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DOWNTOWN LA WITH ARTIST KIM DINGLE

Experience the heart of the city through the eyes of one of the area's most celebrated creatives.



By Rebecca Cringean

Kim Dingle is a feminist hero, astute social commentator, mischievous wit and all-around interesting person. She used to own a vegetarian restaurant in Eagle Rock but counts downtown Los Angeles as her home, knowing and loving it inside and out.

But let us not fail to mention that most are familiar with the name Kim Dingle from her work as an acclaimed expressionist painter, sculptor and installation artist. For decades, Dingle's art has challenged notions of girlhood, depicting "Wild Girls" and "Priss Girls" acting out in violent, subversive ways. Whether inserting her devilish heroines into famous historic scenes like George Washington and the cherry tree or the flag raising on Iwo Jima, or her sculptural Fatty and Fudge characters turning on each other in fits of mindless rage, Dingle says, via her artist statement: "What about the violence? I am a violent person. Not physically, but that violence is in me. Those children are me, the animals are me, I am them. Being a girl is my background. Of course I have a feminist consciousness but I don't think of myself as an artist who has a feminist agenda. No more so than any other artist, male or female."

A participant in the 2000 Whitney Biennial, Dingle's works are also in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, MOCA Los Angeles, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Peter Norton Family Foundation, among many, many others. A true Southern Californian, Dingle's parents moved from Pomona to LA proper when she was just a babe in arms. We asked the artist to take us on a tour of her DTLA. Her insight and pure affection for the heart of The City of Angels was readily apparent. Here, we present Kim Dingle's Downtown Los Angeles.

How long have you been acquainted with DTLA?

Kim Dingle: My life in the "Real Art World" began in downtown LA in 1981. There were two galleries on the corner of Mateo and Jesse, a block from 7th Street. They were clean, white-walled, open spaces for art that were pretty much hidden in a rough neighborhood. I worked in both of these galleries either as a volunteer or sometimes for \$6 an hour. My first shows were in those spaces

called LA Artcore and the Double Rocking G. Where did we eat around there? I have no memories of seeing any food.

What do you make of the current trendiness of DTLA?

KD: It's about time. It's not trendy in my opinion. It's real. There are deep roots of creative people and creative effort going into the landscape. It takes 35 years to get something good to eat in a once desolate neighborhood.

Is your studio/living space in or near DTLA?

KD: My studio is three minutes from Chinatown in Cypress Park, just east of Dodger Stadium.

Best place for breakfast?

KD: Zinc's on Mateo near 6th.

Best coffee shop?

KD: Philippe's, the oldest coffee shop in Los Angeles, is so jam-packed with history it is vibrating. It's so unpretentious. They've had the same tables and chairs for decades and the same employees. When did they raise the price of a cup of coffee from 10 cents?

Best art supplies in DTLA?

KD: BOBCO Metal Supply on Alameda. It's a sharp place.

Best retail space?

KD: The Last Bookstore on Spring Street.

Thank you for existing. You stayed true to the print and cardboard and paper books, which are now starting to trend again.

Favorite LA artist who is not you?

KD: Whaaaaaaat?

Best gallery or art space?

KD: In 1981, in DTLA, I was given my first break in the art world. It was at LA Artcore, which was run by a fantastic teacher named Lydia Takeshita. Guess what? LA Artcore is still going strong and being run by the iron-fisted Takeshita. She is now located in a wonderful historical building in Little Tokyo and showing exceptional artists from around the world and selling for exceptionally great prices, I might add. Nonprofit. Her dedication is astounding.

Best food in DTLA?

KD: Hands down, the best food is being served at The Springs—again on Mateo. It's the best because it is the healthiest by far and definitely the most difficult to pull off because it's raw, gourmet and vegan. Impressive. Plus, there's wine and beer, which I think must be good for you, too.

Favorite street and vibe in DTLA?

