

Conde Naste Traveller

Lowdown: LA

This month we quiz Patrick Steven Waechter, concierge at the Standard Downtown LA



What is LA's hottest club at the moment?

The White Lotus (1743 North Cahuenga Boulevard, Hollywood; 00 1 323 463 0060). Where Nicolas Cage and the hip LA crowd go to drink sake (it's the new Cognac).

Where can I buy cool LA clothes?

For a true expression of style (on a budget), pick up some second-hand threads for \$2-\$5 on the **Goodwill** thrift store racks – the best are at 817 South La Brea Avenue or 8905 Venice Boulevard. Or you can up the trendy factor and save more cash at vintage clothing store **Jet Rag** (825 North La Brea Avenue) on Sundays, when everything is one dollar.

To look cool in LA what should I avoid?

Don't look in the mirror.

What's the next big LA fad?

Electric cars. You won't be able to print this fast enough. Fads move through this city faster than the carpool lane.

Any tips for driving in LA?

Traffic isn't as bad as everyone says. If you do drive: 1) avoid the 405 Freeway; 2) remember the Olympic Boulevard is a swift-moving substitute for the 10 Freeway between downtown and the Westside; 3) take passengers and use the carpool lanes.

Universal Studios is tacky.

How can I get a real behind-the-scenes studio tour?

LA Center Studios (00 1 213 534 3000; www.lacenterstudios.com). One of the first studios built in LA. Films shot there include *Mission Impossible 2*, *Terminator 3* and *Catch Me If You Can*.

Best spa treatment?

Beverly Hot Springs (00 1 323 734 7000; www.beverlyhotsprings.com).

Where can I get my hair done with Hollywood's A-list?

Goodform at 727 North Fairfax (00 1 323 658 8585).

Coollest place to buy books?

The Bodhi Tree in West Hollywood (8585 Melrose Avenue) has a very good Californian New Age selection; the **Samuel French** bookstore (7623 West Sunset Boulevard) offers an amazing collection of plays and books on the performing arts.

Where's best for sushi?

Pull up a cardboard chair designed by Frank Gehry at **R-23**, downtown (Suite 109, 923 East 2nd Street; 00 1 213 687 7178).

Where do I go for authentic Mexican food?

The best tacos are churned out by the many 'roach coach' catering vans that circulate throughout the urban jungle. For a reliable restaurant, head to **El Cholo** (1121 South Western Avenue; 00 1 323 734 2773). For an edgier, less-expensive option and a damn good Margarita, make your way to **La Barca** (2414 South Vermont Avenue; 00 1 323 735 6567).

Where can I hear decent jazz?

Catalina Bar & Grill in Hollywood (1640 North Cahuenga Boulevard; 00 1 323 466 2210).

I want to take an unusual LA tour. What do you suggest?

The delightfully insane Anne Block runs **Take My Mother Please!** (00 1 323 737 2200). Block is obsessed with LA and does everything from bespoke tours inspired by a client's favourite film to visits to LA's most quirky buildings. She drives clients around in her silver Cadillac.

Any good pubs?

For a heady mix of expat Euros, artsy Eastsiders, Hollywood trendies, and the best keg beer in LA, try the **Red Lion Tavern** in Silverlake (2366 Glendale Boulevard; 00 1 323 662 5337).

Can you get me seats near Jack Nicholson at a Laker's game?

Definitely. If you have the cash I have the number to call.

Where can I work out?

I choose the **24-hour fitness** (www.24hourfitness.com) at Sunset and Vine – the only treadmills in LA with a prime view of the Hollywood sign.

Does LA have a good flea market?

Two dollars gets you into the **Melrose Trading Post** (00 1 323 655 7678) in the Fairfax High School parking lot on the corner of Fairfax and Melrose. Open Sundays. **SHARON BOORSTEIN** *Standard Downtown LA, 550 South Flower Street, LA (00 1 213 892 8080)*