

L.A. TIMES FOOD – 12/22/23

The year that killed L.A. restaurants: Here are more than 65 notable closures from 2023

A brutal year for Los Angeles restaurants saw dozens of closings across the city. Inflation, actors' and writers' strikes and higher rent, utilities and labor costs all were cited.

This year was brutal for Los Angeles restaurants. Some of the region's most cherished operations and most anticipated openings have closed after what has proven to be one of the most difficult years for L.A. restaurants, with a pick-and-choose array of reasons as varied and profound as the city's cuisines.

Though we've compiled a list of more than 65 L.A. restaurant closures from throughout 2023, the closing announcements are still coming.

Best Bet, ETA, the Anchor, Parmizza and others announced their ends as recently as this week — as this list was being compiled and

written — underscoring the severity of the year's onslaught of goodbyes. Restaurants across L.A. are continuing to shutter at a rapid pace, right up to the end of the year, with more slated for January.

Citing inflation of prices for ingredients, utilities and rent, labor costs, staff shortages, [business kneecapped by the entertainment industry's months of strikes](#), lack of government aid and a saturated dining market, to name a handful of reasons, dozens of restaurateurs have chosen to close their businesses before 2024.

Though many chefs reopened their restaurants after pandemic-spurred shutdowns and pivots, restaurateurs are still recovering, with some still facing back rent and other bills deferred from 2020. According to the National Restaurant Assn., the cost of food is far more expensive than pre-pandemic levels. "As of November 2023," the trade association recently reported, "the Producer Price Index for all foods remained more than 25% above its February 2020 reading."

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On closing L.A.'s Kinn, chef highlights mental health issues in restaurant industry

“The cost of repairs — anything that's connected to labor — is really severe,” said République and Bicyclette chef-owner Walter Manzke, who closed both Petty Cash Taqueria and Sari Sari Store this year. “It's hard to comprehend the invoices you see, and you don't have a choice when you have to fix the stove. ... I think there are a few people in the world where everything fell into place during the pandemic, and they were lucky and everything worked out and they're in a better place, but that's certainly not us and for the most part not anybody that I'm associated with.”

Some closures not included in this list marked the end of an era but a rebirth elsewhere: DTLA Cheese, for instance, shuttered its Grand Central Market stall to move down the block to a larger space and [rebrand as DTLA Cheese Superette](#). Others are slated for a 2024 end but were recently announced, such as all-day restaurant Loam and rooftop bar Upstairs, both located in downtown's Ace Hotel and [set to close Jan. 31](#) when the hotel ceases all operations; Stella Barra in Santa Monica has announced a Jan. 5 closure date.

For others, whose closures are listed publicly across Yelp, social media and Reddit — such as Slasher Pizza and Forever Pie — we were unable to independently verify the closures with the business owners.

Some restaurants found happier endings after announcing closures this year: Vegan sushi restaurant [Kusaki](#) shuttered in August only to reopen in December, while another vegan spot, Nic's on Beverly, [announced its closure in June](#) but public outcry encouraged the building's owner to reach an agreement with the restaurateurs, [keeping Nic's afloat](#). The owners of Cajun-tinged, barbecue-forward [Shady Grove Foods](#) in Long Beach said they received a pledge of civic aid to maintain operations after [a report](#) of their impending closure was published online.

Those that did close tried to navigate one of the hardest years for restaurants in recent history — an accomplishment no matter the outcome. Here are more than 65 notable restaurant closures from the L.A. area in 2023.

The Anchor: Westside seafood favorite — and [L.A. Times-recommended oyster destination](#) — the Anchor announced its intended closure this week after nearly a decade of buttery lobster

rolls and bottomless brunch mimosas. The Anchor's last day of service will be Sunday, Dec. 24. "This is not goodbye," co-owner Kristen Ciccolella wrote on Instagram. "We're rolling right into our next adventure — serving up all your favorites on the Little Anchor food truck."

Angler: The L.A. outpost of the Michelin-starred San Francisco seafood restaurant debuted in 2019 in Beverly Grove to great anticipation. After pandemic-spurred closures and a reopening and retooling, it permanently closed in July.

Angry Egret Dinette: Wes Avila's taco- and torta-forward restaurant in Chinatown is set to close Dec. 31 after three years. With Ka'teen in Hollywood and multiple new restaurants on the horizon — including one slated for L.A. next year — Avila chose to close his more casual restaurant. "I think it's run its course," Avila told The Times. "I find myself mentally stretched too thin. This year is gonna be even busier than this past year and I can't be everywhere at once."