KD: Chung King Road, Chinatown. Oh, the history. This street is the perfect blend of old and new, traditional, unconventional, contemporary galleries, rock musicians. The original Chinese citizens from the '40s are still there keeping the tradition and welcoming the new. How can any street be that clean and well-lit? It's private.

Any work directly influenced by DTLA?

KD: Hmm ... only the inherent molecules in the fabric of my work and being.

What does DTLA need, and what is still great about it?

KD: The city needs to get Angels Flight operating again. There is a 1930s painting of Angels Flight by artist Millard Sheets that is always on display at LACMA. My mother stood with me in front of this painting in the 1970s and told me Angels Flight was a real thing in DTLA. Last month I saw that it has been resurrected, yay, but not functioning. Had to walk instead of riding Millard Sheets's painting. This is minor. DTLA is awesome in its renaissance.



WINE BAR FOR CHILDREN AT MR. LING'S MARKET



CAKE



NEVER IN SCHOOL



The State of the Art (and the art world) in Downtown Los Angeles

By Mat Gleason

The late Joni Gordon, founder and proprietor of NewSpace Gallery in East Hollywood, once told me, “Tell me where the Dow Jones finished today and I’ll tell you how healthy the art world is tonight.” While the overall health of the art scene remains connected to the larger economy as a whole, the dynamic in and around Los Angeles splits things to the extremes—the super-wealthy are influencing what is on the gallery walls while the poor and downtrodden have taken to the streets, some of them getting quite wealthy in the process.

The Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art opened its Grand Avenue doors in November of 1986. The cognoscenti groaned that such a major cultural destination should be anywhere but downtown, then a half-abandoned ghetto of parking lots and antiquated office spaces. No fortune teller alive could have predicted that in 30 years’ time MOCA would be an almost inconsequential contributor to the cultural life of not only Southern California in general but to downtown LA specifically. There is almost too much going on in the central city’s art scene to even grasp, and every week something else excites everyone with a new curation, indoor opening reception or fantastic outdoor vandalism.

Downtown is so bursting in its art exhibit hosting that the western end of Boyle Heights—firmly a denizen of East LA—is now considered a pulsating art “burb” of Downtown proper. Anderson Street, the first right off of the Fourth Street bridge, has a booming village of world-class art galleries. The Eva Chimento Gallery represents two serious Los Angeles veterans: minimal master Roy Thurston and abstract giant Monique Prieto. Across the street, Venus Over Los Angeles features over 14,000 square feet of a former warehouse turned into a white-walled wonder. The Corey Helford Gallery, relocated from

Culver City with an equally sizable real estate statement—over 10,000 square feet of exhibition space—is there as well. These two warehouse conversions could not have a more opposed program. While Venus is a New York transplant that shows emerging artists with a decidedly conceptual basis, Corey Helford delivers the highlights of LowBrow with artists like Ron English and Shag, giant figures in this cartoon-skilled art movement.

If you happen to make a left onto Anderson Street off of the Fourth Street bridge, you will find 356 Mission, a spacious warehouse run by one of New York’s most powerful art dealers, Gavin Brown. The vibe is austere hipster on the walls, but a welcoming zine-based bookstore, Ooga Tooga, is at the entrance. Amidst the world-class international jet-set art here is a desolate urban wasteland straight out of “Repo Man.” The foreboding industrial landscape sees its days numbered with the sheer volume of people relocating to this neck of the woods.

Downtown LA’s art scene is centered in the Arts District. Once its own vast wasteland of abandoned concrete homesteaded in the 1970s by artists with a Wild West mindset, today it is an urban playground for hipster creatives. What it lacks in authenticity it more than makes up for in innovation and creature comforts usually lacking this close to Skid Row. The center of the center is the Joel Bloom Square at Traction Avenue and East Third Street, named after the man whose corner store was a meeting place for City Hall politicians and local artists in the 1990s. Bloom was a native of Chicago and appointed himself alderman of the neighborhood. He alone saw the potential for the loft dwellers east of Alameda to manifest the potential of their community in a way the city could codify and structure for them. For all the talk about rising rents having long chased artists from the Arts District, they are seemingly everywhere

here—in person and on the walls. The Art Center is home to dozens of sanctioned and unsanctioned murals, all of which fall under some definition of “Street Art,” an art trend that might have peaked a half-decade ago, but there is no shortage of examples here to insist the movement has many more permutations to explore.

