

# DOWNTOWNER<sup>®</sup>

THE INSIDER GUIDE TO DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

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## CHICAS TACOS

In a parking lot between two nondescript, vaguely Art Deco buildings, a cheery neon sign with marquee lights beckons passersby to Chicas Tacos.



Photographed by: Caleb Thal

### THE WHEELHOUSE

A one-stop shop for all things bike and coffee, The Wheelhouse seeks to assuage the fears of lost riders, welcoming new and returning cyclists alike into LA's growing bike scene.

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### CITY OF ANGELS BOXING

Don't be fooled by the picture-perfect boxing bag jungle, gold sparring ring, and many murals adorning the walls — City of Angels is a gym for blood, sweat, tears, and spills.

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LONG LIVE DOWNTOWN

THE INSIDER'S VIEW OF DOWNTOWN CULTURE, FOOD, DRINKS, FASHION & THE PEOPLE WHO SHAPE IT.

A FERROCONCRETE PUBLICATION

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# CHICAS TACOS

## THE TACO BELLE

Written By Thomas Harlander  
Photographed By Caleb Thal

In a parking lot between two nondescript, vaguely Art Deco buildings, a cheery neon sign with marquee lights beckons passersby to Chicas Tacos. Step through the red wooden door, into their low-ceilinged, brightly white-walled space, and bask in the warmest of welcomes.

The menu consists of quote-unquote “elevated” classics, made with organic ingredients that are delivered fresh daily. Their fried fish taco is heaped with Caesar salad — the perfect marriage of two Baja legends (the Caesar salad was invented in Tijuana in the '20s). Chorizo-spiced cauliflower holds down the veggie taco, bedecked with a meaty slice of marinated portobello mushroom and a dollop of avocado cream. Their peppery grilled asada is best ordered “mama’s style” — sandwiched between layers of molten cheese and extra-thick tortillas (made to spec at Boyle Heights’ famed *La Princesita Tortilleria*). Sharing the two-pound stack is probably prudent, but hey, no judgement if you go at it alone.

The chicken taco, though — with tender dark meat grilled to perfection and topped Baja Med style with olives, creamy feta, and cucumbers — that’s where Chicas began.

For brothers Chris and Jon Blanchard, who own the restaurant with Nico Rusconi, their



affinity for Mexican cooking grew out of church trips to Ensenada and family vacations all throughout Baja. As they got older, they spent more time in the Valle de Guadalupe, the oldest wine region in the Americas.

“We met this family,” Chris says, “and we would stay on their farm, learning about them and their style of cooking. That Baja-Mediterranean salad was the first thing we tried, and it happened to be on top of this amazing organic chicken that was raised locally by another farmer. We were like, we’ve got to do something with this.” With the family’s blessing, they set to work on Chicas, busting out the teal paint, shipping in tile from Mexico, and revamping a 1947 Spartan airstream (it’s still a work in progress, but will eventually open as additional dining space). James Beard-nominated chef Eduardo Ruiz honed the recipes, California-ing them up here and there with, say, a little kale. Soon enough, locals were lining up for house-made aguas frescas and juicy carnitas.

“The fact that we’re getting that response back from the neighborhood is unbelievable. It puts the biggest smile on our face,” Chris says through a mouthful of their off-menu merit salsa-topped quesadilla. And Chicas extends equal good will to every straggler who wanders in the door. If anything outshines their food (whether that’s even possible is debatable), it’s the sense of exuberance and familial fondness shared between the Chicas crew and already solidifying crowd of regulars. “We couldn’t feel more welcome,” Chris says. “It just feels like a warm hug.”

FIND THEM HERE:  
728 S Olive St.  
chicastacos.com





# THE WHEELHOUSE

## A NEW LIFE CYCLE

Written By Justin Caffier  
 Photographed By Kort Havens

“Like riding a bike” is an optimistic simile. Sure, in a vacuum, you might be able to hop on a bicycle after some time off and remain upright, but muscle memory can only get you so far when your last time pedaling was years and miles away from the dangers of potholes and texting drivers.

Husband and wife proprietors, Chase and Tami Spenst, recognized the disconnect between that turn of phrase and the legitimate concerns of would-be cyclists considering hopping in the seat after a long hiatus or for the first time ever. Their Arts District retail, repair, and coffee shop, The Wheelhouse, seeks to assuage those fears and welcome new and returning cyclists alike into LA’s growing bike scene.

“Right now in LA, it’s a weekend thing. It’s a mountain bike thing. But there isn’t enough of a daily lifestyle cycling scene yet,” says Chase from The Wheelhouse’s front porch. “So, when thinking of what business we wanted to start, it wasn’t about a bike shop, it wasn’t about a coffee shop. It wasn’t about building any one thing. It was ‘how do we create a place or experience that gets people riding bikes for everyday stuff?’

The Spensts aren’t the only ones focusing on increasing cyclist numbers. The LA Metro has been rolling out its bike-share program over the past few months to help combat the “first mile, last mile” issue hindering the growth of LA’s public transportation services.

It’s hard not to feel welcomed at The Wheelhouse. The high ceilings, living room-style layout and transit themed décor all beg you to come in and take a load off whether you’ve just finished a grueling trail and need a tune up, or are a pedestrian needing to duck out of the sweltering summer heat.

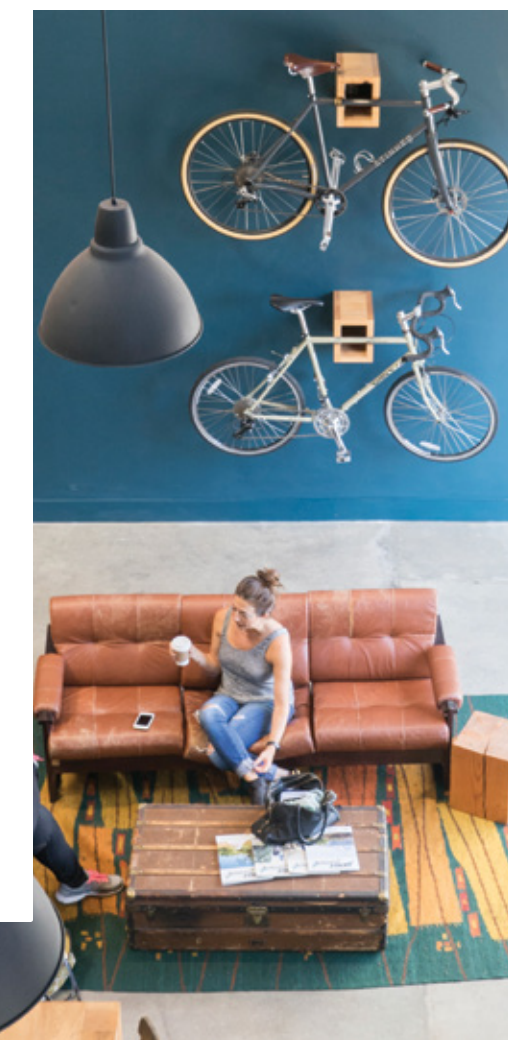
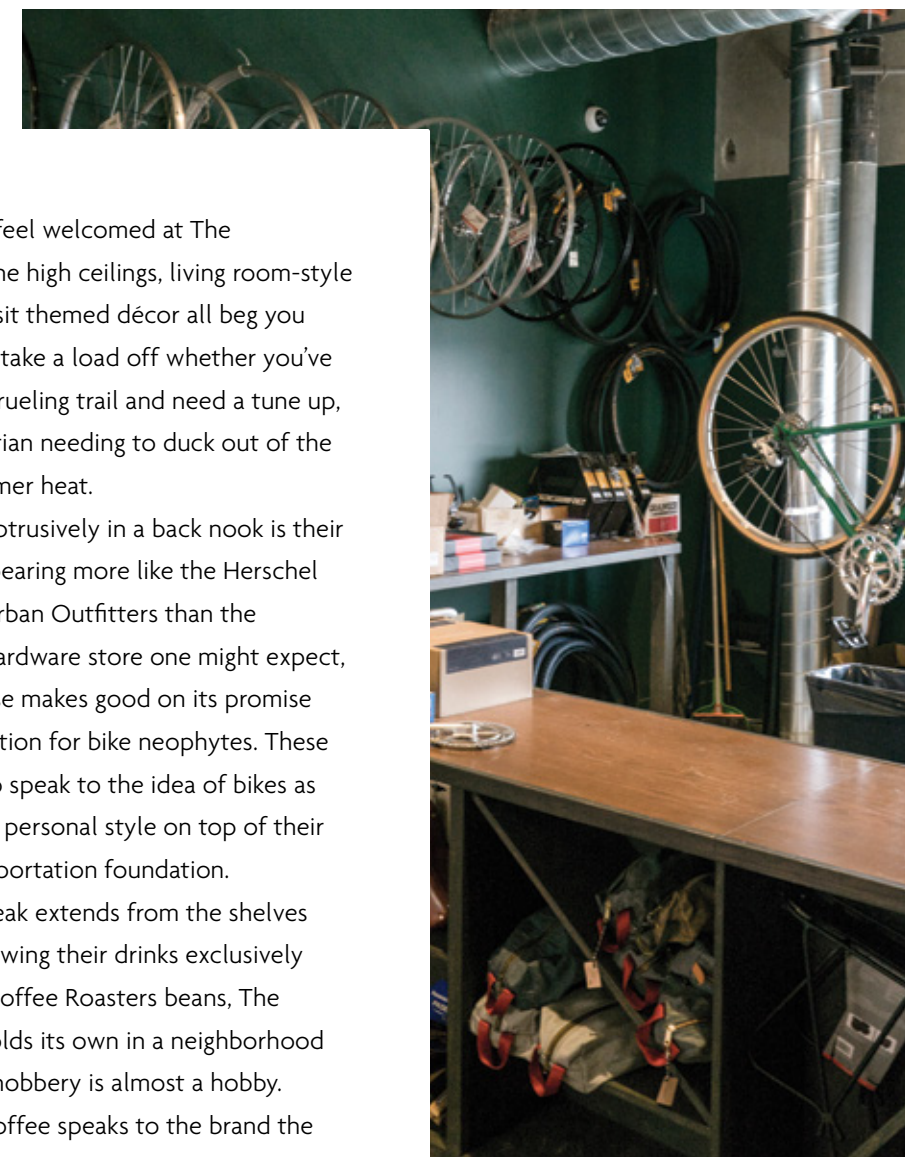
Tucked unobtrusively in a back nook is their parts shop. Appearing more like the Herschel section of an Urban Outfitters than the chromed-out hardware store one might expect, The Wheelhouse makes good on its promise of non-intimidation for bike neophytes. These accessories also speak to the idea of bikes as an extension of personal style on top of their means-of-transportation foundation.

