

MR. HOLLYWOOD

(Hollywood Personal Guide of Jeff Zarrinam)

Over the course of my career, I have had the possibility to meet people who were able to express themselves in relation to their profession with a sense of pride. The president and CEO of The Hollywood Hotel made a lasting impression on me during our interview. A lure of passion, love and enthusiasm that provides you with some much energy that you will never perceive the hotel and Hollywood itself as other people do. You will become obsessed with passionate message carried by Jeff Zarrinam. Hollywood starts breathing at you pace while you will do the same with Hollywood.

It would be a big mistake not to introduce the director of the Hollywood to our readers. Every person aims to achieve something extraordinary making childhood and adolescent's dreams come true. (For some people, it may take longer and there are the ones who have no expectations whatsoever even in their fifties.). Your life has been greatly influenced by a certain quote read during a family vacation. Which quote was it which led you to the hotel industry?

It was actually a book, Conrad Hilton's "Be My Guest" while I was staying at the Reno Hilton with my family when I was 12 years old. That book ignited my passion for hospitality. What makes this book interesting and useful is the quality of the man, not the strength of his business empire. "Connie" Hilton is a man of honor and principle, but he has much ambition, too.

That was the first time you came into contact with this industry. What was the next step? You entered the real world stripped of childhood dreams. How did you end up being a director? What did you have to do and sacrifice for the sake of your future career?

Upon graduating from college, I managed one of our family's apartment buildings on Sunset Boulevard. I had just finished a model room in the apartment building and a French tourist walked in and asked if I had a room to rent for seven nights. I quoted him a rate of \$210 for the week, which he paid in cash, and which happened to be more than a tenant's monthly rent. After that experience, I converted the apartment building into the Park Sunset Hotel, which is now the Grafton On Sunset hotel and have been in the hospitality business ever since.



Mr. Zarrinam, I was so pleased to be made aware of the fact that you are awarded with the unofficial title of being Mr. Hollywood. I reckon you are familiar with Hollywood inside out. Great congratulations and now I am going to make good use of this information in favor of our readers. Do you happen to know any place in Hollywood which is relatively unknown by the visitors of LA? If yes, are they related to some interesting stories or events?

There are several suggestions, including:

TRAILS CAFE

Located at the tip of the northern entrance of Griffith Park, this little gem of a café feels more like Northern California than Southern California. It's not uncommon to see towering trees that are several decades old, if not more. They offer Stumptown coffee, which is a plus for coffee drinkers. The avocado sandwich is definitely worth trying and the granola and with yogurt is definitely quite delicious.

COMEDY CLUB AT HOLLYWOOD HOTEL

Home to some of the best comics in the business, the Comedy Club at Hollywood Hotel has been a popular entertainment venue for over 12 years. The club is open every Wednesday - Saturday and there is no cover charge and only a one-drink minimum. Famous celebrities who have visited the club's open mic nights include Kristen Wiig, Jessica Biel and Drew Barrymore.

PRIVATE TOURS OF HOLLYWOOD LANDMARKS

The best way to visit some of Los Angeles most well-renowned landmarks such as the renowned Pantages Theatre and the legendary Paramount Studios is through private, VIP tours. Companies like LA Inside Tours will take their guests on customized VIP tours of famous landmarks throughout Hollywood where they'll get an insider's sneak peek of what other people might not see.

TRAIL MAPS TO THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN

Many people who visit and live in Los Angeles want to see the Hollywood Sign but aren't familiar with the trail maps that make it easy to visit this famous outdoor landmark. The Hollywood Sign trail maps can be downloaded online or on a mobile phone, and they give accurate and clear directions on how to get to all three hiking trails including, The Mount Hollywood Trail, The Canyon Boulevard Trail and The Cahuenga Peak Hike.

WACKO SOAP PLANT

What started out as a soap plant when it opened in 1971, has now turned into a fun, pop culture toy shop with a rock star attitude. Wacko Soap Plant now has an inventory of over 2 million items in its 6,500 square foot Hollywood location in-

cluding toys, décor, gifts and art that will leave any guests heads spinning!

Now you are a director of a hotel located in the center of Hollywood. The hotel itself offers more than the traditional services which managed to capture my imagination for the very first time. Movie posters, a breathtakingly beautiful patio and strange feelings contribute to the charm of the hotel and attach some additional value to the whole building. They often say that a hotel corresponds to the way of life of its owner or director. Is it your case as well?

