





Jan/Feb 2023 · Volume 42 Number 1



L-R Clockwise: "All Roads Lead to Westwood" Fall Tour by Mike Hume, 2022 Community Leadership Boot Camp Graduates by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy, Last Remaining Seats by Mike Hume, the 2023 Preservation Awards by Mike Hume, Historic Downtown Walking Tour by Sana Ahmed/L.A. Conservancy, "On the Road to Toluca Lake" by Vince Gonzalez

2022 In Review: Connecting People to Places and Culture

By Carley Michelle Hildebrand and Lisett Chavarela

Happy New Year, L.A. Conservancy members! Thank you for an amazing 2022. Together, we faced expected and unexpected challenges, came together in person again, and victoriously rallied in support of historic places important to L.A.'s history. From *Last Remaining Seats* to our epic Fall tour in Westwood, it was a return to business *almost* as usual for the L.A. Conservancy as we continued to meet the needs of a hybrid world with both in-person and virtual programming. None of it could have been achieved without your support.

We hope that reflecting on the Conservancy's vital work in 2022 will galvanize your passion for saving historic places in 2023.

One of the things we missed most during the pandemic was *being with you in person*. After all, a core value of the Conservancy is our commitment to community. Historic preservation has the power to connect people to places and culture, and 2022 gave us plenty of opportunities for us to meet, learn from each other, and celebrate our shared histories together.

In 2022, the Conservancy held **327** in-person events! From our award-winning weekly walking tours to special events like "Meet Us at the Greek" and "All Roads Lead to Westwood," over **10,000** Angelenos joined us in exploring L.A. history. Inperson and virtual youth tours also continued. The Conservancy engaged with nearly **1,500** students across L.A. County with programming focused on L.A.'s diverse architectural and cultural heritage: from Chinatown to Central Avenue.

But perhaps the most significant indication that 2022 signaled a 'return to normal' was the triumphant return of our beloved *Last Remaining Seats* series! More than **5,000** folks from all over Southern California (and beyond!) took in the wonders of historic theatres over the three-weekend classic film festival.

"Building Community: Pioneering Black Architects in L.A."

Announcing the L.A. Conservancy's newest virtual tour: "Building Community: Pioneering Black Architects in L.A."! Launching in February in honor of Black History Month, "Building Community" illustrates how Black architects shaped Los Angeles and influenced communities through advocacy and architecture:

Wednesday, February 22nd

Cost: \$8.00 Members / \$12.00 General Public

Time: 6:00 p.m. PST

During this one-hour virtual tour, you'll learn about the careers of architects Norma Merrick Sklarek, Paul Revere Williams, and Roland Wiley (to name a few), and see why the buildings they designed represent stories of triumph in overcoming unthinkable adversity.

"Building Community" will challenge tourgoers to reflect on why it's important for architects to understand and represent the communities where they design buildings.

"Building Community" is also available as a virtual student field trip and is an excellent tool for educators to use year-round, not just during Black History Month. The field trip is recommended for grades 6-12. Cost is \$25 per booking (recommended for up to 30 students) and scholarships are available!

Learn more others at: <u>laconservancy.org/</u> <u>buildingcommunity</u>.

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The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County.







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Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation and the Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

Upcoming In-Person Tours & Events

For more information and to register for our events, visit: **laconservancy.org/events**.

SATURDAYS FEBRUARY 4 & 18

LAWRENCE HALPRIN: RECONNECTING THE HEART OF LOS ANGELES

Experience famed landscape architect Lawrence Halprin's plan to transform downtown Los Angeles through the use of open spaces. Explore how his iconic designs are connected, and learn how these open urban spaces foster art, community, and a connection with nature. Tours start at 10:00 a.m. \$15 Conservancy Members/\$20 General Public

COMING SOON!

MEET US AT THE GREEK!

2022's popular tour of the Greek Theatre is coming back for an encore! Learn about the Greek Theatre's glittering history and see first-hand its extensive restoration, inclu ing architectural details not seen for decades. February tour date will be announced soon! Be sure your email is current for the Conservancy's E-Newsletters.

