



CICLAVIA

A NEIGHBORHOOD GUIDE
TO THE VALLEY

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THE VALLEY Like the rest of the city of Los Angeles, the nearly 145,000-acre San Fernando Valley has been chronically misunderstood and underappreciated. It's been compared to the Garden of Eden and called the armpit of California. Belittled and insulted, it looms in the cultural imagination as the epitome of suburban sprawl, famous for its shopping malls, high-rising interrogative speech (aka ValSpeak), and association with the porn industry.

Like, right. One trip "over the hill" and the tired stereotypes fall apart: the Valley is a unique place, a center of production (agricultural, entertainment, and aerospace industries, to name just a few) with a vibrant history and a diverse amalgamation of neighborhoods. Nearly two million people live here, and were the Valley to be its own city, it would be the fifth largest in America by population. Surrounded by mountains, this huge plain of mostly flat land was named for its geography and for the mission established in 1797.

Ever since Los Angeles first annexed large parts of the Valley in 1915, there's been tension between the two, which writer Kevin Roderick likens to "step-siblings who have grown closer over time, but who should never be mistaken for blood family." He points out that Valley locals never say they live in Los Angeles; instead, they claim residence in one of the Valley's 34 neighborhoods. The decision to become part of Los Angeles was made largely because the area needed water (annexation was two years after the opening of the LA Aqueduct), and over the years numerous secessionist movements have occurred. Still, the center holds and the Valley remains an essential part of the city of Los Angeles—politically,

historically, financially, culturally, and creatively. The interplay between the two is an ongoing dialogue that shapes our civic discourse—for that reason, in this guide we highlight the geographic passages between the two places. Not only do the passageways play roles in the history of the area, these canyons and once-dangerous passes unite our city, much like the freeways that sometimes snake over and through them.

It's fitting that CicLAvia's first spin into the Valley starts here along two of the area's oldest thoroughfares: Ventura Blvd. and Lankershim Blvd. Ventura Blvd., the main east-west route through the Valley, was likely a footpath for Native Americans before becoming part of El Camino Real and served as U.S. Route 101 prior to the construction of the 101 freeway that runs parallel to it. The first traffic signal in the Valley was placed at the intersection of these two great boulevards. From this starting point, one can move either west or north into the deeper reaches of "America's suburb."

The snippet of the southeastern Valley along today's route serves as a fine introduction to the area. Originally inhabited by the Tongva Indians who had villages along the banks of the Los Angeles River, it was commercially developed in the 20th century, marked by two big real-estate booms (the 1920s, post World War II). Subdivisions, restaurants, supermarkets, auto dealerships, bars, even liquor stores were all built with the automobile in mind. (Return at night to see all the amazing neon that remains.) Once a white-flight destination, today's 818 is more diverse than ever before: one-third of its residents today are foreign-born, and the Valley has the largest percentage of mixed-race households in Los Angeles. Yesterday's homogenized suburb is today's multiethnic hot spot for new urbanism.

CicLAvia has commissioned two visionary Dutch artists, Rob van Rijswijk and Jeroen Strijbos, to develop an interactive musical composition that will enhance and intensify your experience of CicLAvia—The Valley.



CICLAVIA – THE VALLEY WALKSCAPE

By using their Walk With Me app on your iPhone or iPad, you can create a customized walkscape that fuses natural, musical, and vocal sounds with live "noise" from your surroundings. Deploying GPS for artistic purposes, Walk With Me reveals a new layer of the city by offering a blend of sounds tailored for each user and allows for engagement with the landscape and its history in an entirely new way.

CicLAvia—The Valley Walkscape is FREE to download and is a permanent installation of sound that users can experience at anytime along this route.



Download the app at
[**walkwithme.net**](https://walkwithme.net)

CicLAvia—The Valley Walkscape is made possible in part by a grant from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs and funds from the Netherlands Cultural Services (New York), in partnership with DutchCulture.



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City of Los Angeles



CicLAvia transforms LA's streets into a safe, fun, car-free space for walking, bicycling, skating, jogging, and seeing the city in a whole new way.

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NEIGHBORHOOD EXTRAS—LEGEND



CULINARY LA



INSTAGRAM SPOTS



SEEN IT: FILM LOCATIONS



LITERARY LA



SING IT

Lankershim Blvd., 1999

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles
Public Library Photo Collection



“Except for some kind of quilting bee or the selling of peaches there wasn’t much in the way of entertainment. People here had no firsthand experience of what was happening culturally in the nation. El Portal was the first time North Hollywood could participate in the cultural-life of America.”

— Tom Link, author of *Universal City-North Hollywood: A Centennial Celebration*, to Paul Zollo, Sept. 28, 2011, on patch.com, “El Portal Theatre to Celebrate 85 Years”

NORTH HOLLYWOOD

Over the course of its history, North Hollywood has had several names—sometimes, confusingly, at the same time. After Isaac Lankershim, one of California’s leading grain exporters, purchased nearly 60,000 acres of the Valley from Pio Pico in 1899 with his business partners in the San Fernando Farm Homestead Association (his friend Isaac Van Nuys was a key member), the two men decided to transform the ranch land into wheat farms. When Isaac Lankershim died, his son James purchased part of his father’s land and subdivided it into small farms of 10 to 80 acres. A town called Toluca was established there, and James renamed the street that ran through it, known then as San Fernando Road, in honor of his father: Lankershim Boulevard. According to company maps of his land holdings, he renamed the town as well, calling it Lankershim. So for a while the town had two names—Lankershim on the Southern Pacific train station and Toluca on the post office, even though they were across the street from each other.

By 1906, the Lankershim name stuck, and the moniker Toluca went on to be used elsewhere (see **Toluca Lake**). At this point, Lankershim was a farming and fruit-orchard community, but the arrival of Pacific Electric’s Red Car in 1911 changed everything. The trip over the hill to Hollywood, which had taken the better part of a day, now could be made in a mere 45 minutes (and for only 25 cents). By 1922, 25 streetcars and 17,000 automobiles crossed the Cahuenga Pass every day. From the 1920s until well after World War II, the area that would become North Hollywood was the fastest-growing community in the Valley as farmland and orchards were transformed into businesses and homes.

The area's rapid growth—and a severe drought—made water a concern. In 1923, Lankershim's residents voted to join the city of Los Angeles through annexation, mainly to obtain a steady source of water. A few years later, influenced by the development of Studio City, the town changed its name to North Hollywood to gain a bit of Hollywood's allure and also, residents hoped, a film studio of its own.

Ironically, given its name, North Hollywood is one of the few areas in the Valley that doesn't house a major film studio—though there are plenty of prop shops and production houses around. Instead of film, NoHo, as it's called, is the Valley's center of performing and visual arts, as well as being somewhat designed with pedestrians in mind—and none of this was an accident. Starting in the late 1970s, the City of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) initiated a number of revitalization projects, including creating the NoHo Arts District in the 1990s. Today, more than 20 theaters are located here, as well as many art galleries and dance studios. There are more music-recording venues in North Hollywood than anywhere else west of the Mississippi (the famed Palomino Club was also on Lankershim Blvd.). This vibrant arts scene, plus the relative affordability of real estate and transit-friendly setup, make NoHo a hot spot for artists and other bohemians.

NORTH HOLLYWOOD ARTS DISTRICT HUB



Breakfast burrito with salsa verde from the Crown Burger



In front of El Portal marquee



Wild at Heart (1990), *Clueless* (1995), *The Big Lebowski* (1998)



If You Lived Here, You'd Be Home By Now and *Depth Takes a Holiday: Essays from Lesser Los Angeles* by Sandra Tsing Loh



Van Hunt's "North Hollywood"

1 North Hollywood Metro Station

Lankershim Blvd. and Chandler Blvd.