That hip streak extends from the shelves to the cups. Brewing their drinks exclusively with Olympia Coffee Roasters beans, The Wheelhouse holds its own in a neighborhood where coffee snobbery is almost a hobby. The premium coffee speaks to the brand the Spensts are attempting to cultivate with The Wheelhouse. It’s almost a cycling social club, keenly designed to pull you in deeper with every interaction.

There’s a social conscience behind those business machinations. The Spensts aren’t looking to just shoo you out the door once you’ve purchased a fixie. The Wheelhouse organizes group rides each Thursday evening. Even non-customers are invited. “Those really let you take in the neighborhood and, hopefully, help grow the community,” says Chase. “Don’t worry, though. We don’t pedal too fast.”

**FIND THEM HERE:**  
 1375 E 6th St #6  
 thewheelhouse.bike

**WATCH THE VIDEO FEATURETTE:**  
 ladowntowner.com/the-wheelhouse





# CITY OF ANGELS BOXING

## HURT SO GOOD

Written By Lucy Rogers-Ciaffa  
Photographed By Eric Cacioppo

It's been said the answer to simplicity is subtracting the obvious and adding the meaningful. Founder Alex Brenes did just that with his Downtown gym, City of Angels Boxing. The gym's layout is understated but classic, consisting of a boxing bag jungle, a gold sparring ring, and various exercise machines – all illuminated by a large skylight. Having grown up training in an often-violent Costa Rican town, Brenes brought the same scrappy determination from his humble childhood gym to Los Angeles, but added the equipment they never had – making it the potent, urban-decay-in-the-best-way gym it is today.

First to greet you at the gym is a 14-foot Muhammad Ali, one of many impressive murals Brenes commissioned for the space. The mural of a Sugar Ray Leonard fight Brenes first watched as a twelve-year-old adorns the outer wall of his gym office; a mural he gazes up at with the same profound awe that small town tykes reserve for superheroes.

Though it may be Instagramable, don't be fooled – CoA Boxing is a gym for blood, sweat, tears and spills. Whereas most L.A. gyms are so immaculate and air-conditioned members don't break a sweat, CoA Boxing aims for "an atmosphere much more conducive to good boxing," Brenes says. At CoA, patrons are trained



like real fighters, regardless of their fitness goals — and a bit of gravel in the gut is not just welcomed, but encouraged.

In terms of his training ethic, proper preparation is paramount to Brenes. Unfortunately, "there's a lack of seriousness today within fitness studios willing to let anyone spar immediately" in an effort to attract more clients, Brenes explains. CoA Boxing relies on no such cache, and Brenes will only allow a boxer to spar "once they've shown an exceptional level of commitment and skill." The team firmly believes in the mantra "what you give is what you get," so maximum effort during class and regular training is expected in order to obtain the best results. While gym-goers are welcome to "do whatever they want outside the gym, they're going to pay for it when they come back in," Brenes quips.

With over twenty-one years of boxing experience, Brenes affirms that he is not simply in it for the money, but because he genuinely loves the sport. Thus, CoA Boxing does not aim to lock all who enter into returning with an ironclad membership. Everyone is welcome to sign up on a class-by-class basis, while those seeking more commitment can enjoy wallet-friendly weekly to monthly memberships.

The gym also works with nonprofit *Athletes in the Making*, helping underprivileged children secure at least one hour of guided exercise per day, and sponsors an impressive array of amateur boxers: four teams in Costa Rica, one in Kenya, and one from Belize.

So, take an hour to train like a real fighter for a cause, and head over to City of Angels Boxing. Whether it's by the stylish space, the vibrant trainers, or someone's right fist, you're sure to get hooked.

