



## **Excerpted Reviews from *AtNight Los Angeles***

*(Originally appeared in digital format on wireless devices.)*

**By Craig McGuire**

### **3 Clubs**

1123 North Vine Street  
323.462.6441

### **360**

6290 Sunset Boulevard  
323.871.2995

### **Akbar**

4356 West Sunset Boulevard @ Fountain  
323.665.6810

### **Arena**

6655 Santa Monica Boulevard  
323.462.0714

### **Argyle Hotel Bar**

8358 Sunset Boulevard  
Between Sweetzer & La Cienega Blvd.  
213.654.7100

### **Asia de Cuba**

8440 Sunset Boulevard  
323.848.6000

Located in Ian Schrager's chic Mondrian Hotel, Asia de Cuba is more than just the West Coast spin-off of the hot NYC nightlife mainstay. Sure the stunning, yet understated décor achieved by world-renowned designer Philippe Starck seems strikingly similar. The menus at both spots aren't that much different either. And, at the 32-seat Lobby Bar they even boast the same wide array of aged, spiced and infused rums you'll find in New York. But there is something positively LA about this romantic locale. As the moniker implies, this spot delivers a delicious nuevo Asian-Latino fusion. However, where Asia de Cuba really succeeds is with its intimate ambiance, especially if you can grab a table outside. This is one Hollywood sequel we recommend.

### **The Baked Potato**

3787 Cahuenga Boulevard  
818.980.1615

Silky horns and soul-searching riffs slink out onto Cahuenga Boulevard drawing you into The Baked Potato, the city's oldest contemporary Jazz club. Little has changed here over the past 30 years, which is quite an achievement considering the plastic fleeting reality of LA. We're glad they didn't waste too much time on the décor in this one-room spot, because it probably wouldn't have made much of a difference anyway. The lights are low and the small audiences hunched over, totally absorbed in the music. For the serious aficionados only, there's a serious Jazz vibe here, so head-bangers and dancing queens need not apply. The performers, like most of the crowd,



are often swept up in the moment, so go somewhere else if it's quite conversation you seek. And, while they serve up a mean baked potato--offering 21 different takes on the traditional spud--that's just about all there is to the menu. So, you might want to grab a snack before you come. Cover charge runs between \$5 and \$15.

**The Baked Potato Hollywood**

6266 Sunset Boulevard  
323.461.6400

**The Bar at the Beverly Wilshire**

9500 Wilshire Boulevard  
Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel  
310.275.5200

**Bar Marmont**

8171 Sunset Boulevard  
Between Sweetzer Avenue and Crescent Heights Boulevard  
213.650.0575

**C**

8442 Wilshire Boulevard  
@ Hamilton Drive  
213.782.8157

**Cava**

8384 W. Third Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90048  
323-658-8898

**Club Amagi**

6114 Sunset Boulevard  
323.464.7497

**Club Lingerie**

6507 Sunset Boulevard  
323.466.8557

**The Coconut Club**

9876 Wilshire Boulevard  
310.274.7777

Merv Griffin's take on the supper club experience hits all the right chords. The décor is opulent and the atmosphere elegant. From the crowd to the Big Band orchestra, everything about The Coconut Club oozes style, sophistication and class. The crowd is a bit more mature than most LA nightspots, and there's usually plenty of out-of-towners, but this is still one of the best places in the city to make the right impression. However, impressions don't run cheap these days, so expect to spend and don't forget the plastic. There's swing, waltz and all kinds of ballroom



dancing—but trust us, it's so much more fun that it sounds. Like everything else about this place, you want to kick it up a notch so wear the good suit tonight, and make sure you pull out that chair for the young lady. That's a good boy.

**Coconut Teaser**

8117 Sunset Boulevard  
323.654.4773

**The Comedy Store**

8433 Sunset Blvd  
323.656.6225

**The Conga Room**

5364 Wilshire Boulevard  
323.549.9765

Opened a little over two years, The Conga Room has quickly risen to the top of LA's nightlife scene as THE premier spot for live salsa and merengue. By regularly featuring some of the giants on today's Latin and Afro-Cuban music landscape, LA hipsters and hopeless romantics alike know The Conga Room is as close to a sure thing as you're likely to get in LA. The dining room boasts some of the best Nuevo Latino and Cuban fare to be had outside of Havana, but the ambiance is strictly pre-Castro. And what would complement a perfect evening better than a superior smoke. The Conga Room boasts quite an impressive collection in its tasteful cigar lounge. Expect to pay a little more here, but you probably figured that out already.