Animal: One of L.A.'s most groundbreaking restaurants — and the start of Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo's local restaurant and catering empire — came to a close in June. "I don't think we ever

thought it would go this far," Shook [told The Times](#). "We've had so many great talented people that have come in and worked there." Shook and Dotolo said they plan to retain the space for any future projects.

Bar Moruno: This convivial Spanish restaurant from industry vets David Rosoff and Chris Feldmeier debuted in 2015 in the Original Farmers Market; after a brief run in Grand Central Market and a hiatus, it returned in the form of a full restaurant in Silver Lake in 2022.

The Barish: Nancy Silverton's steakhouse tucked into the historic Hollywood Roosevelt hotel launched in 2020, the first standalone, full-service restaurant in years from the famous chef. Over the summer it quietly closed along with Silverton's morning lobby pastry service.

Best Bet: One of L.A.'s most anticipated new restaurants closed abruptly this week [after years of planning](#). Best Bet, the pizza-forward Italian restaurant from chef Jason Neroni, closed in Culver City. It opened in July. "After a decade of work together on the Rose Venice, Catch & Release and Best Bet, chef Jason Neroni and his partnership group are announcing their mutual decision

to part ways,” read a statement sent to The Times on behalf of Sprout Restaurant Group. “Chef Neroni has decided to take a step back from day-to-day operations to focus on his family and his hospitality consultancy.” Neroni could not be reached for comment.

Blossom Venice and Atwater Village: Blossom, the casual, local chain specializing in Vietnamese noodle bowls, closed two of its locations this year on either side of L.A. In April it shuttered in Venice, while the Atwater Village space closed in November.

Bolita: Virgil Village’s intimate Cuban-inspired cocktail bar from the owners of El Cochinito and Café Tropical closed suddenly this winter after launching in 2021.

Breadblok: A local bakery chain famous for its gluten-free ethos and range of celiac-friendly baked goods, Breadblok suddenly closed all locations in May.

Café Basque: The first L.A. restaurant for New York's Le Coucou chef Daniel Rose closed quietly in May. The collaboration with Boka Restaurant Group operated for less than half a year in the Hoxton Hotel.

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Shuttered Café Tropical was also a beacon for people seeking sobriety

Café Tropical: After a nearly half-century run serving Cuban specialties in Silver Lake, Café Tropical closed suddenly on Dec. 1 [due to an alleged family feud](#). The restaurant was not only home to pasteles, Cubanos and other Cuban cuisine but also [support meetings for those in substance-abuse recovery](#).

Cassell's Downtown: The expansion of Al Cassell's famed 1948-founded burger counter debuted in 2018, but the downtown location closed quietly in September. The Koreatown location, still home to some of [L.A.'s best burgers](#), remains open.

Causita: After [critical praise](#), chef Ricardo Zarate's Peruvian-Japanese concept in Silver Lake closed in late 2022 for repairs. But toward the start of this year Causita, a collaboration with the owners of adjacent spots Bar Moruno and Rápido, closed permanently.

Chef Tony Dim Sum Pasadena: Chef Hui Dong "Tony" He, also of Sea Harbor, opened Chef Tony Dim Sum in Old Pasadena

in 2020 with gold-brushed dumplings and other fanciful dim sum. In October it closed, but He maintains Chef Tony Dim Sum locations in Arcadia and Monterey Park.

Clark Street Grand Central Market: After eight years serving fresh bread and pastries in Grand Central Market, baker Zack Hall decided to close his downtown Clark Street Bread stall in February. Clark Street continues operations at cafes in Larchmont, Echo Park and Brentwood, plus Clark Street Diner in Hollywood.

El Cochinito: The long-running Silver Lake strip-mall sibling to Bolita and Café Tropical shuttered suddenly alongside its sibling concepts weeks ago. The beloved Cuban restaurant had served the neighborhood since 1988. Court documents and a source close to the closures of all three restaurants point to [an alleged family feud](#).

Craft L.A.: Celebrity chef Tom Colicchio's only L.A. outlet served Century City for nearly two decades until its closure this winter. "Extending our celebration of local and seasonal to the West Coast has always felt like a natural fit," Colicchio wrote in a statement.

“But like all good things, our time in Los Angeles has come to an end.”