Contrasting low art with high art is never more urbane than in the newly opened Hauser Wirth and Schimmel fine-art gallery two blocks north of Joel Bloom Square. Surrounded by trendy Street Art murals, Hauser & Wirth, one of the international art world’s top commercial galleries, has opened a Los Angeles branch with legendary curator Paul Schimmel as a partner. The first show is a survey of women sculptors that mixes contemporary stars with modern masters of the past. The gallery takes up a whole city block and will have almost 100,000 square feet of exhibition space. Hauser & Wirth is the third largest gallery in the world after the Gagosian and David Zwirner, so the move of hiring Schimmel forces every serious fan of art worldwide to make Downtown Los Angeles a destination. Look for Zwirner and Go-Go to start pulling top curatorial talent from the museums, as H&W did when Schimmel was exiled in a palace coup in 2012 as chief curator at MOCA—one that saw then-director Jeffrey Deitch last just one more year. And while MOCA is on healthier feet today, it is literally and figuratively in the shadow of the Broad Museum, a marvel of architecture for a collection of contemporary art heavy on the big names and light on anything remotely soulful beyond a few choice Jean-Michel Basquiat paintings.

If you want charm with your cotemporary art, though, you have to come to my neighborhood: Chinatown. For almost 20 years, Chung King Road has been the heart of Downtown LA’s art exhibition scene with lulls and peaks depending on the galleries moving through there. China Art Objects,

the Francois Ghebaly Gallery and Mihai Nicodim are three major players in the international art world today who got their humble start on Chung King Road. Today sees the Charlie James Gallery, a perennial presence at major international art fairs, holding title as the longest current resident of the Road. Paige Wery’s Good Luck Gallery, specializing in Self-Taught Artists, just celebrated two years in Chinatown, and the Gregorio Escalante Gallery opened in September of last year. Led by Greg Escalante, a cofounder of Juxtapoz, the world’s largest-selling art magazine, this space delivers Surreal Pop stars—everyone from the ubiquitous Shepard Fairey to the grandfather of psychedelic fine art, Robert Williams. For a twist on galleries, visit the Institute for Art and Olfaction on Chung King Road, where perfumes and other nasal-teasers are held in the same esteem as the art on the walls.

Downtown has dozens of galleries that don’t necessarily fall into any of the traditional neighborhoods. Clyde Beswick moved his CB1 Gallery to South Santa Fe Avenue, more known for machine shops than culture. His vision was rewarded when it was announced that the exclusive Soho House was moving in just up the street. Jason Vass recently converted an industrial building into his Jason Vass Gallery across the street from the soon-to-be-demolished-and-then-rebuilt Sixth Street bridge. Thirty years after MOCA planted its flag firmly downtown, there is just so much going on in the center of the city that the art world scarcely drops by the Westside any more when it wants to see what art from today will be on the walls of the museums decades from now. When it comes to the best art of our time, Downtown LA is bursting at the seams.

About the author: Mat Gleason is a Los Angeles-based critic and curator. He has lived within four miles of Downtown LA since 1986.

Photo: Eric Minh Swenson

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POPKILLER

Downtown LA Retail Roundup

The best places to spend your money and time in DTLA

By Mara Elise Koval

Downtown LA is a hub for all things trendy, edgy, cultural and delicious. The diverse spread of businesses can be overwhelming to navigate, so we've explored the corners of the city to compile a list of our favorite hangout spots for you. Whether you're a local or just visiting for the weekend, these are all must-adds to your downtown bucket list. Get going, and get excited.

