



HUGE PLATINUM/EMERALD CLUB, BIG POOL, OMG FOOD -- BUT GET AN EAST-FACING ROOM

by Lew Toulmin

I visited the Jonathan Club in downtown Los Angeles, stayed for two nights in June of 2017, and compiled a full report.

HISTORY

The Jonathan Club was founded in 1895 by a group of LA businessmen, and the current, massive, 13-storey building was erected downtown in 1924.



Brother Jonathan

The club was named after “Brother Jonathan,” the iconic American symbol who succeeded Yankee Doodle and preceded Uncle Sam. In 1927 the club acquired its secondary facility, the Beach Club. This acquisition was so controversial that a club manager was fired over the issue, but then the beach facility became so popular that another manager was fired when he tried to sell it! The club was almost destroyed by the Depression, but eventually recovered and is now quite successful. It is rated as a Platinum Club and as an Emerald Club, and is considered to be one of the top five city clubs in America.



MEMBERSHIP

The club has almost 4000 members, drawn from the upper strata of LA society, including business leaders, government officials, and movie and media moguls. Membership opened to women and minorities in the 1980s, and is based on numerous letters of



nomination from existing members. The nomination process takes about a year, and is quite rigorous in its screening. The members must pay a hefty initiation fee of \$30,000, plus \$4,200 per year in dues.

Distinguished members have included President Ronald Reagan, railroad magnate Henry Huntington, Nathan Cole (co-founder of the *Los Angeles Times*), and Medal of Honor winner Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, killed on the bridge of the USS *Arizona* during the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

LOCATION

The club is located in downtown Los Angeles beside the 110 freeway, a block west of the rival California Club and the LA Central Library. Five blocks east of the club is The Last Book Store, a famous venue with numerous speakers and programs. Parking at the club is via 24-hour valet, with the entrance on South Figueroa Street just beyond the front pedestrian entrance. Parking is about \$27 per day and is not included in the room cost.

FACILITIES

The numerous facilities include a penthouse Sky Bar, various meeting rooms, travel agent, camera club, large 20-yard swimming pool, basketball court, running track, workout rooms, sauna, massage, library, the Tap Room (informal eating), main formal dining room, the Grill, urban garden, rooftop views and seating, billiards, bake shop, barber shop, business center and wine cellar. Whew!



Reciprocal members can use the Jonathan Beach Club in Santa Monica, which has about 150 yards of private beach front, and dining facilities. One staffer stated that the Jonathan Club had about 60 reciprocal clubs, but the posted list in the lobby shows about 45. Either number is rather small.

DRESS CODE AND RULES

The official dress code is coat and tie on the formal third floor, but is business casual in most areas, including on the weekends (when there is very reduced service), when dining in the Tap Room, or when entering, leaving or reading in the main lobby or library.

Jeans, cargo pants, and tank tops are not allowed anywhere. Athletic attire is of course acceptable in the gym areas.

You can borrow a jacket on site if you forgot yours!

BED ROOMS

There are 82 bedrooms at the Jonathan Club, ranging from suites to junior suites to small standard bedrooms. I stayed in a junior suite, which cost \$293 per night including taxes and reciprocal fees. Local club members only pay \$234 for the same room. The junior suite included a king bed, sitting room with desk, two TVs, a spacious bathroom with large shower but no tub, a safe, and a refrigerator. The décor was tasteful, in muted light browns and off whites.



There were two issues with the bedroom that were annoying. One was a fire alarm that went off for 45 minutes, reportedly due to a malfunctioning light bulb. Another was the fact that the room got quite warm in the afternoon, despite the AC being turned on to the maximum. I suggest that if you visit the club in the summer, you ask for a room facing east or north.