Located adjacent to the historic Lankershim/North Hollywood Train Depot, today's transit station serves the heavy-rail subway as the northern terminus of the Red Line and the eastern terminus of the Orange Line bus service. The extension of service here in 2000 led to many transit-oriented developments and is widely credited for revitalizing the area and making it more pedestrian-friendly.

2 Southern Pacific Lankershim/North Hollywood Train Depot

Lankershim Blvd. and Chandler Blvd.

Assembled by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1896, the train depot remains one of the oldest railroad structures in Southern California and was originally used to transport goods from local packing plants and canneries. It was the meeting place between the Southern Pacific line and the Pacific Electric Railway, which ran its line through the Cahuenga Pass to what was then known as Lankershim Station in 1911, changing the Valley forever. Currently under a \$3.6 million restoration by Metro, it was in use until 1952.

1. NORTH HOLLYWOOD METRO STATION

Photo courtesy of Aaron Paley



3 Federal Bar

(Federal Bank Building) 5303 Lankershim Blvd.

Housed in a 1926 former bank, this popular gastropub with 20 craft beers on tap is owned by Knitting Factory CEO Morgan Margolis. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Margolis fell in love with the prohibition-era brick building while driving his kids to martial-arts classes nearby. After the Hollywood location of the Knitting Factory closed in 2009, he wanted to open a new one, but discovering this building led him in a new direction. He has since opened another Federal Bar location in Long Beach.

4. EL PORTAL THEATRE, 2000

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library
Photo Collection



4 El Portal Theatre

5265–5271 Lankershim Blvd.

Built in 1926, this Art Deco movie palace was the original first-run movie theater in the Valley and did as much to connect the community of Lankershim (which changed its name to North Hollywood that same year) to Los Angeles culturally as the rail line did geographically. Built by the Fox West Coast Theatre chain (see **Fox Studio City Theatre**), the nearly 1,400-seat theater hosted silent films as well as vaudeville and other live theater acts. Nearly destroyed by the Northridge earthquake in 1994, this gem of a theater was restored as a stage for theater instead of film, and its 1930s WPA wall reliefs—depicting people harvesting peaches, a nod to the town’s history—are still visible today.

5 Tokyo Delve’s Sushi Bar

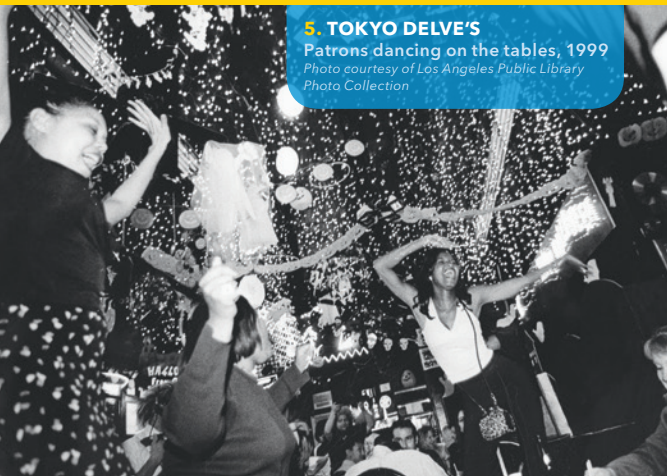
5239 Lankershim Blvd.

This is not the place for a quiet dinner; instead, the enthusiastic sushi chefs greet you with a boisterous welcome in Japanese when you walk in, the staff regularly breaks out in song, and patrons are encouraged to dance along (on the tables even). Providing riotous fun and good sushi since 1986, Tokyo Delve’s holds a unique spot among the slew of sushi places in the Valley.

5. TOKYO DELVE’S

Patrons dancing on the tables, 1999

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library
Photo Collection





6. PHIL'S DINER, 2000

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles
Public Library Photo Collection

6 NoHo Commons/Laemmle Theatres/Phil's Diner

5230 Lankershim Blvd.

Built in 2004 by the J.H. Snyder Company, this transit-oriented, mixed-use development includes residential buildings as well as restaurants and a seven-screen Laemmle movie theater that is owned and operated by family descendants of Carl Laemmle (see **Universal City**). While the Commons added to the neighborhood, one sad setback is the closure of the restored Phil's Diner, a 1920s-era dining car that is possibly the state's oldest and looks like a wonderful place to have lunch. Alas, you can't.

7 Academy of Television Arts & Sciences

5220 Lankershim Blvd.

Founded in 1946, the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, which has recently rebranded itself as the Television Academy, is the nonprofit membership organization that awards the Emmys. When the organization first started promoting its fledgling medium, they received little support from motion picture folks; this historic rift between the TV and film industries continues, as co-host Amy Poehler quipped at the 2013 Golden Globes, "Only at the Golden Globes do the beautiful people of film rub shoulders with the rat-faced people of television."

8 Millennium Dance Complex

5113 Lankershim Blvd.

This famous dance studio, founded in 1992, hosts top-tier performers—Christina Aguilera, Beyoncé, Jennifer Lopez, Janet Jackson, Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, and Usher—all have busted a move here. Owners AnnMarie and Robert Baker were some of the first dance-studio operators to offer a diverse range of styles—hip-hop, jazz, and ballet—under one roof. Before opening Millennium, AnnMarie managed the legendary Moro Landis Studios, a dance and rehearsal space founded by vaudevillians George Moro and Ruth Landis that was located near Ventura and Vineland.

9 Deaf West Theatre

5112 Lankershim Blvd.

Founded by the deaf actor Ed Waterstreet in 1991, this 99-seat venue is home to a nationally renowned theater company of, by, and for the deaf. Since childhood, when he would go to shows with his hearing family, Waterstreet dreamed of a theater that would be fully accessible. Productions here integrate spoken English and American Sign Language (ASL) with signing actors rather than consigning ASL to an interpreter at the side.

10 Department of Water and Power Building

(now Lankershim Arts Center) 5108 Lankershim Blvd.

Designed by architect S. Charles Lee and finished in 1939, this beautiful Streamline Moderne building was built by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Today it houses the Lankershim Arts Center, perhaps the hub of the NoHo Arts District. Along with hosting arts programs and classes, the Center is home to a theater company and an art gallery. The now-renovated building was declared a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (no. 232) in 1980. Although the trees out front somewhat obscure the building's façade, it remains intact—and pretty breathtaking.

11 Ha Ha Café

5010 Lankershim Blvd.

Established in the late 1980s, this laid-back comedy club and restaurant has hosted legendary performers such as Eddie Murphy and Andrew Dice Clay, but mostly it's known as the spot to find up-and-coming talent. Open seven nights a week.



12 NoHo Gateway

Lankershim Blvd. and Huston St.

This 2009 sculpture by LA artist Peter Shire was commissioned by the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA), which oversaw the revitalization of the area. Shire, a graduate of the Chouinard Art Institute who has a studio in Echo Park, designed it as a fanciful depiction of the area's history with nods to the entertainment industry (characters constructing sets, film cameras), the music business (musical notes), and aviation (balloons).

.....

13 Idle Hour Café

4824 Vineland Ave.

Recently reopened after a thoughtful restoration, this barrel-shaped restaurant and bar was built in 1941 (the giant barrel made of cedar) by Michael D. Connolly, a film tech at nearby Universal Studios. Connolly ran it as a bar and taproom; it later became a flamenco-dance showcase called La Cana that closed in 1984. Shuttered since then, this prime example of "programmatic architecture"—fanciful buildings shaped like the things they might be selling (famous LA examples include Randy's Donuts and Tail o' the Pup)—was saved by preservationists. Writer Chris Nichols, whose activism was crucial to its restoration, calls the landmark "an authentic icon of California car culture."

