550, arclightcinemas.com.

Jia Zhangke, arguably the world’s greatest living director, continues his interrogation of contemporary Chinese society with Ash Is Purest White, a love story that spans 17 years from the dawn of the millennium to the present day. It played in competition at Cannes last year but lost the top prize to the Oscar-nominated Shoplifters. Violence seems to permeate every beautifully composed frame, but Jia’s detachment from the dramatic romance, depending on your outlook, gives the movie shifty gears and maintains a sharp eye and a clear conscience. The American Cinematheque has paired it with Walker, Cox’s 1987 film about a villainous American mercenary (Ed Harris) who enjoyed a brief stint as president of Nicaragua. Cox will appear between films for a discussion. Egyptian Theatre, 6712 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Fri., March 15, 7:30 p.m.; $15. (323) 466-3456, americancinemathequecalendar.com.

Los Angeles Filmforum hosts experimental filmmaker and photographer Babette Mangolte at Echo Park Film Center for an evening of four short films, each centering on the art of dance. The program, Babette Mangolte: Dance/Art/Film, includes Staging Lateral Pass (2013); Steve Paxton at Dia:Beacon (2014); Je, Nous, I or Eye, Us (a 2014 film originally shot on 16mm); and Edward Krasinski’s Studio (2012). Mangolte, born in France but working in New York, will be present for a Q&A. Echo Park Film Center, 1200 N. Alvarado St., Echo Park; Fri., March 15, 8 p.m.; $5. (213) 484-8846, echoparkfilmcenter.org.

Creature From the Black Lagoon, one of the first and best horror films to emerge from the original 3-D craze of the early 1950s, has a special screening with in-person guests at the Aero on Friday night. Scientists exploring the Amazon River get more than they bargained for when an ancient gill-man becomes territorial. Mitchell Danton, son of star Julie Adams, will introduce the film with Alan K. Rode. The feature will be followed by a documentary featurette about the making of the 1954 film. Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica; Fri., March 15, 7:30 p.m.; $15. (323) 466-3456, americancinemathequecalendar.com.

Saturday, March 16

UCLA presents a double feature pairing a Fay Wray classic with a Robert Riskin pre-Code “fallen woman” picture. Viva Villa! stars Wallace Beery as the Mexican revolutionary and Wray as the beautiful daughter of a wealthy landowner. Virtue stars Carole Lombard as a prostitute who attempts to conceal her past when she falls in love with a cabbie. The program is part of UCLA’s retrospective occasioned by the release of Victoria Riskin’s new book about her parents, Fay Wray and Robert Riskin: A Hollywood Memoir. The series was curated by Jan-Christopher Horak. UCLA’s Billy Wilder Theater, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Saturday, March 16, 7:30 p.m.; $10. (310) 266-8013, cinema.ucla.edu.

BY NATHANIEL BELL
CANNABIS

Welcome to Stylus:

brands and products now available to anyone 21 and older. Whether you're visiting L.A. or live in the area, cannabis tours offer a way to get a sense of the cannabis tourism scene right now.

Robert Fiore of DopeTour. "Now there's 10 to 15..." When I started my tour company a year ago, I think there were three pot tour companies," says Fiore. "Whether you're visiting L.A. or live in the area, cannabis tours are a great way to get a sense of the cannabis tourism scene right now.

Why take a cannabis-themed tour at all? Why not just go and visit the dispensaries yourself?" asks Fiore. "You get an education along with the sights and sounds of L.A.—do exactly that. But cannabis tours offer a unique and immersive experience. You'll make new friends. Not to sound like an advertisement, but it's true. You'll meet interesting people and learn about the history and culture of the cannabis industry in L.A.

Cannabis tours are also a great way to support local businesses and entrepreneurs. "The majority of people coming don't know what to expect," says Fiore. "They're looking for guidance and advice. The guide can be a great resource for the guests. We're constantly educating our tour guides on the latest and greatest products available on the market."

Tours are also a great way to get a sense of the cannabis tourism scene right now. "Whether you're visiting L.A. or live in the area, cannabis tours are a great way to get a sense of the cannabis tourism scene right now," says Fiore. "You'll meet interesting people and learn about the history and culture of the cannabis industry in L.A.

Cannabis tourism is on the rise, and it's not just for tourists. "We get a good mix of tourists and locals," says Fiore. "There are some benefits that make cannabis tours worth considering. You can see the cannabis landscape from the comfort of a tour bus, and you can see why a tour bus of strangers + a knowledgeable guide + weed = fast (and hungry) cannabis tourism.

LA WEEKLY

THE ROLL UP

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