FIND THEM HERE:  
3000 S Hill St.  
cityofangelsboxing.com



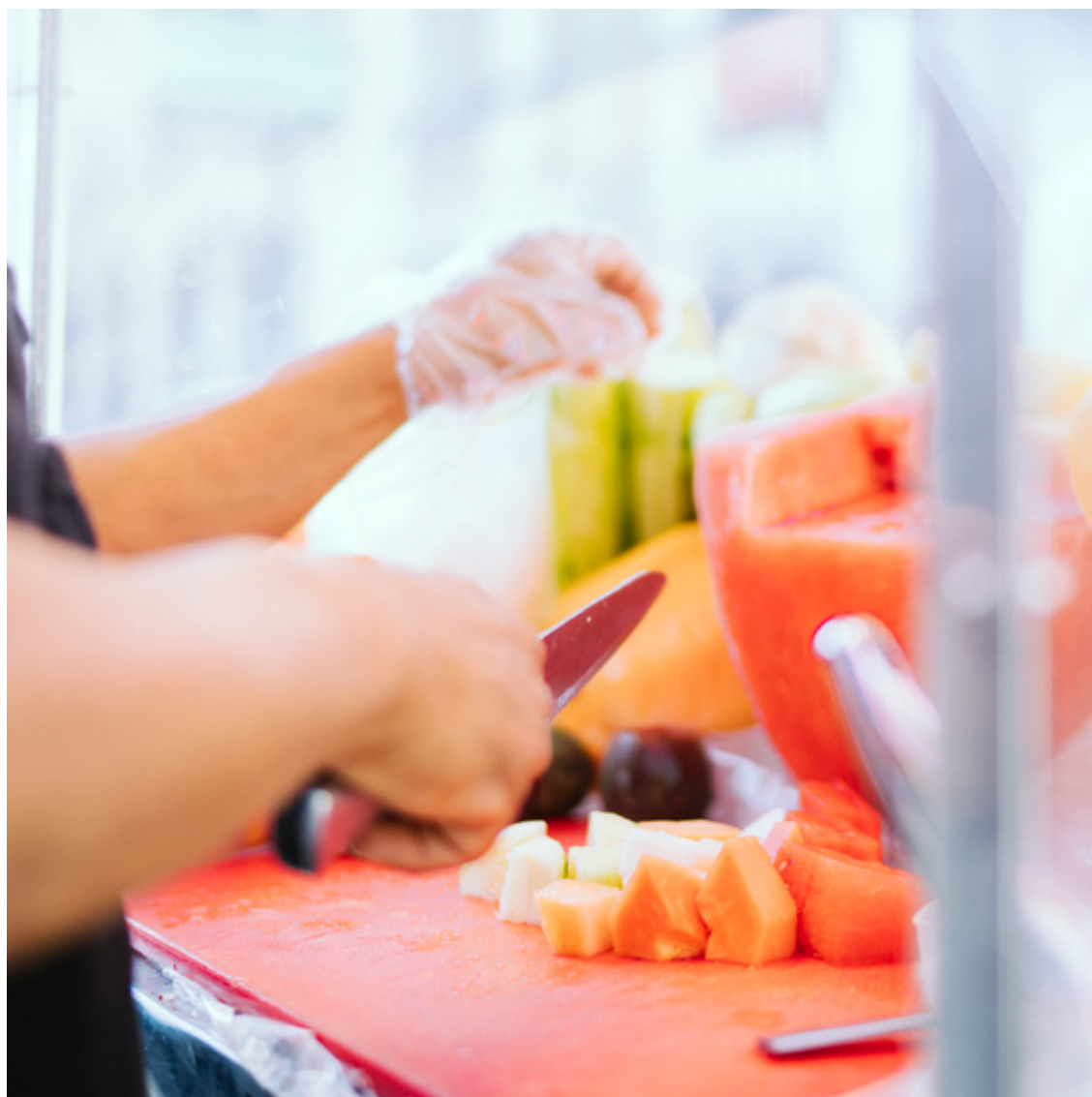
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# THE FRUIT OF DOWNTOWN

## FOLLOW YOUR CART

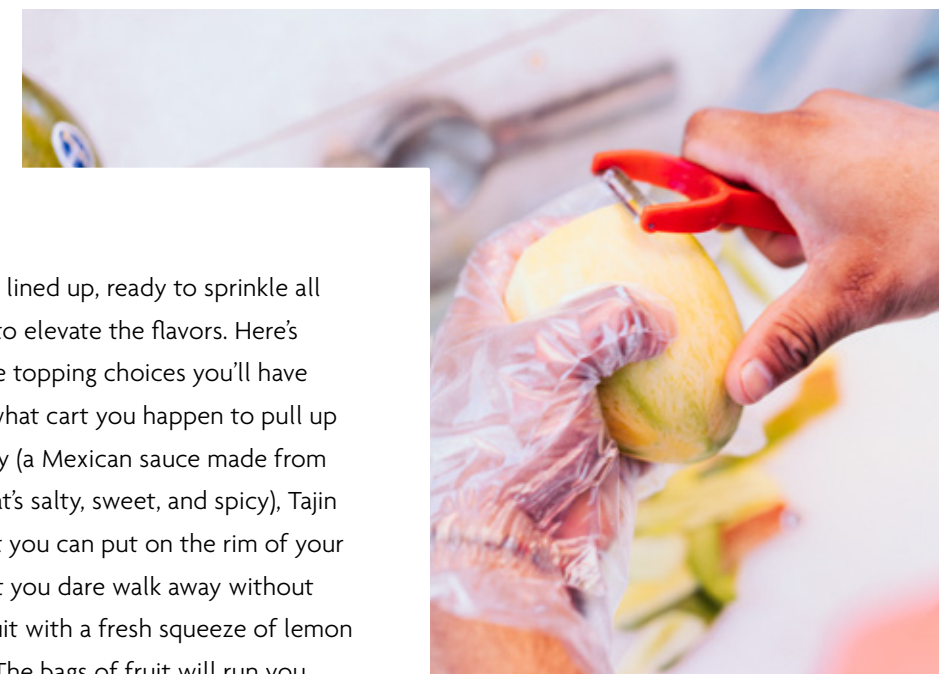
*Written By Linda Hosmer  
Photographed By Logan Havens*

Mayo-dipped elotes, bacon-wrapped hot dogs, al pastor tacos, fresh blue corn quesadillas — just a few of the drool-worthy and cheap street meals you can grab at nameless steel carts all over town. Any native or longtime Angeleno knows these carts have been dominating and influencing the food fabric of LA long before any food trucks pulled up to the scene.

These flavor-packed, quick bites recalibrate people's palates, introducing them to how good food can be with very little fuss, very little money, and zero pretense. This is the real LA. The LA that invites you into a dubious alley, makes it feel like a home you've never lived in, and turns it into one you never want to leave.

But on hot sunny days — ok, almost any day in LA — your sweaty eyes will be drawn to one cart-type in particular: the ones with the colorful umbrellas that offer more than just a shady break. They represent refreshing relief with juicy stacks of chopped-up fresh fruit, ready to go home with you in a plastic bag.

"We have pineapple, we have mango, cantaloupe, watermelon, jicama, papaya, cucumber," says Jose Luis in Spanish. He's been slicing and dicing for three years and his fresh fruit is just the perfect canvas for the tasty



toppings he has lined up, ready to sprinkle all over your fruit to elevate the flavors. Here's just some of the topping choices you'll have depending on what cart you happen to pull up next to: Chamoy (a Mexican sauce made from pickled fruit that's salty, sweet, and spicy), Tajin (lemon chili salt you can put on the rim of your margarita), and don't you dare walk away without bathing your fruit with a fresh squeeze of lemon and some salt. The bags of fruit will run you anywhere from four to seven dollars, depending on the size you want.

Know that the people working these carts put in long, physically draining hours while on their feet and in the heat. Jose Luis' day starts at 7AM as he collects and chops the fruit he's estimated he'll be selling for the day, loads up his cart, and makes sure to be ready to go by 10AM. He buys his fruit from the same Downtown LA marketplace most reputable restaurants source their goods. And for those doubters who steer clear of street fruit carts, Jose Luis vows: "We use gloves every time, for every order we use different gloves. We try to keep everything as clean as possible."

But it's important to note that this staple of LA street food isn't what it was a decade ago — when police would regularly trash their fruit and shut them down for illegally running these carts. These days, Jose Luis says more people have the proper permits and he stresses that things have changed for the better, despite continuing debate on the legitimacy of these types of businesses. "We work without fear anymore, more security without problems from police. It's a more pleasant experience."

WATCH THE VIDEO FEATURETTE:  
[ladowntowner.com/downtown-fruit](http://ladowntowner.com/downtown-fruit)