12. NOHO GATEWAY

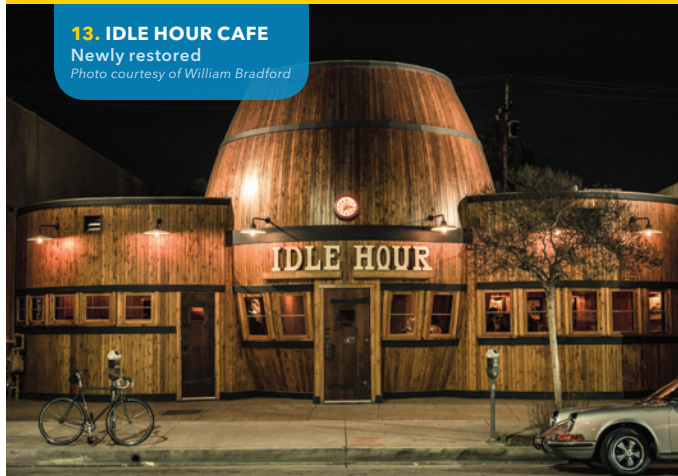
Photo courtesy of Aaron Paley



13. IDLE HOUR CAFE

Newly restored

Photo courtesy of William Bradford



Floods destroyed the concrete Lankershim Blvd. bridge over the LA River, 1938

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection



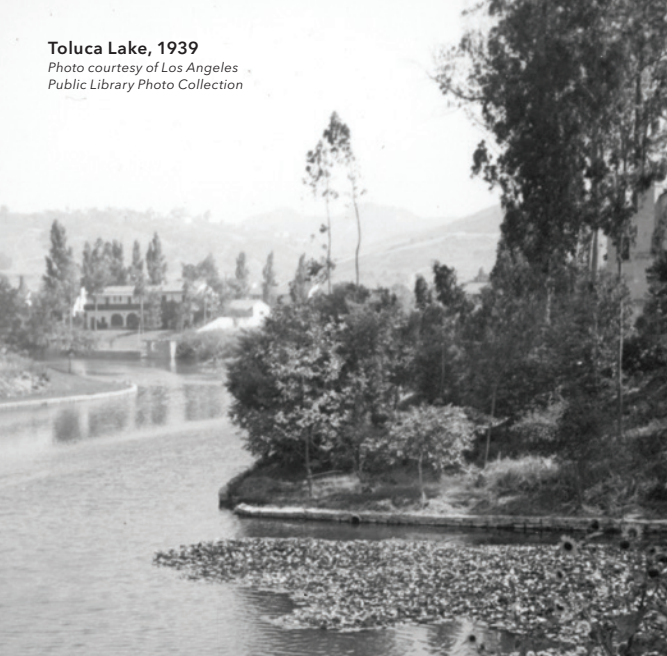
PASSAGE: LOS ANGELES RIVER The 51-mile Los Angeles River flows through the San Fernando Valley on its course from the mountains to the ocean. It's the original connective freeway between Los Angeles's diverse communities, and today is under a massive revitalization effort to turn the concrete channel back into a beautiful, natural setting. Various government and community groups have been working together to develop new parks, walk ways, bike paths, and art along the river's banks.

Fortunately, Studio City has several sections of the river undergoing important "greening" projects. The Los Angeles River, just north of Ventura Blvd., runs parallel to today's route through Studio City, so all are easy to check out. Just outside of today's route with an entry at Coldwater Canyon, the North Valleyheart Riverwalk is a new river trail from Studio City to Sherman Oaks. The \$3.5 million project, funded by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and spearheaded by the nonprofit group The Village Gardeners, constructed a new decomposed granite path as a walkway and shaded the area with native plants and shrubs. Perhaps the most eye-catching of changes is the mosaic mural made by artist Kevin Carman, a 10x20 foot steelhead trout that appears on Ethel Ave.

Scheduled to open in 2016, the half-mile Zev Yaroslavsky LA River Greenway Trail, a garden path named for the former LA County supervisor, is a vital "missing link" along the river. It will connect the North Valleyheart Riverwalk to the 2.5-mile river trail that goes downstream from Whitsett Ave. The project will create the longest stretch of greenway along the river in the Valley.

Toluca Lake, 1939

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles
Public Library Photo Collection



"They had chickens, a Victory Garden...My dad bought the home shortly before I was born. We didn't have air conditioning nor a pool for many years. I recall the freeway being put in. Stayed cool by sprinklers, Water Wiggles, Slip 'N Slides. All the kids played together. Boys and girls, roller-skating, riding bikes, having flour fights."

— Sandie Howard, who grew up in Toluca Lake and is the granddaughter of comedian Shemp Howard, in the *Los Angeles Times*.

TOLUCA LAKE

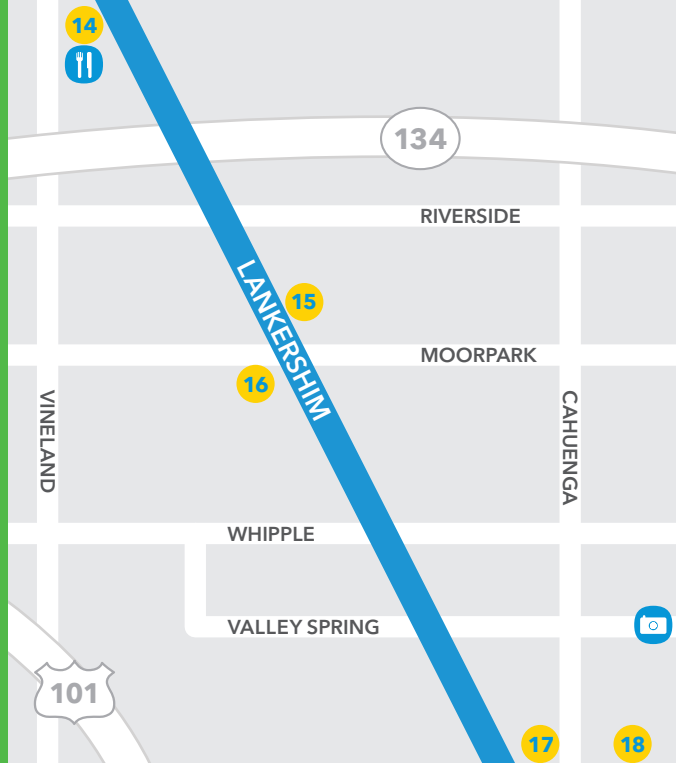
Before it became the affluent neighborhood it is today, this area was a swampy wetland. No one would have guessed it would become one of the toniest addresses in the age of automobile suburbanization. The name Toluca was first used around the 1890s on the application for a new post office submitted by Nevada businessman Charles Forman, who had just bought 12,000 acres of wheat ranch from the Lankershim family. (That post office was located in the home of Wilson C. Weddington, today the site of the El Portal Theatre. See **North Hollywood**.)

A few things about Charles Forman: He was given the rank of general by Nevada's territorial governor for winning a five-hour battle between the U.S. Militia and some 500 Native Americans. He married the daughter of John Rowland, who fought alongside Pio Pico at the Second Battle of Cahuenga (see **Universal City**). An extremely wealthy man, he also started an early cable-car system in LA and built a turbine power plant on the Kern River that supplied power to the city (and is still used today). It is reported that the character Ben Cartwright from TV's *Bonanza* was modeled after him. When he bought "Toluca," he did so as a gentleman farmer, content to spend the last years of his life living in a modest ranch house at the end of a dirt road. Part of the property contained the last remaining Kahaweenga Indian village, and he employed the Native American women as bakers—according to historian Tom Link, the adobe beehive oven they used could still be seen until the 1920s.

