

# Hometown News

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Westchester • Playa del Rey • Marina del Rey

## Custom Hotel Brings Los Angeles' Artsy Side to Westchester

By Stacie Jones

If you've ever wished that you could spend the night in a museum of contemporary art, then Westchester's newly opened Custom Hotel is for you. Of course, you won't have to sleep in an art piece like Jeff Koons' "Cracked Egg (Red)" or eat Yoko Ono's "Apple" for breakfast, but rather you'll find comfort and fare in a stylish hotel that exudes the fun and funky charm of Los Angeles' artsy side.



The Custom Hotel was officially unveiled in October of last year, and although it joins other boutique hotels in the Los Angeles area (such as the Standard in Hollywood and Downtown), the thing that sets the Custom Hotel apart is location, location, location. The 12-floor, 250-room hotel tower sits at the southwest corner of Lincoln Boulevard and Manchester Avenue, and is only a short drive from LAX, placing it in the second-highest-rated district for hotel occupancy in Los Angeles.

According to Avi Brosh, president of Palisades Development Group and the man behind the style-conscious Custom, "We saw a need in this area of Los Angeles for a lifestyle-driven hotel that caters to a customer looking for great design at a modest price. Over 80% of transient business to L.A. stays near LAX, and those travelers are craving some place fresh, new and fun to visit. It will be the antidote to boring, beige hotels."



And what an antidote it is. The hotel, which was originally designed by Welton Beckett (the famous architect who gave us a number of Los Angeles landmarks including the Capitol Records building, Cinerama Dome and Dorothy Chandler Pavilion), seemed to be begging to be transformed into a vibrant and contemporary space.

If you've driven past the Custom Hotel lately, I'm sure you've noticed how the tower rises above its pale neighbors in a show of black. A move that General Manager Bruno Vergeynst declared, "definitely gave us attention."

But don't let the hipster image intimidate you. The Custom Hotel is looking to give its guests an authentic L.A. experience, but without the attitude.



"We want to be part of this community and welcoming to everyone," explained PR rep Emma Haber. That is why the hotel has invited students from neighboring Otis College of Art and Design to come in and utilize the meeting rooms as classrooms. Makes sense considering one meeting room called "Scribble" has done away with the drab conventional round table and swivel chairs and has replaced them with art easels and paper. Hotel guests are also welcome to come into the room and try their hand at a little sketching.

"The space encourages creative thinking," Vergeynst said. The hotel is reaching out to the community in other ways as well by hosting "Sundaze," a weekly pool party every Sunday from 1 to 9 p.m. Each week the hotel has a unique mix of DJ's from all over the world spinning a multi-genre play-list of eclectic music, from down-temp Electro-Jazz to up-beat Afro-Cuban, Future Bossa and beyond. While taking in the music you can either dip your toes in the pool or hang out at the Hopscotch Pool Bar. The bi-level pool bar and grill features four private cabanas, an outdoor fire pit and stadium seating, as well as an actual Hopscotch game – just be careful while hopping with drink in hand.



On Fridays, the hotel has a weekly happy hour at 6 p.m. called "The Hours" where you can either relax outside or inside the lobby/lounge while sitting on a chair, a couch or a whimsical sheep shaped stool (my votes for the sheep!) If eating is more your thing, the hotel boasts "Bistrotek," a contemporary American bistro that serves California-fresh fare in an atmosphere that is reminiscent of New York's SoHo.

In answer to the hotel gift shop, Custom gives you the "Bazaar," a room filled with vintage vending machines chalk full of curios. Need a gold wig? Check out the vending machine called "Bling" where everything is gold. Been looking for the perfect alternative to "My friend went to L.A. and all I got was this stupid t-shirt" shirt? Ten bucks will fetch you some spidey underwear and pink fishnet gloves.

But don't let all the quirkiness fool you into thinking that Custom Hotel has forgotten that first and foremost it's a hotel. Most guests on hotel.com have been writing rave reviews about the Custom. On a scale from 1 to 5, they have put it at an average rating of 4.2, proof that the unique design features haven't overshadowed some down home hospitality. All the rooms are warm and comfortable, and with modest price room rates beginning at \$129/night, they are also affordable. Every room comes equipped with LCD TVs, stereos with iPod docking and mini bars. And let's not forget the view. Ah, the view. Rooms and suites offer some of the city's most stunning and panoramic views, including the ocean, Malibu, Hollywood, Downtown and Westchester's very own LAX runway.

So the next time you get the urge to just roll out your sleeping bag and kick it at the Geffen Contemporary, I recommend you check into the Custom Hotel. They want you to stay there and they won't yell at you for touching the art.

For more information go to [www.customhotel.com](http://www.customhotel.com)