

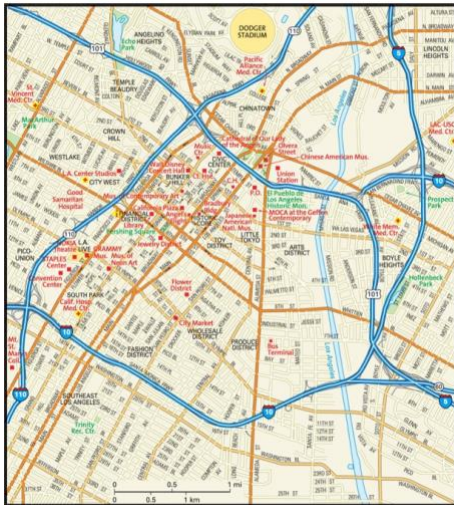
# **CLAW 23 LEATHER WALKING TOUR OF DTLA**

**November 25, 2023**

**JON WRIGHT**

**Los Angeles Leather Coalition Board member  
Tom of Finland Foundation Board member  
Commander, Regiment of the Black & Tans**

**START: BONAVENTURE HOTEL Flower Street Lobby**



**FIRST STOP: CENTRAL LIBRARY**

**SECOND STOP: BILTMORE HOTEL**

**THIRD STOP: OVIATT BLDG**

**FOURTH STOP: PERSHING SQUARE**

**FIFTH STOP: BRADBURY BLDG/ GRAND CENTRAL MARKET**

**SIXTH STOP: ANGELS FLIGHT/CALIFORNIA PLAZA/ MOCA**

**SEVENTH STOP: BROAD MUSEUM/ WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL**

**EIGHTH STOP: MUSIC CENTER/ TOP OF GRAND PARK/ VIEW OF CITY HALL**

**NINETH STOP: LIBRARY TOWER/ SPANISH STEPS/ BRIDGE TO HOTEL**

## HOTEL BONAVENTURE

**Date Built:** 1974- 1976

**Architect:** John Portman

**Architectural Style:** Brutalist Mid Century Modern/ Post Modern

**Interesting Facts:** largest hotel in the City of LA, lynchpin of Bunker Hill Redevelopment Project

## RICHARD RIODAN CENTRAL LIBRARY

**Date Built:** 1926; 1993

**Architects:** Bertram Goodhue (original); Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Assoc. (Tom Bradley addition)

**Architectural Style(s):** Ancient Egyptian & Mediterranean Revival (original); Modernist/ Beaux Art (Bradley addition)

**Interesting Facts:** The original library was totally unique and incredibly beautiful, although woefully overcrowded and antiquated. The central tower is topped with a tiled [mosaic pyramid](#) with suns on the sides with a hand holding a torch representing the "Light of Learning" at the apex. Other elements include [sphinxes](#), [snakes](#), and celestial mosaics. It has sculptural elements by the preeminent American architectural sculptor [Lee Lawrie](#), similar to the [Nebraska State Capitol](#) in [Lincoln, Nebraska](#), also designed by Goodhue. The interior of the library is decorated with various figures, statues, chandeliers, and grilles, notably a four-part [mural](#) by illustrator [Dean Cornwell](#) depicting stages of the [History of California](#) which was completed around 1933. It was almost destroyed by two fires in 1986, leading to a massive citywide effort to save the beloved building. The original structure has been lovingly restored and expanded with an enormous, eight-story atrium wing dedicated to former mayor Tom Bradley. Now, the library contains an area of 538,000 square feet, and has nearly 89 miles of shelves and seating for over 1,400 people.

## BILTMORE HOTEL

**Date Built:** 1923

**Architect:** Schultze & Weaver

**Architectural Style:** Synthesis of the Spanish-Italian [Renaissance Revival](#), [Mediterranean Revival](#), and [Beaux Arts](#) styles