After Forman's death in 1919, his ranch was sold to investors who wanted to create a residential subdivision on the land.

Along with creating the exclusive Lakeside Golf Club, the spring-fed pond on Forman's former property was enhanced into a six-acre natural lake for the planned neighborhood. During the 1920s, the Valley's population doubled, and with the arrival of the Valleywood colony (Universal Studios and Warner Brothers were in walking distance), movie stars began buying up the bucolic properties alongside the lake. The reclusive Greta Garbo lived here, as did Mary Astor, Bing Crosby, W. C. Fields, and Bob Hope—as well as many prominent directors, screenwriters, and other film folk. In fact, the first home built on the lake—on Valley Spring Lane—became the home of famed aviator Amelia Earhart.

If you want to see the famed lake of Toluca Lake today, you'll have to make friends with either a member of the Lakeside Golf Club or a resident who lives alongside it. The lake, owned and maintained by the nonprofit Toluca Lake Property Owners Association, isn't accessible to the public.



Pepperoni pizza from Little Toni's at 1am



Three Men in a Tub (1938),
Strangers on a Train (1951)



Anything by Frank Sinatra,
who lived here in the 1940s



By the lake, if you can get in



Valley Boy by Theodore Pratt,
The Chapman Report by Irving
Wallace, *Less Than Zero* by
Bret Easton Ellis

14 Little Toni's Restaurant

4745 Lankershim Blvd.

Another example of a classic Valley restaurant that had curb appeal and catered to the growing population of young families, this Italian red-sauce restaurant has been serving family-style meals and pizza for nearly half a century. With a neon sign that beckons diners to pull in off the boulevard—and open till 2am—Little Toni's remains a hot spot for late-night meals.

.....

15 Ernie's Mexican Restaurant

4410 Lankershim Blvd.

Founded by Ernie Cruz in 1952, this Valley staple is the last of the Cruz family's dynasty—Ernie and then-wife Albina opened their first restaurant, Ernie's Taco House, in Lincoln Heights just after his return from World War II in 1944. Business boomed, and they added locations here, in Eagle Rock, and eventually in Pasadena. The mom-and-pop is a great example of the type of restaurant that thrived among a growing suburban population: with a full bar, a kids' menu, and a trademark neon sign, it offered somewhat exotic cuisine in a comfortable setting that catered to families.

16. ST. CHARLES BORROMEO CHURCH

Photo courtesy of Aaron Paley



16 St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church

10800 Moorpark St.

One of the oldest Catholic churches in the Valley, the St. Charles Borromeo congregation moved to this site in 1938. The complex includes a school (1939), a rectory (1939), a convent (1941), and the original church building (1938), which was designed to resemble the Mission San Carlos Borromeo in Carmel. But it is the impressive Churrigueresque façade of the church, designed by architect J. Earl Trudeau and built in 1959, that is visible from Lankershim—and its construction was partially funded by parishioners Bob and Dolores Hope.

18. LAKESIDE GOLF CLUB, 1963

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection



17 North Hollywood Toyota

4101 Cahuenga Blvd.

Built in 1940, this Streamline Moderne-style car dealership is an excellent example (if you overlook the contemporary signage) of an automobile showroom built around the height of the Valley's transformation into an autotopia. Today it is part of the Toyota dealership that spans several locations along Lankershim.

18 Lakeside Golf Club

4500 Lakeside Dr.

This 138-acre private golf club remains the crown jewel of Toluca Lake. Officially opened in 1925 and designed by famed golf architect Max Behr (who also did the Wilshire Country Club's course), the challenging course left much of the beautiful setting undisturbed. The original course played across the Los Angeles River, but the flood of 1938 demanded that be changed. The club has always had an elite clientele, including locals Bing Crosby, Don Ameche, Gene Autry, W. C. Fields, Oliver "Babe" Hardy, Bob Hope, Howard Hughes, and former president Ronald Reagan. With an initiation fee upwards of \$80,000, the club remains exclusive.

Bird's eye view of the
Hollywood Freeway through
the Cahuenga Pass, 1954

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public
Library Photo Collection



PASSAGE: CAHUENGA PASS/PASEO DE CAHUENGA

If you want to get “over the hill” from the Valley “into town,” you have a limited number of ways to do so. Today’s route contains three such passages, plus one river. The busiest of these is the Cahuenga Pass, which has been used for millennia. Named for the area’s first residents—the Shoshone and Chumash tribes who founded a village called Kawengna near here, the spot was ideal for its proximity to the river and the nearby hills when the river flooded.

The Pass had a prominent role in hostilities after Spain ceded California’s rule to Mexico. The first, in 1831 when exiled Mexican Californios led a small army up from Baja to battle the Mexican army, who they met here. In 1845 the second Battle of Cahuenga occurred between the armies of Mexico and the United States (see **Campo de Cahuenga**) that resulted in the appointment of a new California-born governor, Pio Pico—the man who would eventually sell the Valley and thus, spur its development.

By 1851, the horse path through the pass was opened to wagons and oxcarts. At the turn of the century, the Cahuenga Pass was a single lane, paved in peach and apricot pits; it took the better part of the day to travel round-trip from Lankershim to Hollywood. The arrival of Pacific Electric’s Red Car in 1911 changed everything—instead of a day, the trip could be made in 45 minutes. By 1922, 25 streetcars and 17,000 automobiles crossed the Cahuenga Pass every day. In 1926, the city’s inspector of public works declared the Pass to be one of the most heavily traveled and congested roads in Southern California. As any commuter today knows, that continues to be the case.