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# DRINK

**A** **THE WHEELHOUSE**  
1375 E 6th St #6  
thewheelhouse.bike

**B** **FAR BAR**  
347 E 1st St.  
farbarla.com

# EAT

**C** **CHICAS TACOS**  
728 S Olive St.  
chicastacos.com

**D** **AU LAC**  
710 W 1st St.  
aualac.com

# MOVE

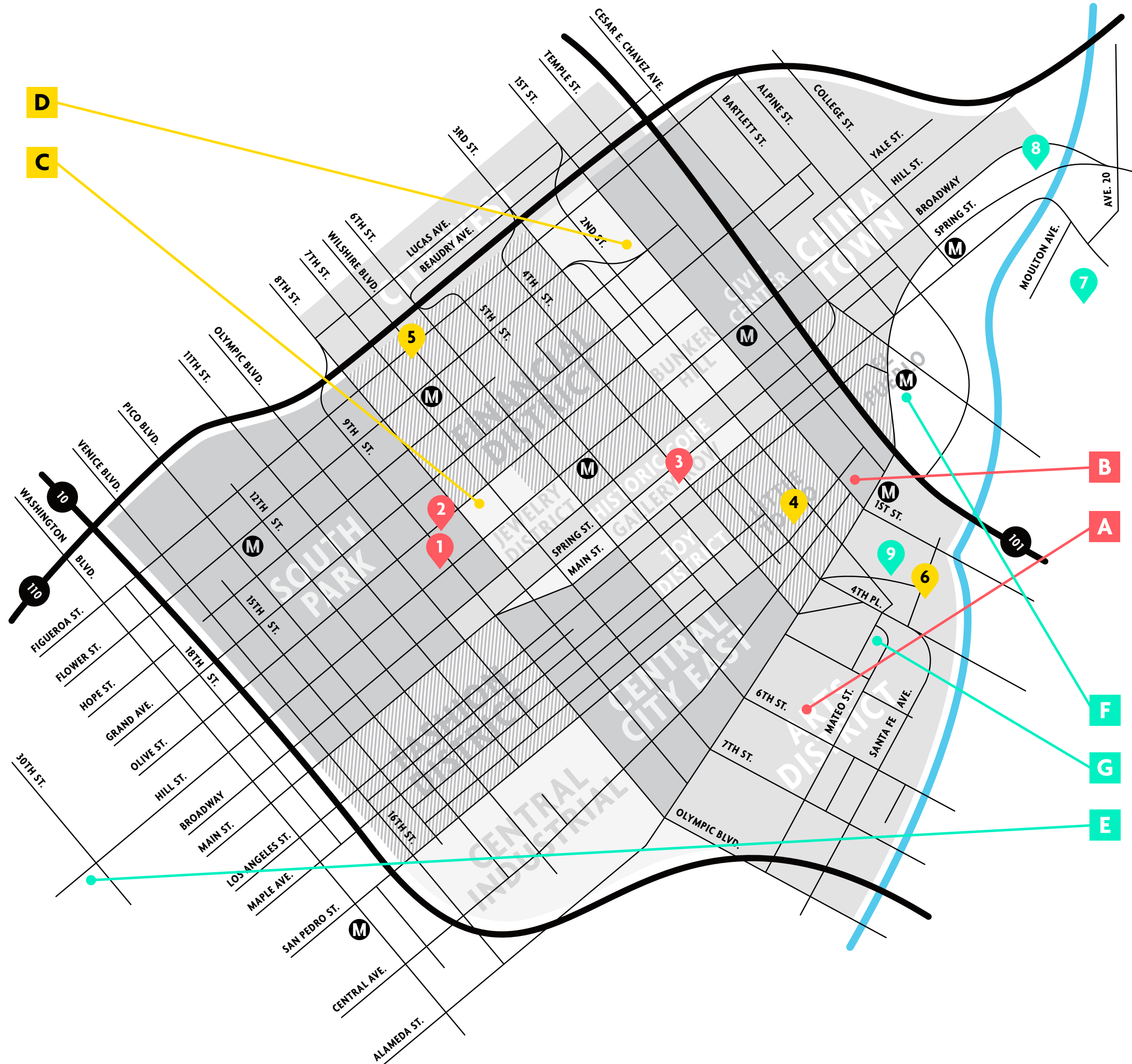
**E** **CITY OF ANGELS BOXING**  
3000 S Hill St.  
cityofangelsboxing.com

**F** **UNION STATION'S BEST**  
800 N Alameda St.  
unionstationsbest.com

**G** **TEG**  
500 Molino St. #102  
tegintl.com

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\*MAP SIMPLIFIED & NOT TO SCALE



# DOWNTOWN FAVORITES

**1** **THE STOCKING FRAME**  
911 S Hill St. — thestockingframe.com  
Casually comfortable after work drink spot, The Stocking Frame serves craft cocktails and craft beers. Their changing menu of seasonal cocktails and food makes this place an exciting spot for an unpredictable crowd. Try the Alberta: vodka, grapefruit, pink peppercorn, and thai basil.

**2** **COGNOSCENTI COFFEE**  
868 S Olive St. — poppcoffee.com  
Brand new coffee shop to hit the growing coffee scene in DTLA. The austere yet cozy environment invites customers to sip and stay awhile. With fresh baked goods from Bread Lounge and a shelf full of artisanal goods, customers are sure to make Cognoscenti their one stop shop.

**3** **THE CONTINENTAL CLUB**  
116 W 4th St. — circa93.com/the-continental-club  
Swanky underground club, with nods to 60s London feature plush leather booths and craft cocktails. It's dark, it's classy, and there are no qualms to make your own dancefloor anywhere. Dress up and get there early, lines can get long on weekends.

**4** **BALDORIA**  
243 S San Pedro St. — baldoriadtla.com  
This recent addition to the Little Tokyo family is extending the district's walkable borders south on San Pedro. The fusion restaurant is home to a dynamite strawberry pizza that quickly turns drinks into dinner. Share plates, family style, happy hour — it's all good fare.

**5** **MIRO**  
888 Wilshire Blvd. — mirorestaurant.com  
Set in a mid-century modern dream, Miro serves farm fresh ingredients prepared for a sophisticated palate. Try their house-cured charcuterie board or squid ink pasta with lobster bathing in savory saffron sauce.

**6** **AMAZEBOWLS**  
300 S Santa Fe Ave. — amazebowls.com  
As the long DTLA Summer kicks into full gear, an oasis from the burning heat opens its long-awaited doors. Amazebowls' iconic coconut açai bowl might be the most Instagramable meal in the city and somehow tastes even better!

**7** **THE STRONGHOLD CLIMBING GYM**  
650 S Avenue 21 — strongholdclimb.com  
Certainly the best looking climbing gym around, Stronghold's digs at The Brewery are perfect for your evening workout. With yoga sessions and other great amenities, it will be tough to drag you off the walls and back out into the real world once you're in.

**8** **BUILDING BLOCK**  
970 N Broadway Ste. 104 — building-block.com  
Boutique and design studio for structured leather bags and accessories. The minimal Chinatown shop displays its artful accoutrements in tempting, gallery-like ways.

**9** **HAUSER WIRTH & SCHIMMEL**  
901 E 3rd St. — hauserwirthschimmel.com  
This month is your last chance to view the "Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women, 1947 — 2016" show, at Hauser Wirth & Schimmel's incredible Arts District gallery. Make no mistake, this is a very important collection of work and is not to be missed.



# LOFT & BEAR

## WHAT VODKA CAN BE

Written By Rayna Jensen  
Photographed By Rozette Rago

Downtown has long been the purveyor of specialty spirits — there's the West Coast's only baijiu bar at *Peking Tavern*, and virtually every tequila, mezcal, and sotol you can dream of at *Las Perlas*, and that's just between two blocks. When it comes to crafting our own products, however, that's fairly uncharted territory. But maybe not for long.

Young State America (YSA), a small-batch distillery located in a loft space above *Factory Kitchen*, is only the second distillery in Los Angeles since prohibition. YSA was founded in 2013 when owner Paul Ryan, one of the youngest commercial distillery owners in the country, moved here from Maryland to begin crafting his drink of choice. After a few months of hunting and couch surfing, things clicked: he had a business plan, a business partner, a place to live, and he had leased the loft that now houses his distillery. It was here that he created Loft and Bear Vodka.

"LA tends to be a market that people want to emulate," Ryan says of ultimately settling on the Arts District. "People always want to know what's going on in LA. Everyone comes out here with a dream, right?"

YSA runs its entire operation out of the 1,400 square foot space — the bottling, the tasting, the



marketing, and the distilling, which all happens in a single copper still. Even at full capacity, it's a very small operation, but that hasn't stopped Loft and Bear from bringing home a few awards, like a gold medal at the 2014 MicroLiquor Spirit Awards, and a silver medal at the 2013 New York World Wine and Spirits Competition.

"Sometimes people will be like 'eh, it's just vodka,'" says Karl Steuck, resident mixologist and head of business development, "but we're showing you what vodka can be."

Loft and Bear is distilled from soft winter wheat, a variety of the grain usually used for baking. The low protein content makes it ideal for distillation — higher protein usually results in a less nuanced flavor profile. Like many good vodkas, Loft and Bear's flavor is clean enough to serve as a solid foundation for a number of cocktails, but the spirit holds up in pretty much any iteration: chilled, mixed, over ice, even neat (especially neat).

"Anyone can make a good chilled vodka," says Steuck, who came on board only after having tried Loft and Bear at the temperature where most vodkas are their least palatable — warm.