**Interesting Facts:** The hotel is meant as an homage to the [Castilian](#) heritage of Los Angeles. The "Biltmore Angel" is heavily incorporated into the design—as a symbol of the city as well as the Biltmore itself. The interiors of the Biltmore Hotel are decorated with: [frescos](#) and [murals](#); carved [marble fountains](#) and columns; massive wood-beamed ceilings; [travertine](#) and oak paneled walls; [lead crystal chandeliers](#); cast [bronze](#) stairwells and doorways; fine [artisan marquetry](#) and mill work; and heavily [embroidered](#) imported [tapestries](#) and draperies. Most notable are the frescoed mural ceilings in the main Galleria and the Crystal Ballroom, which were hand painted in 1922 by Italian artist [John B. Smeraldi](#), known for his work in the [Vatican](#) and the [White House](#). Smeraldi and his team famously painted the ballroom's colorful, seamless fresco over a period of seven months, decorating it with figures of Greek and Roman gods, angels, cupids and other mythological creatures.

The Rendezvous Court, once the hotel's lobby but now used primarily for afternoon tea, is decorated with a [Moorish Revival](#) styled plaster ceiling painted with [24 Carat Gold](#) accents, two original imported Italian chandeliers from 1923, and a grand [Spanish Baroque Revival](#) bronze doorway, whose astrological [clock](#) still keeps time today.

Each ballroom on the Galleria level is themed either after the room's original function or the hotel's overall California-heritage premise. The Emerald Room was once the hotel's main guest dining room; its decor features images of hunt and harvest, with hand-painted animals and fish on the cast-plaster ceiling beams. The Tiffany Room was formerly an open corridor used as a drop-off point for Crystal Ballroom functions. Now enclosed, the elegant space centers around exploration, with relief sculptures and panels depicting [Queen Isabella I of Castile](#), and [Christopher Columbus](#) and other [Spanish New World explorers](#). The split-level Gold Room, once a dining room for elite guests, features [Prohibition-era](#) hidden liquor compartments and panels along the ceiling for [press photographers](#) to take pictures of the event below. It is decorated with a gold [cast-plaster](#) ceiling, hand-oiled wood paneling, and nine mirrored windows along three sides.

The South Galleria is painted with floral [friezes](#) inspired by the decor of [ancient Roman Pompeii](#), and features a vaulted ceiling, marble [balustrades](#) and heavy Roman piers. Gold-painted [wrought iron](#) gates open to a staircase leading down to the Biltmore Bowl, site of the first Oscar ceremony. In fact the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences was founded at a luncheon in the Crystal Ballroom and the original Oscar statuette sketched on a Biltmore Hotel napkin!

Also of interest is the hotel's health club and indoor pool, which was modeled after the decks of 1920s luxury ocean liners. Finally, among many other star studded events, the Biltmore Hotel served the [International Olympic Committee](#) as their headquarters during the [1984 Summer Olympics](#).

## JAMES OVIATT BUILDING

**Date Built:** 1928

**Architect:** Walker & Eisen

**Architectural Style:** Art Deco

**Interesting Facts:** James Oviatt was a successful men's clothier who travelled often to France and brought back the architectural style he would use in his famous building. The furnishings included a 12-ton illuminated glass cornice and glass arcade ceiling by architect Ferdinand Chanut and glassmaker Gaëtan Jeannin. [René Lalique](#) designed and created the molded glass elevator door panels, front and side doors, chandeliers, and a large panel clock. Many tons of 'Napoleon' marble and a massive, three-faced [tower clock](#) with chimes (manufactured by the pioneering electric clockmaker, *Ateliers Brillié Frères* ) were imported from France. The penthouse has been restored as an exquisite example of the Art Deco style. The restaurant & nightclub Cicada occupies the former haberdashery and is amazing!

## PERSHING SQUARE

**Date Built:** 1866 (dedicated as La Plaza Abaja); renamed for General John Pershing in 1918

**Architect:** John Parkinson (1910 remodel); Ricardo Legorreta & Laurie Olin (1994 remodel)

**Architectural Style:** Public square with post modern features

**Interesting Facts:** One of the oldest public squares in Los Angeles, the original park was reputedly a gay cruising area in the late 1940's and in order to sanitize the area, the entire park was dug up and replaced with underground parking similar to Union Square in SF. The palm trees were removed and sent to Anaheim to be part of the original Jungle Cruise ride at Disneyland then under construction! It continued to be neglected and was considered unsafe so in 1992, it was closed for a complete renovation to how it looks today. It hosts numerous civic events including the DTLA Proud pride festival every August.