Route for CicLAvia—The Valley

presented by Metro

March 22, 2015

THE VALLEY – 6 miles

1/2 mile

CicLAvia Route

Ruta de CicLAvia



Pedestrian Zone

Area de los peatones



Crossing Points for Cars

Puntos de cruce para carros



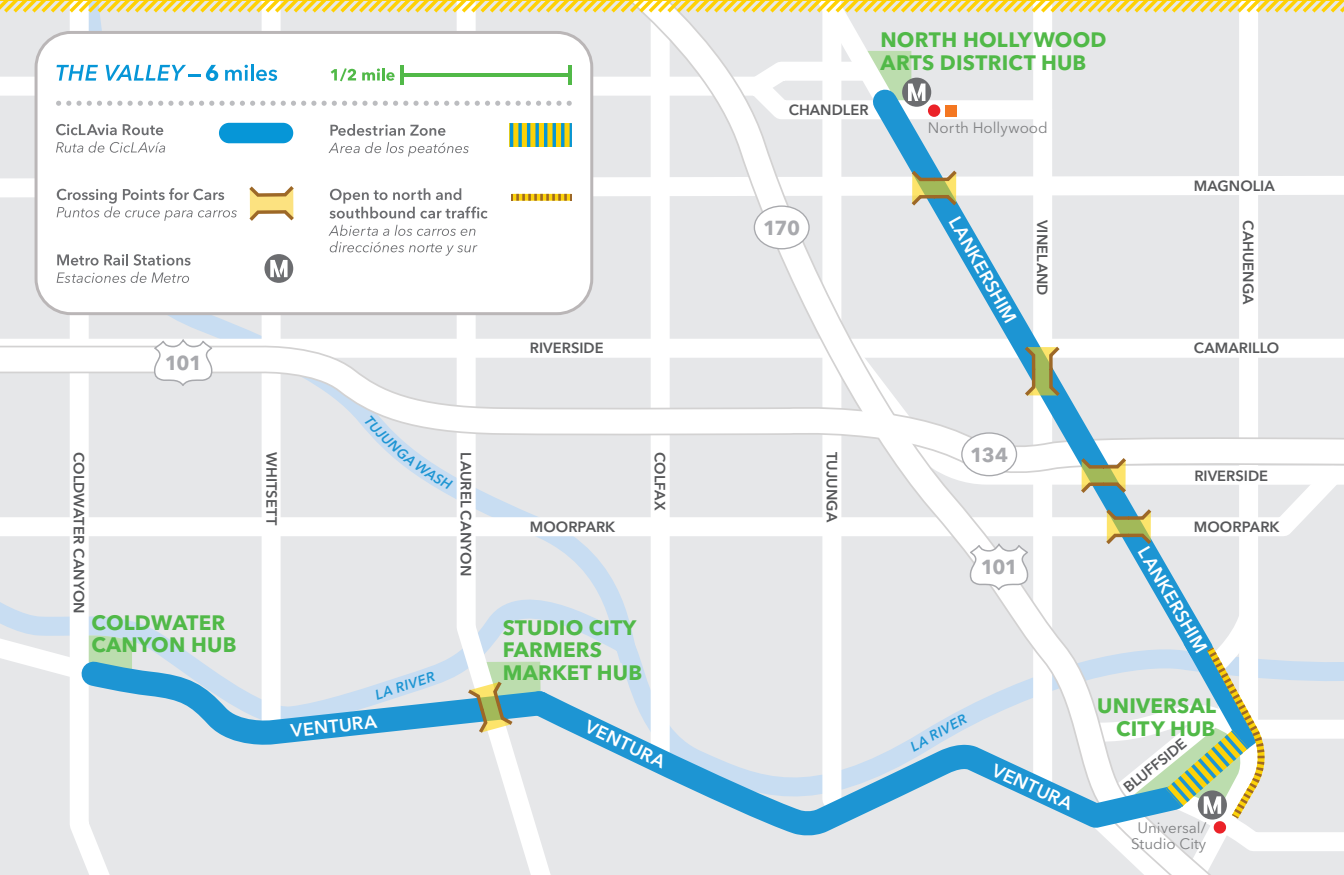
Open to north and southbound car traffic

Abierta a los carros en direcciones norte y sur



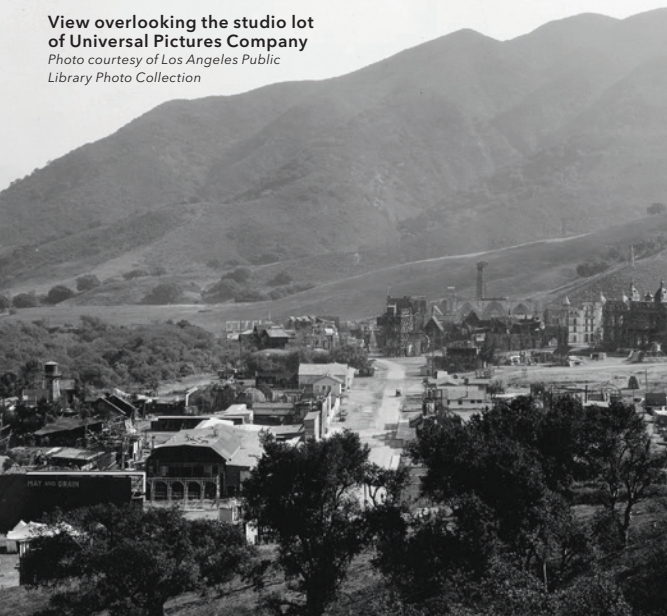
Metro Rail Stations

Estaciones de Metro



**View overlooking the studio lot
of Universal Pictures Company**

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public
Library Photo Collection



“Carl Laemmle’s greatest legacy was freeing up movie making—he pioneered the idea that there’s no lock on this art form. And the influence of the film industry shows up in all shapes and forms on the city. It’s a studio town but that commercial business brings in artists who do creative work of all kinds—in the theater, as writers, as independent filmmakers.”

—Greg Laemmle, president of Laemmle Theatres, LLC, a family-owned business that has been exhibiting art and foreign films in Los Angeles since 1938. He’s also the great-nephew of Carl and a great cycling advocate.

UNIVERSAL CITY

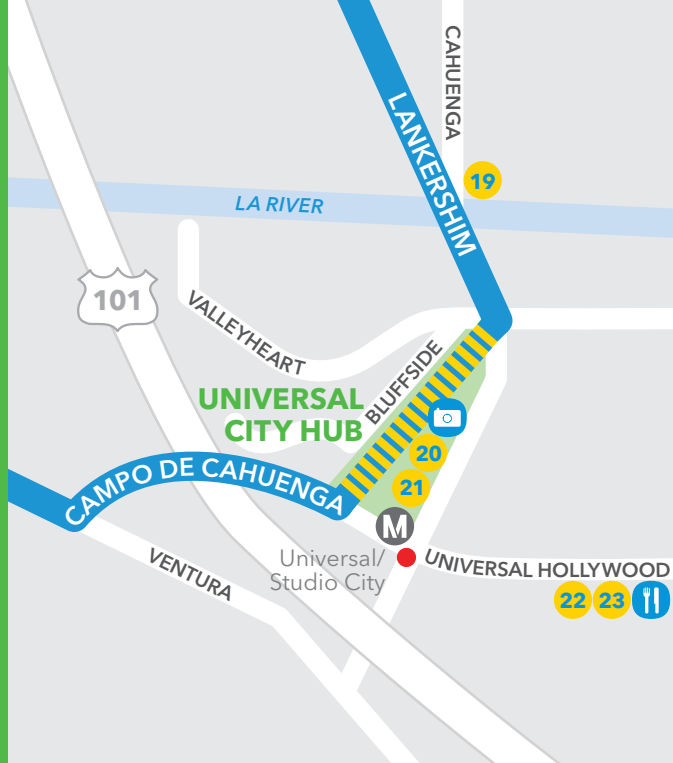
No place might be more “Hollywood” than Universal City, which is not, geographically speaking, in Hollywood at all but at the southeastern tip of the Valley. As a place, it embodies many of the idiosyncratic traits and ongoing tensions that derive from living in a city where one of the primary industries is entertainment. Created by—and named for—a film studio, it’s a “city” with no real residents, since most of the area is designated as a manufacturing zone (film production began here in 1912). The majority of the area belongs to NBCUniversal and is unincorporated, with only a small bit of land falling within the actual city limits of Los Angeles. It’s an area for working or visiting, but not living, where the honorary mayors are movie stars, natural disasters are most often special effects, and everything is a camera-ready commodity.

Silent-era filmmakers set up in the Valley soon after arriving in Los Angeles; they realized that all of the locations they needed were essentially in their backyard—a huge swath of rugged terrain that could pass for almost anywhere. Plus, the agrarian Valley was readymade for shooting Westerns—ranchers at the time complained that film studios kept hiring away their cowhands. In 1912, studio boss Carl Laemmle, the maverick founder of Universal Pictures, leased the former Oak Crest Ranch, located at the mouth of the Cahuenga Pass (present-day Forest Lawn) and established the first motion picture studio in the Valley.

Many film studios would follow his lead into what later became known as “Valleywood,” cementing the important role the movies would have in defining the area.