My fascination with Hollywood runs as deep as my roots in the community. We purchased the re-established Hollywood Hotel on Vermont Avenue in 1964. I have amassed many original items from the hotel's first location on Hollywood Boulevard. In addition to renovating Hollywood Hotel, I am restoring the 31- suite Chateau Celeste, an upscale boutique hotel directly across the street from Hotel Hollywood, which was originally built in 1927.

Anyone who knows or works with me does not try to me in the early mornings because I hike the Hollywood Hills everyday. These treks allow me to unplug, reinforce my Hollywood footing and embrace the magnificent view that people the world over travel to see.

The current renovation will elevate Hollywood Hotel to a more contemporary offering while paying homage to its Hollywood roots.

Located in the center of the entertainment capital, the vibe of the hotel is intimate and evokes comfortable, cosmopolitan meets vintage Hollywood glamour, but in a tasteful and minus the clichés.

Readers and travelers are fond of stories about your hotel regarding some interesting moments from the history. Could you please provide us with some details about the history of the hotel? What has happened from the very beginning to the present? In fact, if something extraordinary happened, please share with us.

The original hotel was established in 1903, and the current hotel's location on Vermont is a 130-room property that fuses old Hollywood glamour with a modern take on deluxe amenities and newly refreshed comfortable rooms. The original Hollywood Hotel was built in 1903 and was known as "the" Hollywood hotel. The 1937 movie "Hooray for Hollywood" was filmed on location at the property and first featured the song "Hooray for Hollywood." Rudolph Valentino lived in the hotel and met his first wife there. Recent celebrities who have visited the hotel include Jessica Biel, Kristen Wiig, Aiden Quinn and Drew Barrymore.

Travel business is extremely difficult on various levels (comply with the competition from every angle, you have to manage the different demands and expectations of clients, come up with new ideas all the time, monitor current trends, maintain and lead an attractive pricing policy). As a man who went on a mission in this industry, you have gained plenty of experience and information. If you were to advise something to a newly appointed director of a provincial hotel worthy of your attention, what would you recommend to him or her? How should they proceed, what mistakes should they avoid and what should be prioritized over other things?

Operate without debt: Since we have owned the hotel for over 20+ years, our debt service ratio is very, very low. Hollywood Hotel is an internationally famous hotel which probably and one of the most recognized of any hotel brand in the world. With a very large repeat customer base comes high occupancies and consistent revenues which we can reinvest back into the property in increments without shutting down the property and without accumulating additional debt.

Use technology to your advantage: We have researched and implemented technology to streamline our operations, enhance the guest's experience and value and adapt to the way travelers communicate while on the road.

Research and network: I am a voracious researcher and reader and am constantly on the look out for different and new products and services to enhance our business and guest experience. Because of my deep involvement in the tourism industry, from the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce as Sr. Vice Chair to the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau, to the Board Chair of the East Hollywood Business Improvement District, I interact and work with many others in the industry, exchanging and sharing information and ideas.

Listen more than not: Listening to guests and staff, always look out for new or different ways of doing things via new products and services and staying aligned with traveler booking and communication trends. The guest experience relayed through user-generated review sites are invaluable to us. So much so that we will adjust our renovations in accordance to comments about any disruptions it may have caused our guests.

Regarding past events, you have fond memories of meeting a French tourist. Let's get back to the present. I was wondering if you could tell me why should one choose Hollywood Hotel? What are its advantages and disadvantages? How does it differ from the competition?

We offer the most central location, value, cleanliness and comfort: The 130-room Hollywood Hotel is one of

the most reasonably priced hotels in the city and offers incredible value in a central location. Situated right in the heart of Hollywood, it's steps away from boutique shopping, world-class dining and cutting edge culture, and the closest hotel to The Hollywood Sign, Griffith Park, LA Zoo, Greek theater and Mount Hollywood hiking trails. Guests can even hop on the nearby Metro and explore Los Angeles, or spend the day at Universal Studios.

Business travelers, vacationers and locals alike appreciate the hotel's state-of-the-art extras and thoughtful amenities such as free WiFi, on-site fitness center, open-air fountain courtyard, complimentary hot international breakfast buffet served daily, an outdoor pool, and unparalleled service in newly refreshed rooms and more than 5,000 square feet of flexible function space. A unique feature of the hotel is Hollywood Hotel's own Comedy Club, which brings all-star comedians to the property on a weekly basis.

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The current refreshing includes all guest rooms, outdoor courtyard and lounge, bar, pool area and lobby and roof deck. The project is designed by one of Los Angeles' most respected interior designers, Katy Naghavi, founder of the successful, Beverly Hills-based studio, Atelier Katayon.

