

FRONTIERS MEDIA

Hollyhock House to Reopen After 3 Years of Renovation

By Mike Ciriaco

<http://www.frontiersmedia.com/frontiers-blog/2015/02/12/hollyhock-house-reopen-3-years-renovation/>

Frontiers Media Says:



Bored of the same old obligatory Valentine's Day dinners in overcrowded restaurants? This year, shake up the holiday by bringing your boy somewhere romantic, unique and quintessentially L.A. This month, the iconic Hollyhock House, architectural crown jewel at the center of the East Side's Barnsdall Art Park, will celebrate its grand reopening following a three-year period of renovation and restoration. The ribbon-cutting, presided over by Mayor Eric Garcetti, kicks off a 24-hour public opening, perfectly timed for an off-the-beaten-path V-Day destination.

"A house with a past, a panoramic vista and named after a flower? The only thing missing are the chocolates," says Hollyhock House Curator Jeffrey Herr, ticking off its myriad romantic qualities. "Anyone with an imagination can fill in that blank. If you're stumped for a unique proposal site, it doesn't get much better than this."

The structure itself is the conceptual love child of two eccentric personalities. Oil heiress Aline Barnsdall commissioned architect Frank Lloyd Wright to design Hollyhock House as both her personal residence and the centerpiece of the arts and theater complex that would eventually evolve into today's Barnsdall Art Park. The ornate building, which features Mayan sculptural elements and incorporates the eponymous Hollyhock flower into much of its décor, is a departure from Wright's typical form-follows-function philosophy.

“Hollyhock House isn't a textbook example of what Wright called organic architecture,” says Herr. “Nevertheless, it was a bold statement that fits two standout personalities. Put these two on an island and you'd get Hollyhock House.”



While the building may be an ideal wedding of Wright's architecture and Barnsdall's eclecticism, its artistic merit was undermined by its poor functionality. As one of Wright's first L.A.-based projects, the design failed to anticipate the city's irregular weather conditions and was ill prepared for its rare bouts of rain. The living room would flood and the flat roof terraces were unequipped to deal with the precipitation. Additionally, the cantilever concrete used in Hollyhock House's construction were quickly ravaged by L.A.'s characteristic seismic activity. These structural concerns were a huge factor that necessitated the building's renovation, but according to Herr, they weren't the only aspect that stretched out the refurbishment.

“Details, details, details,” says the curator. “Christian Dior is supposed to have said, ‘The detail is as important as the essential is. When it is inadequate, it destroys the whole outfit.’ Inadequate doesn’t begin to describe the way details had gone missing from Hollyhock House. Think *Eliza Doolittle* and *My Fair Lady*.”

Finally, every detail of the luxurious home has been attended to, polished off and pulled together, just in time to be enjoyed by you and your fair lady this Valentine’s Day.



Hollyhock House Reopening
Barnsdall Art Park
Feb. 13
hollyhockhouse.net

BLINK CREATIVE GROUP

Frontiers Media
February 12, 2015