

TYPECON 2010: BABEL

LOS ANGELES

A guide to restaurants near the convention hotel and selected spots further afield but worth the trip.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Hrant Papazian, Danny Yee, Maece Seirafi,
Eric MacLeod, Jason Walcott, Jack Curry,
Cynthia Hasbani, Michelle LeClerk,
Chesley Nassaney, Matthew Butterick,
Jimmy Moss, Ellen Greenberg, Rob Stevens,
John Hudson and Catherine Lorenz.

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Those marked with a ★ recommended by SOTA members & TYPECON attendees

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\$ – cheap • \$\$ – affordable

\$\$\$ – pricey • \$\$\$\$ – steep • \$\$\$\$+ crazy

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*Within a short walk of the hotel.
(Many are in the mall next door.)*

\$\$ Trimana 1875 Century Park East
Generic but fresh salad/sandwich bar.

\$\$ UMMBA Grill Century City Center
A faux churrascaria watered down for the food court. Expensive, but decent.

\$\$\$ Toscanova Century City Center
Modern take on Northern Italian.
Fun happy hour. Dinner is overrated.

\$\$ Ajisen Ramen Century City Center
Successful chain in Hong Kong & Japan; the best-reviewed of the low-end places at the (overall superior to that of other malls) food court. Good curries, large portions.

★ \$\$\$\$ Craft/Craftbar 10100 Constellation
Tom Colicchio's ever expanding chain of high-end, extremely posh and usually very good restaurants has now conquered Los Angeles. New American, heavy on the meat. Craftbar, the less-expensive complement at the same location, is as good and significantly more accessible.

\$\$\$ Breeze In the hotel
Good fresh fish and various contemporary Japanese dishes. The generic non-Japanese dishes are so-so.

\$ The Cellar 1880 Century Park East
Divey bar with meh food. Here since 1971, which makes it a relic in Los Angeles terms. Lots of lawyers & other corporate types hang out here. Free pizza on Fridays.

★ \$\$\$ Gulfstream Century City Center
The best restaurant in the mall. Fresh and very good seafood. "The grilled artichoke is great," as are the daily shellfish specials.

★ \$\$ Clementine 1751 Ensley Avenue
Excellent neighborhood café / bakery with "the best Saturday brunch in the area." Good hot and cold salads & sandwiches at lunch.

\$\$ The Pink Taco Century City Center
Fake Mexican for fake people. Stay away.

\$\$ Breadbar Century City Center
Fancy and delicious sandwiches on – as you might expect from the name – great bread. The pasta items are mediocre, but you can't go wrong with salads and sandwiches – "the black cod slider is terrific."

★ \$\$ Javan 11500 Santa Monica Boulevard
Of the dozens of Persian restaurants in Los Angeles, Javan stands out for its friendliness, dependability, portions, and varied menu. "Always good, fresh, and open late."

Also, a short walk south and east takes you to West Pico, where several decent food trucks (including one excellent taco truck, which often has fresh ceviche) park.

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Other worthy attractions.

The Museum of Tolerance 9786 West Pico
Los Angeles' most obvious (and, perhaps, only) reality check. Closed Saturdays.

Annenberg Space for Photography 2000 Avenue of the Stars
Excellent exhibits in a small space. "The National Geographic show was really good."

Museum of Jurassic Tech 9341 Venice Blvd.
This is the oddest spot in Culver City, and the most confusing museum in the world. "Words cannot do it justice, so please visit."

Grand Central Market 317 South Broadway
Cheap and good food from a dozen stalls, spice and produce markets, and "lots of unmanufactured old-LA ethnic charm."

LACMA 5905 Wilshire Boulevard
The LA County Museum of Art is a fantastic, "enormous sprawling collection of fine art" & cultural relics from all over the world.

*A bit further away.
(A walk or short drive.)*

John Hudson and Hrant Papazian note that there is a cluster of good restaurants on South Beverly Drive between Wilshire and Olympic, about one mile east of the hotel:

\$\$ Chin Chin 206 South Beverly Drive
Good California/Chinese fusion.

\$\$ Paulette 9466 Charleville Boulevard
“The best macarons in Los Angeles.” Other desserts are good too. Many, many flavors.

There are close to a dozen other decent restaurants in this pleasant walking neighborhood, as well, including Piccolo Paradiso, Aram, South Beverly Grill, Bossa Nova, and the very expensive but quite good Sushi Sushi.

★ **Apple Pan** 10801 West Pico
Excellent burgers and fries – “straight out of the 1940s.”

★ **\$\$ Gyū-Kaku** 10925 West Pico
Very good cook-it-yourself Japanese barbecue, with excellent happy hour specials (cheap beers & half-price food).

\$\$\$ Campanile 624 South La Brea Avenue
Terrific high-end brunch. Interesting building was once Charlie Chaplin’s own studio and offices.

\$\$\$ Corkbar 403 West 12th Street
Romantic, cozy bar – “a bit too comfortable and homey to be a scene spot” – with dependable American comfort food.

★ **\$\$\$ Sushi-Gen** 422 East 2nd Street
Possibly the best sushi in downtown LA. “Unpretentious spot” with friendly chefs and “perfectly-prepared and very fresh fish.”

★ **★ Roscoe’s** 5006 West Pico Boulevard
Excellent chicken and waffles for breakfast or late at night. “Any time – it’s all good.”

\$\$ Father’s Office 3229 Helms Avenue
Great burgers. 60+ microbrews. “Don’t ask for ketchup; it’s not that kind of place.”

