
Pop-up Drive-In Theatres and Outdoor Screenings Offer Cinematic Experiences Amid the Pandemic

By Steven Herrera /February 25, 2021

Tag: Entertainment

Pandemic-related indoor theater shutdowns in Los Angeles County have forced consumers to watch movies at home in isolation or with those who live in the same household. While there is no question that watching a movie at home offers convenience, many people have missed the shared experience of seeing a film on the big screen at the cinema. Pop-up drive-in theaters and socially-distanced outdoor screenings have emerged to keep the theatrical experience alive while people cannot be together in a theater.

Hollywood offers a solid assortment of outdoor movie events—as one would expect from the film capital of the world. The venues are differentiated from each other through the type of films shown, pricing, food options, and overall experience. Capacity is limited, so it is important to reserve a spot in advance. FM radio is required for the audio, unless otherwise noted.

Drive-In Theatre at the Hollywood Roosevelt



*The drive-in theatre at the Hollywood Roosevelt is in the valet parking lot behind the hotel.
(Photo by Steven Herrera)*

The pop-up drive-in theatre at the Hollywood Roosevelt is located in the parking lot behind the historic hotel at 7000 Hollywood Boulevard. Ticket holders can roll up to the valet parking lot from the Orange Drive entrance. These drive-in events are an opportunity to experience the glamour of classic Hollywood at a venue that dates back to 1927.

February's lineup included favorites such as *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), *Dirty Dancing* (1987), and *Casablanca* (1942). *Black Panther* (2018) is screening on February 28th at 6:15pm and 9:30pm.

Each ticket includes complimentary popcorn, and refreshments are available from a converted Airstream trailer. There is also a full bar and food menu available until 9:30pm each evening from 25 Degrees, the hotel's take on the traditional American burger restaurant. This polished establishment offers more than just burgers. There are vegan and vegetarian options, plus a new All Day Brunch menu.

The price of admission starts at \$45 per car, and goes as high as \$75 for premium spots with unobstructed views of the screen. Up to six people are permitted per vehicle.

Cinelounge Drive-In Theatre



At the Cinelounge Drive-In, the screen is on the south side of the building at 1625 North Las Palmas Avenue. (Photo by Steven Herrera)

Arena Cinelounge—a boutique art house cinema at 6464 Sunset Boulevard—launched a seven-night-a-week drive-in theater in the parking lot behind the historic Egyptian Theatre. This parking lot happens to be adjacent to the former venue of the Cinelounge, 1625 North Las Palmas Avenue. The Cinelounge Drive-In focuses on new independent films, many of them not shown on any other big screens in town.

Upcoming screenings include *Nomadland* (2021), a drama about a woman named Fern (Frances McDormand) who is living as a modern-day nomad, *Billie Eilish: The World's a Little Blurry* (2021), a documentary about the singer-songwriter's journey while creating her debut album, and *The Vigil* (2021), a supernatural horror film steeped in ancient Jewish lore.

There are ten gourmet blends of prepackaged popcorn available, all of which are non-GMO, vegan, and nut and preservative free. Examples include "Popodile Dundee" (Australian BBQ), "Popcorn of the Living Dead" (Cinnamon Churro & Pretzels), and "Eternal Popcorn of the Spotless Mind" (Rosemary Salted Caramel).

Ticket prices start at \$29.99 for the driver, and go all the way up to \$99.99 for the driver plus four. Tickets and concessions are sold in advance only through the Cinelounge website. No outside food or drinks are allowed.

Rooftop Movies at the Montalbán



In addition to the film, the outdoor movies at the Montalbán offered guests a beautiful rooftop view of Hollywood. (Photo courtesy of the Montalbán)

The Ricardo Montalbán Theatre at 1615 Vine Street started showing outdoor movies on its rooftop in 2015. The rooftop movies returned for a shortened, socially-distanced season offering nine nights of screenings from August 14, 2020 to September 19, 2020.

The slate of recent classics included *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019), *Joker* (2019), *The Goonies* (1985), *Grease* (1978), and more.

Guests sat in designated chairs, properly spaced from each other, and had to consent to temperature screenings and face mask requirements. Audio was piped in over sets of sanitized wireless headphones provided by the staff.

The price of a single ticket was \$30. Before the showtime, guests could order from Hollywood Burger, which delivered food to the rooftop. We expect the Montalbán to announce upcoming movies in the near future, so stay tuned!

Note: The following options are outside of the Hollywood Entertainment District, but are included here because of their proximity to the district.

Hollywood Legion Post 43 Drive-In



The Legion Drive-In offers screenings with a beautiful nighttime backdrop of the Hollywood Hills. (Photo courtesy of Hollywood Legion Post 43 Drive-In)

The Hollywood Legion Post 43 Drive-In plays first run films—just like brick-and-mortar theaters. The drive-in is setup in the parking lot of the American Legion hall at 2035 North Highland Avenue, which is just south of the Hollywood Bowl. Screenings are offered seven days a week.

In February, screenings included a mix of new releases such as *Nomadland* (2021), and Hollywood classics such as *Chinatown* (1974). *Being There* (1979)—a story about an unassuming gardener (Peter Sellers) who is mistaken for a brilliant philosopher—is playing on Sunday, February 28th at 7:00pm.

Cars are arrayed in an amphitheater-like setting, and patrons are afforded a view of the Hollywood Hills. The drive-in is equipped with a state-of-the-art 4K projection system, and there are plans to screen 35mm film in the future.

The price of admission is \$65, with a maximum of four guests per vehicle. The price includes unlimited popcorn, one soda and one candy for each guest. You may bring your own food and drinks, but alcohol is not permitted.

Drive-In Movie Nights at Pizzeria Da Michele



The drive-in theatre at Pizzeria Da Michele is located in the parking lot directly across the street from the restaurant. (Photo by Steven Herrera)

Pizzeria Da Michele, a classic Italian eatery at 1534 North McCadden Place, offers guests dinner and a movie. The pop-up drive-in theatre is setup in the parking lot across the street from the restaurant.

Movies are shown Thursday through Sunday from sundown to 9:00pm. A variety of different short films are presented throughout the night. Each night's screenings will be a surprise, but the selections are generally feel-good films.

Guests can order food without leaving their cars, and the menu offers more than just pizza.

Admission is free. Guests can call the restaurant to reserve a spot.