FOOD

On Monday the main dining room was closed, so I had dinner in the informal Tap Room on the second floor. I did not expect much, since the complimentary snack being served was junior hot dogs. I ordered the \$26 prix fixe three-course dinner menu, and was astounded at the quality. The salad was terrific, with crisp fresh lettuce, small bacon strips, ranch dressing, excellent avocado, and blue cheese. This was the best salad I had had in years, so I gave it my highest grade, a very rare OMG -- "Oh My God"! This was followed by an excellent salmon with a nice crust and very tender flesh, accompanied by beans and mashed potatoes. The dessert was an apple pie a la mode, with tasty apples and a very good crust. If only all private clubs had food of this quality!

Additional photos of the club are presented below.

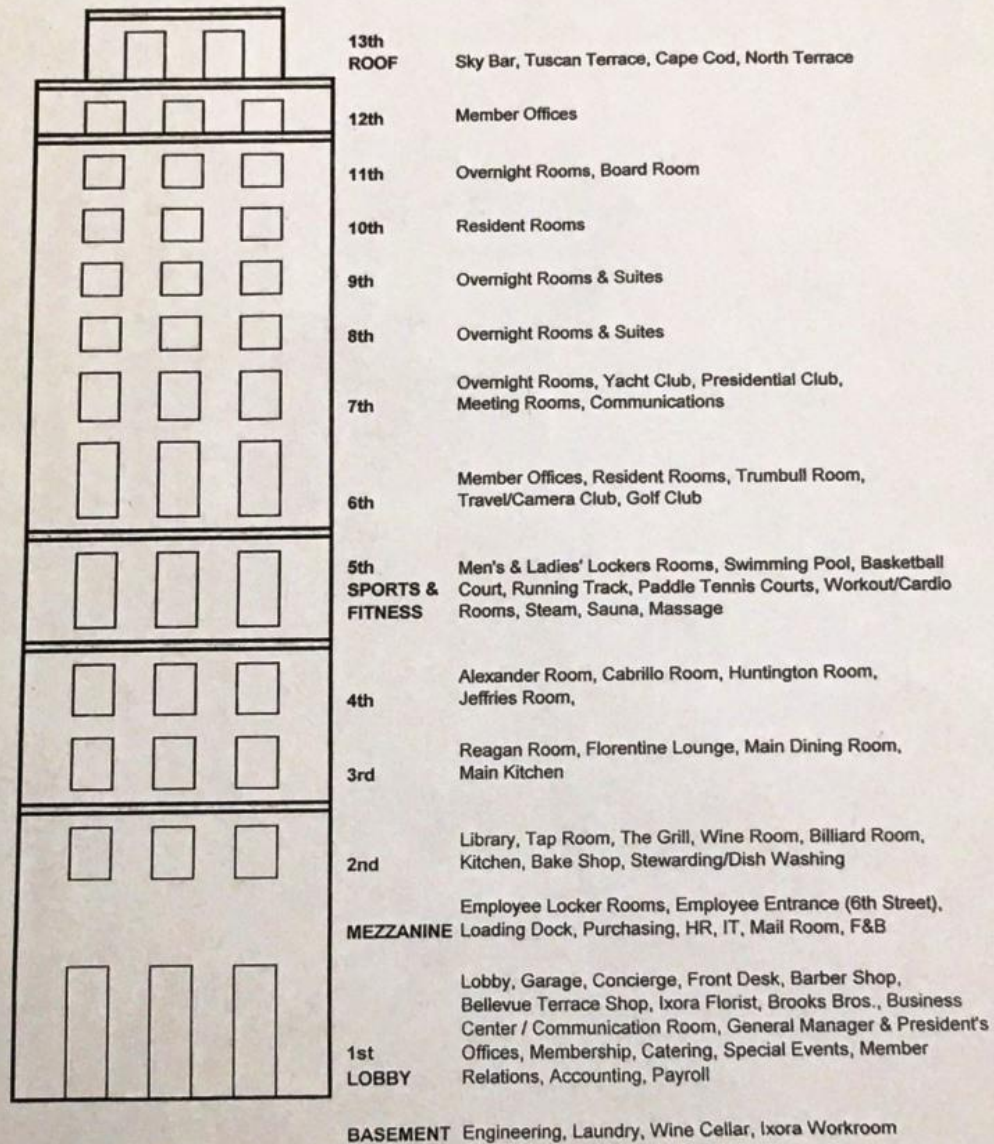


The club has an extensive collection of art of the West.