Cupid’s Hot Dogs Northridge: Cupid’s Hot Dogs, founded nearly 80 years ago, is currently run by third-generation owners Kelly and Morgan Walsh, who announced they must close the Northridge location Dec. 30. Cupid’s will maintain its outposts in Winnetka, Simi Valley, Fullerton and Orlando.

Da Pasquale Trattoria: Pasquale Morra’s Napoli-inspired Beverly Hills mainstay closed this summer after roughly 35 years of business. The Morra family continues to operate Italian restaurants H.O.M. Italian Eatery in Woodland Hills and House of Meatballs in Westwood.

Diamond Bakery: Fairfax’s beloved Jewish bakery of nearly 80 years closed earlier this month, citing difficulty sustaining business in the area. An acquisition by Bread Los Angeles is ensuring that Diamond’s baked goods will be available for retail in local delis such as Nate ’n Al’s.

Double Zero: Matthew Kenney’s vegan pizzeria opened in Venice in 2019 as a sibling to the New York City location but shuttered suddenly in July. The New York location remains open.

Eszett: Silver Lake wine bar and restaurant Eszett shuttered in January after years of pandemic pivots and other operational difficulties. “We’ve had some slow weeks and slow months,” chef and co-owner Spencer Bezaire [told The Times](#), “and with just the cost of everything going up, and the whole restaurant and food landscape changing, we just couldn’t make the numbers work.”

ETA: This popular Highland Park cocktail bar beloved for its weekly jazz nights and dollar oysters will shutter on Dec. 30 after eight years on York Boulevard. ETA will close on Dec. 24 and 25 for the holidays, then reopen with live performances each night until the closure. Ownership posted in a public statement: “Stay tuned to this very [Instagram account](#) for some big announcements.”

Etta: Wood-fired Culver City restaurant Etta is slated to close Dec. 31 after a tumultuous year of restructuring and possible eviction, as first reported by [Eater](#).

The Federal: The North Hollywood restaurant and bar housed in a 1920s bank building is set to close at the end of December. The Knitting Factory, which programmed live events upstairs, will continue elsewhere and is set to announce its new location in 2024.

Genever: Historic Filipinotown's women-owned cocktail bar, a James Beard Foundation Award semifinalist, closed in January, [leaving a void in L.A.'s bar scene](#).

Here & Now: This Arts District cocktail bar known for inventive cocktails and its festive pop-up, Blitzen's — held annually both in winter and July — closed in August.

House of Xelas Boyle Heights: Latin-focused bar and Boyle Heights staple of five years House of Xelas shuttered in August, [citing a dispute with the location's landlord](#). It has since opened an outpost in Highland Park, taking over the patio of sibling restaurant and bar Nativo.

Jean-Georges Beverly Hills: The Beverly Hills outpost of the global chain from French chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten opened in the Waldorf Astoria in 2017. In May the restaurant shuttered,

but Vongerichten retained his all-day menu and brunch upstairs at the Rooftop by JG.

Jeon-Ju: After more than a quarter of a century specializing in bibimbap and other Korean staples, Jeon-Ju closed toward the beginning of the year.

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Sublimely Korean (and Hot, Too)

Johnny's Bar: Highland Park divey watering hole Johnny's Bar is set to close at the end of the year, celebrating New Year's Eve as a last hurrah. A concept to be announced from new ownership is already slated for the space.

Junkyard Dog: After less than one year in operation, Silver Lake vegan sports bar Junkyard Dog closed this summer.

K-Zo: After 17 years of nigiri, artfully plated sashimi and omakase in Culver City, chef-owner Keizo Ishiba closed his Japanese restaurant K-Zo in October. Local chain Brothers Sushi

recently opened in the space, [with owner Mark Okuda employing former K-Zo staff](#) at his own restaurant.

Kinn: Koreatown's Kinn closed in November. Chef Ki Kim cited personal mental health struggles as partial cause for the closure. "Whether it's quality of life, financials, sleep hours, we have to please our guests and please our customers rather than making sure we're staying healthy," [he told The Times](#). "It adds up."

Konbi: One of L.A.'s most recognizable Japanese restaurants suddenly closed its Echo Park and Culver City locations in January. Co-owner [Akira Akuto told The Times](#) that the restaurants shuttered for a range of reasons, including a statewide hike in operating costs, broader increase in the cost of goods and a lack of post-pandemic business from nearby, vacant offices.