Even at room temperature, Loft and Bear drinks almost like a chardonnay: it has a creamy, buttery mouth feel, with notes of vanilla and the subtlest zing of lemon. It's smoother than the average vodka, thanks to the soft winter wheat, and has a more substantial texture. Though vodka isn't much of a sipping drink in this part of the world, it might be high time to make it one.

So where can you find this rare beast of a drink? For now, only in Los Angeles. Restaurants like *Bestia* and *Zinc* have it on their menu, and you can find bottles at *K&L* in Hollywood or at any local *Whole Foods*.

FIND THEM HERE:  
loftandbear.com



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# UNION STATION'S BEST

## A WINDOW TO THE PAST

Written By Steve Day  
Photographed By Christian Thomas

There's an old, lost world, breathing its final breath out there, you know? A world of romance and class. Of charisma and decadence. A world in harmonious paradox, which exists — just barely — in the craft of a few romantic artisans. Marco Ramirez is one: a true craftsman and gentleman. One of the last unburned bridges our new world has back to a simple, beautiful past.

Marco began shining shoes for a living at twenty. He was fresh out of the military and received an opportunity at the LA Athletic Club. "It's funny," says Marco. "When I was twelve or thirteen, my friend and I used to hit the streets with a little shoeshine box and I never paid attention...now, when we look at Downtown, there's not too many people who shine shoes. I'm very fortunate — I'm glad I stuck around, because today the reward is there."

Today, his empire stretches from the Athletic Club to Union Station, where he has now been serving the commuter community for almost two years. Where he once found himself amongst friends at the club, he now finds himself amidst strangers — some 65,000 per day — but that's not quite how he sees it. "Being in customer service for 30 to 40 years, talking just



becomes natural," says Marco. "Since we depend on people, you've got to be good with people. I got better as I got older, but besides that, it's a gift." To him, they're all friends.

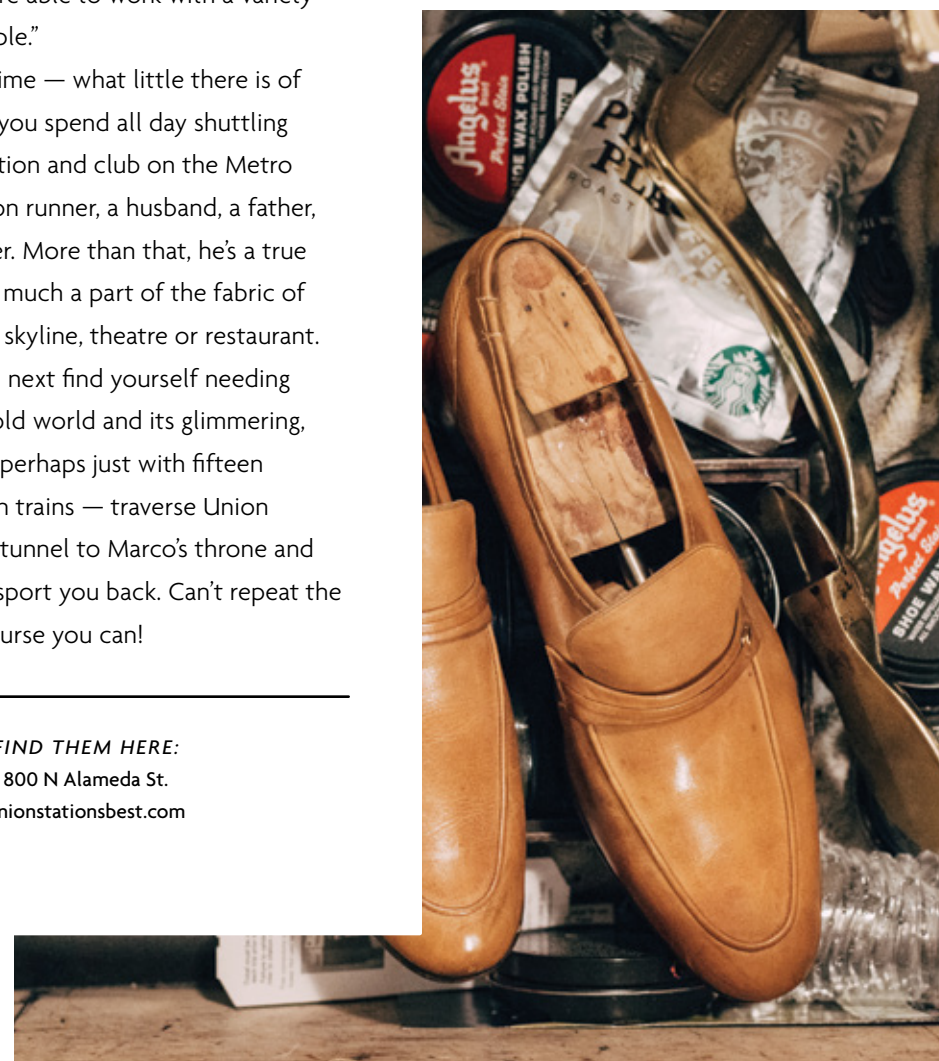
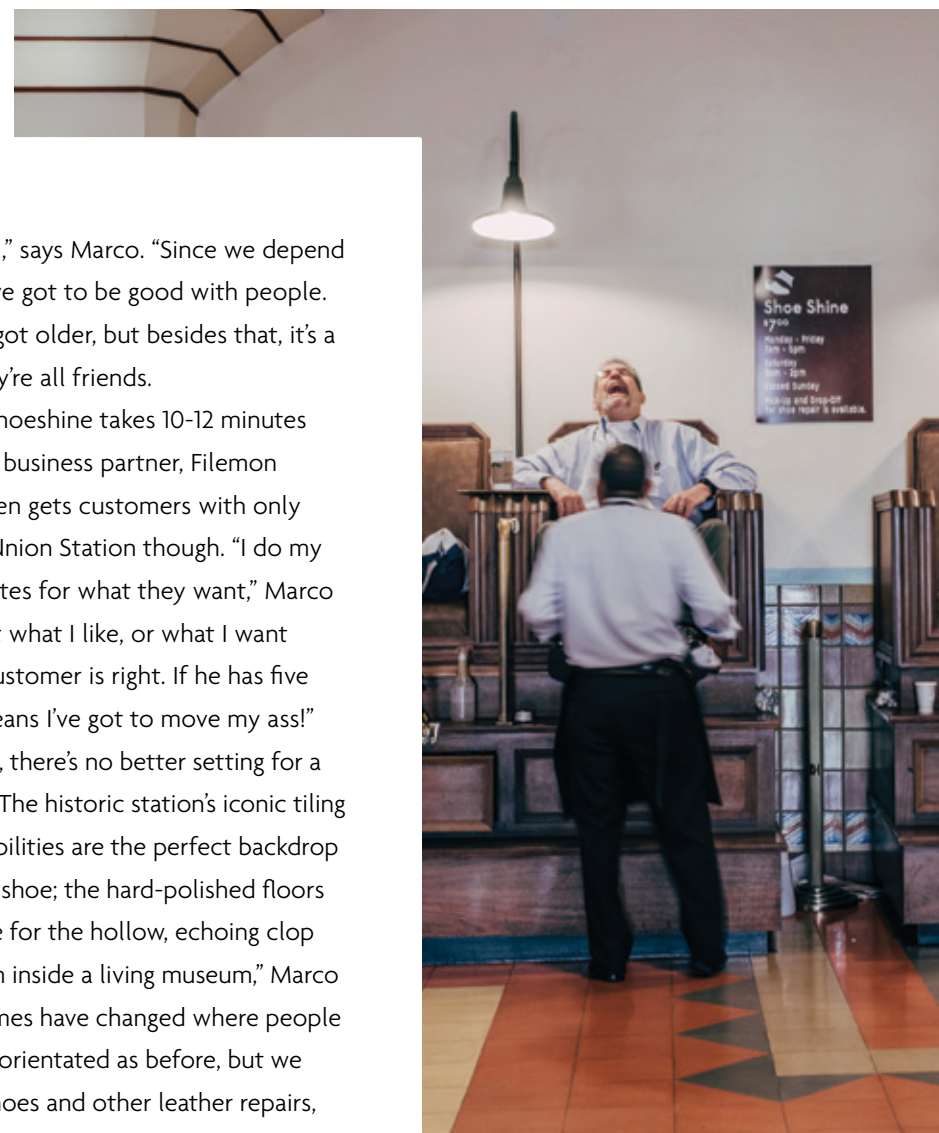
An average shoeshine takes 10-12 minutes for Marco or his business partner, Filemon Ruano. They often gets customers with only five minutes at Union Station though. "I do my best in five minutes for what they want," Marco explains. "It's not what I like, or what I want to do, but the customer is right. If he has five minutes, that means I've got to move my ass!"

