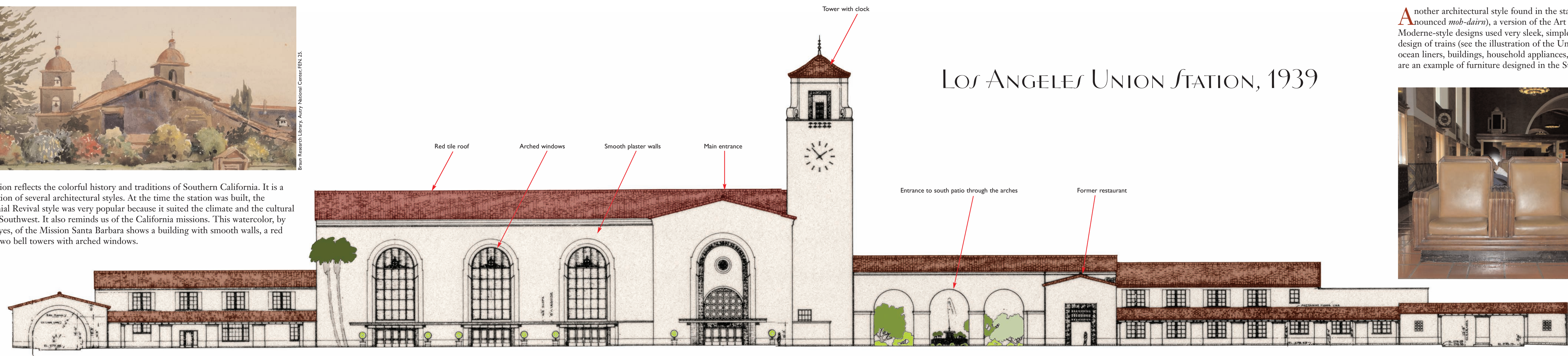


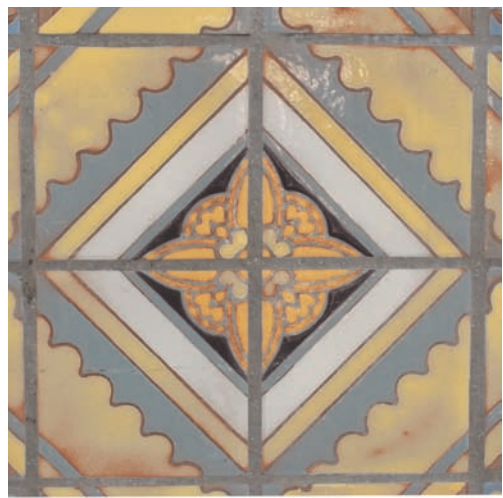


Braun Research Library, Autry National Center, PEN 25

Union Station reflects the colorful history and traditions of Southern California. It is a combination of several architectural styles. At the time the station was built, the Spanish Colonial Revival style was very popular because it suited the climate and the cultural history of the Southwest. It also reminds us of the California missions. This watercolor, by Eva Scott Fenyes, of the Mission Santa Barbara shows a building with smooth walls, a red tile roof, and two bell towers with arched windows.



Union Station was built with many Spanish Colonial Revival elements. Spanish Colonial Revival buildings often have red tile roofs, smooth white plaster walls, arched windows, heavy dark wooden doors, colorful ceramic tile decorations, and enclosed garden patios planted with trees and flowering native bushes. Can you find all these elements in Union Station? If you look closely at the tall arched windows on the front of the station, you will see designs in the ornamental ironwork that look like mission bells. Do the bells in the design remind you of the real bells you see in the painting of the mission?



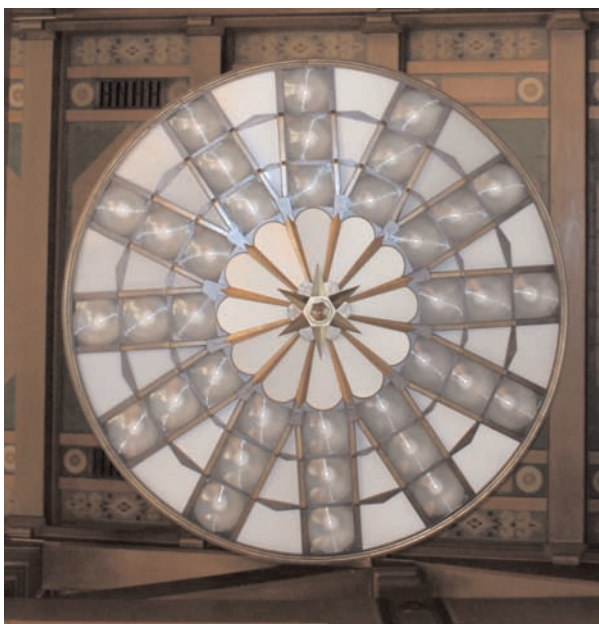
Most of the tile in the station was made by Gladding, McBean & Co., a famous Southern California company that is more than 100 years old. Can you match the tile design to its location in the station?



