



[A Glass of Wine in Downtown Los Angeles...](#)

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...something that may not have been suggested a decade or two ago, but with downtown LA in a major revitalization period, lofts and condos going up every which way that you look, and the completion of the [Staples Center](#)-adjacent [Nokia Theater/LA Live](#) complex, there are now plenty of restaurants, hotels and wine bar options to get your vino on in the downtown area.

Los Angeles has always lacked that central, downtown, heartbeat that cities like New York, Chicago and San Francisco have always had. Now, after much ado, the Los Angeles heartbeat, albeit faint, can be felt.

One spot that's doing it's part to help the heart is a recently opened "wine bar and gastropub", [The Must Bar](#). According to their website: "The brainchild of Coly Den Haan of Santa Barbara, Certified Sommelier and Entrepreneur, The Must is a concept wine bar and gastropub featuring more than 50 local and global wines destined to be a 'must' visit location for wine and beer enthusiasts. Each of our guests, wine enthusiasts and novices alike, is treated to multiple ways of enjoying and learning more about wine and food pairing in a fun, energetic and customer-focused setting. After a brief introduction, our servers ask guests to make a selection of their mood, ranging from "Must Be Curious" to "Must Be Thrifty" providing a playful interaction with the staff and diminishing any apprehension of explaining they would like to experiment, sample by the glass, or stay within a certain price range."

The spot is in an unassuming spot across the street from an about-to-open building of brand new lofts/condos, and I was greeted with a warm, homey-feeling interior with lots of light and lots of wood (even the menus are rubber-banded to panels of wood).

I got there in time for happy hour which features \$3 snacks like soup, house made soft beer pretzels and Chocolate Chip Bread Pudding. There are also \$3 beer and wine options, including a great Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz blend from [Trace Wines](#). A big blueberry pie in a glass with a dash of cedary-oak for good measure. For \$3 a glass?!!! With all the wood in this place you couldn't make a stick big enough to beat that deal.

While I enjoyed the happy hour wine, I was hungry for more than just snacks, so I looked at the dinner menu. I was pleasantly surprised at the moderate prices, and on a cool evening in January, I had lots of warm, comfy entree choices from Chef MaryAnn Salcedo (former sous chef to Gordon Ramsey on the hit television show "Hell's Kitchen"). Highlights include The Must Grilled Cheese, The Must BLT, 3-Bean Salad (my mom makes that sometimes!) and the Fluffernutter, which is "Smoked almond & roasted peanut butter, marshmallow fluff and bananas on grilled brioche served with dark chocolate ganache"; wow!

I decided on an **Orange, Almond, & Bacon salad** and an order of **Mini Chicken Sliders**. The salad was delicious with the yummy, salty bacon cutting the sweet/citrus dressing just right. The chicken sliders... well, what can I say: Fried chicken with ranch dressing and smoked mozzarella-I gulped them down back to back to back.

And to wash all this down? I ordered a bottle of Pinot Noir from a rarely mentioned region when it comes to Pinot: Alsace. I mean, to be honest, I can't even pronounce Alsace, and if you can't either, here's my gift to you:

The region is mostly associated with dry Riesling, but I can assure you, this **2005 Klingenfus Pinot Noir** was no Riesling. The nose was all cherry, all day long, and once I got some on my tongue I got more cherry, cranberry, some underlying earthy-ness and a nice substantial finish with a hint of strawberry. It's funny, it didn't taste like the Pinots that I'm used to (Central California, Sonoma Coast or Oregon); in a weird way, it somehow tasted of a faraway land... which of course, it is.

Just when I thought my meal was over, along came our server with a special treat: **A Port Float**. Uh, what? That's right... "Ruby Port with a scoop of vanilla bean ice cream, and topped with Hawaiian cream soda. Slurp... gone.

All in all it was a great meal in a part of Los Angeles that I love to visit. And since red wine is good for the heart, well, I'll plan on drinking as many glasses as I can at The Must... to keep that heart beating. By the way, The Must also offers [Sunday Wine Classes](#). If/when you're in LA, make sure you check it out!