Aesthetically, there's no better setting for a man like Marco. The historic station's iconic tiling and design sensibilities are the perfect backdrop to a well-shined shoe; the hard-polished floors a perfect surface for the hollow, echoing clomp of an oxford. "I'm inside a living museum," Marco says. "Yes, the times have changed where people are not as dress-orientated as before, but we also do tennis shoes and other leather repairs, so somehow we're able to work with a variety of different people."

In his spare time — what little there is of it anyway when you spend all day shuttling between the station and club on the Metro — he's a marathon runner, a husband, a father, and a grandfather. More than that, he's a true Downtowner, as much a part of the fabric of this town as any skyline, theatre or restaurant.

So when you next find yourself needing a breath of the old world and its glimmering, passé soul — or perhaps just with fifteen minutes between trains — traverse Union Station's narrow tunnel to Marco's throne and let his craft transport you back. Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can!

FIND THEM HERE:  
800 N Alameda St.  
unionstationsbest.com



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# ÂU LAC

TEMPLE OF VEGAN

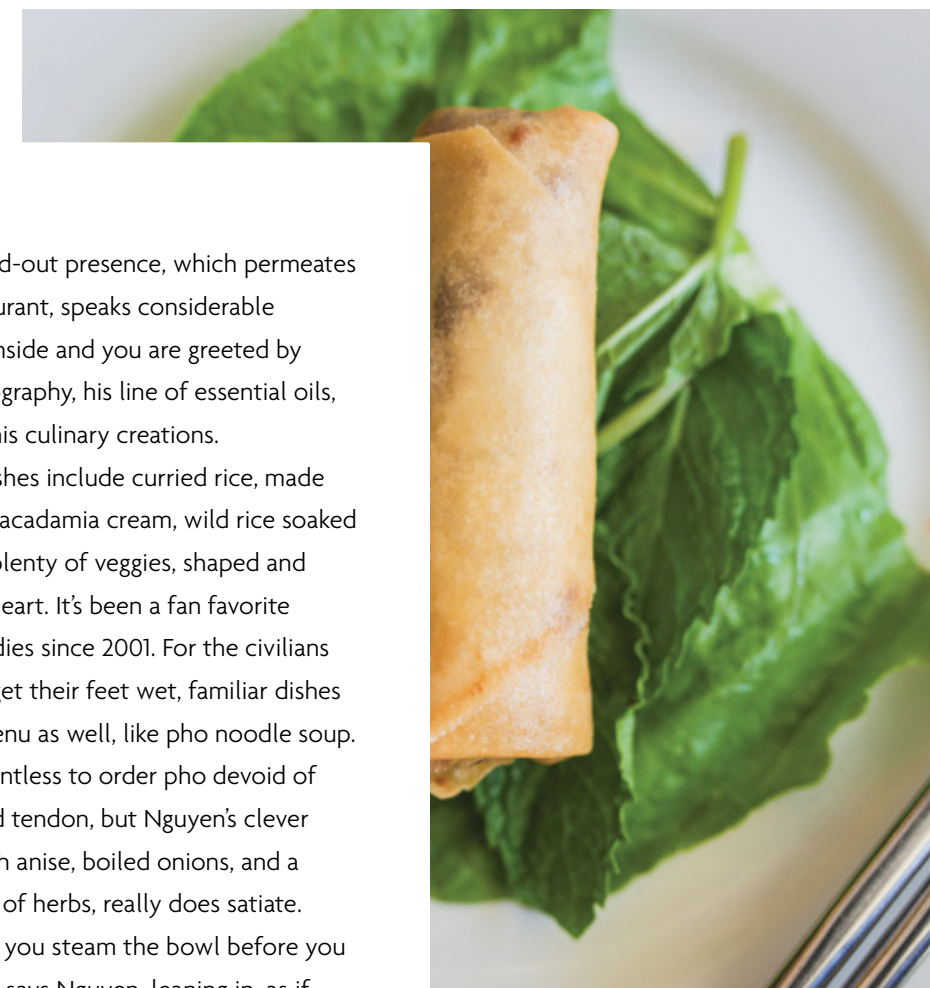
Written By Sophie He  
Photographed By Oriana Koren

Back in 1997, when Mai Nguyen officially opened the doors of Viet-vegan concept Au Lac, devoting oneself to a plant-based diet was still pretty damn fringe. Veganism was an emerging lifestyle that was just getting its sea-legs, and as a result, dietary options were markedly one-note. It was the Goop-less era of mock-meats and tofu blocks, and it was something Nguyen, compelled by her own improved quality of health, sought out to change for the better.

“To me, if I eat tofu for the rest of my life, I rather die,” says Nguyen. “It is so boring!”

Nguyen wanted to spread the tenets of healthy eating, but she wasn’t willing to give up her love for traditional Vietnamese cooking. So, she got to experimenting, blending, and sublimating, eventually enlisting the expertise of raw food advocate, Chef Ito. Au Lac has since established itself as one of Orange County’s most celebrated vegan restaurants, and with last year’s second location opening on 1st & Hope, Angelenos are no longer required to make the long trek down to Fountain Valley for a taste of Chef Ito’s Asian-infused “humanese” creations.

Chef Ito, who has gained notoriety over the years for his decade-long religious vow of silence, has become, despite declining press interviews, Au Lac’s mysterious, de-facto figurehead. He operates the kitchen sans verbal instruction, opting instead to communicate via hand gestures, modeling, and written word. And even though his voice remains unheard, his



mythical, zenned-out presence, which permeates the entire restaurant, speaks considerable volumes. Step inside and you are greeted by Chef Ito’s photography, his line of essential oils, and of course, his culinary creations.

Signature dishes include curried rice, made with blended macadamia cream, wild rice soaked overnight, and plenty of veggies, shaped and molded into a heart. It’s been a fan favorite among raw foodies since 2001. For the civilians just looking to get their feet wet, familiar dishes frequent the menu as well, like pho noodle soup. It may seem pointless to order pho devoid of beef, bones, and tendon, but Nguyen’s clever dupe, made with anise, boiled onions, and a heaping helpful of herbs, really does satiate.

“In Vietnam, you steam the bowl before you put in noodles,” says Nguyen, leaning in, as if divulging a trade secret. “That’s how you get it that hot.”

The ambience is surprisingly chic, considering the restaurant’s location in a nondescript strip mall. Au Lac steers away from the expected granola-chic aesthetic, opting instead to preserve the space’s former life as a supper club. The dining room floor boasts surprisingly modern flourishes: here you will find a piano, crystal lighting, plush booths, and a full bar featuring organic cocktails, housed underneath a lit, arched ceiling.

“There’s Gracias Madre and Cafe Gratitude, but we wanted to be different,” says Linh Nguyen, Mai’s daughter. She runs Au Lac LA, while Mai helms the original location. “We wanted to cater toward people who aren’t sure about veganism. Here, we invite them into a welcoming atmosphere.”

