

# LOS ANGELES

EAT

## UMAMI UNLEASHED

Dynamic Chinese cuisine meets panoramic city views at WP24.

| BY AMBER GIBSON

WP24, 900 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles  
213-743-8824 // [wolfgangpuck.com/restaurants/fine-dining/57129](http://wolfgangpuck.com/restaurants/fine-dining/57129)

There's no semblance of pretension at Wolfgang Puck's Asian restaurant on the 24th floor of the Ritz-Carlton at L.A. Live, but the food is as thoughtful and delicious as ever. WP24 started serving an à-la-carte menu for the first time earlier this year; previously the eatery offered exclusively tasting menus. New family-style options like sweet-pea lobster dumplings and Assam curry seafood hot pot served tableside are ideal for sharing. But consider yourself warned: There may be fights over the final bites.

Red chilies, garlic, ginger and Thai basil season everything from charred cauliflower to stir-fried prime beef fillet. The bold flavors are complemented by a remarkable wine list, including an extensive by-the-glass selection. At Nest next door, enjoy small bites (some from the WP24 menu) and colorful cocktails in a more casual environment.

Pastry Chef Megan Potthoff puts a unique Asian twist on classic European desserts, filling a pillowy blackberry soufflé with tapioca and kaffir-lime ice cream and pairing pistachio mochi cake with milk-chocolate ice cream and *gianduja*. Even if you didn't save room for dessert, you won't be able to resist the playful *mignardise* presented with the check.



SHOP

## BLOC PARTY

An open-air shopping emporium enlivens downtown Los Angeles.

| BY AMBER GIBSON

The Bloc, 700 S. Flower, Los Angeles  
[theblocdowntown.com](http://theblocdowntown.com)

This former 1970s-style mall just completed a \$180-million overhaul to become an alfresco shopping experience spanning an entire city block. It's the largest mixed-use project in Los Angeles, encompassing creative office space, independent retailers and restaurants, and the massive 496-room Sheraton Grand Los Angeles. A pedestrian passageway links the Bloc to the Seventh Street/Metro Center Station, the city's busiest transit station, for easy access via metro, light rail or bike.

This is the Ratkovich Company's first retail center, and the team scouted their favorite shopping districts in New York for inspiration. Patrons will find an equal mix of national brands and independent boutiques. Not to be missed is the seasonally evolving collaboration between Apolis and Alchemy Works dubbed Free Market, a curated mix of men's and women's fashion, home décor, accessories, and objets d'art. Murals by Inner-City Arts grace the sides of office buildings, and theater-cum-restaurant Alamo Drafthouse shows first-run and independent films. Popbar serves customizable gelato on a stick, and Killer Café dishes up shrimp and grits, shrimp pot pie, and crab cakes 24 hours a day.



# LOS ANGELES

STAY

## LANDMARK LUSTER

A stay at the crown jewel of Beverly Hills.

| BY AMBER GIBSON

Beverly Wilshire, 9500 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills  
310-275-5200 // [fourseasons.com/beverlywilshire](http://fourseasons.com/beverlywilshire)

When the Beverly Wilshire opened its doors back in 1928, the Beverly Hills Speedway (not Rodeo Drive) was the neighborhood's main attraction. Notable residents through the decades include Elvis Presley, John Lennon and Warren Beatty, although most visitors know the hotel best for its starring role in the 1990 film *Pretty Woman*. With its iconic awnings and elaborate lobby floral arrangement, the Beverly Wilshire is as glamorous as ever. A stay in one of the 395 guest rooms, with their marble bathrooms, private balconies and delectable turndown treats, will make anyone feel like a star.

After an exhausting day of shopping, treat yourself at the magnificent spa, allowing ample time to relax in the aromatherapy crystal steam room. Your therapist will find you nibbling house-made chocolate bark and sipping tea in the lounge before whisking you past a glittering amethyst geode to indulge in a heavenly stress-relief massage with basalt hot stones. The 90-minute treatment ends with an invigorating face and scalp massage, leaving you feeling lighter, brighter and ready to conquer the City of Angels.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MILROY & MCALEER | FOUR SEASONS

TOUR  
CHICAGO

SHOP

TOP HAT

Take a step back in time at Optimo.

