

# MITCH'S COOL LOS ANGELES

*(In Praise of the Unfairly Maligned Los Angeles  
By Mitch Schneider)*

- Leaving this world behind (like Elvis used to, as legend has it) by walking/meditating at the lushly landscaped 10-acre **Lake Shrine, Self-Realization Fellowship**, off Sunset Blvd in Pacific Palisades (310 454 4114, free). <http://www.yoganandasrf.org/tmp/LocationDetail.aspx?id=942>
- Buying organic produce, eating CornMaiden's eclectic tamales and tossing dollars into open guitar cases every Sunday morning at the **Hollywood Farmers Market** (Sunset and Ivar, 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM, free). [www.farmernet.com](http://www.farmernet.com)
- Greek-feasting at the bustling, warm-hearted taverna/market **Papa Cristos**, Pico and Normandie (2771 W Pico Blvd, 323 737 2970), at the same location for over 50 years. [www.papacristo.com](http://www.papacristo.com)
- Taking in the swimming pool-dotted view of the Valley from the **Topanga Boulevard Overlook**, three miles south of Ventura Blvd on Topanga (free parking and picnic tables). <http://www.lamountains.com/parks.asp?parkid=59>
- Pondering the city's unique blend of glamour and cruelty while looking out over Los Angeles from the secret gardens of Beverly Hills' **Greystone Park and Mansion** (905 Loma Vista Dr, 310 550 4796, free). [www.greystonemansion.org](http://www.greystonemansion.org)
- Gallery-hopping and grabbing a bite at the art complex **Bergamot Station** in Santa Monica (2525 Michigan Avenue, 310 586 6488, free parking). [www.bergamotstation.com](http://www.bergamotstation.com)
- Rejecting the mainstream by taking in an essential left-of-center movie at the reliably well-programmed **Nuart Theatre** in West Los Angeles (11272 Santa Monica Blvd, 310 281 8223). [www.landmarktheatres.com](http://www.landmarktheatres.com)
- Sliding into your pricey-but-worth-it reserved seat at the state-of-the-art **Arclight Theatre** in Hollywood (6360 Sunset Blvd, 323 464 1478, [www.arclightcinemas.com](http://www.arclightcinemas.com)) and then walking across the street to buy CDs at Amoeba Music ([www.amoebamusic.com](http://www.amoebamusic.com))
- Food shopping downtown at the sprawling **Grand Central Market**, the city's oldest and largest open-air market (317 S. Broadway, 213/624-2378) [www.grandcentralsquare.com](http://www.grandcentralsquare.com)

- Ocean-gazing from atop the nine-story Ferris wheel at **Pacific Park** in Santa Monica, particularly on a warm January day as the sun falls into the sea while freezing temps accost your East Coast buddies (310 260 8744). [www.pacpark.com](http://www.pacpark.com)
- Luxuriating with a Korean Buff and Massage at Koreatown's posh **Aroma Spa and Sport**, where admission includes use of multiple steam rooms, hot/cold tubs, swimming pool and high-tech gym (3680 Wilshire Blvd, 213 387 2111). [www.aromaresort.com](http://www.aromaresort.com)
- Transcending the mundane by getting ridiculously pampered at that better-than-therapy hideaway known as the **Beverly Hills Peninsula Hotel** (9882 S Santa Monica Blvd, 310 551 2888). [www.beverlyhills.peninsula.com](http://www.beverlyhills.peninsula.com)
- Sampling tea from around the world and scones at Afternoon Tea, served all day, at the **Chado Tea Room** in Hollywood (8422 1/2 W 3rd Street, 1 800 442 4019). [www.chadotea.com](http://www.chadotea.com)
- Getting electrified by the ultra-modern luminous pieces plus the vintage neon signs at downtown's **Museum of Neon Art** (501 W. Olympic Blvd, at Hope St, 213 489 9918). [www.neonmona.org](http://www.neonmona.org)
- Winning, placing, showing—and brunching--on the Turf Terrace at Arcadia's art deco, 1934-opened **Santa Anita Race Track**, against the backdrop of the San Gabriel Mountains (285 W. Huntington Dr, 626 574 6336). [www.santaanita.com](http://www.santaanita.com)
- Giving shout-outs to Johnny and Dee Dee Ramone; Jayne Mansfield; Rudolph Valentino; and Cecil B. DeMille at the hundred-year-old **Hollywood Forever** cemetery (6000 Santa Monica Blvd, 323 469 1181), site of an infamous Korn party in 2006 that marked Axl Rose's first public appearance in years. [www.hollywoodforever.com](http://www.hollywoodforever.com)
- Taking the canyons and back streets when the freeways look foreboding on the live maps at the heaven-sent **Sig Alert**. [www.sigalert.com](http://www.sigalert.com)
- Heading downtown by going underground and exiting at the beautiful art deco landmark **Union Station**. [www.metro.net](http://www.metro.net)
- Dining in style at **Traxx** under the high Spanish ceiling along the sweeping Grand Ticket Concourse at Union Station. [www.traxxrestaurant.com](http://www.traxxrestaurant.com)
- Enjoying one of the best panoramic views in the city—Hollywood Hills and downtown--while “dining” on the roof at the **Beverly Center** mall adjacent to the Food Court. [www.beverlycenter.com](http://www.beverlycenter.com)

- Eating the best pizza in the city at that venerable rock and roll Italian restaurant/hangout, the **Rainbow Bar & Grill**, where rock and roll never forgets and dinner is served until 2:00 AM seven days a week (9015 Sunset Blvd, 310 278 4232). Ask for Table #14, site of the first date for Marilyn Monroe and Joe Dimaggio when the eater was called Villa Nova. [www.rainbowbarandgrill.com](http://www.rainbowbarandgrill.com)
- Going poolside with a day pass at various hotels like the **Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel** where you don't need to be a guest (1700 Ocean Ave, 310 458 6700). [www.santamonicaloewshotel.com](http://www.santamonicaloewshotel.com)
- Eating Pan-Asian food (including crickets and worms) at **Typhoon** while watching the private planes take off and land on Runway 21 at **Santa Monica Airport** (Typhoon, 3221 Donald Douglas Loop S, 310 390-6565 <http://www.typhoon.biz/>)
- Treating yourself to the four star bathrooms in between meetings by stopping off at the **Four Seasons** hotel and then checking your Blackberry by the fireplace in the lobby (300 S Doheny Dr, 310 273-2222). [www.fourseasons.com](http://www.fourseasons.com)
- Throwing a dinner party amidst the velvet images of Charlie's Angels in the kitschy wine room of the long-running **Antonio's** Mexican restaurant (7470 Melrose Ave, 323 658-9060). [http://www.antoniosonmelrose.com/Antonios\\_on\\_Melrose.html](http://www.antoniosonmelrose.com/Antonios_on_Melrose.html)