FIND THEM HERE:  
710 W 1st St.  
aulac.com



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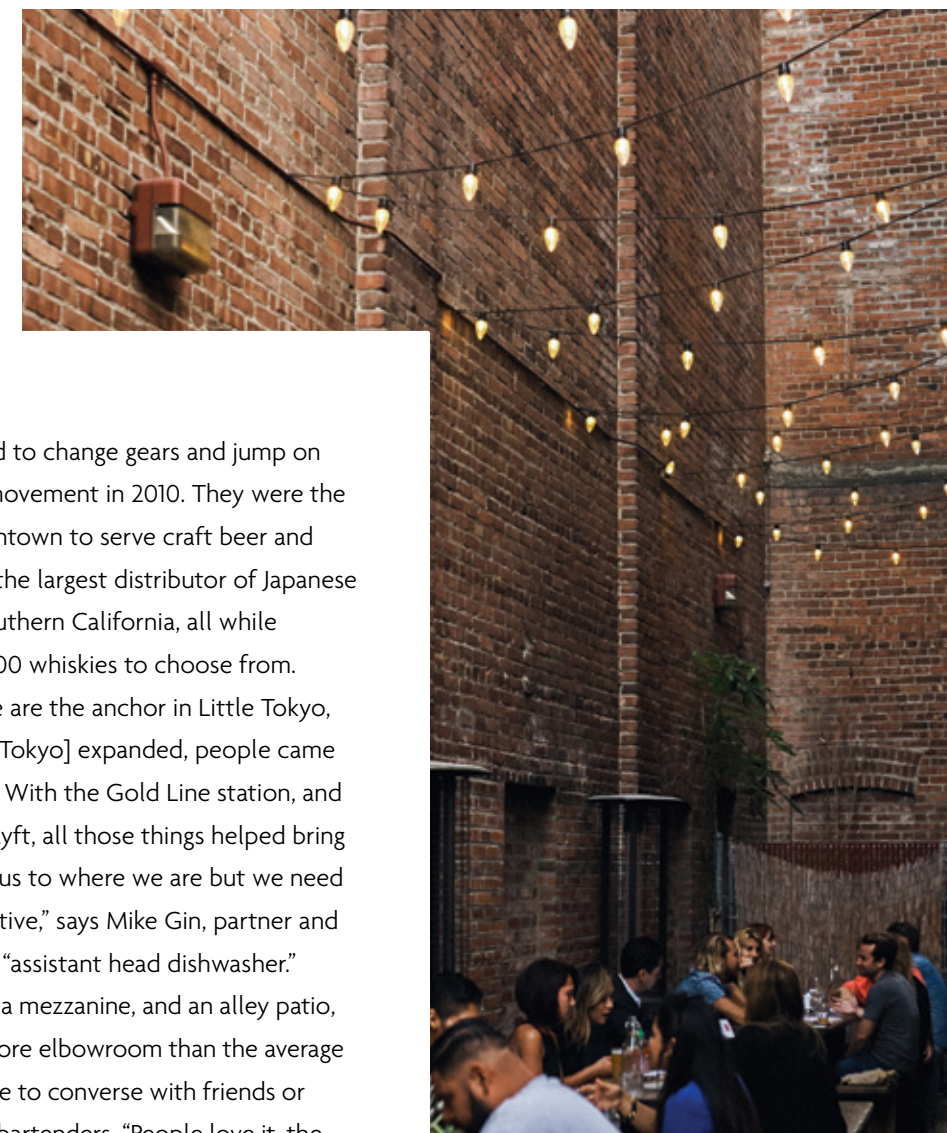
# FAR BAR

500 BOTTLES OF WHISKY

Written By Janica de Guzman  
Photographed By Jack Strutz

Imagine an alley where live chickens once roamed, a basement that stored the belongings of wrongfully incarcerated Japanese Americans, and a restaurant booth where the legend of Bruce Lee once dined. There aren't many spaces that can boast witness to this, but the walls at Far Bar have seen it all. Long before Far Bar was a watering hole for craft beer and Japanese whiskies, it was originally named the Far East Café. In Little Tokyo's historic building, its location dates back to 1935, serving chop suey and a piece of hope for the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII. As time went on and Japanese immigrants had reestablished a community of their own, devastation hit Little Tokyo yet again with the Northridge earthquake, condemning Far East Café for 12 years.

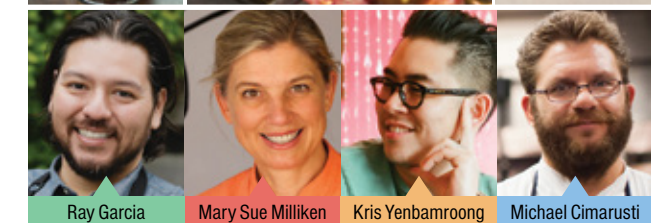
In 2006, Mike Gin, Don Tahara, and Enrique Ramirez came in with a vision to bring the historic building back to life and introduce a restaurant/bar concept: Far Bar. Little Tokyo was not the curious micro-world we know today though. Its streets were still a ghost town, so the



partners needed to change gears and jump on the craft beer movement in 2010. They were the first bar in Downtown to serve craft beer and today, they are the largest distributor of Japanese craft beer in Southern California, all while boasting over 500 whiskies to choose from. "We feel like we are the anchor in Little Tokyo, before it [Little Tokyo] expanded, people came here for Far Bar. With the Gold Line station, and now Uber and Lyft, all those things helped bring people and get us to where we are but we need to stay competitive," says Mike Gin, partner and self proclaimed "assistant head dishwasher."

With 2 bars, a mezzanine, and an alley patio, Far Bar offers more elbowroom than the average and a quiet place to converse with friends or knowledgeable bartenders. "People love it, the best part is learning from other customers," says Guillermo Bugarin, who leads the beer program and trains the staff on beer. Other notable items on the menu are the Ming's Wings; crispy, juicy chicken wings buried under green onion and peppers, and the garlic wasabi fries invite nothing less than stuffing a fist full of fries right into mouths. What makes Far Bar uniquely itself is the relaxed and comfortable environment. There's no pretense here, just good people who want to be surrounded by great food and craft beer.

FIND THEM HERE:  
347 E 1st St.  
farbarla.com



5 GREAT EVENTS

**OPENING NIGHT**

Fri., Sept. 2 | 7:30 - 10:30 p.m.

**FIELD TO FORK**

Sat., Sept. 3 | 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**DINNER WITH A TWIST**

Sat., Sept. 3 | 7:30-10:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY BLOCK PARTY**

Sun., Sept. 4 | 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**FLAVORS OF LA**

Sun., Sept. 4 | 7:30-10:30 p.m.

**TICKETS: [latimes.com/TheTaste](http://latimes.com/TheTaste)**

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# TEG

## GIVING DESIGNERS A CUTTING EDGE

Written By Ivan Navarro  
Photographed By Ashley Frangie

For many aspiring fashion designers, Downtown LA is a tremendous resource built from a solid manufacturing industry that has existed for decades. Whether it's sourcing fabrics or textiles in the Fashion District, fabricating in the Arts District, or distribution at the Cooper Design Building, Downtown LA serves a burgeoning makers movement beaming with concepts and the need to create. Within this creative renaissance, TEG International has been empowering indie fashion designers, craftsmen, and creatives for over ten years.

The Evans Group, or TEG International, is an integrated development and production house based in the Arts District. By facilitating an otherwise complicated process, TEG attracts creatives once inhibited by a lack of technical

proress. "We now work with designers who have no experience in design but it's a dream of theirs. Bridging the gap for someone who didn't go to fashion school but wants to create," explains founder Jennifer Evans. Whether ideas arrive on a napkin or are inspired by a specific jacket detail, TEG serves the fashion community at large to include novices, writers, and retailers looking to develop their own flagship lines. Past and current clients include Jeremy Scott, Grey Ant, and Greg Lauren.

TEG specializes in the development of 30 to 40 fashion lines per month, offering a myriad of in-house services ranging from patterns to manufacturing (bypassing outsourcing and expense) for indie and large brands alike. International partnerships in Senegal (handcrafted shoes and bags), Vietnam (custom printed textiles), and Spain (luxury handbags and shoes) have been established to meet the burgeoning needs of designers seeking high attention to detail and technique. Each program meets a thoughtful vetting process based on quality, best practices, and in person visits from Evans herself.

Having learned the fashion business early in her career, Evans' search for humanitarian opportunities led her to a nonprofit international



school. "This is such a weird story how things work out...the [school] owner asked me to start a social enterprise to raise scholarship funds. I said, let's start a little sewing shop so the money can go to these scholarships," explains Evans. With experience, a shipping container, sewers, and machines, Evans replied to Craigslist ads marketing her "sewing factory" and immediately found customers. It wasn't long before this serendipitous endeavor quickly revealed itself as a niche market for small designers who couldn't afford or commit to standard high-volume manufacturing facilities. Within a year she relocated from Laguna to Downtown LA armed with a team of technically proficient artisans and a passion for craftsmen.

