

# GIVE BACK

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## Why Los Angeles Men Are Moving Downtown

By Kathy A. McDonald | October 1, 2015 | [Home & Real Estate](#)

Want to live on top of the world? For LA's A-list alpha males, Downtown is boomtown.

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The high life! Level Furnished Living offers renters both a rooftop basketball court and pool (both rare for Downtown) behind its L Club Lounge.

With high-rises sprouting everywhere, Downtown Los Angeles living is looking up, way up. The area's makeover into a thriving urban center—where people actually live, not just work and play—took decades of capital investment and major zoning-rule changes. With a dozen still like construction cranes populating the skyline, more than 10,000 new apartments in construction (including 2,000 or so luxury condominiums), and an astounding 12,000 more units being proposed, Downtown is finally ready for its close-up.

The new, upmarket features in many of the residential towers offset the units' compact square footage. Amenities include tricked-out common areas and comforts akin to those at ritzy five-star hotels. Concierge on duty 24/7? Check. Sparkling pool and primo fitness center? Check. On-demand dog spa for four-footed residents? Check. And there's more: maid service, private yoga instruction, and a de rigueur on-site screening room! Whatever enhanced lifestyle elements an upwardly mobile bachelor, young professional, or empty-nester can dream up are readily available, whether the apartment is studio- or penthouse-size.

These developments have attracted buyers—particularly males—to areas that were previously commercial-only enclaves. The Emerson, a \$130 million project from Related California, sits on Grand Avenue's cultural corridor next to The Broad museum; in the Fashion District, the Garment Lofts occupies an ornate, Gothic-style, former office building built in 1926; and South Park's reinvention includes Level Furnished Living.

The 271 apartments at [The Emerson](#) (225 S. Grand Ave., LA, 213- 599-7336), designed by Arquitectonica and located on Bunker Hill, offer elevated living of the most contemporary kind. Acclaimed architecture and interior-design firm Marmol Radziner created an art-filled ground floor; custom-furniture, inside and out, from the firm's atelier adds a chic vibe to the lobby, library, and serene outdoor patio. "There is an attention to detail reflected in our promise to enhance the lifestyles of our residents," says Gino Canori, executive VP of development for Related California. Some of those details are striking. A verdant wall of succulents and a high-top communal table say "of the moment," while the barbecue and fire pits make entertaining effortless in The Emerson's penthouse lounge. On the 20th floor, the lounge (much like a premium hotel's executive-level hospitality lounge) has drop-dead gorgeous views of iconic cultural landmarks and neighbors, including Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Music Center, and The Broad. A move-in coordinator helps ease the stress of relocating to the luxury tower, where studios start at \$2,495 per month.



A room with a view: Each of Level's units, including this modern-chic one-bedroom suite, features panoramic vistas of the Downtown LA skyline.

A zoning change in 1999 allowed for the adaptive reuse of Downtown's historic core of former office buildings and industrial spaces—the key to triggering the current residential rush. The Fashion District's vintage edifices (many with grand oversized windows) are the latest buildings being repurposed. "We're taking the building's original history, respecting it, and adding a modern flair," says Debbie Welsch, asset manager with Capital Foresight, the design and development firm behind the transformation of the [Garment Lofts](#) (217 E. Eighth St., LA, 213-948-4516). Its newly built-out 77 rental units—from \$1,850 to \$5,000 per month—come with high-end touches (marble backsplashes, stainless steel appliances) and 1920s character (those huge windows, which provide views of the beautiful cityscape).

The recently opened 35-floor [Level Furnished Living](#) (888 S. Olive St., LA, 213-873-8400) has 303 fully furnished contemporary apartments (and a full-floor penthouse with pool) coupled with resort-style extras, like a pool deck, outdoor basketball court (unique for Downtown), private dining room, and event space. "We're a game-changer for Downtown," says Colin Daley, Level's executive director of sales. Units at Level are available by the night, month, or year (nightly rates start around \$400; monthly rent starts around \$5,000); bachelors, as well as families, will appreciate the over-the-top hospitality components, like personal training, dry-cleaning, and dog walking.



The rooftop lounge, 20 stories above street level, boasts up-close views of The Emerson's cultural-landmark neighbors, including the Walt Disney Concert Hall and The Broad.

Conceived by [Carmel Partners](#), Eighth & Grand (770 S. Grand Ave., LA, 213-293-2447) has 700 apartments and occupies a three-acre site; it's scheduled for move-ins this month. Next door is the busy, buzzy, all-hours eatery Bottega Louie; on the ground floor is a Whole Foods Market flagship (with its own restaurant and bar), set to open on November 4. Commune, the hipster design gurus behind the Ace Hotel, crafted the artistic lobby, complete with a coffee bar and a residents-only screening room. Leases for studio apartments start at \$2,030 per month, and that rate includes parking (essential for Downtown), along with access to the 5,400-square-foot gym, the courtyard with pool and party deck, and the shared outdoor spaces. Interior luxuries include quartz countertops, top-of-the-line appliances, and, in many units, a balcony. Another plus: diversity of layout (most bedrooms are off street), as well as 9-foot-high ceilings throughout. The rooftop pool and private lounge are ideal for skyscraper views and sunset-hour socializing.

The pace of development in Downtown won't slow down any time soon: Some of LA's biggest projects to date are still in progress. Greenland USA is building the massive Metropolis project in South Park (including a 38-story condo tower and the Hotel Indigo). The 4.6-acre Fig Central luxury condos, hotel, and retail space, next to L.A. Live, will be joined by Circa, a massive mixed-use project located on South Figueroa Street that will add 648 luxury rentals to an already booming market. "Downtown LA is now an economic driver for the city and the entire region," says Carol Schatz, president and CEO of the Central City Association, a decades-long champion for the area's residential development. "Downtown's revitalization is very important to the city," she adds. "LA can't be a great city without a great center." It's safe to say, it's in the works.

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