**Crush Bar**

1743 North Cahuenga Boulevard @ Hollywood Boulevard  
323.461.9017

**The Derby**

4500 Los Feliz Boulevard  
323.663.8979

While it's not nearly as mobbed as it was after being featured in "Swingers," The Derby is still a great spot for live music and dancing--especially if you're partial to swing. Musicians blaring jazz, swing, bebop and blues smoke the crowded dance floor. The crowd, like the spot, is unpretentious in a stylish LA sort of way. If you can't dance, and even if you can, early evening dance lessons nightly, ranging in skill levels, offer the ideal excuse to pull him closer to you. Depending upon how often he stomps on your toes, it makes for quite the memorable evening. Located on the spot that used to be one of the five original Brown Derby restaurants there's plenty of history here. The designer has captured some of the essence of Hollywood's Golden Age with deep red velvet draped booths and vintage pics lining the walls. But the element that brings the room together is the impressive horseshoe shaped bar beneath a 30-foot-high ceiling. From the performers to the setting, the atmosphere is far from stale, nostalgic in the popular retro sense of the word.

**Dragonfly**

6510 Santa Monica Boulevard  
323.466.6111



You can't miss this Hollywood hotspot. Just cruise down Santa Monica Boulevard until you spy the giant dragonfly stuck to the side of a building with a giant line snaking down the block. This spacious three-room club, complete with outdoor patio and four full bars, offers ample opportunity for strolling and scene changing. Dragonfly pulls a pretty mixed crowd, due in part to the diverse music lineups. If you're lucky, you'll land at Dragonfly to catch a quality unannounced headliner jam for a set or two. A-listers who've tuned up here include Rage Against the Machine, Stone Temple Pilots, Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Alanis Morissette, NOFX, Social Distortion, Porno for Pyros, L7 and more. On Fridays and Saturdays the live acts tend to wind down around midnight, ceding the space over to the DJs spinning eclectic playlists ranging from retro to hip-hop, with plenty of funk, alternative and house thrown in for good measure.

**El Carmen**

8138 West Third Street  
Between Kilkea Drive & La Jolla Avenue  
213.852.1556

**El Florite**

1253 North Vine Street  
323.871.8612

**Fais Do-Do**

5257 W. Adams Boulevard  
323.954.8080

**Florentine Gardens**

5951 Hollywood Boulevard  
Between Bronson Avenue & North Gower Street  
323.464.0706

**The Garage**

4519 Santa Monica Boulevard @ Virgil Avenue  
323.683.3447

**Garden of Eden**

7080 Hollywood Boulevard  
323.465.3336

Come frolic with the beautiful people of LA—well, at least some of them. This Moroccan-style retreat is subtly breathtaking, in an abstract Hollywood Boulevard kind of way. The emphasis here is on Hollywood highlife, and what a deliciously decadent scene that can be sometimes. Be prepared. The fashionistas at the door take the "fashionable attire" dress code very, very seriously. So, unless you want to make small talk out by the curb all night, leave the Gap and Old Navy gear at home. Once you get in, wander around a bit, strike a pose or two and work your way into a conversation. There's plenty of room to dance, stroll out by the two garden patios for a quick smoke, or just snatch a people-watching perch. Warning: As this venue hosts the occasional hip-hop event, avoid the embarrassing fashion faux pas by calling ahead.