With new hotels cropping up in the area, we are continuing to update the hotel to be fresh, chic and cosmopolitan. There are no framed movie posters here, and not a film reel in sight. Instead, guests will indulge in stylish, modern comfort.

One of the most exciting elements of our renovation will be the breathtaking Moroccan-inspired rooftop addition featuring panoramic views of the Hollywood Hills and the city. Initial plans include a permanent bar, pool, lounge and seating areas, putting green, Billiard/ping pong tables and outdoor movie theater.

Every person acquires a certain philosophy trying to broaden their horizons and knowledge in search of the secret of success. I would like to ask you a question regarding success. What do you consider to be your greatest achievement in life?

I consider my greatest career contributions to improve Hollywood and giving back to the community that I love so much. I am the Steering Committee Chairman of the Proposed Hollywood Route 66 Business Improvement District and the Hollywood Western Business Improvement District. I am also on the Tourism Improvement District Steering Committee for the LA Tourism and

Convention Board. I am very involved in philanthropic work being a founding board member of the East Hollywood Los Feliz Homeless Coalition, and a sponsor of the Hollywood Christmas Parade benefitting Toys For Tots. We also support Project Angel Food, LA Cedars Rotary Club, Hollywood Boys and Girls Club, Hollywood Police Activities League and Hollywood Central Park.

Interview by Peter Fritz

Photos: Peter Fritz, Dreamstime



JEFF ZARRINNAM:

“wish you were here”

LA DESCARGA

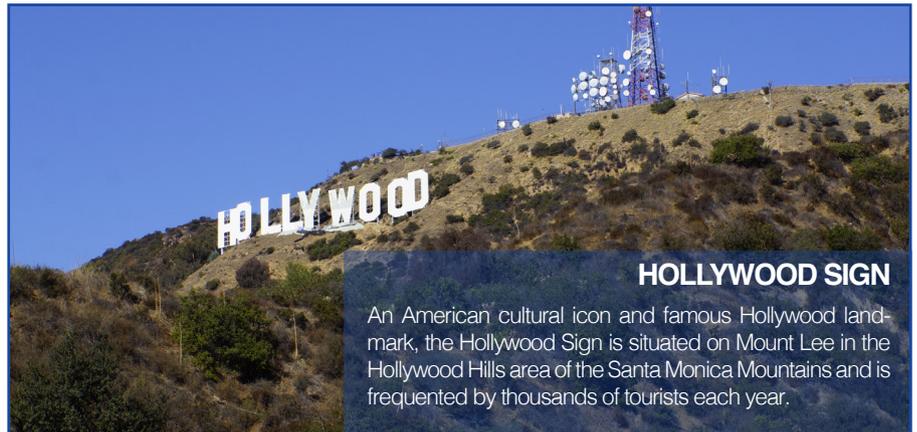
This well-known, reservations-only, Havana-inspired bar is a hotspot among visitors to Los Angeles. Patrons must pass through a secret closet, down a spiral staircase, which leads to a spectacular speakeasy with rum-based cocktails, a selection of cigars and burlesque performances.

LARCHMONT VILLAGE

This quaint and friendly shopping district is located in one of the most historical areas of Los Angeles and borders the grand, old estates in Hancock Park. Larchmont Village is home to great restaurants, tons of shopping and their famous Farmer's Market held every Sunday (10am – 2pm).

PINK'S FAMOUS HOT DOGS

A Hollywood legend since 1939, Pinks Famous Hot Dogs offers 21 varieties of mouth-watering hot dogs. Lines to taste the hot dogs from the popular restaurant are often long, but the reward is well worth the wait!



HOLLYWOOD SIGN

An American cultural icon and famous Hollywood landmark, the Hollywood Sign is situated on Mount Lee in the Hollywood Hills area of the Santa Monica Mountains and is frequented by thousands of tourists each year.

MUSSO & FRANK GRILL

This Hollywood favorite dates back to 1924 and is the oldest restaurant in Hollywood. It is known for its amazing martinis, seafood cocktails, steaks, and retro dishes like Welsh Rarebit.

MICELI'S

Dubbed as “Hollywood's Oldest Italian Restaurant,” Miceli's has been serving up delicious Italian food since 1949. Also known as “Home of the Singing Waiters and Waitresses,” guests are often serenaded with Italian songs, classical standards and musical show tunes.

GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER

Opened in 1927, Grauman's Chinese Theatre is located on Hollywood Blvd. and is a famous cultural landmark where visitors come to see the handprints and footprints of well-known Hollywood celebrities that are embedded along the concrete sidewalk.

GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY

A popular tourist attraction situated on the south-facing slope of Mount Hollywood, the Griffith Observatory is home to an extensive array of space and science-related displays.



GENE AUTRY NATIONAL CENTER

Founded in 1988, the Gene Autry National Center features a collection of art and artifacts in eight galleries that depict the historical and fictional history of the American West from 16th Century to the present.

THEATRE

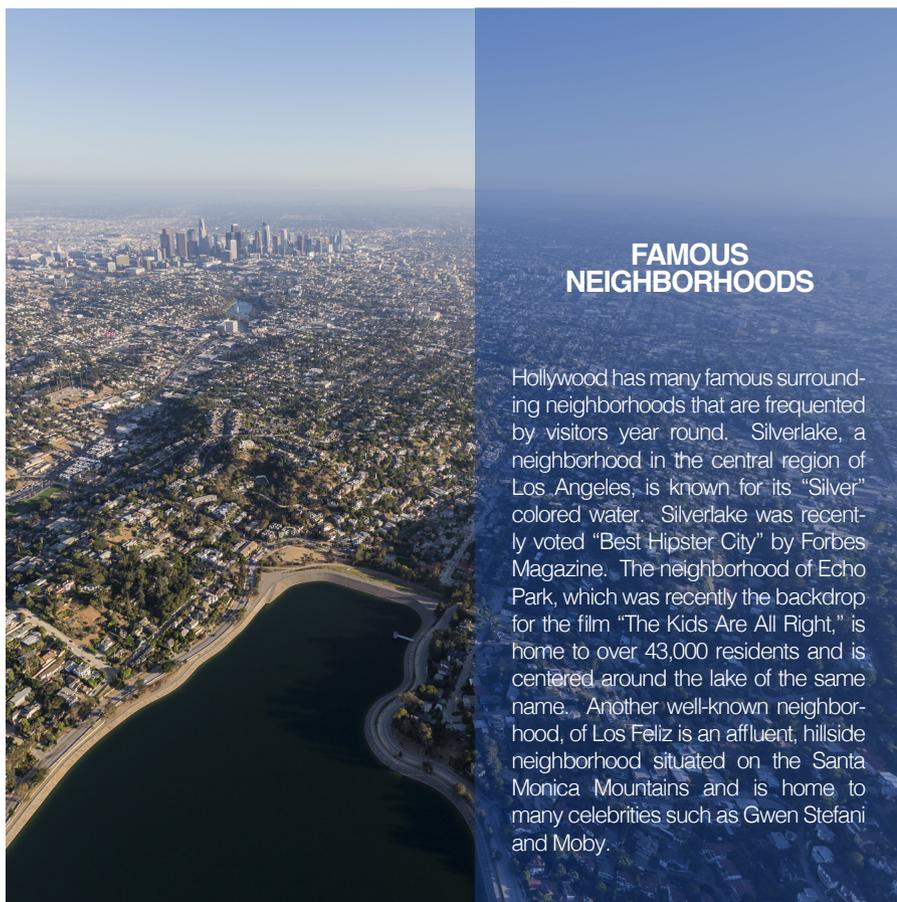
Nicknamed "The Greek," the Greek Theatre, seats 5,870 people and is located at Griffith Park and is home to many of the city's outdoor concerts, stage shows and graduation ceremonies. It was first opened in September 1929 and was designed after a famous Greek temple.

ROSCOE'S CHICKEN AND WAFFLE'S

Opened in 1975 by a Harlem and Motown native, this soul-food restaurant has been a stomping ground for many famous celebrities including Natalie Cole, Redd Foxx and, more recently, President Obama.

FORD AMPHITHEATRE

Recently named the "Best Music Venue in Los Angeles" by LA Weekly, the Ford Amphitheatre was built in 1920 and seats over 1,200 people in its outdoor and indoor space. Its home to some of the best live concerts, entertainment and performing arts programs that Los Angeles has to offer.



FAMOUS NEIGHBORHOODS

Hollywood has many famous surrounding neighborhoods that are frequented by visitors year round. Silverlake, a neighborhood in the central region of Los Angeles, is known for its "Silver" colored water. Silverlake was recently voted "Best Hipster City" by Forbes Magazine. The neighborhood of Echo Park, which was recently the backdrop for the film "The Kids Are All Right," is home to over 43,000 residents and is centered around the lake of the same name. Another well-known neighborhood, of Los Feliz is an affluent, hillside neighborhood situated on the Santa Monica Mountains and is home to many celebrities such as Gwen Stefani and Moby.