BY KATE NELSON

Optimo, 51 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago  
312-922-2999 // [optimo.com](http://optimo.com)

Hat maker Graham Thompson's passion runs deep. Growing up in the western suburbs of Chicago, he noticed that the classic characters of black-and-white films always seemed to be donning a chapeau of some sort. At age 16, he started apprenticing at Johnny's Hat Shop under owner Johnny Tyus. He went on to buy the business in 1995, renaming it Optimo.

Since that time, Thompson has grown a fan base spanning the globe. He counts among his customers heavy hitters like Johnny Depp, Tom Ford and Jay Z. They've come to appreciate the fine materials and expert craftsmanship reminiscent of the millinery shops of yore.

This summer, the 800-square-foot Optimo flagship store was unveiled in the historic Monadnock Building. On display are the impeccable felt and straw hats crafted at Thompson's recently opened design and production facility situated on Chicago's South Side. "When you walk through the doors, I want you to feel immediately at ease, because you know you are in good hands," he explains.

And when it comes to hat making, there simply aren't more capable hands. While custom creations can be ordered via phone, most clients prefer to stop in. First comes the careful measuring to determine the best fit among Optimo's specialty sizes. Next, a consultation determines which style best suits each man's aesthetic, lifestyle and personality. And that's when the magic happens. Chapeaus are crafted using vintage molds and strengthened via decating, an age-old steaming process. Silk linings are folded and stitched by hand. It's this commitment to traditional millinery methods that keeps customers coming back for more.



PHOTOGRAPH BY NEIL WATSON | 10 LEAVES MEDIA



EAT

FINE-DINING REVIVAL

This West Loop gem ushers in a new era of elegance.

BY AMBER GIBSON

Oriole, 661 W. Walnut St., Chicago  
312-877-5339 // [oriolechicago.com](http://oriolechicago.com)

Your cab driver may have trouble finding this 28-seat restaurant on a forgotten side street, but the hunt is worth it. A freight-elevator entrance opens dramatically to reveal an intimate interior where Chef Noah Sandoval's small team quietly and calmly delivers one of the most precise tasting menus in town.

Several courses flirt with perfection. A piece of buttery, briny Santa Barbara sea urchin is served nigiri-style, cut with acidity from yuzu kosho and topped with a crunchy sprinkling of *genmai* brown rice. I'm tempted to sidle into the open kitchen just steps away to sneak a second piece. Moments later, I'm putting my chopsticks to work on a bite of foie gras torchon draped with white soy *gelée* served on Japanese ceramic. Sandoval employs only the best ingredients — Jamón Ibérico de Bellota, Japanese A5 wagyu, local lamb belly — bringing levity to these rich meats. Two drink pairings are available, one incorporating beers and mixed drinks, the other reserve wines.

Love and care shine in every detail at Oriole, from house-baked bread and house-cultured butter to a bathroom stocked with individually packaged floss and house-made mints. Pastry Chef Genie Kwon even sends you home with a generous gift for the morning after; on my visit, a miniature pecan lemon pie.

TOUR  
CHICAGO



STAY

MISS CONGENIALITY

Meet River North's girl next door.

BY AMBER GIBSON

Dana Hotel and Spa, 660 N. State St., Chicago  
312-202-6000 // [danahotelandspa.com](http://danahotelandspa.com)

Polished but low-key, self-assured yet gracious. Cool and collected with a hidden wild streak. She might not have the same name recognition as Chicago's other top luxury hotels, but this 216-room property is like the girl you sat next to in high-school chemistry you can't believe you overlooked. The concierge is well-connected, and the guest rooms are modern simplicity at its best.

Dana's cutting-edge spa is the first in Chicago to offer Cryofacials, literally blasting away wrinkles while tightening and hydrating to keep skin looking young. High-tech skincare lines like PriyanaMD and Factorfive blend hyaluronic acid with stem cells to supercharge collagen production for longer-lasting results.

Vertigo Sky Lounge is the clubbiest scene around. The city's first indoor-outdoor rooftop is 26 stories high with live DJs, bottle service and an attractive, lively crowd. Even frigid winter weather can't stop the party: An outdoor fire pit keeps guests warm while bartenders mix up lethal libations behind the sleek ice bar until early morning.