Sitting room in a junior suite.

THE JONATHAN CLUB



You need a map to keep track of all the Club facilities.



One of numerous meeting/function rooms.



Another meeting room, set up for a speech with head table.



The basketball and pickleball court.

NORTH AMERICA		EUROPE		ASIA
Outrigger Canoe Club <i>Honolulu, HI</i>	Coral Casino Beach & Cabana Club+ <i>Santa Barbara, CA</i>	Detroit Athletic Club* <i>Detroit, MI</i>	Union League* <i>Philadelphia, PA</i>	American Club <i>Hong Kong, CHINA</i>
Pacific Club <i>Honolulu, HI</i>	Pacific Club <i>Newport Beach, CA</i>	Union Club* <i>Cleveland, OH</i>	Down Town Association+ <i>New York, NY</i>	American Club <i>Singapore, SINGAPORE</i>
Vancouver Club* <i>Vancouver, CANADA</i>	Arid Club <i>Boise, ID</i>	Granite Club <i>Toronto, CANADA</i>	New York Athletic Club* <i>New York, NY</i>	Tokyo American Club* <i>Tokyo, JAPAN</i>
Union Club of British Columbia* <i>Victoria, CANADA</i>	Denver Athletic Club <i>Denver, CO</i>	National Club* <i>Toronto, CANADA</i>	Union League Club* <i>New York, NY</i>	
Rainier Club* <i>Seattle, WA</i>	Dallas Petroleum Club <i>Dallas, TX</i>	Rideau Club <i>Ottawa, CANADA</i>	Westchester Country Club* <i>Rye, NY</i>	Carlton Club* <i>London, ENGLAND</i>
Washington Athletic Club* <i>Seattle, WA</i>	Minneapolis Club* <i>Minneapolis, MN</i>	Capital City Club+ <i>Atlanta, GA</i>	Harvard Club* <i>Boston, MA</i>	Oriental Club* <i>London, ENGLAND</i>
Arlington Club* <i>Portland, OR</i>	St. Louis Club <i>St. Louis, MO</i>	Army and Navy Club* <i>Washington, DC</i>	Union Club* <i>Boston, MA</i>	Reform Club* <i>London, ENGLAND</i>
Multnomah Athletic Club <i>Portland, OR</i>	Milwaukee Athletic Club* <i>Milwaukee, WI</i>	City Tavern Club <i>Washington, DC</i>		Royal Automobile Club* <i>London, ENGLAND</i>
Sutter Club+ <i>Sacramento, CA</i>	Chicago Club* <i>Chicago, IL</i>	Cosmos Club* <i>Washington, DC</i>	AFRICA/MIDDLE EAST	Royal Automobile Club* <i>London, ENGLAND</i>
Olympic Club* <i>San Francisco, CA</i>	Union League Club* <i>Chicago, IL</i>	University Club* <i>Washington, DC</i>	Cape Town Club+ <i>Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA</i>	Circle de l'Union Interalliee <i>Paris, FRANCE</i>
University Club* <i>San Francisco, CA</i>	University Club* <i>Chicago, IL</i>		Capital Club* <i>Dubai, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES</i>	Club Financiero Genova <i>Madrid, SPAIN</i>
				Circulo Ecuestre* <i>Barcelona, SPAIN</i>
				OCEANIA
				Athenaeum Club* <i>Melbourne, AUSTRALIA</i>
				Royal Automobile Club* <i>Sydney, AUSTRALIA</i>
				Union University & Schools Club* <i>Sydney, AUSTRALIA</i>
				Northern Club* <i>Auckland, NEW ZEALAND</i>
				* Overnight accommodations +Adjacent hotel

List of reciprocal clubs.

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