COMING SOON!

BILTMORE WALKING TOUR

2023 marks the centennial of the spectacular Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. So what better occasion for us to bring back our popular Biltmore weekend walking tours! See this Beaux Arts marvel yourself on this docent led tour of what was once the largest hotel West of Chicago. February tour dates will be announced soon! Be sure your email is current for the Conservancy's E-Newsletters.



2022 Boot Camp Graduates. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy

Call for 2023 Community Leadership Boot Camp Candidates!

We're excited to announce that the L.A. Conservancy's Community Leadership Boot Camp training program is coming back for its third year in a row! To date, we've had nearly 75 graduates from

this program and the amount of interest expressed in this hands-on deep-dive into all things historic preservation has exceeded all expectations. This leadership program engages community members throughout Los Angeles County, helping them build skills to advocate for preservation-based outcomes.

During this immersive leadership training, attendees will:

- Hear best practices and lessons learned from the field
- Deepen their understanding of preservation as a planning tool
- Learn how to make a compelling case for preservation
- Connect with other community members who love historic places

Applications for the next session open January 17, 2023. Deadline to apply is Thursday, February 16, 2023. Applicants must be L.A. County residents and have active Los Angeles Conservancy membership. For full session dates and full details about the program, please visit: laconservancy.org/bootcamp.

Looking Back and Powering Ahead in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



In 2020, the Conservancy deepened our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We established a task force dedicated to ongoing, transparent dialogue and examinations of DEI issues affecting the Conservancy and our mission. Consisting of staff members and a liaison from our Board of Directors, the task force has been instrumental in creating a foundation from which the organization will build DEI into all aspects of our work and operations.

Learning: Conservancy staff engaged in extensive anti-racism training, a learning opportunity which we will make available to all new staff. Our taskforce has also engaged in regular shared learning opportunities on topics related to DEI and historic preservation.

Reflecting: A vital step forward and with the support of consultants, we completed an internal survey and an organizational review of our processes, projects, systems, materials, and policies. We reflected on where we were, where we are, and where we want to be as an organization.

Growing: The Conservancy has adopted a series of recommendations by our consultants fortifying our growth in various areas, including organizational culture, managing accountability, DEI in the public sphere, and leadership

in advancing DEI work. In 2021, the Conservancy commissioned a pay equity study and made necessary adjustments. DEI was also at the bedrock of our strategic planning process, embedding a DEI lens in every aspect of our vision forward.

Today, the Conservancy confirms our commitment to preserving and amplifying a more inclusive history that represents the diverse people of Greater Los Angeles.

As a county-wide historic preservation organization that advocates and educates about historic places and spaces, we honor and respect the history of the original inhabitants and places that preceded the founding of Los Angeles.

In 2021, we worked with a representative from the Gabrieliño Tongva people to adopt a land acknowledgement and have begun including indigenous histories in our programs—from our walking tours to our student programs.

We've been intentionally increasing our outreach in BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities and increased our support of community driven preservation through multiple programs, including our Community Leadership Bootcamp, Legacy Business Grant Program, and ongoing partnership with local preservationists.

We've intensified our efforts to raise public awareness and advocate on behalf of lesser-known yet culturally significant historic places important to Los Angeles history. Your response in support of our efforts has been incredible!

As we move into 2023, we look forward to fulfilling our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as LAC strives to be an anti-racist preservation organization.

Envisioning the Future: The Conservancy's Three **Year Strategic Plan**

Back in 2020, the Conservancy had nearly completed a strategic planning process when, like the rest of the world, we had to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the spring of 2022, we felt it was time to launch a new strategic planning effort to position our organization for success in the new landscape. We engaged a consultant to help the organization in creating a three-year strategic planning process: a new roadmap to guide the Conservancy in the execution of its mission.

After months of conversations, surveys, and retreats, as well as a full DEI audit, a strategic plan was created to help articulate priorities for achieving the Conservancy's mission in the years ahead.