FASHION RETAIL

Ooga Booga Store

Don't let the plain exterior of the store deceive you, Ooga Booga is a hidden indie haven in the heart of Chinatown. An eclectic space of artistic books, clothing, mix tapes, art and more—we promise that exploring the treasures inside is just as fun as saying "Ooga Booga."

943 N. Broadway, #203 (upstairs)
Los Angeles, CA 90012
<http://oogaboogastore.com/>

Popkiller

Popkiller's blend of Japanese culture with work produced by local artists kills all pre-conceived ideas about what a Southern California store should be. Prepare for sensory overload because this store is packed with vintage clothing and every quirky novelty imaginable, tacky holiday sweaters and bacon wallet included.

343 E. 2nd St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012
<http://www.popkiller.us/>

Blends

Blends' minimalist aesthetic serves as the perfect backdrop to highlight its unique selection of footwear and apparel. The wide variety of rare sneakers and custom collaborations is enough to attract any shoe collector or fan of fancy feet.

725 S. Los Angeles St.
Los Angeles, CA 90014
<http://www.blendsus.com/>

Wittmore

This menswear and lifestyle shop embodies the essence of timeless and effortless style. Clean lines and leather goods abound in the industrial and airy space. Wittmore's curated selection of global clothing, accessories and grooming products provides you with everything you need to dress and live as a modern LA man.

300 S. Santa Fe Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90013
<http://shopwittmore.com/>

FOOD

Bestia

Bestia is your grandma's old-school Italian cooking with a modern twist. Set in a warehouse complete with exposed brick, tulip pendant lighting and bright seating, the crowd favorites of cavatelli alla norcina and burrata pizza are served amid a whimsical and industrial atmosphere. This trendy spot is clearly a hit because reservations fill up months in advance.

2121 E. 7th Place
Los Angeles, CA 90021
<http://bestiala.com/>

Nickel Diner

The Nickel Diner is the quintessential vin-

tage-style diner, serving up all things comforting. It puts its own spin on the classics, dishing out maple-bacon donuts, cinnamon-brioche French toast, and mac and cheese. Unfortunately, it costs more than a nickel, but it's well worth it.

524 S. Main St.
Los Angeles, CA 90013
<http://nickeldiner.com/>

Otium

The aesthetic plating and ambiance of this hip eatery are praised alongside its cocktails and new American cuisine. Cascading glass raindrops, an open kitchen and floor-to-ceiling windows complete the backdrop for your perfect food picture. No shame in letting the camera eat first here because Otium's plates look as good as they taste.

222 S. Hope St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012
<http://otiumla.com/>

Stumptown Coffee

We're suckers for a hip coffee shop, and we know you are too. Stumptown Coffee Roasters offers some of the best cold brews, house-roasted coffee, baked goods and artfully prepared lattes in town. Trust us and make this your new hangout/study/work-meeting spot.

806 S. Santa Fe Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90021
<https://www.stumptowncoffee.com/>

Fritzi

In a city teeming with gastropubs, it's difficult to stand out; however, Fritzi does just that through its industrial-chic décor, which is the perfect setting for the updated, next-level iterations of hamburgers and hotdogs. You don't want to miss the hand-crafted cocktails, tater tots or potato waffles either. Yum!

814 Traction Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90013
<http://fritzidtla.com/>

Peddler's Creamery

Peddler's Creamery puts a new spin on the classic ice-cream shop, serving up bicycle-churned organic ice cream. Its unique concept is accompanied by an equally unique range of flavors, including pancake batter and honey lavender. This avant-garde dessert spot is one that both kids and adults will want to finish their vegetables for.