Ten years on and asked about what niche she fills now, Evans responds, "We specialize in working with what you'd consider the independent designer. We try to help people visualize their dreams and we do that really well so they can get started on the right foot."

FIND THEM HERE:  
500 Molino St. #102  
tegintl.com

## DOWNTOWN EVENT CALENDAR AUGUST 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>31</b> <b>HISTORIC CORE FARMER'S MARKET</b> 5th & Spring 9AM – 2PM Walk around the picturesque Historic Core and check out some local artisans and farmers produce, between Broadway & Spring.	<b>1</b> <b>PTEROSAURS: FLIGHT IN THE AGE OF DINOSAURS</b> The Natural History Museum 900 Exposition Blvd. 9:30AM – 5PM A hands-on experience with interactive apps, life-size models, and a Virtual Flight lab to soar through skies over prehistoric landscapes.	<b>2</b> <b>TRIVIA TUESDAYS</b> Grand Central Market 317 S Broadway 8PM Team up to test your knowledge and compete for fun prizes!	<b>3</b> <b>LIQUID INTELLIGENCE</b> JW Marriott Hotel 900 W Olympic Blvd. 6 – 7PM Mixology Class — Create Cocktails on Trend	<b>4</b> <b>FIRST THURSDAYS</b> Far East Plaza 727 N Broadway 5 – 9PM On the first Thursday of every month, Chinatown's hottest property becomes a hotbed of culinary innovation, as chefs and friends take over!	<b>5</b> <b>TEASE, IF YOU PLEASE!</b> Globe Theatre 740 S Broadway 8:30PM Oh, Miss Donna Hood! Your burlesque shows are too much for us, but we just can't live without them...	<b>6</b> <b>STAR WARS MARATHON</b> The Theatre at Ace Hotel 929 S Broadway 2PM For the first time in over a decade Alamo Drafthouse is bringing the original STARWARS trilogy roaring back to big screen
<b>7</b> <b>ROCK AND ROLL FLEA MARKET</b> The Regent Theater 448 S Main St. 10AM – 3PM More like a party that happens to sell stuff. Only \$2 cover, and free if you eat at Prufrock. RnR flea brings together an impressive collection of hand-picked vendors.	<b>8</b> <b>SUMMER NIGHTS</b> Grand Central Market 317 S Broadway Until 10PM Downtown's premiere food hall extends its hours for the summer, so you can eat and drink and be merry at GCM, every night until 10!	<b>9</b> <b>THE MAKERS</b> Seven Grand 515 W 7th St. 10PM Smooth, improvised jazz and even smoother whiskey, upstairs.	<b>10</b> <b>GEEKS WHO DRINK TRIVIA NIGHT</b> Iron Triangle Brewing 1581 Industrial St. 7:30PM We take two things very seriously on a Wednesday night: beer and trivia.	<b>11</b> <b>DOWNTOWN ART WALK</b> 634 Spring St. 12 – 10PM Downtown's free, self-guided, public art phenomenon. Grab a friend and start walking.	<b>12</b> <b>SUMMER OF SALSA</b> LA Plaza 501 N Main St. 6PM Dance to the sounds of LA's most renowned salsa bands at LA Plaza's FREE summer concert series every 2nd Friday	<b>13</b> <b>JEREMIH</b> The Novo 800 W Olympic Blvd. 8PM Ooh, so smooth! Goldenvoice present the soothing sounds of one of R&B's best.
<b>14</b> <b>SUNDANCE NEXT FEST 16</b> The Theatre at Ace Hotel 929 S Broadway 12 – 10PM Four features being shown at 12, 2, 4, and 8pm to wrap up the amazing Sundance Next Fest weekend!	<b>15</b> <b>MOIST MONDAYS</b> La Cita Bar 336 S Hill St. 10PM – 2AM Your weekly Monday night moistening, join the crew inside or out back on El Patio for a stiff drink or four.	<b>16</b> <b>THE DROP: MIKE POSNER</b> Grammy Museum 800 W Olympic Blvd. 7:30PM Cruise through one of LA Live's feature attractions for a night of fun with Mike Posner!	<b>17</b> <b>WEDNESDAY LIVE</b> Le Petit Paris 420 S Spring St. 7:30PM Enjoy live jazz every Wednesday evening. Discover a beautiful location while you enjoy live music and dine on amazing French cuisine.	<b>18</b> <b>GOURMET FARMER'S MARKET</b> FIG at 7th 735 S Figueroa St. 10AM – 2:30PM The farmers market at FIGat7th offers an assortment of produce, kettle corn, flowers, honey, breads, olives and more, every Thursday.	<b>19</b> <b>MJ ULTRA</b> Downtown Dance & Movement 1144 S Hope St. 8PM R&B/Soul singer MJ Ultra performs the new album "Ocean Drive" featuring the House Of Vibe All Stars.	<b>20</b> <b>NONOBJECT(IVE) SUMMER HAPPENINGS</b> The Broad 221 S Grand Ave. 8:30PM Late night music, performance, and art.
<b>21</b> <b>LA NISEI WEEK JAPANESE FESTIVAL</b> Little Tokyo 4PM The final day of the 76th Annual Nisei Week Japanese Festival celebrations. Hang out and enjoy the festivities across Little Tokyo.	<b>22</b> <b>HAPPY HOUR</b> Far Bar 347 E 1st St. 3 – 7PM One of Little Tokyo's finest little watering holes gives you great deals! \$5 food, beer and spirits, with \$7 cocktails. Yes, please!	<b>23</b> <b>LUNCHTIME FOOD TRUCKS</b> Grand Park 200 N Grand Ave. 11AM – 2PM Food trucks parked on Olive Court and the Marketplace with easy access for everyone.	<b>24</b> <b>WINE WEDNESDAYS</b> Everson Royce Bar 1936 E 7th St. 5 – 8PM Enjoy a \$25 flight of three wines with culinary creations by chef Matt Molina in one of the Arts District's finest outdoor areas.	<b>25</b> <b>BLOOD ORANGE</b> The Theatre at Ace Hotel 929 S Broadway 8PM Goldenvoice & FYF present one of the most politically, racially, and creatively active artist in the game right now. Tonight is night two of back-to-back Ace Hotel shows.	<b>26</b> <b>YELLOW CONFERENCE</b> Arts District 440 Seaton St. 8PM The two-day gathering empowers creative women with amazing speakers discussing using passion, strengths, and influence to serve the greater good.	<b>27</b> <b>FYF FEST</b> Exposition Park 701 State Drive 2PM This year's FYF has your weekend jammed with great bands, good food and plenty of sunshine.
<b>28</b> <b>LA SMORGASBURG</b> Alameda Produce Market 746 Market Ct. Another amazing LA Smorgasburg lineup! The list of vendors is so impressive that this is an absolute must-attend event for all Downtowners.	<b>29</b> <b>MONDAY MAYHEM GAME NIGHT</b> Angel City Brewery 336 S Hill St. 7 – 9PM 15+ Board Games, 8+ Beers on Tap, 3-Round Cornhole Tournament and 1 Geeky Host.	<b>30</b> <b>TACOS &amp; TRIVIA TUESDAYS</b> Angel City Brewery 216 S Alameda St. 7PM Taqueria El Severo will be serving up their grilled tacos outside, while inside will be an ongoing game of trivia from King Trivia.	<b>31</b> <b>LOW END THEORY</b> The Airliner 2419 N Broadway 9:30PM – 1:30AM Weekly experimental hip hop and electronic music. Bring earplugs, the beats show no mercy.	<b>1</b> <b>SUMMER NIGHTS</b> Grand Central Market 317 S Broadway Until 10PM Downtown's premiere food hall extends its hours for the summer, so you can eat and drink and be merry at GCM, every night until 10!	<b>2</b> <b>GUERRILLA TACOS</b> Blacktop Coffee 826 E 3rd St. 10AM – 2PM The freshest food truck filling stomachs. The Guerrillas use fresh, seasonal produce and their menu, like location, is prone to change on the daily.	<b>3</b> <b>CINDY SHERMAN</b> The Broad 221 S Grand Ave. 10AM The amazing exhibition is open all day, but make sure you roll up early. The Broad gets packed every day — especially weekends!



VIEW OUR FULL CALENDAR AT  
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