As part of this plan, Conservancy staff and Board worked to develop a new vision statement for the organization: Connecting people to places and culture.

With the vision of connecting people to places and culture serving as a through-line, our key strategic direction over the next three years will be to:

- Position the Conservancy as a relevant, visible, and connected local voice on preservation
- Use storytelling and targeted outreach to grow the base of preservation supporters
- Expand programming in a focused and intentional way
- Cultivate an organization that reflects commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Ensure the organization has the staff, infrastructure, and revenue in place to strategically achieve its mission

This vision is firmly rooted in our belief that that historic preservation empowers and nourishes communities by creating meaningful connections between people. By preserving places and stories that matter, we encounter not only our own history, but the history of others.

Thank you to all of the staff, board members, volunteers, donors, and community partners who participated in helping inform this project.





L-R: Legacy Businesses Grant Program, Canva Stock Images; Taix Restaurant photo Kent Kanouse/Flickr; Paul R. Williams Residence photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy

2022: Preservation Highs and Lows

By Adrian Scott Fine

2022 kept the Conservancy busy, a year of great public policy wins as well as numerous successful efforts to help save threatened historic places from demolition and neglect. Unfortunately, the year was also marked by setbacks and threats to long-standing preservation programs.

As we begin a new year, we look back on a few preservation wins and losses from 2022 and think about how to best propel our efforts forward in 2023. Together, let's work to ensure we are doing even more in helping Angelenos save historic places that matter.

WIN: Legacy Businesses

A big win last year was the City of Los Angeles voting to establish a new legacy business program, a move we owe to the leadership of Councilmember Curren Price Jr., the City's Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD), and Office of Historic Resources (OHR).

Once this exciting new program is in place, much needed funding, marketing, and technical assistance will be available to longtime businesses throughout the city. Joining other cities that have created successful legacy business programs,

including San Francisco and San Antonio, L.A. will launch its new program in 2023. Funding is the core component, with more than five million dollars set aside for grants and other forms of assistance to help support L.A.'s legacy businesses.

The Conservancy has been there from the start, advocating for such a program for the past two years, coinciding with the launch of our Legacy Business Initiative in late 2019. As part of our efforts to broaden awareness about legacy businesses, we also helped bring together a coalition of community-based organizations in support of a legacy business program. Ultimately, many of our coalition's recommendations were incorporated in the final, adopted program. The Conservancy is now working closely with the EWDD staff as it prepares to launch and implement the new program.

As a companion piece, the Conservancy is also very excited to launch our very own Legacy Business Grant program, initially in late 2022 with a call for applications resulting in an overwhelming response of legacy business applicants from throughout the county! The next round for applications opens February 8th: <code>laconservancy.org/grant</code>. Thanks to funding from Wells Fargo, we will

award grants to help support ten legacy businesses in 2023.

WIN: Paul Revere Williams House

The Craftsman style house at 1271 West 35th Street illustrates how small places can impart powerful stories. Before architect Paul Revere Williams was allowed to build a house of his own in his neighborhood of choice, he and his family resided in this house for thirty years.

For all of Williams' success, racial injustice, restrictive covenants, and redlining framed his world. He designed mansions in places where he couldn't live and elegant shops and restaurants where he was unwelcome. Threatened with demolition and redevelopment in 2022, the Conservancy intervened and successfully nominated this house as a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM). In 2023, we are very hopeful that this house finds a new owner that restores this house, ensuring it stands proud to tell Williams' story, and those of so many within L.A.'s African American community.

LOSS: Taix French Restaurant

Plans to redevelop the site of the Taix French Restaurant in Echo Park highlight several questions about how best to protect legacy businesses, preserve historic buildings, and respect the intent of the City's Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

The Cultural Heritage Commission recommended to City Council to designate Taix as a Historic-Cultural Monument, including the building and entire parcel. Yet, based on a recommendation by former Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, the full City Council supported a plan that reduced the scope to only two exterior signs and an interior bar top, paving the way for demolition. Instead of finding a win-win approach to preservation and providing new housing, this action undermines the purpose of local designation and sets a harmful precedent for preservation and environmental review in Los Angeles.