The affable “Uncle Carl,” as he was known due to his penchant for hiring relatives (he also assisted in getting more than 300 Jews out of Germany in the 1930s), soon bought more ranch land in the Lankershim Township, and in 1914 Universal City was born. For its grand opening in March 1915, the visionary Laemmle planned grand festivities, including an eight-day, whistle-stop train tour and three days of celebrity-filled public events at the new film plant. An estimated 10,000 people attended a BBQ, excited to check out the studio’s vast stages, “authentic” Indian village, and zoo of wild animals. They got to see a western stunt show, a bridge explosion, and a simulated flood. From the beginning, Laemmle envisioned Universal City as a tourist attraction, and for 25 cents the public could sit on bleacher seats and watch the movies being made (a chicken box lunch was 5 cents more). The biggest film studio in the country, Universal Pictures was not only the nation’s leading film producer for the next decade, it also initiated the business of film tourism and transformed movie-making into a broader category of entertainment that went beyond the theater and into theme parks and other branded experiences. Disneyland, for example, wouldn’t exist for another 40 years.

Today, Universal City continues to be a functioning film studio and a key tourist destination.



The NBCUniversal Commissary



More than 8,000 films have been shot on the Universal lot, including *Psycho* (1960), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), and *Jurassic Park* (1993)



In front of the Campo de Cahuenga, birthplace of our state



An Empire of their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood by Neal Gabler

19 Air Raid Siren No. 127

Southeast corner of Lankershim Blvd. & Cahuenga Blvd.

During World War II and the Cold War, air raid sirens were installed all over Los Angeles to mitigate the threat of a Japanese bomb strike or nuclear attack. When this one was built circa 1940, the warning system was state-of-the-art; in 1985 the city's remaining sirens were disconnected.

20 Campo de Cahuenga

3919 Lankershim Blvd.

American history was forever changed at this site, which is held to be one of the most historic spots west of the Mississippi. Although the foundation of the original adobe is visible, the adobe you see today was built in 1951 to commemorate the site where on January 13, 1847, Gen. Andres Pico and Lt. Col. John C. Fremont signed a treaty that led to the end of the Mexican-American War. A cattle ranch at the time, the enemies' peaceful action here birthed the state of California. Along with California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, most of Arizona and Colorado, and parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming were ceded by Mexico to the U.S.; anyone living in these territories was granted the right to U.S. citizenship. The site is managed by the Campo de Cahuenga Historical Memorial Association for the Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks Department and is open to the public on 1st and 3rd Saturdays.



20. CAMPO DE CAHUENGA

Map outlining the borders of the Campo de Cahuenga
Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection

21 Universal City/ Studio City Metro Station

3901 Lankershim Blvd.

Opened in 2000, this was Metro's first subway line into the Valley and terminates one stop north at the North Hollywood station. During construction, the original foundation of the Campo de Cahuenga was unearthed just six inches below a sidewalk and portion of Lankershim Blvd. Inside the station, *The Tree of Califas*, by artist Margaret Garcia and architect Kate Diamond, pays tribute to the history of the Campo, focusing on the mythological black Amazon queen Califas, the namesake of our state.

22 Universal CityWalk Hollywood

100 Universal City Plaza

Located immediately outside the theme park, this open-air shopping center, designed by the late Jon Jerde and built in 1993, pioneered the concept of creating a faux-urban street shopping environment. Envisioned as a pedestrian connector of the theme park and movie studio, CityWalk, as cultural historian Norman Klein says, "has something of the relationship to the real city that a petting zoo has to nature." Still, it's a great spot to get a snack, especially the small-scale versions of some of LA's most beloved restaurants: Pink's and Tommy's Hamburgers.



23. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

A tour bus moves through the back lot

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection

23 Universal Studios Hollywood

100 Universal City Plaza

The development of sound in motion pictures forced Universal Studios to suspend their public tours—the folks watching the filmmaking from bleachers could be heard booing the villains. In the 1950s, the studio began allowing public bus tours of the back lot. After MCA's purchase of Universal in the 1960s, tram tours of the back lot and stages were formalized into what became a full-fledged amusement park: Universal Studios Hollywood. The rides and attractions change with the times (although some, like the giant mechanical *Jaws* shark, remain perennial favorites), but the "Glam Tram" tours continue.

View of a winding road
in Laurel Canyon, 1912
Photo courtesy of Los Angeles
Public Library Photo Collection



PASSAGE: LAUREL CANYON BLVD. In the late 1960s between the glitz of the Sunset Strip and the rough, cowboy clubs in the Valley, musicians found a middle ground (literally) in a neighborhood of crumbling bungalows and serpentine streets called Laurel Canyon. Named for the famed north-south thoroughfare that connects West Hollywood to Studio City, Laurel Canyon, like its namesake Blvd., is an iconic part of the city. The isolation and beauty of the canyon's hills have inspired great art and music, as well as grisly murders and alleged hauntings.

Once all but secluded from the rest of the city, canyon development here was spurred in the early part of the 20th century by the nation's first trackless trolley that brought perspective buyers from Sunset Blvd. to rustic weekend cabins around Lookout Mountain. By the teens and 20s, silent-era movie stars discovered the area and built their mansions in its privacy. (And yes, Laurel Canyon even had its own film studio: a top-secret studio run by the Department of Defense.) In the mid-century, thanks to developments in steel production and architecture, new homes were built on steep, previously unbuildable hillside lots; several Case Study houses still survive.

But what Laurel Canyon is most famous for is music. In the late 1960s, a treasure trove of songwriters, musicians, record producers—even entire bands moved in, making it the epicenter of rock n' roll. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, the Eagles, the Mamas & the Papas, Joni Mitchell, Jim Morrison, Linda Ronstadt—all created incredible music here—a soundtrack to remember as you gust down from Mulholland Drive.

Looking west on
Ventura Blvd., 1959
Photo courtesy of Los Angeles
Public Library Photo Collection



"...that stretch of Ventura Boulevard [is] still pretty close to how it was in the late '40s. There was always the feeling you lived in the Valley and not Los Angeles—the city was divided. Going to the doctor's office, you went over the hill, as if to another city, another state entirely."

— director Paul Thomas Anderson, who was raised in Studio City, to Steve Erickson in the January 2015 issue of *Los Angeles* magazine

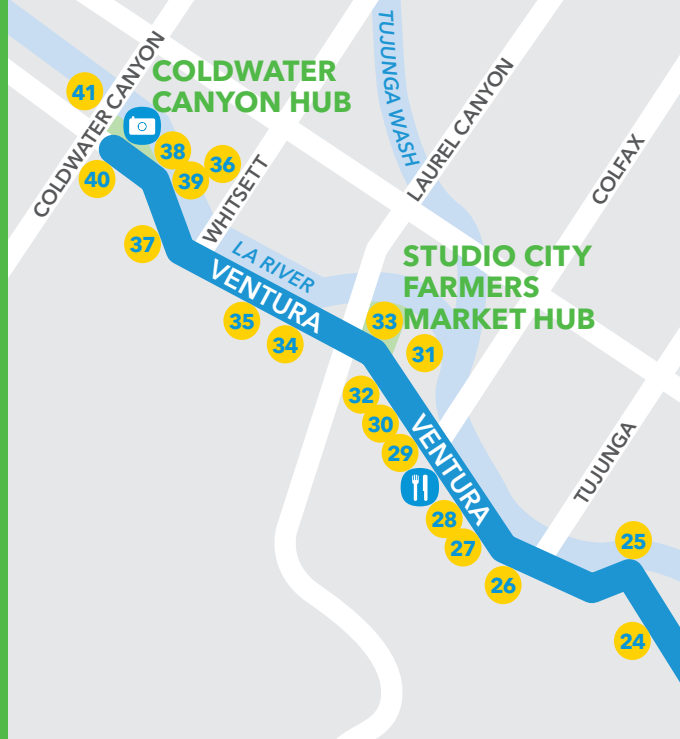
STUDIO CITY

Like Universal City, Studio City owes its existence to the movie business. In 1926, producer Mack Sennett, of Keystone comedy fame, established his studio near Radford Ave., converting a former lettuce ranch into film stages—some are still in use today. Unlike Universal City, though, which was one man's vision, Studio City was developed by a land syndicate, the Central Motion Picture District (CMPD), which decided to transform 500 acres of what had been the western part of Lankershim Ranch into production facilities and film studios with residential subdivisions and other businesses in mind. Getting Sennett, who was part of the syndicate, to move his studio here was part of a plan to lure other film companies as well—and while it didn't do that, it did entice the general public. After Mack Sennett's Studioland officially opened in 1928, so many people drove down Ventura Blvd. to see the \$800,000 facility that the *Los Angeles Times* named the intersection of Radford and Ventura the third-busiest intersection in Los Angeles.