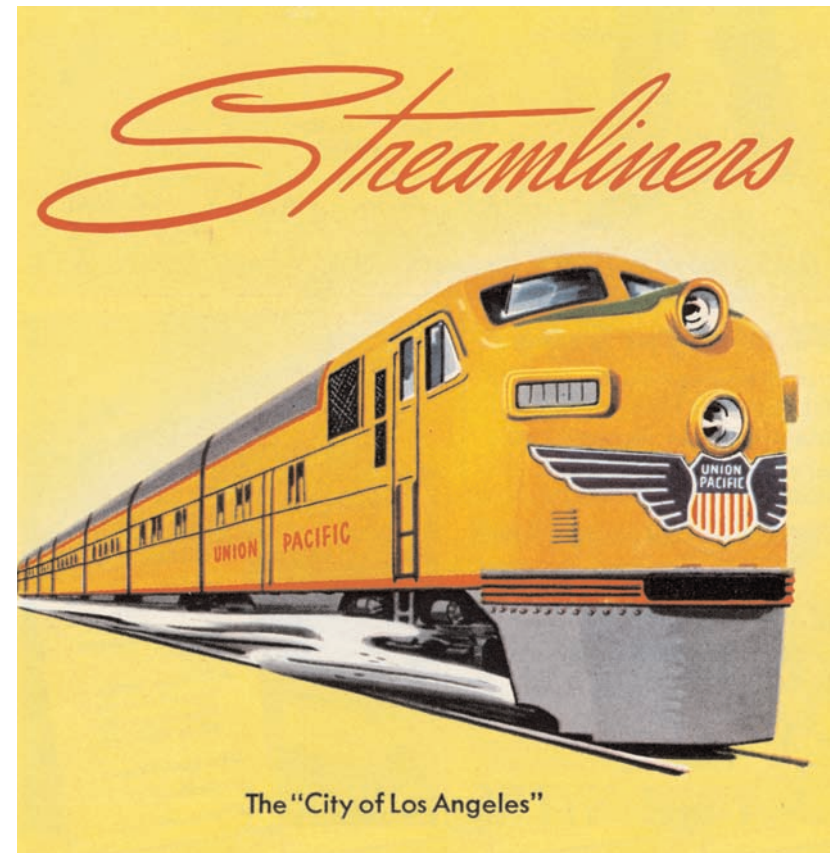
Los Angeles Union Station, 1939

You can find all kinds of lively and exciting details in the station, below your feet and far above your head! Look up to see the elaborately painted ceilings, plus enormous chandeliers that are as heavy as a car! Look down to see patterns of colored marble on the floors of the ticketing concourse, the waiting room, and the old restaurant space. The marble and tile designs on the floors make us think of rugs, and they are meant to give a sense of warmth to the station's gigantic interior spaces. The floor in the restaurant resembles the colors and patterns of a gigantic Native American hand-woven rug. Do you have any rugs that look like this in your home?

Getty Research Institute



Another architectural style found in the station is called Streamline Moderne (the French word for “modern,” pronounced *mob-dairn*), a version of the Art Deco style that was very popular in the 1920s and '30s. Streamline Moderne-style designs used very sleek, simple shapes to make us think of speed and motion. The style was used in the design of trains (see the illustration of the Union Pacific *City of Los Angeles* “Streamliner” train), airplanes, automobiles, ocean liners, buildings, household appliances, and even furniture. The wooden chairs we see in the station's waiting room are an example of furniture designed in the Streamline Moderne style.



Los Angeles Union Station was the last of the great American train stations. It opened near the end of the era of American rail travel, and it remains today a monument of uniquely Southern Californian architecture. Many other American cities tore down their train stations—the magnificent Pennsylvania Station in New York City is a sad example—and replaced them with smaller stations used by Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corporation). Fortunately for Los Angeles, Union Station was used “as is” by Amtrak. It was not torn down. In fact, the main station looks today almost the same as when it was new. It continues in its original role as a transportation hub for Los Angeles and Southern California.