THE SAYER'S CLUB

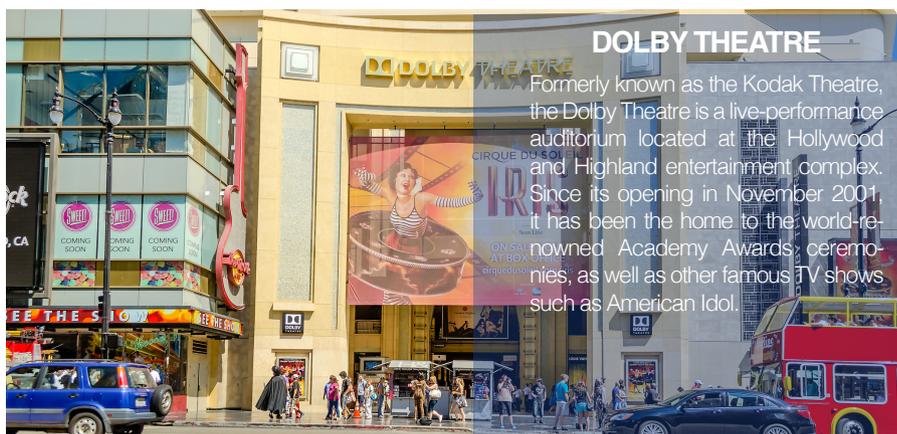
One of Hollywood's most exclusive live-music venues, this popular restaurant, lounge and music spot boasts a cocktails bar with handcrafted cocktails and a succulent small plates menu for its patrons.

AVALON HOLLYWOOD

A historic nightclub and venue located in Hollywood at the intersection of Hollywood and Vine. Previously known as the Hollywood Palace, Avalon Hollywood has a capacity of over 2,000 people and is a hotspot for tourists and visitors to Hollywood.

DRESDEN ROOM

Best known for its cameo in the movie "Swingers" and appearances in "Mad Men," the Dresden Room has been a classic Hollywood establishment for decades. The restaurant serves authentic comfort food favorites and the live entertainment by husband and wife duo Marty and Elayne is unbeatable. Get there early because the place gets packed!



DOLBY THEATRE

Formerly known as the Kodak Theatre, the Dolby Theatre is a live-performance auditorium located at the Hollywood and Highland entertainment complex. Since its opening in November 2001, it has been the home to the world-renowned Academy Awards ceremonies, as well as other famous TV shows such as American Idol.

HOLLYWOOD BOWL

This famous Hollywood outdoor amphitheater is home to the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and summer home to the LA Philharmonic, as well as countless musical entertainers and groups who perform at this remarkable musical venue under the stars.



HOLLYWOOD & HIGHLAND

A vibrant shopping, dining, and entertainment district on the world's most famous boulevard featuring over 60 shops including Louis Vuitton, Sephora, GAP, H&M and BCBG. Hollywood & Highland is also home to nightclubs, hotels, restaurants, and popular venues including the famous Kodak Theatre where the Academy Awards are held every year.



SUNSET JUNCTION/ LOS FELIZ VILLAGE SHOPS

This famous Hollywood outdoor amphitheater is home to the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and summer home to the LA Philharmonic, as well as countless musical entertainers and groups who perform at this remarkable musical venue under the stars.

DOWNTOWN LA'S SANTEE ALLEY

One of the most popular shopping areas in LA's Downtown Fashion District, Santee Alley is home to over 150 retail shops and stores that include clothing, jewelry, housewares and accessories, toys, beauty and cosmetics for bargain prices. LA's own bazaar district! One of the most popular shopping areas in LA's Downtown Fashion District, Santee Alley is home to over 150 retail shops and stores that include clothing, jewelry, housewares and accessories, toys, beauty and cosmetics for bargain prices. LA's own bazaar district!

CATALINA BAR & GRILL

Known for its "old world charm," this lively supper club located in the heart of Hollywood entertains guests with nothing but the best in live jazz and musical performers. Home to many famous jazz musicians including Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Carter and Wynton Marsalis!

OHM NIGHTCLUB

Also located at the famous intersection of Hollywood & Highland, OHM Nightclub is a "secret" speakeasy popular for tourists who want a mix of nightclub and bar all in one place. Tourists to the area frequent OHM Nightclub for its fresh and flavorful, handcrafted drinks, as well as for the great music and world famous DJ's.



HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME

More than 2,400 five-pointed terrazzo and brass stars embedded in the sidewalks along fifteen blocks of Hollywood Boulevard and three blocks of Vine Street, honoring achievements in the entertainment industry and bearing the names of famous actors, musicians, directors, producers, musical and theatrical groups.

