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Rejoice! Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House is Open at Long Last

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Travel + Leisure says:



In 1921, a middle-aged Frank Lloyd Wright had already established himself as the progenitor of the Prairie School of architecture, having flood the Midwest with horizontal lines, hipped roofs, and overhanging eaves. The style, regimented and iconic-looking, emerged in a time when neo-Gothic Victorian was en vogue, so his ideas for so-called organic architecture were wild. By 1921, however, the Prairie trend was already on his way out—and Wright was moving on.

Enter: Hollyhock House, Wright's design for oil heiress and progressive Aline Barnsdall. Though the house boasts the reclusive feel of Wright's other designs, what the heaviness of its façade and its small windows, it also marks the entrée of Wright into his Mayan Revival period and, in some ways, the entrée of California modernism.

And now, after six years and \$4.5M worth of restorations, the Hollyhock House is open to the public for tours. Not only that, it's got a shiny new nomination to become a UNESCO World Heritage site.

So what makes the house so influential? The story is this: while Wright was away in Tokyo working on a hotel, he put the project in the hands of his project manager Rudolph Schindler, an architect who later became a demi-god for the modernism

movement. In that way, the house, according to the house's curator Jeffrey Herr, can be considered the "germination of what I think you can easily say became California Modernism." So not only is it the first L.A. commission of America's most famous architect, Hollyhock in some ways heralded in a style that has come to define the area's built environment.

According to a press release from a city council member in L.A., the latest revamp lets visitors "see and experience the house in much of its original splendor" of the house, with renovations made to the floors, windows, doors, and decorative moldings. Interestingly, much of the renovations involved the dismantling of changes made by Wright's son, architect Lloyd Wright, who in 1974 brought in (gasp!) formica countertops and sliding glass doors.

"Over the years it became beige, literally beige, as well as architecturally bland," Herr tells The Hollywood Reporter. So, yes, even the paint colors are restored. The formica counters? Back to mahogany.

Interested in checking it all out? You may want to hold off for awhile. According to reports, lines right now are "totally bananas," drawing the attention and ardor of thousands, who are apparently more than willing to stand in incredible queues. Considering the history represented here, it's definitely worth a trek, particularly for architecture buffs, but maybe wait for the news to cool.

The Hollyhock House is open Thursday through Sunday, 11 a.m. To 4 p.m. Admission—a.k.a. the "Walk Wright In" self-guided tours—are \$7 for adults, and \$3 for students, children, and seniors. More info, this way.