Preservation Snapshots



The Complex Theatre and Studios. Photo by Lindsay Mulcahy/L.A. Conservancy

The Complex Theatre and Studios

On October 22, 2022, actors and comedians gathered at the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Wilcox. Cars honked as they waved signs that read "Comedy not Condos" and "Protect the Arts." The group had come together for a clear purpose—to save the Complex Theatre.

Since 1990, the five small theatres have been hub for the artistic community, hosting countless Hollywood Fringe Festival performances, youth classes, and shows that have gone onto Broadway. A legacy business, the Complex anchors a string of theatres along Hollywood's Theatre Row.

In the fall of 2022, the property owner put the building on the market and refused to extend the tenants' lease. When Complex owner Matt Chait learned about the historic significance of the property, he reached out to the L.A. Conservancy for support.

The 1928 building was identified in the SurveyLA citywide historic resources inventory as a rare example of commercial development along streetcar lines.

The building's tie to the entertainment industry dates to the 1930s, when it headquartered 16 different motion picture union locals. Before the emergence of the Complex Theatre, the building had long been a site of both Hollywood artistry and industry.

It is located within the Hollywood Entertainment Industry Support Services Planning District, described by Survey-LA as the most significant collection of entertainment industry-related support services buildings in Hollywood. It has operated as a theatre since the early 1970s.

The Complex's fifty years as a theatre only deepens its historical significance. While the building will be vacated at the end of 2022, the community hopes designating the building a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) will honor its history and encourage a new owner to continue its legacy as a theatre space.

The Conservancy and Complex Theatre supporters are now actively pressing for a preservation-based outcome.



The Verbin Residence. Photo courtesy Steven Luftman

The Verbin Residence

Constructed in 1959-60, the Verbin Residence in Benedict Canyon is architecturally significant with distinctive characteristics of a Mid-Century Modern residence, incorporating an A-frame structure with post-and-beam style and distinctive Polynesian influences.

In 2013, the SurveyLA citywide historic resources inventory identified the Verbin Residence as individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM).

Additionally, the Verbin Residence was identified in 2021's SurveyLA's L.A. Modernism Historic Context Statement for Postwar Modernism, and separately it was used as an example for the Subtheme: A-Frame Buildings.

In 2022, the Verbin Residence was placed for sale, as the longtime residence of Maurice and Doris Verbin.

The Conservancy and community advocates were concerned about the future of this highly distinctive Modernist residence, which prompted the preparation of the HCM nomination.

Houses similar to the Verbin Residence are often purchased and routinely demolished as teardowns.

We hope the HCM designation will ensure both recognition for this unique architectural design and long-term protection for the Verbin Residence.

Fortunately, the new owners of the house bought it with the intention of restoring it and keeping its distinctive features intact!

To keep up to date on all of the Conservancy's urgent advocacy issues, please remember to sign up for our Preservation Action Alert e-mails! You'll receive updates on when and how you can take direct action to help save L.A.'s historic places: laconservancy.org/subscribe.

2022 Review continued from page 1

Last Remaining Seats wasn't the only cause for celebration last year. In late June, the Conservancy was honored to hold its annual benefit in person at the Bob and Dolores Hope Estate in Toluca Lake! Dining and cocktails along the comedy legend's private golf hole was an experience not to be forgotten. Neither was our 2022 Preservation Awards celebration at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum! We honored the nine 2022 award-winners with a special tribute on the Coliseum's jumbotron and an evening of mingling and networking.

But for all the celebrating we enjoyed, there were also thousands of hours spent doing the Conservancy's core advocacy work. Each day, we're hard at work behind-thescenes pushing for solutions and win-win outcomes to preserve the places that matter to L.A. history. In 2022, we were involved with more than 180 preservation issues — whether through direct nominations, advocacy or technical assistance. The Conservancy, thanks to help from community members and supporters, was able to save a former home of Paul Revere Williams from demolition, protect a piece of L.A.'s postwar Chinese American community, and push for the survival of rare examples of Beaux-Arts, Mid-Century Modern, Victorian architecture, and more.