## BRADBURY BUILDING

**Date Built:** 1893

**Architect:** George Wyman (not a trained architect) from the original designs by Sumner Hunt

**Architectural Style:** Italian Renaissance Revival exterior with spectacularly unique interior familiar to cinema geeks around the world

**Interesting Facts:** The five-story central court features glazed and unglazed yellow and pink bricks, ornamental cast iron, tiling, Italian marble, Mexican tile, decorative [terracotta](#) and polished wood, capped by a [skylight](#) that allows the court to be flooded with natural rather than artificial light, creating ever-changing shadows and accents during the day. At the time the building was completed, it featured the largest plate-glass windows in Los Angeles.

The Bradbury Building made a memorable place in film history as the insurance office central to the 1944 [film noir](#) classic *Double Indemnity*.<sup>[30]</sup> It has subsequently been featured prominently as a setting in many films, television shows and in literature—particularly in the science fiction genre. Most notably, the building is a setting in the 1982 science fiction film *Blade Runner*, for the character J. F. Sebastian's apartment, and the climactic rooftop scene. It has been used in dozens of TV shows and music videos including Cher's *Take Me Home* in 1979.

## MILLION DOLLAR THEATER

**Date Built:** 1918

**Architect:** Albert C. Martin (building tower); William Woollett (theater auditorium)

**Architectural Style:** [Spanish Colonial Revival](#) ornament, including bursts of lavish [Churrigueresque](#) decoration, statues, longhorn skulls, and other odd features

**Interesting Facts:** One of the first movie palaces built in the US and the first theater built by Sid Grauman who went on to build Grauman's Chinese and Grauman's Egyptian theaters in Hollywood. At its height, Broadway had the largest concentration of movie palaces in the world. The Million Dollar Theater reputedly cost over a \$1million to build (probably more!) and featured the longest clear span concrete beam ever built up to that time supporting the balcony. For many years, the office building housed the headquarters of the municipal water department of Los Angeles (later DWP) and eventually the [Metropolitan Water District of Southern California](#) and the penthouse was William Mulholland's office. From the 1940's until the 1970's, the Million Dollar Theater was the mecca of [Spanish-language](#) entertainment in the United States. [Dolores del Río](#), [Cantinflas](#), [María Félix](#), [Agustín Lara](#), [José Alfredo Jiménez](#), [José Feliciano](#), [Juan Gabriel](#), [Vicente Fernández](#), and [Celia Cruz](#) are but a few of the artists that worked there. Spanish language television network Univision traces its roots to the theater.

## GRAND CENTRAL MARKET

**Date Built:** 1897 (original Homer Laughlin Building); 1905 (Laughlin Annex) opened as Wonder Market in 1917

**Architect:** John Parkinson (Homer Laughlin); Harrison Albright (Annex)

**Architectural Style:** Beaux Art

**Interesting Facts:** One of downtown's oldest commercial structures in continuous use, this building was the city's first fireproofed and steel-reinforced structure. Today, the Market's 40 stalls are home to an only-in-LA blend of legacy vendors like China Cafe and Roast To Go (Grand Central Market tenants for over half a century), rising stars, and success stories from the city's buzzing food scene. The Market is a microcosm of the historic immigrant communities that have shaped Los Angeles and a mosaic of the creativity and vision of the people who call this city home.

## ANGELS FLIGHT

**Date Built:** 1901

**Architect:** Merceau Bridge & Construction Co.; Train & Williams

**Architectural Style:** Beaux Art funicular railway

**Interesting Facts:** The 120-year-old funicular takes passengers on a short ride between Hill Street and Grand Avenue on Bunker Hill. Originally opened in 1901, Angels Flight® — the world's shortest railway — has given more than 100 million rides on its hillside track. The original cars Olivet and Sinai have been rebuilt several times over the years. The railroad has been closed several times for long periods due to the Bunker Hill Redevelopment Project which destroyed the neighborhood it was built to serve. The closed Angels Flight® was operated for a single day to film Ryan Gosling's and Emma Stone's characters riding it in the 2016 film *La La Land*. And now it has been restored for a new era amongst the high rises of the new DTLA.