The Sennett lot became Republic Pictures in 1935, and many prominent film stars began their careers there: Jack Benny, Tony Curtis, Bette Davis, Joan Fontaine, Peter Lawford, Ronald Reagan, Roy Rogers, James Stewart, and John Wayne. The CMPD syndicate had already established schools in the area, and residential developments—the first was at Ventura and what is today Laurel Canyon Blvd.—were on the rise. For studio workers (Republic had 400 on its payroll in 1935) and movie stars, living near work had great appeal: the commute was fantastic and, in the still mostly rural area, could be done

by horse. Hence, the emergence of what historians call “the Valleywood colony”; as more studios moved into the Valley—First National Studios/Warner Brothers, Columbia Pictures, and Disney were in Burbank; Warner Brothers in Woodland Hills and Calabasas; RKO in Encino—their most famous employees came along too and contributed their own culture to the mix. Most of these film stars fancied themselves to be much like the self-reliant cowboys they played on screen, although the reality was quite different: as homesteaders, the stars brought more glamour to the Valley (polo fields, parties, elaborate architecture) than anything else.

With studios settling in other parts of the Valley, Studio City became mostly a residential area (more than 1,000 acres of public parks as well) with the exception of the Republic Pictures lot, which operates today as CBS Studio Center. The central business district on Ventura Blvd. remains much as it was during its development from 1930 to 1960 with vibrant shops, restaurants, and, in some spots, rare pedestrian appeal. The residential neighborhoods, settled by studio workers, artisans, and professionals from the aviation industry, can today be broken into two distinct categories: those south of Ventura, in the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains, that make up some of the most expensive real estate in Los Angeles (home to many wealthy entertainment-industry types), and the more typically suburban-looking areas north of Ventura, where more modest homes (though only slightly less expensive) follow the grid-like patterns of the streets.



“Sushi Row” on Ventura Blvd.



The lake at Sportsmen’s Lodge



Earth Girls Are Easy (1989),
Man on the Moon (1999),
Happy, Texas (1999)



Michael Connelly’s
Harry Bosch mysteries



“Free Fallin’” by Tom Petty

24 American National Academy of Performing Arts

10944 Ventura Blvd.

Founded in 1957 by screen star Francis Lederer, this school has taught acting and dance for more than half a century. Instructors have included Jerry Lewis, Johnny Silver, and John Forsythe. Perhaps the most famous teacher, though, is Studio City icon Dorothy Barrett, who taught here for 60 years. Until recently, the nonagenarian, who was under contract with MGM in the '40s, could be found teaching children tap in the dance studio; she lived in an apartment above the school.

25 El Royale Motel 26 El Patio Inn

11117 Ventura Blvd.

11466 Ventura Blvd.

Before the construction of the 101 freeway, Ventura Blvd. served as the main route from Hollywood through the San Fernando Valley to points north. All along the route were motels like these two that feature detached units oriented around a central parking lot. The Spanish Colonial-style El Patio Inn was built in the 1940s, the El Royale Motel in the 1930s. Both are rare reminders of the importance of this earlier auto artery and are popular film locations; appropriately, David Lynch shot scenes for *Lost Highway* in El Patio, and Paul Thomas Anderson used the El Royale for *Boogie Nights*.

27 Oil Can Harry's

11505 Ventura Blvd.

Open since 1968, this dance club is one of the oldest gathering spaces for the LGBT community in the Valley—in fact, some say it was the first gay dance club in Southern California and is the oldest gay bar west of the Mississippi. Always inclusive, the dance floor was mostly disco in the '70s but switched to country-and-western in the '80s, making it also one of the few remaining places to learn line dancing in town. Sadly, club owner Bob Tomasino, who was known for his support of other LGBT organizations and charitable giving, was killed by a drunk driver in 2013.



25. EL ROYALE MOTEL
Photo courtesy of Rob Bellinger
manicamerican.com.



28. STUDIO CITY HAND CAR WASH

Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

28 Studio City Hand Car Wash

11514 Ventura Blvd.

Hand-in-hand (pun intended) with car culture is car-cleaning culture, and this car wash, with its unique, sculptural signage—a huge hand holding a giant yellow sponge beneath a life-sized replica of a pink 1957 Corvette—is a fine example of how quirky advertising can become a fixture to a community. Created by sculptor Gagik Daniel in 2001, the “hand” is either loved or hated by locals. Controversy ensued when the Studio City Residents Association advocated its demolition. Fans came forward, saving the sign and preserving a piece of vernacular architecture that makes this stretch of Ventura a bit more distinct.

29 Laurelwood Apartments

11833 Laurelwood Dr.

According to the Los Angeles Conservancy, this 1949 structure is “one of the finest Modern expressions of the ubiquitous courtyard apartment complex to be found anywhere in Southern California.” Though the street view isn’t that impressive, take a look up the central walkway, and the beauty and ingenuity of architect R. M. Schindler’s design—two terraced structures featuring 10 two-bedroom units each, sloping gently up the hill—becomes evident. These were the last apartments designed by Schindler, a great proponent of multi-family residential designs.

30 Studio City Palm Trees

Ventura Blvd. between Carpenter and Whitsett Aves.

Trees figure prominently in the real-estate development of the Valley—in Studio City, as in other areas, beautification meant bringing in (often mature) trees to enhance the landscape, so that the former wheat and citrus fields or ranches looked less barren. The area’s first automobile-based subdivision, Laurel Terrace, boasted mature sycamore trees along its roads, which had been planted in the 1920s. Planting trees was a way to make an area more distinctive and thus more marketable. Planted in 1959, the Mexican fan palms that line this stretch of Ventura Blvd. are, like most palms, non-native to the area.

31 CBS Studio Center

(CBS Radford Studio) 4024 Radford Ave.

One of the first motion picture studio lots built in the Valley, this was originally Mack Sennett's Studioland from 1928 to 1933. After that, it operated as Mascot Studios before its purchase by Republic Studios (1935–1962), which began producing TV shows as well as features here in the 1950s. In 1967, CBS purchased the studio and expanded its stages. Classic TV shows such as *Bob Newhart*, *Mary Tyler Moore*, *Get Smart*, *Gilligan's Island*, and *Gunsmoke* were made here. More recently, the lot has been home to *CSI: NY*, *A Different World*, *Hot in Cleveland*, *Roseanne*, *Seinfeld*, *That '70s Show*, and *Will & Grace*.

31. REPUBLIC STUDIOS, 1937

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection



32 Du-par's Restaurant and Bakery

12036 Ventura Blvd.

Famous for its pies (especially the chicken potpies) and pancakes, the original Du-par's was founded in 1938 at the Los Angeles Farmers Market as a simple, nine-seat stall. The home-style cooking and 24-hour service proved popular, and the restaurant expanded into a chain, opening this Studio City branch 10 years later. After the suburban boom of the postwar era, family-style restaurants thrived in the Valley—and Du-par's has always been much beloved. In 2004, W.W. "Biff" Naylor, owner of the Tiny Naylor's chain of diners, bought three Du-par's, including this one.