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Konbi, home to the best egg salad sandwich in L.A., to close both locations

La Brea Bakery Cafe: At the top of the year La Brea Bakery, founded by chefs Nancy Silverton and Mark Peel, closed its

restaurants in L.A. and Downtown Disney. Kiosks in Chicago's McCormick Place Convention Center and New York's JFK International Airport are the only remaining outposts.

La Golondrina: One of Olvera Street's oldest and most iconic Mexican restaurants is closed, with the now-former owners having filed [a recent lawsuit over hundreds of thousands of dollars in back rent](#) owed to the City of Los Angeles.

CALIFORNIA

One of L.A.'s oldest Mexican restaurants needs a miracle to stay on Olvera Street, owners say

M Cafe: After 18 years serving macrobiotic and health-minded dishes on Melrose, M Cafe shuttered in September.

Mírame: The first contemporary, high-end Mexican restaurant from chef Joshua Gil and partner Matthew Egan opened in Beverly Hills in 2020 and closed this June. A Menlo Park location is in the works, while its Los Feliz sibling restaurant, Mírate, opened in 2022 and remains in operation.

Mister O's: This neighborhood restaurant with a Midcentury Modern, throwback-inspired design served cheffy Americana classics in Studio City from its launch in 2018 to its closure this fall. According to owner Michael Cardenas, a burger restaurant is slated to open in the space next year.

Mohawk Bend: The Echo Park bar with bountiful plant-based dishes shuttered in October after 12 years of service.

Needle: Chef-owner Ryan Wong's Silver Lake Cantonese restaurant closed permanently this month. Needle had previously announced, then rescinded, its closure in summer of 2022.

Nickel Diner: The neighborhood diner and downtown institution closed in May. Nickel Diner, which helped feed those in need, ran for 15 years. "Maybe if the pandemic hadn't happened, we'd all be in a different space ... but it did, and it changed us," co-owner Monica May [told The Times](#). "And it changed the nature of business. And it changed the nature of being here in downtown."

Noodle Harmony: Sichuan noodle destination Noodle Harmony closed in June after five years in operation, after being

unable to come to a lease agreement with the Monterey Park building's owner. "It is a big hit to our family, we will be doing our best to recover and try to find another location for a possible reopen," ownership posted to Instagram.

Off Vine: Neighborhood restaurant and Hollywood mainstay Off Vine closed in March after more than three decades, its site slated for demolition to become an underground parking lot. "Pictures on the walls had price tags on them," [Linda Deutsch wrote for The Times](#). "So did lamps and antique tables. Every now and then people hugged each other and wiped away tears. I was one of them."

Overland Cafe: Palms' beloved brunch spot Overland Cafe shuttered in July after nearly a half century of eggs Benedict, biscuits and gravy and griddled short stacks.

The Palm Beverly Hills: Long-running steakhouse and celebrity hot spot the Palm closed in October. In 2014 it relocated to Beverly Hills from its original, iconic West Hollywood location, which opened in 1975. The Palm maintains locations across the U.S., including one in downtown L.A.

Parmizza: Two months after its October debut, Culver City's parm-focused restaurant Parmizza has announced its closure along with plans to open elsewhere in 2024.

Petty Cash Taqueria: The popular Mexican restaurant from the husband-and-wife team behind République closed suddenly in October after a decade of tacos, margaritas and the signature cauliflower nachos in Fairfax. "It was an extremely difficult decision," chef and co-owner Walter Manzke told The Times. "I don't even know if it was a 'decision' because I had to close it. The truth is, financially, it wasn't in the best place and it has to do with the rising costs across the board and the bottom line."

Pizzette: Nancy Silverton's quick-and-casual stall in Culver City's Citizen Public Market food hall shuttered quietly earlier this year. The Italian counter-seating spot with wine service opened in 2019.

Plant Food + Wine Venice: Plant Food + Wine, which for years served as Matthew Kenney's plant-based L.A. flagship, quietly closed in Venice in the spring. In July [it reopened](#) in the Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills and remains in operation there.

Porchetta Republic: Downtown’s casual sandwich shop — and former Smorgasburg stand — quietly closed this spring. Porchetta Republic launched its bricks-and-mortar shop in 2019.

Porridge + Puffs: After years of pandemic closure, in April Minh Phan [revived her Historic Filipinotown restaurant](#). But two months later Porridge + Puffs closed as a restaurant, with Phan sharing her plans to use the building as a community space for occasional events and collaborations instead.