**The Gate**

643 N La Cienega Boulevard



310.289.8808

**Giant at Circus Disco**

6655 Santa Monica Boulevard  
323.464.7373

**The Gig**

7302 Melrose Avenue  
323.936.4440

**Goldfingers**

6423 Yucca Street  
Between Wilcox Avenue & Cahuenga Boulevard  
323.962.2913

**Good Luck Bar**

1514 Hillhurst Avenue  
Between Hollywood & Sunset Boulevards  
323.666.3524

**The Groundlings Theatre**

7307 Melrose Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
(323) 934-9700

For those who don't know, Groundlings are rabid, furry little bar creatures that live in the sewers...No, relax LA, we're just kidding. Actually, The Groundlings is an incredibly talented and painfully funny improv and sketch comedy troupe that sprung up in the early 70s as the Gary Austin Workshop. The group later incorporated, and in 1979 moved into its new digs on Melrose. Ever since, they've held regular performances blowing up the LA comedy scene. The Groundlings celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary last year, and are just increasing in popularity. The Groundlings have been a breeding ground for immense talent, fostering the sarcastic wit, deadpan hilarity and sheer lunacy of such stars as Phil Hartman, Lisa Kudrow (it's Pat from SNL), Jon Lovitz, Paul Reubens (Pee Wee Herman was created here), Laraine Newman, Cassandra Peterson, Pat Morita and Edie McClurg. Check out "Cookin With Gas,"--LA's longest running all-Improv show, every Thursday night frequently featuring celebrity guests.

**Hollywood Athletic Club**

6525 Sunset Boulevard  
323.962.6600

**House of Blues**

8430 Sunset Boulevard  
213.650.0247

Los Angeles and the blues--now there's a West Coast oxymoron. The way the crowds seem to dig the music at this Sunset Boulevard spot, you'd think Angelenos really feel the blues. But what



exactly are the LA-style blues? Oh, no, the weatherman says the temperature will dip below 75 degrees. Better grab that harmonica. You say you're baby took the Bentley and stuck you with the Lexus. We feel your pain. The House of Blues is the blues, LA style, which means commercial, shiny and splashed with a fresh coat of neon paint. That is, when they actually play the blues. While the sign on the door may say House of Blues, they feature just as much rock, jazz and pop performers as anything else. This is the LA flavor of the national chain which includes outposts in Harvard Square, the French Quarter, Chicago, Orlando, Las Vegas and Myrtle Beach. If you're the type that absolutely needs the sullen, gritty setting to get in the mood to feel the blues, there are much seedier venues we can suggest. But, what is sacrificed in authenticity, is redeemed in quality—albeit sometimes a bit candy-coated. After all, they do consistently draw the top talent in the industry, offer tasty Southern cooking and a delightfully rousing Sunday Gospel brunch. Besides, instead of huddling together in some side-street one-room smoky dive, this 29,000-square-foot space seats over 400 for dining and 1,000 for music listening.

**The Ice House Comedy Club**

24 North Mentor Avenue  
626.577.1894

**The Jazz Bakery**

3233 Helms Avenue  
310.271.9039

**The John Bull English Pub**

958 S. Fair Oaks Avenue  
626.441.4353

**The Key Club**

9039 Sunset Boulevard  
310.274.5800

The Key Club, with its post-modern esthetics, excellent sound system and fabulous crowd, is one of LA's top dance factories. This upscale, high-tech space is a popular live music venue drawing an eclectic array of talent—not to mention a great looking and high-energy crowd. The two-story structure is a strong pull on the club circuit, which explains, but doesn't excuse, the high cover charges—over \$20 on some nights. The Key Club also offers a menu of contemporary California cuisine accompanied by a full wine list. Open Wednesday through Sunday 7 p.m. to 2 am.

**Lola's**

945 North Fairfax Avenue  
213.736.5652

**Lounge 217**

217 Broadway  
Between Second & Third Streets  
310.281.6692

**Luna Park**



665 North Robertson Boulevard  
310.652.0611

In a city not particularly known for club hopping, Luna Park and its one-stop nightlife shopping fits right in. Located just South of Santa Monica Boulevard, this spot boasts a restaurant, dance floor, piano, and two main performance areas including a 100-seat cabaret room and the 300-seat clubroom. Known for the wide array of offerings ranging from hip-hop to alternative comedy, not only are the shows good, but the production quality is higher than most venues. The menu is progressive Americana with French and Italian influences. In addition to the restaurant and performance spaces in this multi-level spot, there are three bars and an outdoor patio. Make sure to leave plenty of room to wrestle with the valet, especially following performances.