In addition, we've been hard at work equipping local preservationists with the tools needed to be an effective advocate of historic preservation in their own neighborhoods! Our Community Leadership Boot Camp, which was launched in 2020, continued this year and saw **30 new graduates** ready to advocate for the places that matter to them. Our virtual program "People + Places" also continued in 2022 with three fascinating episodes that focused on a diverse lineup of topics: women's history, Googie architecture, and L.A.'s multifamily housing history. (Please see page 5 for our full spotlight on the 2022 preservation wins and challenges.)

And one final journey in 2022 that we're taking with us into 2023 is the creation of a brand-new L.A. Conservancy website! We've been working on creating a new destination that will truly emobdy the scope of our work and our vision for the future. In addition to improved user experiences, the new *laconservancy.org* website will feature rich video, images, and most important of all, *stories* from Angelenos just like you. (To stay up to date on this exciting project, make sure your email is current for the Conservancy's E-Newsletters.)

Thank you for being part of the Conservancy! We look forward to working with you in the year ahead and are honored that you're a part of this journey to save the places and tell the stories that make L.A. special. <u>Let's continue</u> to make history, together, in 2023!

YEAR IN REVIEW:

2022

Legacy Business Grant Program

In late 2022, a new grant program was made available to longtime small businesses within Los Angeles County! Thanks to generous funding from Wells Fargo, the Conservancy's Legacy Business Grant Program will award ten \$5,000 grants to eligible small businesses that have operated and contributed to their community's history for at least 20 years.

The Return of Last Remaining Seats (LRS)!

We were thrilled to see Angelenos respond in force to the return of LRS with over 5,000 attendees over the three weekend festival. Highlights included a near capacity screening of Alfred Hitchcock's NOTORIOUS at the Los Angeles Theatre and our first ever journey to the Westside with an opening night tribute to Sidney Poitier at the Regency Village Theatre.

Westwood Fall Tour

On November 12th and 13th, 2022, hundreds of L.A. Conservancy members and members of the general public gathered in Westwood Village for our big Fall Tour. "All Roads Lead to Westwood" was an epic undertaking and required support from all Conservancy staff plus more than fifty volunteers. The tour covered more than 50 sites of historic interest in Westwood Village, the UCLA campus, and Little Holmby.

New Series: Preservation Perspectives

In August 2022, the Conservancy launched a brand new virtual series called "Preservation Perspectives." This series gave L.A. City Council District candidates the opportunity to share their views on preserving historic places in Los Angeles, as well as the role of historic preservation as a tool in addressing issues like affordable housing, density, sustainability, and more.

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ISSUES

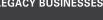


Your membership helps fund countless hours of advocating for L.A.'s historic built environment.

327
IN-PERSON TOURS



Thanks for supporting our events and helping us safely transition back to inperson walking tours and events in 2022! 64
LEGACY BUSINESSES





You helped us celebrate 64 legacy businesses on social media! Our campaign has reached 4 million people.

1,500

STUDENTS ENGAGED



Your membership helped us create virtual workshops and resources to bring L.A. history to students.

160

ENGAGED VOLUNTEERS



Our volunteers came out in force at events like Last Remaining Seats! We're thankful for their their time and support. 10,112

IN-PERSON TOUR ATTENDEES



Supporters like you showed up at our inperson programs like the epic "All Roads Lead to Westwood" tour. Thank you!

30 LEADERSHIP BOOT CAMP

GRADUATES



The Conservancy helped equip 30 local advocates with tools to be leaders in preservation in their neighborhoods.

390,000

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS



Your support helped us engage with nearly 400K folks about advocacy issues, education, events, and more. 100

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS



In 2022, we received support from 100 event sponsors and grantors, with contributions from \$2,000 to \$50,000!

OCTOBER 16 / DECEMBER 2 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Conservancy acknowledges the generous contributions of our new and upgrading Supporting members, and new and renewing members of our Sustaining, Benefactor, and Cornerstone groups.