Portuguese Bend: Long Beach’s Portuguese Bend closed abruptly in February amid legal disputes, according to the [Long Beach Post](#).

Pump: A jewel of the “Vanderpump Rules” empire shuttered in July when restaurateur and reality TV star Lisa Vanderpump closed Pump in West Hollywood after a decade of service. Vanderpump [cited “untenable” rent increases](#) for the decision. The Pumptini and the Pump burger can be found at sibling spot TomTom.

Rápido: Bar Moruno’s sibling corner store specializing in tinned fish, wine and ready-made sandwiches and salads offered Silver

Lake a Spanish-leaning superette from early 2022. In November it closed alongside full-service restaurant Bar Moruno.”

RiceBox: Downtown's quick and casual Cantonese spot specializing in familial recipes, Chinese barbecue, rice bowls and fusion specials such as char siu egg rolls closed in September after five years in Spring Street Arcade. "Our lease is up and [we have] made the difficult decision not to renew," chef and co-owner Leo Lee posted to Instagram. "However, this is not goodbye or farewell. We are still around as we [continue to build our brand and future location\(s\)](#)."

Rod's Grill: One of the San Gabriel Valley's old-school diners shuttered in February after nearly 70 years. Its owners, the Romero family, wrote in a statement: "Rod's Grill will be going under new ownership and we wish them the best on this new journey!" The diner, which sits on historic Route 66 in Arcadia, has yet to reopen.

San Marino Seafood: After roughly two decades as San Marino's go-to neighborhood fish market, owner George Banks quietly closed his shop and restaurant in June.

Sari Sari Store: The popular quick-and-casual Grand Central Market stall specializing in Filipino dishes suddenly closed earlier this month. Sari Sari Store was opened in 2017 by Walter and Margarita Manzke, who also operate République, Manzke and Bicyclette in L.A., as well as Wildflour in the Philippines.

Sestina: This summer Matthew Kenney's plant-based pasta bar Sestina abruptly closed its Culver City location, which opened in 2020. It marked the end of the chef's chain that served vegan fresh pastas, pizzas, antipasti and Italian sweets.

Shabu-Shabu House: One of Little Tokyo's longest-running restaurants closed in October, citing the impending demolition of its Japanese Village Plaza space.

Taco María: Carlos Salgado's acclaimed Mexican restaurant closed in July after 10 years in a Costa Mesa shopping mall. The chef-owner hopes to reopen Taco María in a new, larger location in the future. "It's not the end," Salgado [told The Times](#). "It's not anyone's last chance to eat at Taco María."

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Appreciation: Farewell for now, Taco María. We didn't deserve you

Tallula's: The neighborhood Mexican restaurant from the Rustic Canyon restaurant group closed in August six years after its opening in Santa Monica Canyon. Co-owners Josh Loeb and Zoe Nathan wrote in a public statement: “In this very difficult restaurant economy, the most challenging we’ve experienced in our almost 17 years of operations throughout our 9 places, it no longer was sustainable to keep Tallula’s open.”

Wax Paper Chinatown: The second outpost of one of L.A.’s top sandwich shops closed in October after nearly five years of sandwiches and specials named for public radio personalities. “Our first day was the busiest day in WP [Wax Paper] history, but the years would prove to be unkind, never really recovering in a post-pandemic world and economy,” owners Lauren and Peter Lemos wrote in a statement. Wax Paper remains open in Frogtown, as does its nearby full-service sibling restaurant, *Lingua Franca*.

Wise Sons Jewish Delicatessen: Jewish deli chain Wise Sons [touched down in L.A. with a Culver City location](#) in 2021. In September, it closed. “We have struggled to operate a casual

restaurant that remains financially viable while supporting its employees, remaining affordable for its customers, and serving a quality product,” the restaurant said in a statement. Wise Sons remains open in San Francisco and Oakland.

Wolfgang Puck at Hotel Bel-Air: In March the renowned chef ended his run with his eponymous restaurant in one of L.A.’s most famous hotels after more than a decade of service. Hotel Bel-Air’s dining operations continue as the Restaurant at Hotel Bel-Air and Bar & Lounge, sans Puck.

Woodspoon: Natalia Pereira’s celebrated, home-style Brazilian restaurant closed in May after the chef sustained an injury. She reopened Woodspoon briefly later in the year with a limited menu of classics but has since closed it again.

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