★ **\$\$\$ Lazy Ox Canteen** 241 South San Pedro
Gastropub with rich, often unhealthy and extremely tasty food. Consistently the best restaurant in the neighborhood.

★ **\$\$ The Gorbals** 501 South Spring Street
“Jewish-Scottish fusion” that is actually far better than it sounds, served in a pleasant bar inside the Alexandria Hotel.

\$\$ Clafoutis 8630 West Sunset Boulevard
Fantastic roast chicken, excellent service, “fun spot for people-watching.”

\$\$\$ The Little Door 8164 West 3rd Street
Very good rich French/Mediterranean food; “quiet and intimate.”

\$\$\$\$+ Urasawa 218 North Rodeo Drive
This, the most expensive and “one of the best Japanese restaurants in Los Angeles,” is a study in understated elegance. The food is both subtle and rich, and – at \$450 to \$600 per person – it had better be really good, too. I couldn’t find anyone who had actually been to verify that, though. Go here only if you’re on the Fontshop expense account.

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Elsewhere in town, but worth the trip.

★ **\$\$ Langer’s Deli** 704 South Alvarado Street
“I doubt many attendees will want to go this far for a meal, but it’s worth the trek.” The complete LA experience – incredible pastrami sandwiches in a 1950s-style deli in the middle of a Latino neighborhood.

★ **\$\$ Messob** 1041 South Fairfax Avenue
Three miles from the Hyatt. Excellent and authentic Ethiopian food; “very good coffee;” friendly and fast service.

\$\$ Huckleberry 1014 Wilshire Boulevard
Terrific lunch & brunch in Santa Monica. “The maple-bacon biscuit, green eggs & ham, and fried-egg sandwich are really good.”

★ **\$\$ BLD** 7450 Beverly Boulevard
“Serves all three meals ... the best brunch in town.” Blueberry-ricotta pancakes are worth driving many miles for.

\$\$ M Café Beverly Hills 9433 Brighton Way
“Macrobiotic menu with great selection of vegan/vegetarian items” – try the sweet potato fries.

★ **\$\$ Musha** 424 Wilshire, Santa Monica
Japanese izakaya (bar food). Small plates complemented by a very pleasant bar.

★ **\$\$ Gjelina** 1429 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice
“Great restaurant with no sign on boutique-store-lined street in Venice Beach.” Rich meat, seafood & dessert dishes; great neighborhood for walking & shopping.

\$\$ Hole in the Wall 11058 Santa Monica Blvd.
“An actual hole in an actual wall, hidden behind Winchell’s Donuts.” The burger here is a solid offering, and “the veggie burger is the best I’ve ever had.” Unfortunately closes at 9 pm, even though it would otherwise be the perfect late-night spot.

★ **\$\$ Versailles** 1415 South La Cienega Blvd.
This noisy, fun Cuban joint is a mainstay of West Los Angeles as much for its food as the ambience. Lots of garlic (the house specialty is garlic chicken), good drinks. Great place to go with a group, but be prepared to wait, especially on weekend evenings.

\$\$ Philippe 1001 North Alameda Street
“Historic spot that may or may not have invented the French Dip.” Enormous sandwiches and great potato salad. Meat!

\$\$\$ Musso & Frank 6667 Hollywood Blvd.
“Oldest restaurant in Hollywood,” serving the same dishes for the past 75 years. Whether or not it was the favorite of Orson Welles or Johnny Depp, the food is decent & the staff interesting, and it’s “a fun place to watch people and soak up the historic character of the neighborhood.”

★ **★ Pink’s** 709 North La Brea Avenue
I grew up in the long lines at this venerable hot dog stand, and while they are not the quality of New York’s Crif Dog or Hot Doug’s in Chicago, the dogs are good enough. “Try the David Hasselhoff or the Huell Howser dogs,” but be prepared for a long wait.

Dive bars all over Los Angeles.

★ **★ King Eddy Saloon** 131 East 5th Street
Extremely cheap drinks, friendly atmosphere and bartender (say HI to Leon for me), neither completely over-hipstered nor full of terminal alcoholics. This marks the edge of Los Angeles’ still very sad skid row, but at least you can have fun as you drink yourself into a stupor.

★ The Short Stop 1455 West Sunset Boulevard
Dodgers-enamored sports bar. Pool, photo booth, inexpensive drinks.

★ Hank’s Bar 840 South Grand Avenue
A downtown institution. Free popcorn, cheap beer, but do be careful of the very strong drink specials.

★ California Institute of Abnormal Arts 11334 Burbank Boulevard
Burlesque, a preserved clown corpse under glass (really), very strong drinks. Hard to find, so try to bring a local.

★ Star Garden 6630 Lankershim Boulevard
Topless bar (male and female), although it’s becoming more of a burlesque place several nights out of the week now that the owner and dancers seem to be entering some kind of arty post-nude phase. Pleasant dive-bar aspects, though, and quite relaxing on evenings when there are no bare breasts in your face. Not that there’s anything wrong with bare breasts.

★ Tiki-Ti Cocktail Lounge 4427 West Sunset
Tiny and special, especially if you are into the tiki thing. The owner allows smoking inside, “so avoid it if that turns you off.” Cash only.

★ **★ Frank & Hank’s** 518 South Western Ave.
Dirt cheap drinks, friendly bartenders, “exceptionally frisky trannies”; everything you could want from a Koreatown dive bar.

★ The Frolic Room 6245 Hollywood Blvd.
One of the last seedy bars on what used to be one of Los Angeles’ seediest streets. Lots of folks on their way to or from AA meetings.