## CALIFORNIA PLAZA

**Date Built:** 1985- 1995

**Architect:** Arthur Erickson (overall project, One California Plaza and Two California Plaza (with AC Martin & Assoc.)

**Architectural Style:** Contemporary

**Interesting Facts:** California Plaza is home to the [Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art](#) (MOCA), Colburn School of Performing Arts, the Los Angeles Omni Hotel, and a 1.5-acre \) water court. It includes One California Plaza, a 577 ft skyscraper located in the [Bunker Hill District](#) and [Two California Plaza](#). The site was once the thriving but definitely dicey neighborhood of Bunker Hill which was completely destroyed in the 1950's through redevelopment.

## MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (MOCA)

**Date Built:** 1986

**Architect:** Arata Isozaki



**Architectural Style:** Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Modernism

**Interesting Facts:** The construction and \$23 million cost of the striking MOCA Grand Avenue sandstone building was part of a city-brokered deal with the developer of the \$1 billion [California Plaza](#) redevelopment project on [Bunker Hill](#), who received the use of an 11.2-acre, publicly owned parcel of land. On the grounds that the LA municipal ordinance said that 1.5% of the construction costs of new buildings had to be spent on fine-arts embellishments, MOCA's board of trustees struck a deal with the Community Redevelopment Agency to have the project developer build a 100,000-square-foot museum, designed by an architect of the trustees' choice, at no cost to the museum. The Grand Avenue location is used to display pieces from MOCA's substantial permanent collection, especially artists who did much of their work between 1940 and 1980. There is also an extensive set of rooms used to display temporary exhibits, usually a major retrospective of an important artist, or works connected by a theme.

## THE BROAD

**Date Built:** 2015

**Architect:** Diller scodio + Renfro

**Architectural Style:** Iconic 21<sup>st</sup> Century Modernism ("the veil and the vault")

**Interesting Facts:** The building design is based on a concept entitled "the veil and the vault". "The veil" is a porous envelope that wraps the whole building, filtering and transmitting daylight to the indoor space. This skin is made of 2,500 rhomboidal panels made in fiberglass reinforced concrete supported by a 650-ton steel substructure. "The vault" is a concrete body which forms the core of the building, dedicated to artworks storage, laboratories, curatorial spaces and offices. The façade proved very tricky to fabricate leading to delays and some criticism that it fails to meet the original vision of the architects. The three-story museum features 50,000 square feet of exhibition space on two floors with 35,000 square feet of column-free gallery space on the third floor and 15,000 square feet more on the first. The roof has 318 skylight monitors that let in diffused sunlight from the north. The Broad houses a nearly 2,000-piece collection of contemporary art, featuring 200 artists.

## WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

**Date Built:** 2003

**Architect:** Frank Gehry

**Architectural Style:** iconic 21<sup>st</sup> Century Modernism

**Interesting Facts:** The project to find a new home for Los Angeles' prestigious orchestra began when [Lillian Disney](#) made an initial gift of \$50 million in 1987 to build a performance venue as a gift to the people of Los Angeles and a tribute to [Walt Disney](#)'s devotion to the arts and to the city. The Walt Disney Concert Hall is the fourth hall of the [Los Angeles Music Center](#) and was designed by [Frank Gehry](#) with acoustics by Minoru Nagata. It seats 2,265 people and serves, among other purposes, as the home of the [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) orchestra and the [Los Angeles Master Chorale](#). It was influenced by the [vineyard-style](#) seating configuration, of the [Berliner Philharmonie](#) by [Hans Scharoun](#). In the short time it has been open, the hall has become a beloved symbol of the city.