458 S. Main St.
Los Angeles, CA 90013
<http://www.peddlerscreamery.com/>

GALLERIES

The BOX Gallery

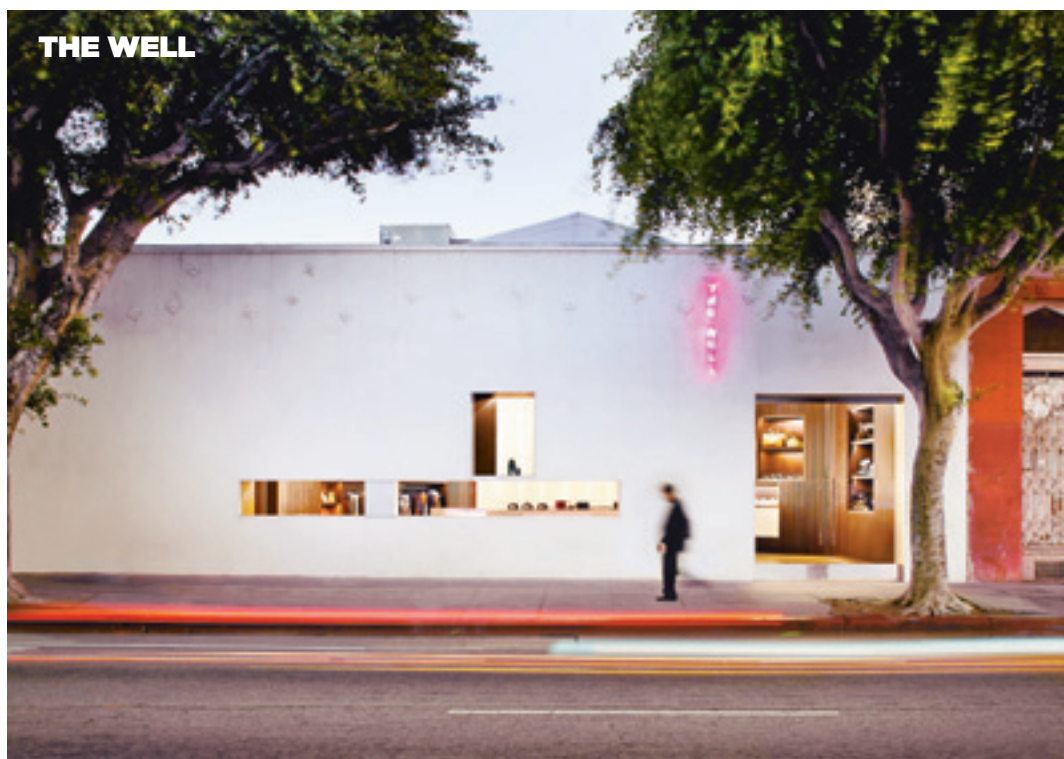
The glowing neon sign affixed to The BOX's all-gray cinderblock gallery building summons the daring artgoer. The exhibitions hosted are both unconventional and thought-provoking, rotating every few months to keep LA gallery hoppers



WILDING CRAN GALLERY



WITTMORE



on their toes.

805 Traction Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90013
<http://www.theboxla.com/>

Wilding Cran Gallery

The Wilding Cran Gallery is a relatively new bricks-and-mortar space specializing in international contemporary art. Its exhibits are juxtaposed by the simplistic white building, letting the different artistic media speak for themselves. The husband-and-wife curators combine art with philanthropy, a model we love just as much as the gallery itself.

939 S. Sante Fe Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90021
<http://wildingcran.com/>

The Broad Museum

In less than a year, The Broad Museum has easily become LA's most talked about and Instagrammed art destination. Its 120,000 square feet of gallery space house its inaugural installation, featuring a comprehensive collection of contemporary pieces. No matter how many social-media pictures you've seen of Jeff Koons' Rabbit or Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Mirrored Room, nothing

compares to visiting and snapping the pic yourself.

221 S. Grand Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90012
<http://www.thebroad.org/>

OTHER RETAIL

Poketo

Poketo is the gift shop of your dreams, offering an array of unique products created through collaborations with international and local artists. Its shelves are stocked with artfully inspired housewares, stationery, accessories, phone cases and things you never realized how much you wanted and needed before walking into this beautifully crafted, quirky store.

