

Discover HOLLYWOOD

WINTER 2007/2008

Living on Top
of the World

VISUAL ARTS THEATRE MUSIC FILM PLACES OF INTEREST ... AND MORE

Living on Top of the World

by Anita Rosenberg



Like a modern day Philip Marlowe my feet are propped on my desk, chair tilted back, eyes fixated out the picture window on the iconic signage of Capitol Records, the Hollywood Tower, Castle Argyle, and the Hollywood Sign. Only I am not a private detective living in a 1940's film noir movie, I am part of the new YoCo (young cosmopolitans) demographic returning to the cities for the urban experience. We range in age from 25 to as high as 65 and are *authenticity seekers*. We are returning to Hollywood to live, work, and play because the uniqueness of this town is what it's all about.

Historically, Hollywood has always been a playground for the avant-garde. *Old Hollywood* and its early bohemian roots attracted artists, actors, dancers, writers, and musicians to the fantasy nightclubs, fine dining, chic shopping and the spectacular cinemas and theatre. In the early 1930's anything and everything was available and it was here on the famous Boulevard (the stars were not put into the cement until 1960 as a tourist attraction) where regular folks could brush elbows with movie stars. They came to nightspots to see and be seen and today, in *New Hollywood*, that tradition continues.

At the famous intersection of Hollywood and Vine, across the street from where the 1950's radio show, *Breakfast at Brennan's*, was broadcast live, today a fleet of King Kong size cranes are busily at work on the W Hotel project that promises even more excitement. Once

again Hollywood is experiencing a building boom and reinventing itself. Back in 1911 this farming community of five hundred residents quickly expanded into a movie colony of thousands when the Nester Company built Hollywood's first film studio in an old tavern at the corner of Sunset and Gower. Before the Great Depression of the 1930's Cahuenga Boulevard, Vine Street, and Highland Avenue developed grand high-rise buildings and more single-family dwellings than ever before were built to fill in the surrounding area. Banks, clubs, movie palaces, and department stores sprung up to cater to the growing demands of the burgeoning film industry and buildings from that time had their own unique personalities.

"There is a lot of history here in Hollywood," recalled Los Angeles native and editor of *Discover Hollywood*, Nyla Arslanian, when we talked about my move from the Hollywood Hills to Hollywood & Vine. "As a teen, I would ride the bus to Hollywood with my girlfriends to go to the movies and shop. It was our Main Street. Your building was The Broadway department store and I wonder, do you hear a ghostly echo of an elevator operator calling, 'women's lingerie... housewares... mezzanine.'" I laughed and her remark connected me to a different time.



"Making our move into the heart of Hollywood was a very important step for SBE and we wanted to ensure that no detail was overlooked with both Katsuya and S Bar, so that both venues would cater to local residents, visitors to the city, and Hollywood's tremendous history," said Arich Berghammer, Chief Operating Officer of SBE Restaurant Group. "We think we've accomplished just that, and are very excited to be at the forefront of the Hollywood & Vine resurgence."



Photographs by Anita Rosenberg

Like any starlet at the top of her game, Hollywood had difficulty maintaining its popularity. When the modern 1950's and the swinging 1960's arrived the fickle movie folks moved to Beverly Hills and nightclubs headed west to the Sunset Strip. Tourism was reinstated as a huge draw to put Hollywood back on the map and by 1985, the Hollywood Boulevard commercial and entertainment district was officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Contrary to the lyrics in the Missing Person's song, "Nobody walks in L.A." – everybody walks in Hollywood. We're reinventing walking. I can walk to just about anything I want.

My friend, an interior designer, Gail Baral, also wanted an urban experience so she relocated to a loft near the famous Roosevelt Hotel because of the differences between New York and Hollywood; not the similarities, "I have a lot of space, high ceilings, lots of light, and a view of the mountains." Both cities are a metropolitan oasis of cool, but Hollywood is not New York City. It is uniquely "Hollywood". I think it's the lively mix of people that gives Hollywood character and spirit.



We have restaurants for every taste and cuisine from around the world. With the variety ranging from Japanese at the casual Kabuki or elegant Katsuya, direct from Italy, Fabiolus, or Miceli's, a favorite



since 1949. And don't forget the ultimate in Hollywood authenticity, Musso & Frank's. If that's not enough, a stroll or a subway hop to Hollywood & Highland's selection of eateries. For shopping, there's the most amazing assortment from books and housewares to fashion and beyond.

For \$1.25 you can complete your urban experience with a Metro subway ride. I have traveled on Bart in San Francisco, the Tube in London, subways in New York, Chicago, Tokyo, Hong Kong and even the bullet train in Shanghai – but the Los Angeles Metro is in a class by itself. Each station has its own unique and fanciful theme. Hollywood and Vine is decorated with film reels covering the vast vaulted ceilings and old movie cameras. The stations are ultra clean, arty, easy, and I never wait longer than 15 minutes for the train.

continued on page 21