## MUSIC CENTER OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

**Date Built:** 1964-1967

**Architect:** Welton Beckett

**Architectural Style:** Mid Century Modern

**Interesting Facts:** The Music Center (officially named the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County) is one of the largest performing arts centers in the United States. The Music Center is home to the [Dorothy Chandler Pavilion](#), [Ahmanson Theater](#), [Mark Taper Forum](#), [Roy and Edna Disney / CalArts Theatre](#), and [Walt Disney Concert Hall](#). Each year, The Music Center welcomes more than 1.3 million people to performances by its four internationally renowned resident companies: [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#), [Los Angeles Opera](#), [Los Angeles Master Chorale](#), and [Center Theatre Group](#) (CTG) as well as performances by the dance series Gloriana Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center. The center is home to on-going community events, arts festivals, outdoor concerts, participatory arts activities and workshops, and educational programs. In April 1955, [Dorothy Chandler](#), wife of Los Angeles Times publisher Norman Chandler, began fundraising toward a permanent home for the Philharmonic. Ultimately Mrs. Chandler raised almost \$20 million in private donations; the County provided the site and raised the remaining \$14 million using bonds. The first theater named for her opened in 1964. The rest of the complex was completed in April 1967. The additional venues, the Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Theatre, were dedicated on April 9 and 12, 1967, respectively. The plaza between the three original buildings features a monumental sculpture: Peace on Earth by Jacques Lipchitz which was donated by Lawrence E. Deutsch and Lloyd Rigler, the city's first openly gay power couple. For a number of years prior to the opening of the Dolby Theater in Hollywood, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion was the home of the Oscars.

## LOS ANGELES CITY HALL

**Date Built:** 1928

**Architect:** John Parkinson, John C. Austin and Albert C. Martin, Sr.

**Architectural Style:** Art Deco with Egyptian, Near Eastern and Spanish Colonial Revival elements

**Interesting Facts:** Between the Music Center at the top of Bunker Hill and the Los Angeles City Hall lies Grand Park, a recently reimagined park space which has become very popular. Grand Park is flanked by various city and county governmental buildings and court houses each with its own interesting story to tell. At the base of the hill stands the City Hall. It has 32 floors and, at 454 feet high, is the tallest [base-isolated](#) structure in the world, having undergone a [seismic retrofit](#) from 1998 to 2001, so that the building will sustain minimal damage and remain functional after a magnitude 8.2 [earthquake](#). The concrete in its tower was made with sand from each of [California's](#) 58 counties and water from its 21 historical [missions](#). City Hall's distinctive tower was based on the shape of the [Mausoleum of Mausolus](#), and shows the influence of the [Los Angeles Public Library](#), completed shortly before the structure was begun. An image of City Hall has been on [Los Angeles Police Department](#) badges since 1940. Prior to the late 1950s the Charter of the City of Los Angeles did not permit any portion of any building other than a

purely decorative tower to be taller than City Hall, making it the tallest building in Los Angeles until 1964. The building was the Daily Planet Building in Superman and has been seen in countless film and television productions. It is truly one of the symbols of the city.

## **LIBRARY TOWER (First Interstate Tower/ USNB Tower) and Spanish Steps**

**Date Built:** 1987-1989

**Architect:** Henry N. Cobb (Pei Cobb Freed & Partners)

**Architectural Style:** Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Modernism

**Interesting Facts:** Library Tower is an iconic symbol of Los Angeles and, by structural height, the [third-tallest building in California](#), the second-tallest building in Los Angeles, the [eighteenth-tallest in the United States](#), the third-tallest west of the [Mississippi River](#) after the [Salesforce Tower](#) and the [Wilshire Grand Center](#), and the [129th-tallest building in the world](#), after being surpassed by the Wilshire Grand Center. It is the only building in California whose roof heights exceed 1,000 feet. Because local [building codes](#) required all high-rise buildings to have a helipad, it was known as the tallest building in the world with a roof-top [heliport](#) from its completion in 1989 to 2010. The building was first known and is alternatively known today as the Library Tower, because it was built as part of the \$1 billion [Los Angeles Central Library](#) redevelopment area, following two disastrous fires at the library in 1986, and its location across the street. The City of Los Angeles sold [air rights](#) to the developers of the tower to help pay for the reconstruction of the library. As a result, the building was given permission to far exceed the height it would normally be allowed on its site. In addition, the developers were required to include a landscaped public passageway up Bunker Hill connecting the top of the hill and the Central Library. This feature is often called the Spanish Steps after the famous outdoor stairway in Rome. The building was also known for a time as First Interstate Bank World Center but the name Library Tower was restored after [First Interstate Bancorp](#) merged with [Wells Fargo Bank](#). In March 2003, the property was leased by [U.S. Bancorp](#) and the building was renamed the U.S. Bank Tower. Its helipad played a major role in the film Independence Day