33 Home Savings and Loan

(now Chase) 12051 Ventura Blvd.

Located on one of the Valley's busiest intersections, this 1968 bank, built diagonal to the corner for maximum impact, features a mural mosaic by Millard Sheets that depicts the history of the area, entitled *From Prospector to Director*. Sheets, a prominent artist and the director of Otis Art Institute, was commissioned by the owner of the Home Savings company, Howard F. Ahmanson Sr., to design nearly 100 bank buildings across Southern California. Ahmanson loved Sheets' work, feeling that the artist had attained his desire to create "buildings that will be exciting 75 years from now."



34. FOX STUDIO CITY THEATRE, 1938

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection

34 Fox Studio City Theatre

(now Bookstar) 12136 Ventura Blvd.

This lovely and largely intact Art Deco movie theater was operated by the Fox West Coast Theatres (later Mann Theatres) from 1939 to 1991. Serving the neighborhood, the auditorium held 880 people and was even equipped to show 70mm films. Featured in many films and TV shows, the marquee, box office, and original terrazzo floor are as beckoning as ever although the interior has been transformed into a Barnes & Noble bookstore.

35 Art's Delicatessen

12224 Ventura Blvd.

A neighborhood institution for kibitzing and an industry spot for schmoozing, you never know who you'll find in the booths at this popular, old-school Jewish deli. Opened in 1957 by Art and Sandy Ginsburg, who lived in the neighborhood, the family-run and family-friendly (the couple often offered to hold crying babies so their parents could eat) restaurant is a hot spot for local debate and a must-stop for any campaigning politician passing through town.

36 Weddington Golf & Tennis

4141 Whitsett Ave.

Once home to a sheep ranch, this 17-acre, park-like site is named for Wilson C. Weddington, a member of one of the founding families of the town of Toluca. In the 1950s he began leasing the land to Joe Kirkwood Jr. (see **Pinz Bowling Center**), who designed a par-3 golf course modeled on the sport's most famous courses. Under new ownership it became the Studio City Golf Course and was frequented by film-studio workers. Today it is the largest privately-owned open space adjacent to the Los Angeles River and has been the subject of controversy for nearly a decade with different development proposals circulating and consistent opposition from elected and community leaders to any proposal that would harm it as an environmental and recreational asset.

37 Lingenbrink Shops

(now Coldwater Curves) 12634-12672 Ventura Blvd.

One of visionary architect R. M. Schindler's few commercial properties, this roadside shopping center was completed in 1942. It was commissioned by William Lingenbrink, a gallery owner, real-estate developer, and early patron of Mid-Century Modern architecture. According to the Los Angeles Conservancy, the "modern bones" of the structure can easily be seen beneath the shops' contemporary canopies.

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38 Sportsmen's Lodge

12825 Ventura Blvd.

The history of this Studio City landmark mirrors the story of the Valley's larger development: once a rural fishing area with natural ponds enjoyed by local farmers and their families, it became, over the course of half a century, a Hollywood hangout where Clark Gable, Humphrey Bogart, and John Wayne allegedly taught their children to fish. In the 1920s the natural ponds were replaced with man-made lakes; in the 1930s it was known for "bait-to-plate," that is, guests could come and catch their dinner. Due to its proximity to Republic Studios, film folk started patronizing the place, and over time the rustic spot grew swankier. In 1945, under the name Sportsmen's Lodge, a formal restaurant (one of the Valley's first fine dining establishments) and a lounge were added; a hotel and giant swimming pool were added in 1962, the trout replaced with swans.

39 Pinz Bowling Center

12655 Ventura Blvd.

Famous for its nighttime "glow" bowling and celebrity clientele, this swanky bowling alley caters to the industry stars as well as regular area residents. One of the country's largest gay bowling leagues, the Studio City Bowling League, practices here every Thursday evening. Prior to its \$2 million renovation and sale in 1997, this was known as Kirkwood Bowl, named for its owner actor and professional golfer Joe Kirkwood Jr., who played boxer Joe Palooka in films and a TV series. Kirkwood purchased the bowling center in 1956; during his ownership James Dean and William Holden were known to play here.



38. SPORTSMEN'S LODGE, 1960

*Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library
Photo Collection*

40 Hughes Market

(now Ralphs) 12842 Ventura Blvd.

This supermarket, designed by Tarzana-based architect R. Leon Edgar, was built in 1972; its impressive concrete and glass exterior remains largely intact. Before the company merged with Compton-based Ralphs in 1997, Hughes Markets were one of the region's largest supermarket chains. Created in 1952, after the postwar boom of the suburbs created a fiercely competitive grocery-store industry in California, the privately owned groceries were operated by the family of founder Joseph Hughes for more than half a century.

41 Twain's

12907 Ventura Blvd.

An example of the classic California coffee shop, this now-closed diner was originally a Denny's built in 1960 by the influential architectural firm of Armet & Davis, who designed many of Los Angeles's most beloved Googie coffee shops (including Norm's on La Cienega and Pann's on La Tijera). Twain's showcases the designers' love of aerodynamic lines in its vaulted roof, and like other Googie buildings, the style was created with automobiles in mind—the swooping lines and the bright neon signs that often accompanied these coffee shops caught the attention of passing motorists.

PASSAGE: COLDWATER CANYON BLVD. Another vital artery snaking through the Santa Monica Mountains, Coldwater Canyon Blvd. connects the Valley to Beverly Hills and the Hollywood Hills. Like its sister street, Laurel Canyon, it offers a twisting trip through the hills that can be either beautiful or frustrating, depending on traffic conditions. Less bohemian than Laurel, Coldwater is perhaps more affluent—or maybe just more staid. For more than a century now, on either side of Coldwater (like with Laurel, Mulholland Dr. is the unofficial dividing line between Valley and Basin) celebrities and movie stars have built their homes and enjoyed the privacy the foothills provide.

Frank Sinatra, who in the 1960s lived off Coldwater on the Beverly Hills side, once applied for a private helipad. His plan was to build the platform on sturdy iron posts, mimicking the design of his “cliff-hanger” house (the ultimate in modern design and state-of-the-art technology). But his neighbors protested and blocked it with the City Planning Commission. In other words, the residents of Coldwater are so tony, they aren't afraid to tell Sinatra he's in bad taste.

Along with expensive homes south of Ventura Blvd., Coldwater Canyon Blvd. is rife with areas of open space, preserving some of the area's natural beauty and allowing us to imagine what the canyon looked like before the pavers came through in the 1930s and 40s. First, there's the 122-acre Fryman Canyon Park, which is a lovely place to hike. Further up is Franklin Canyon Park, a 605-acre park with a three-acre lake that was saved from development in the 1970s. Today, part of the park houses the environmental nonprofit TreePeople.

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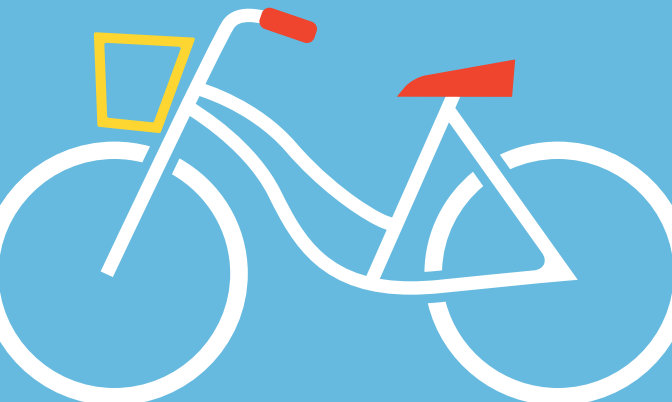
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