820 E. 3rd St.
Los Angeles, CA 90013
<http://www.poketo.com/>

The Well

Step into The Well's renovated warehouse and be prepared for a salon, high-end retail and art experience like no other. The Well harmoniously combines hair styling and shopping, producing a chic and modern atmosphere that will make you question why

you never bought shoes with your blowout before.

1006 S. Olive St.
Los Angeles, CA 90015
<http://www.thewell.la/>

The Last Bookstore

The Last Bookstore is truly one for the books. The eclectic selection of over 250,000 new and used books are stacked in aisles, dead ends, a tunnel, and rooms labeled "The Dungeon" and "Horror Vault." The shop is reminiscent of a maze that we definitely wouldn't mind getting lost in.

453 S. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90013
<http://lastbookstorela.com/>

LOUNGES

The Edison

Set in downtown LA's first private power plant, The Edison exudes old-school glamour through its art-deco architecture, live jazz band and glitzy burlesque shows. This turn-of-the-century location converted into a posh nightclub will be sure to have you ordering a mint julep and looking for Gatsby.

108 W. 2nd St., #101
Los Angeles, CA 90012
<https://www.edisondowntown.com/>

The Varnish

The Varnish is truly a hidden gem, located behind a nondescript door in the back of Cole's Sandwich Shop. This modern speakeasy will transport you back to the days of Prohibition with its handcrafted cocktails, dim lighting and mustache-clad bartenders.

118 E. 6th St.
Los Angeles, CA 90014
<http://213dthospitality.com/project/the-varnish/>

Onyx

Onyx Lounge's candlelit ambiance, plush leather seating, and black-and-white images of Los Angeles mix to create a romantic vibe in the heart of downtown. Its extensive cocktail, dinner and brunch menus make this the perfect spot for a night out, or the morning after.

118 W. 5th St.
Los Angeles, CA 90013
<http://onyxloungela.com/>



RETAIL ADVANTAGE.

