

Spectacular Illumination: Neon Los Angeles, 1925-1965

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The happy-making invention of neon, those gas-filled glass tubes of brilliant color, was patented by Georges Claude in France in 1910, and by 1913 a large Cinzano vermouth sign illuminated the Paris night. A marketer's dream, it may be said that neon found its true home in sprawling, car-crazy Los Angeles, a city exploding in population just as neon captured the imaginations of advertisers in the 1920s. Of course, LA also had the comet that would be Hollywood launching at about the same time—all of which led to a forty-year golden age of neon. *Spectacular Illumination* brings together more than two hundred vintage photos that showcase the influence of neon signs played out on the streets of LA. In the intro, the authors also tell a remarkable story about the early days of neon, how certain industries and businesses embraced the light, and the genius behind the design of the individual signs.

MATT SUTHERLAND (Winter 2017)

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