**Martini Lounge**

5657 Melrose Avenue  
323.467.4068

**Molly Malone's Irish Pub**

575 South Fairfax Avenue @ Sixth Street  
323.935.1577

**The Muse**

54 E. Colorado Boulevard  
626.793.0608

**Orsini's**

9575 West Pico Boulevard  
310-277-6050

**The Palace**

1735 North Vine Avenue  
323.462.3000

**The Palms**

8572 Santa Monica  
310.652.6188

**The Pink**

2810 Main Street  
Between Ashland & Pier Avenues  
310.392.1077

**The Play Room**

836 N. Highland Avenue  
323.460.6630

**The Plaza**

739 North La Brea Avenue  
323.939.0703

**Probe**

836 North Highland Avenue  
Between Waring & Willoughby Avenues  
323.461.8301

**Rage**

8911 Santa Monica Boulevard  
31652.7055

You want to know where all the boys are. They're at Rage, LA's trendy landmark gay club in West Hollywood. Like the crowd, the music varies here from night to night, but chances are it'll be crowded when you come. Mondays feature alternative and underground with KROQ. Tuesdays is "The All New Club '80s" with a mere a \$3 cover. Wednesdays is Latin and house. Thursdays you'll find the Varsity party, Fridays it's Stereo and Saturday it's house music. Sundays Scorch Tea Dance from 6-10pm rounds out the week.

**The Room**

1626 N. Cahuenga Boulevard  
323.462.7196

**The Stock Exchange**

618 S. Spring Street  
213.489.3877

**Sky Bar (Mondrian Hotel)**

440 Sunset Boulevard  
323.650.8999

Talk about exclusive. Just swinging two seats at this ultra-swanky lounge means you've arrived. Located in Ian Schrager's Mondrian hotel, you'll find plenty of LA's A-listers posing and moguling here. The Sky Bar has developed a rep as THE swankiest, upscaliest spot in the City, but don't even try walking up. They only accept reservation over the phone. Even if you're staying at the hotel, you're limited to just two guests. But if you can pull it off, this is the place to see and be seen. Just think of the impression you could make on that special someone. That is, as long as you can control that whiplash model-gawking neck action as some of LA's more outrageous super models are bound to float by. But, if you can't get in, may we suggest you Plan-B it over to Asia de Cuba also located in the Mondrian.

**Sky Sushi**

7901 Santa Monica Boulevard  
323.650.1886

**Sugar**

814 Broadway  
310.899.1989



### **The Viper Room**

8852 Sunset Boulevard  
310.358.1881

All good things come to those who wait, just don't count on it here. Come on cowboy, keep it together. They've got to let you in sooner or later—right? If somehow, somehow, you can stand the mind-numbingly annoying wait at this uber-popular Sunset Strip spot, it's a great slice of LA. Opened in 1993 and co-owned by Johnny Depp, the Viper Room has only increased in popularity and notoriety—thanks in no small part to the tragic demise of River Phoenix. The close quarters, we doubt they fit over 250, is obnoxious, yet makes for quite the intimate listening experience. That's especially when you consider some of the talent that's dropped in, often unannounced, to pick up a mic. They include Johnny Cash, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Stone Temple Pilots, Bruce Springsteen, Oasis, Pearl Jam, Sandra Bernhard, Sheryl Crow, Mick Jagger, Eddie Vedder, Dwight Yoakam, and others. The dark lighting just heightens the notorious texture of the main area. The downstairs lounge is a bit more comfortable, but not much...and not at all when it's crowded. But you didn't come here to unwind. This spot pulls its fair share of celebs, especially in the VIP Room. Upstairs you'll find a long black bar with some seating available and a small stage cramped into the corner. The Tuesday "Atmosphere" party plays host to some solid spinning of trance, drum and bass, techno and hip-hop.

### **Vynyl**

1650 Schrader Boulevard  
323.465.7449

### **Whisky A Go Go**

8901 Sunset Boulevard  
310.276.4202