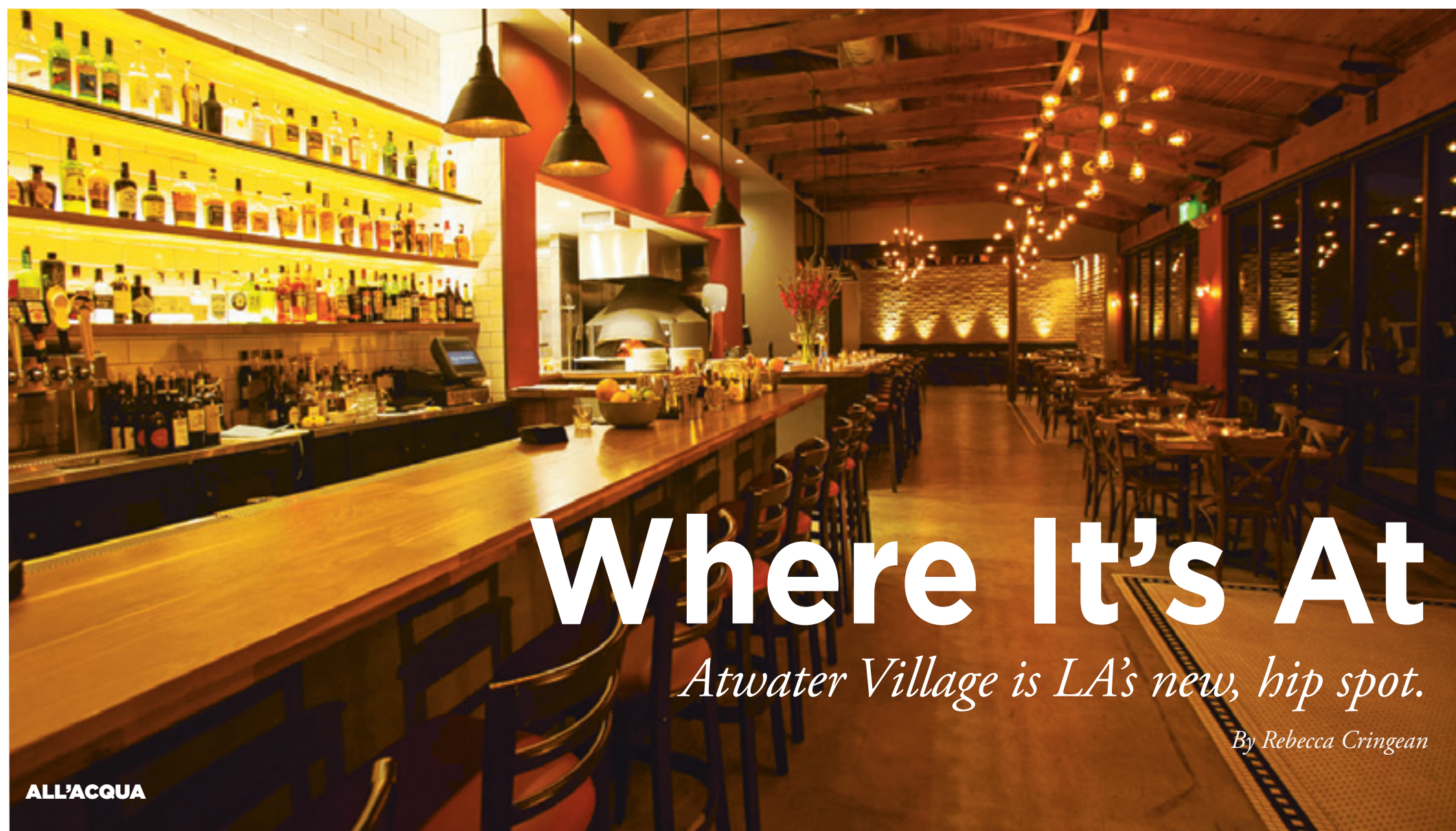
CBRE knows Retail. Through our industry leading perspectives, scale and deep Retail expertise, we deliver outcomes that drive business and bottom-line performance for every client we serve. How can we help transform your real estate into real advantage?

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Where It's At

Atwater Village is LA's new, hip spot.

By Rebecca Cringean

ALL'ACQUA

If, as the saying goes, Los Angeles is 72 suburbs in search of a city, at least no one can accuse Angelenos of abandoning the hunt. Every few years or so, a new “it” city pops up, grabs all the commercial real estate attention, gentrifies, attracts the coolest new restaurants, raises its housing prices and hands the torch to the next area. The last few decades have been dominated by Silver Lake, Los Feliz, Echo Park, Downtown and Eagle Rock, to name a few. But right now belongs, hands-down, to Atwater Village. The once sleepy northeastern town has taken on Silver Lake’s overflow with pride and is now a destination for hipsters, foodies, shoppers and trendoids all over the county.

There’s still time for retailers to get in on the action. “Though all Eastside neighborhoods are rising in value, places like Echo Park and Silver Lake are now pulling international retailers and are no longer just village towns,” says Andrew R. Turf, Senior Vice President of Global Brokerage Services for CBRE. “Atwater Village, however, is still in the high \$30 per square foot, which is a good average number, while rents there have escalated but are still moderate.”

