

# Star Powered

West Hollywood turns 25 with hot restaurants, chic stores and hip hotels. Here are the secret haunts of this L.A.-area enclave. BY DOMINIC PATTEN



The guests-only sundeck at the Andaz provides one of West Hollywood's best pool scenes—and views.

**I**N TINSELTOWN, TURNING 25 is usually the beginning of the end. But West Hollywood (or WeHo, as it's known), where modern moviemaking started on the United Artists lot at Formosa Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard, is in its heyday. Since breaking away from Los Angeles in 1984, the five-square-kilometre principality is prime star-spotting territory. "West Hollywood," says resident and print designer Alexandra Becket, "is very much about creating your own surroundings." With the hundreds of galleries, shops and spas on the Avenues of Art and Design and within the Pacific Design Center, this is a town where look and feel weave together seamlessly.

## WHERE TO STAY

Do you prefer the spotlight or being wrapped in seclusion? For the former, the **Andaz** (8401 Sunset Blvd., 323-656-1234, [westhollywood.hyatt.com](http://westhollywood.hyatt.com)), which opened its renovated digs across the street from House of Blues and next to the star-making Comedy Store

in January 2009, is the place to hang your party hat. With complimentary non-alcoholic drinks, free wireless and a rooftop sundeck with private cabanas, the 14-storey hotel is the first salvo of Hyatt's boutique hotel brand in North America.

The oasis of the **Sunset Marquis** (1200 Alta Loma Rd., 310-657-1333, [sunsetmarquishotel.com](http://sunsetmarquishotel.com)) is just a Rolling Stones' throw away from the excess of the Sunset Strip. Chill in the hotel's lush gardens or take a nightcap at Bar 1200, where George Clooney often holds court. Recently renovated to include 52 villa suites (one of them a 3,200-square-foot presidential villa), the Marquis mixes a minimalist layout with fine linens and tubs that scream bubblebath for two. Insider tip: in the basement, musicians like Seal, Madonna, funkmaster George Clinton and guitarist Slash have recorded tracks in the mahogany-lined rooms of NightBird Studios. "It is not only an inspirational haven for A-list musicians," confides studio manager Gabrielle McGarvey, "but also for any hotel guest who dreams of recording like a rock

star or simply wants to strum a few chords before bed."

## WHERE TO EAT

Since opening in February, **Cecconi's** brasserie (8764 Melrose Ave., 310-432-2000, [cecconiswesthollywood.com](http://cecconiswesthollywood.com)) has delivered the Euro-salon delights of Venice via London to WeHo. The menu, overseen by chef Andrea Cavaliere, dishes from 7 a.m. to after midnight most days. Think carpaccio, tartare and farmers market salads served on the glamorous old-Hollywood terrace or inside. Peering past shimmering lamps on each table and large button-back blue sofas in the busy main room and bar, you can almost spy Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford sharing crab ravioli covered in saffron sauce.

At the Andaz's **RH** restaurant (the name is a tribute to the hotel's former "Riot House" moniker), a health-conscious menu dominated by fresh fish is causing a scene. "The Market List," says sous-chef Pierre Gorness with pride, "allows a lot of liberty, so you can always find what you like, how you like it."

## WHAT TO DO

WeHo is a design hub full of glittering showrooms, like Italian furniture manufacturer **Minotti's** U.S. flagship on Beverly Boulevard (8936 Beverly Blvd., 310-278-6851, [minotti-la.com](http://minotti-la.com)), where consultant Mary Ta can point you to the popular Hamilton sofas (\$10,000 to \$29,000 [U.S.]) and other room-making furnishings. Along the way, pop into **Stella McCartney** (8823 Beverly Blvd., 310-273-7051, [stellamccartney.com](http://stellamccartney.com)) for that fabulous frock, the **Urth Caffé** (8565 Melrose Ave., 310-659-0628, [urthcaffe.com](http://urthcaffe.com)) for a cup of organic Joe and **Hamilton-Selway Fine Art** (8678

Melrose Ave., 310-657-1711, [hamiltonselway.com](http://hamiltonselway.com)) to gaze upon that Warhol print you always wanted.

Gentlemen, hit designer **John Varvatos's** store on Melrose (8800 Melrose Ave., 310-859-2791, [johnvarvatos.com](http://johnvarvatos.com)), where dapper sales associate William Hughes will kit you out in a grey shearling leather jacket (from \$2,400 [U.S.]), for the smoothest designer fit between rock 'n' roll and black tie.

Cruise over to classic nightspots like



The restaurant patio at the secluded Sunset Marquis.

the **Roxy** (9009 W Sunset Blvd., 310-278-9457, [theroxyonsunset.com](http://theroxyonsunset.com)) or the **Troubadour** (9081 Santa Monica Blvd., 310-276-6168, [troubadour.com](http://troubadour.com)), where local legends from the Doors to Guns N' Roses have taken the stage over the decades.

The next day, work a little magic reinvigorating your skin at Sunset Plaza's **Ole Henriksen Spa** (8622A W Sunset Blvd., 310-854-7700, [olehenriksen.com](http://olehenriksen.com)) or at **Kinara Spa** on Robertson (656 N Robertson Blvd, 310-657-9188, [kinaraspa.com](http://kinaraspa.com)), where Halle Berry and Kate Hudson have been beautified.

If you look like a star, West Hollywood might let you buy her a drink for her 25th birthday, which will be officially celebrated this November. Just don't act too eager—at least not on the first date. She's got nothing but time. **w!** For more information, see [visitwesthollywood.com](http://visitwesthollywood.com) or [visitcalifornia.com](http://visitcalifornia.com).



The Stella McCartney boutique on Beverly Boulevard.

BOTTOM: WEST HOLLYWOOD MARKETING AND VISITORS BUREAU