

# Happy 80th, Griffith Observatory

The magnificent skyward-looking institution celebrates eight decades of wonder.

By Alysia Gray Painter • Published May 14, 2015 • Updated on May 14, 2015 at 4:57 pm



We SoCalers may gently quibble about Very Important Matters from time to time, the not-so-pressing issues that ultimately serve to bond us in local love.

Is better to take Fountain or Oakwood into Hollywood on a Friday night? (Both have their pluses.) And should a famished eater simply squeezes the lime, or bite into it, extracting all the juice, when one digs into a plate of shrimp tacos?(The latter, obviously.)

But everyone, across the golden City of Dreams, is all-out goo goo over [Griffith Observatory](#), the always-free, Foucault pendulum-rocking, skyward-dreaming, astronomical Art Deco-plus wonder that sits with an air of timeless majesty above Los Feliz.

Everyone.


Which should make the superstar structure's 80th birthday celebration a snap. City Councilman Tom LaBonge and author Arnold Schwartzman, an authority on the observatory's architecture, will fete the landmark on the evening of May 14, alongside officials and fans and building buffs and park people and visitors from other galaxies.

OK, maybe not that last one, but wouldn't otherworldly beings visit the of G.O. first in LA? They so would. They don't even need an intergalactic tourist app to know this is *the* place to go.


The regal building opened on May 14, 1935, as part of the Works Progress Administration efforts, and the grand pile, if we may lovingly call it a "pile," in the affectionate and old-fashioned sense, has become a building Angelenos practically burst with pride over, and rightly so.

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Griffith Observatory, by the by, is typically referred to as Art Deco, but with a sprinkling of other styles. We see you in there, Streamline Moderne and Beaux Arts, and you, too, high Hollywood fantasy.

The observatory, beyond its outer beauty, serves as a source for serious study of the cosmos, and it regularly invites the curious out onto the vast front lawn to peer deep into the night through a host of telescopes. It's the home of the Leonard Nimoy Event Horizon Theater and the Samuel Oschin Planetarium and a nifty, kid-pleasing sundial. It's been in movies — hello, "Rebel Without a Cause" and "The Rocketeer" -- and it has the best views of the city.

That's an opinion not even worth quibbling over, shrimp taco- or Fountain Avenue-style. It just does and just about everyone says so.

And is there a more worthy neighbor for the Hollywood Sign? What other city puts its most beautiful and legend-heavy icons up high on the side of hills, for all to look up and be emboldened by?


Happy 80th, Griffith Observatory. We know that you're constantly looking at the sky from your Griffith Park perch, but consider that we're constantly looking at you, from all points of the city.


Does that make you, in a way, LA's nearest star?


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