Local real estate agent Courtney Smith prides herself on serving the local, up-and-coming markets located in and around DTLA. She agrees with Turf but speaks from both personal and professional experience. “I remember moving into my first house in Atwater,” she says. “It was the spring of 2003 and the *LA Times* featured AV in its real estate section, noting it as a quaint little neighborhood to watch. Fast-forward to 2009 and *LA Magazine* and *Sunset Magazine* both featured AV as a place to visit. By 2013, Atwater Village was turning up in *Dwell!*”

Adria and Claudio Blotta have been running All'Acqua, Atwater Village’s hottest Italian destination restaurant, since 2014. At first, they were running a wine bar that started serving pasta at customers’ request, and then they quickly realized they had a hit on their hands. They soon branched out to open All'Acqua. “It got us thinking that the Eastside of LA wanted an accessible Italian spot,” says Adria Blotta. “We love the neighborhood and the Eastside vibe. The area is changing quickly, and there are a lot of families with young children who want an easy dinner place that satisfies both the younger and adult sets. So, parents can come and have grown-up food while the kids can still have a simple bowl of pasta or a margherita pizza. Win-win!”

So far, AV has kept its close-knit community vibe, which is something both retailers and residents protect. “Atwater still feels like a real neighborhood with a great main

thoroughfare down Glendale Boulevard with cool shops and great small businesses,” says Blotta. “We think small businesses give the neighborhood something special, specific and interesting. A lot of Westsiders complain about the distance to Atwater, but it’s actually really accessible from the 5 freeway and the 2. It’s also seven minutes to Dodger Stadium and the Greek Theatre, so we’re a good choice for dining prior to or after going to one of those venues. It’s great

to drive to us, park and eat, then Uber back and forth to the venue. It’s cheaper than paying for parking at either of those spots. Atwater is also really close to downtown!”

Paul Yi opened his Japanese hotspot, Ozu East, in AV only last year, but he’s lived in the area for nearly two decades. “I wanted to open my first restaurant in my neighborhood since I know the community very well, and Atwater has always been my back-

yard as it’s only five minutes away,” he says. “It’s an eclectic neighborhood, ethnically diverse, with new families, old folks and hipsters alike. It’s a typical Eastside scene, and my restaurant invites all to enjoy. My landlord is also my partner so it was an amazing opportunity to transform a historic corner location. The Beastie Boys had their ’90s headquarters on the second floor, so there’s that fun history as well.”

Yi watches as his customers satisfy their Japanese-food cravings, noting both the evolution of the area and the depth of people AV attracts. “You can see all the new families moving into the neighborhood,” he says. “Easily we have half kids and newborns in the first two hours of service followed by old-timers who have been in Atwater for some 20 to 40 years. And then there’s the hipsters, wanting easier parking, coming over from Silver Lake, Los Feliz and Echo Park.”

It’s noteworthy that parking plays a major factor in all things Los Angeles, a car city plagued by often horrendous traffic. AV can brag that the streets still move and parking actually exists. But, as Treehaus boutique owner Saralynne Precht adds, it’s also about the town’s community spirit. “The small businesses in Atwater Village are incredibly supportive of each other,” she says. “Shop owners know each other and really participate in the community. We’re organizing Atwater Cares About Autism for the month of April [Autism Awareness month] with a monthlong raffle that will benefit the Los Angeles chapter of the Autism Society of America, and we’ve had great support from our small-business neighbors.”

Treehaus stocks a mix as diverse as the neighborhood, showcasing art, design, fashion and everything in-between. “We picked Atwater Village for a location because of the amazing energy of the area as well as the great selection of stores, restaurants and great foot traffic,” says Precht. “The area is very welcoming and artsy but not in a pretentious way, and this was something we wanted to project in our store since art and design can be accessible and fun. Glendale Boulevard is such a great mix of businesses, and they’ve made it incredibly pedestrian friendly, creating little urban parks and sidewalk tables and chairs, which has made for a great social atmosphere.”

And it doesn’t stop there. Even outsiders are now coming into the city for yoga, massage, knitting classes, art and much more. Get in while you can. And keep an eye on the ever-evolving City of Angels. Next on the map? “Highland Park states the obvious,” says Courtney Smith. “But spots like Frogtown, Cypress Park and Lincoln Heights are up next!”



TREEHAUS



OZU EAST



KUT

kutfromthekloth.com

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www.siwydenim.com



SIWY