



Participants at the start of the Revlon Run/Walk for Women

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S TOP 100 EVENTS

**Inside the biggest parties on the area's annual calendar.**

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Sure, Southern California is known for the entertainment business that dominates Hollywood, but the region is full of diverse events spanning all kinds of industries, from fashion to food to sports. Here's a peek at our picks for the biggest annual events in the area, from the long-running Auto Show to the brand-new Class fashion trade show, from the pageantry of the Rose Parade to the spontaneity of the West Hollywood Halloween parade. Our annual list highlights the parties, trade shows, benefits, and festivals that light up Los Angeles year after year, drawing media attention, tourism dollars, and the top players in their respective fields.

PHOTO: CHRIS WEEKS/WIREIMAGE

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S TOP 100 EVENTS

## Benefits

**1. Carousel of Hope** Barbara Davis's fund-raiser is known for attracting celebrities and raising big bucks—more than \$80 million since its inception in 1982. Last year's ball at the Beverly Hilton honored Pauletta and Denzel Washington, and included performances by the Jonas Brothers and Josh Groban.

**2. Race to Erase MS** Nancy Davis partners with Tommy Hilfinger to host this event, which last year raised \$2 million for Multiple Sclerosis research with the help of auction items like a shopping trip with the Hilton sisters. The 16th annual benefit is scheduled for May 8 at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza.

**3. Los Angeles Opera Opening Weekend Celebration** Each year, the Los Angeles Opera launches its season with three days of events. Last year's festivities included a dinner at a private home for donors, as well as a presentation of the season's new productions at the Music Center.



**4. Los Angeles Philharmonic Gala** The premier local orchestra opened its 2008-2009 season by setting off fireworks inside the Walt Disney Concert Hall during a September concert led by departing music director Esa-Pekka Salonen. Swiss watchmaker Breguet sponsored the gala, and Special Occasions handled event design and production.

**5. Saks Fifth Avenue's Unforgettable Evening** This event benefits the Entertainment Industry Foundation's Women's Cancer Research Fund. The February 2008 evening at the Beverly Wilshire honored Hilary Swank, featured a performance by Mary J. Blige, and raised more than \$1.5 million.

**6. UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center's Taste for a Cure** This food-centric fund-raiser for cancer research took to the Beverly Wilshire last June. *Bon Appetit* editor in chief and event co-chair Barbara Fairchild helped select influential vintners and chefs to prepare wine and food for close to 500 guests.

**7. Chrysalis Butterfly Ball** This June 2008 event at a private Brentwood home trumped its previous records, attracting more than 800 guests and raising \$1.1 million to help homeless individuals find employment. Sponsors included Saks Fifth Avenue, and Smashbox and Jurlique donated gift bags.

**8. HollyRod Foundation's DesignCare Benefit** DesignCare founders Holly Robinson Peete and Rodney Peete helped raise more than \$500,000 to support families facing debilitating diseases. The July event included a performance by Maxwell and an Emanuel Ungaro fashion show.

**9. Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County's Dinosaur Ball** The museum's black-tie biannual fund-raiser returns this year with an "Exploring the Mysteries of Life on Earth" theme, crafted by event producer Timeless Celebrations. The ball is scheduled to take place on April 25.

**10. Scriptor Award Gala** The USC Libraries Scriptor Award honors writers for adapting books into film and will take place in the university's Edward L. Doheny Jr. Memorial Library on January 20. Proceeds benefit the Doheny Library Preservation Fund.

**11. Starlight Foundation Gala** Last year's gala at the Beverly Hilton Hotel raised more than \$1 million for seriously ill children. *High School Musical's* Corbin Bleu hosted the March 2008 evening, which presented William and Elizabeth Shatner with the nonprofit's Heart of Gold Award. The 2009 gala will take place March 27.

**12. Concern Foundation's Block Party** For its 35th fund-raiser benefiting cancer research on July 11, the Concern Foundation will return to its long-standing home at Paramount Studios and stick with its block-party formula, which presents guests with more than 50 restaurant stations. Last year's block party raised \$1.5 million.

**13. California Science Center's Discovery Ball** More than 800 guests converged at the Science Center for last year's 10th annual black-tie fund-raiser, which helped the museum raise more than \$1.3 million toward educational programs and exhibits. This year's ball will take place February 7.

**14. Fulfillment Fund's Stars Benefit** Ryan Seacrest hosted this October 2008 benefit at the Beverly Hilton, where more than 800 guests turned out to support the fund, which helps economically disadvantaged youth graduate high school and college.

**15. Backstage at the Geffen** For its sixth annual fund-raiser in March 2008, the playhouse raised a record-breaking \$575,000. The event drew a sold-out crowd and included performances from honoree Annette Bening and event co-chair Dick Van Dyke.

**16. Pasadena Showcase House of Design** This benefit supports a variety of music programs, and draws close to 40,000 visitors to tour a Pasadena home that has been decorated by select designers. The 2009 showcase will run April 19 through May 17.

**17. Tiger Woods Foundation Block Party** Held at the Grove of Anaheim, proceeds from this annual benefit go toward the golfer's eponymous learning center. The October 2008 fund-raiser featured a three-course meal prepared by Mario Batali and a performance by musician Seal.

## Festivals & Fairs

**1. Los Angeles County Fair** The Pomona Fairplex is home to the largest county fair in the nation. The monthlong fair features live entertainment, rides, games, and vendors selling food and crafts. The fair run from Labor Day weekend through October 4 and drew more than 1.3 million attendees in 2008.

**2. Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival** Golden-voice's Coachella festival, which has swelled to three days in recent years, now brings about 175,000 cool kids into the desert near Palm Springs every April for music and art installations on the Empire Polo Field—plus a long weekend packed with parties off site. The 2009 event will be April 17 through 19.

**3. The Los Angeles Times Festival of Books** This newspaper-sponsored fest brings 140,000 attendees, more than 300 exhibitors, and 100 author panels to UCLA every April for a celebration of books. The 2009 event will take place April 25 and 26.



**4. Abbot Kinney Festival** Now in its 25th year, this popular community festival takes to the Venice streets at the end of September. The volunteer-produced free festival includes live music, arts and crafts booths, and copious food offerings. The festival draws about 130,000 attendees.

**5. Sunset Junction Street Festival** In late August, this festival takes place in the Silverlake district known as Sunset Junction. The festival includes a packed performance lineup and carnival rides, and attracts about 60,000 music-minded hipster types.

**6. Sunset Strip Music Festival** With a successful debut in 2008, the festival will return to venues on Sunset Boulevard June 25 through 27 and—new for this year—part of the street itself. The first installation of the fest drew 25,000 attendees; this year, that number is expected to increase to 40,000.

**7. Redondo Beach International Antiques Fair** This annual fair at the Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center features more than 75 exhibitors showcasing antiques and collectibles for between 2,500 and 5,000 attendees. The show is produced by the OSAT Company and takes place the last weekend of July.