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Membership Interview: Sonya Kolowrat



Photo by: Tim Soter

Sonya Kolowrat joined the Conservancy this year, and jumped in feet first, participating in our Community Leadership Boot Camp and joining the Last Remaining Seats committee. Development Director Liz Leshin recently checked in with her.

LL: What compelled you to join the Conservancy?

SK: It was probably my obsession with the old theaters, and the possibility of exploring inside of them that led me to join the Conservancy. I've also been exploring downtown a lot, and recently started an Instagram account dedicated to Los Angeles terrazzo (@losangelesterrazzo). When I research about the amazing terrazzo I find, nearly every time I am led to the Conservancy website.

LL: What did you get out of participating in the Conservancy's Community Leadership Boot Camp this year?

SK: I learned so much about the amazing resources and research tools available. I know the process of landmarking a building. Most importantly, I learned what I can do as a citizen of Los Angeles to make my voice heard and help advocate to raise awareness of historic spaces.

LL: Why did you want to join the Last Remaining Seats committee?

SK: Last Remaining Seats is such a special and magical series. I love film and old theaters - the glamour they hold, the golden age of cinema. Part of the appeal was just being able to be inside these lovely spaces.

LL: What would you say to encourage others to join and support the Conservancy?

SK: If you love your city, it's important to take an active role in its upkeep. One voice CAN make a difference. Los Angeles is unique, diverse and HUGE. There is a lot of work to be done, and it's so important to protect these spaces and neighborhoods.

Read Sonya's full interview at: laconservancy.tumblr.com.

CONSERVANCY WALKI<u>NG TOURS</u>

Walking tours are back! \$10 for Conservancy members and children seventeen and under; \$15 for general public. Reservations required: *laconservancy.org/tours*.

Art Deco:

Learn how Art Deco became a defining architectural style in the city. **Saturdays**, **10:15 a.m.**

Broadway Historic Theatre and Commercial District:

Explore L.A.'s magnificent movie palaces and learn about the Broadway's revitilization. **Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.**

Historic Downtown:

Get a look at the iconic Bradbury building, step inside Grand Central Market, and more! **Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.**

Union Station:

See the beautiful architecture of this iconic L.A. landmark up close and personal. **Saturdays, 11:00 a.m.**

Past Meets Present:

Explore how the historic sites of Los Angeles' past are shaping its future. **Every Fourth Saturday, 10:30 a.m.**

Modern Skyline:

Think skyscrapers aren't historic? See our iconic skyline in a whole new way. **Every Second Saturday at 10:30 a.m.**



Los Angeles Conservancy

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Support L.A. County's Legacy Businesses! In addition to being longstanding community anchors, legacy businesses are also a source of employment and—in some areas—provide essential neighborhood amenities. Support local legacy businesses near you and join our initiative on social media: **#ISupportLegacyBusinesses**



K BAKERY 1258 West Temple Street Los Angeles, CA 90026 (213) 481-7511

In 1986, a small family established a traditional panadería in Vista Hermosa and, 35 years later, it's one of the most enduring bakeries in town. While it all started with favorites like tamales and tortas, they've expanded to making a variety of pastries and custom cakes, tacos, and what some says is the best burrito in L.A. You be the judge!



PASQUALE 5616 San Vicente Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90019 (323) 936-6883

This cheerful Mid-City store is home to one of the finest shoe restoration shops in L.A. Established by master cobbler Pasquale Fabrizio, Pasquale has four generations worth of knowledge in all manner of leatherwork: shoes, bags, and more. The family business once made shoes for Old Hollywood stars and is still a celebrity fave. **pasqualeshoerepair.com**



NEWLAND HARDWARE 4938 Huntington Drive South Los Angeles, CA 90032 (323) 227-1933

Newland Hardware is a "small town" style hardware store in El Sereno: friendly, helpful, and affordable. Established in 1932, it's been owned and operated by the Orlandini family since 1966 and is currently operated by a brother and sister team. Selection is smaller than big box stores but you'll still find all you need for your home repair needs!