

GRAND ENTRANCE

Renowned architect Frank Gehry and Related Companies' anticipated development The Grand LA will bring 164,000 square feet of shopping, dining and entertainment to Downtown Los Angeles—while uniting the cultural community.

BY JASMIN ROSEMBERG



The Grand LA, a 1.6 million-square-foot project, consists of a 45-story residential tower; a 28-story Conrad hotel; and three levels of shopping, dining and entertainment space.



From top: Tara Bernerd & Partners designed the lobby of Conrad Los Angeles with holistic elements that reflect nature and the art, architecture and culture of DTLA; 305 guest rooms, like this presidential bedroom, boast floor-to-ceiling windows.

The vision for this project started with Eli Broad back in the 1990s," says Rick Vogel, senior vice president of Related Companies (related.com)—the real estate powerhouse behind Downtown Los Angeles' groundbreaking new mixed-use property The Grand LA (thegrandla.com), which will begin its debut in late spring. "[Broad] was really trying to create this cultural corridor that could be the place where Angelenos would celebrate sports team wins, marathons, everything that brings a city together. He always imagined a collection of cultural assets that would line both sides of Grand Avenue—but one that would require some form of real estate development project to really anchor it and create a neighborhood."

The County and City of Los Angeles and the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) aggregated land downtown and looked to developers. "We teamed up with Frank Gehry, and we won the competition in 2004 with a very forward-looking plan that added about 3.2 million square feet that would really create a 24/7, fully functioning neighborhood, developed in three phases," says Vogel. "But the key to our selection was the fact we

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GRAND LA

Clockwise from top left: Architect Frank Gehry wanted The Grand L.A. to feel accessible and right for the neighborhood; the development is across from Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall; connecting the hotel and residential towers is a public plaza that will host events.



"FROM THE START, I WAS TRYING TO DESIGN SOMETHING THAT FIT THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING ARTS DISTRICT."

—FRANK GEHRY

committed to spending over \$50 million to develop Grand Park—which I think is one of the great assets we have in Downtown Los Angeles, and now hosts the largest New Year's Eve party on the West Coast and the largest Fourth of July celebration."

Over the next decade, Downtown transformed as a result of their efforts: The 12-acre Grand Park opened in 2012, the Emerson luxury 270-unit residential complex finished in 2014 and contemporary art museum The Broad debuted in 2015. The centerpiece of this project would be The Grand, an architectural complement to Gehry's adjacent Walt Disney Concert Hall. The team envisioned affordable housing, accessible retail and public venues serving the community. "Stephen Ross, our chairman, really wanted to create a place that Angelenos could go to as a destination," says Vogel of the space that would be a must-visit for tourists and "knit together" the neighboring cultural institutions like the Music Center, The Broad, the Colburn School and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). Vogel also saw it as a concierge: "If you want to know what's going on, come to The Grand, have some dinner, [and] one of our ambassadors can help you find tickets to a show or to The Broad."

The 1.6 million-square-foot project consists of a 45-story residential tower with 436 luxury units—20% of which is affordable housing—and the 28-story, 305-room Conrad Los Angeles (hilton.com), both opening in



late spring. Connecting the two towers is a large public plaza with landscaped terraces that will host outdoor events, and the over 164,000 square feet of retail space coming late fall will house dining, shopping and entertainment concepts. But, it was important this structure didn't feel towering or overdominating, like the high-rise office buildings built in the 1980s on Bunker Hill (whose corridor, from Temple to Third streets, is being rebranded as Grand Avenue Arts).

"From the start, I was trying to design something that fit the scale and character of the surrounding Arts District," says Gehry, who created the three-level retail space to feel soft and level with MOCA and Colburn. The complex includes a central open plaza he calls the "urban room," gently receding towers and incredible sightlines to his Walt Disney Concert Hall—on which they'll do projections. "We had a lot of challenges along the way, but I think we've managed

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PHOTOS BY ALEXANDER A. CARRIE; COURTESY OF THE GRAND L.A.; COURTESY OF THE GRAND L.A.

FOOD PHOTOS COURTESY OF THINKFOODGROUP; INTERIOR, PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GRAND L.A.



Clockwise from top left: José Andrés' Spanish bistro San Laurel at Conrad Los Angeles will serve veal osso buco; coconut ceviche from Andrés' adjacent Latin and Asian rooftop spot; the pool grill kitchen at Conrad Los Angeles.

to make something that feels good to be in and right for the neighborhood." Adds Vogel: "Frank Gehry's genius was to create a large project that didn't feel large."

José Andrés (joseandres.com), who introduced his Spanish cuisine to Los Angeles with The Bazaar in 2008, is helping two original dining concepts on the 10th floor of Conrad Los Angeles. "At San Laurel you have the flavors of Spain using all the beautiful ingredients of the Golden State, like a veal osso buco for two, grilled romaine with Parmesan *espuma* and crab croquetas," says Andrés of the all-day dining experience, which will accompany a chic rooftop restaurant with beach club vibes. "At Agua Viva, we have a mix of Latin and Asian flavors with shared plates like young coconut ceviche, ribeye burger, abalone and shiitake, and *piña borracha*." The Grand will also contain an outpost of Andrés' Bazaar Meat steakhouse: "It will share the spirit of those in Las Vegas and Chicago but be its own destination to discover."

In addition to luxury living, shopping and dining, the inclusive development that's been decades in the making will have something for everyone. Retail outlets will serve a wide range of price points, and accessible cultural programs, performances and celebrations are designed to bring the community together. "It's not for the rich and famous," promises Vogel, who plans to activate the public plaza with music and arts programs and to occasionally close down Grand Avenue—only for special public, not private, events. "Yes, if you want to go have an expensive dinner here, you can find it. But you can also find a \$10 lunch." ■

