



The Many Revivals of Hollywood's Vista Theater

The Vista initially opened as the Lou Bard Playhouse, featuring films and vaudeville. The venue was a part of the Far West Theatres chain, operated by Mr. Bard. Opening night festivities included a screening of Universal Pictures *The Wild Party*, starring Gladys Walton, several vaudeville acts, a newsreel, and as a short subject, *Tips*, starring Baby Peggy, (at the time, the screens most beloved child star) who also was in attendance. Organ accompaniment was via a 2 manual, 6 rank Wurlitzer Style D pipe organ.

By 1928, the venue was renamed the Vista, and shortly thereafter was operated by Fox West Coast Theatres. In 1949, the Vista became an important revival venue. THS member and supporter Shan Sayles purchased this theater in 1960 and operated it as the Vista Continental, specializing in art and foreign films. From 1962 to 1980, the Vista specialized in adult fare. The City of Los Angeles, unhappy with the adult programming, revoked the theater's operating permit. The Vista fought back and in 1968, the case was heard in California Supreme Court, with the Vista winning their case.

In 1980, the Vista was acquired by Thomas Theaters and it once again became a revival house. The venue had been scheduled to be demolished for a parking lot for nearby Children's Hospital. Thomas Theaters found a sympathetic individual who purchased the venue from Shan Sayles and gave a lease to Thomas Theaters.

VISTA THEATER

4473 Sunset Boulevard – Los Angeles

OPENED: October 9, 1923

ARCHITECT: Lewis A. Smith

STYLE: Spanish Revival (exterior) – Egyptian (interior)

WEBSITE:

www.vistatheaterhollywood.com



Images courtesy of Cinema Treasures

By 1982 Landmark Theatres acquired the Vista and renovated the theater and adding an Egyptian-style box office at the sidewalk entrance. Landmark exited its lease in 1985. Sadly, the Vista remained closed from 1985 to the early 1990s.

In 1997, Lance Alspaugh's Vintage Cinemas circuit purchased the Vista and from that time to 2000, had spent \$1 million in renovations that included paint and plaster repair, new seats, seismic retrofit, new projection and sound, and adding celebrity hand and footprints to the sidewalk entrance.

As fate would have it, the Vista closed once again in March of 2020, due to covid. Furthermore, the venue failed to reopen once California state restrictions were lifted.

Film Director Quentin Tarantino purchased the Vista in July of 2021.



Programming for this new venture would be new and vintage 35mm and 70mm films. Following yet another renovation, the Vista reopened in November of 2023 with Christian Slater in *True Romance*, with Mr. Tarantino as host.

Today's renovated Vista also includes an updated rooftop sign, retrofitted marquee, a 20 seat micro cinema, and Pam's Coffee Café, an homage to film star Pam Grier.