



CAFETALES RESTAURANT (1957)

The advent of the automobile in Los Angeles led to a space-age retro futuristic architectural style. Critic Douglas Haskell coined the term 'Googie' to describe it in 1952 after Googie's Coffee Shop, built in 1949 on the corner of Sunset Strip and Crescent Heights. Googie's was demolished in 1989, but the style was popular for small commercial buildings, coffee shops and car washes. Hallmarks of Googie architectural style include tapered columns, spires, and sweeping roofs shaped like flying saucers and spaceships. Often there were tropical landscapes. Buildings were rendered in futuristic colors - turquoise, avocado, and orange. The style inspired Disneyland's Tomorrowland and the Jetsons television cartoon.

Inglewood embraced the Googie architectural aesthetic, sporting four Googie coffee shops, a bowling alley, drugstore, motel, and three car washes. Only one Googie coffee shop – Cafetales – and one Googie car wash - Jet Car Wash - remain intact.

The coffee shop, now known as Cafetales Restaurant, has been through several incarnations since the late 50's. Originally named Sherri's, this coffee shop was next called Farmer's Restaurant then rechristened GG's until it closed in 2008.

Cafetales' paint has dimmed, but its sign, design, and interior details, including rocks and space ship allusions, remain to remind of us of the Googie style.

Architect

Martin Stern, Jr.

115 South La Brea Avenue
Inglewood, California



Architect

Martin Stern, Jr.

Martin Stern, Jr. was born in New York in 1917. His family moved to Beverly Hills and he stayed in California to study architecture at the University of Southern California. After World War II, he set up a small Los Angeles practice. He pioneered Googie architecture with three designs for Ships coffee shops. The first opened in Culver City in 1956; the second in Westwood; the third on La Cienega. Stern's exuberant aesthetic proved perfect for Las Vegas. His Vegas hotels beginning with the Sahara (1959), ushered in the tall hotels that began populating the city. He designed the Sands Hotel in 1964; the Flamingo in 1967; and the Mint in 1968.

Stern designed the International Hotel next to the Las Vegas Convention Center in 1970. Stern created a new model for the urban resort hotel, transforming it with space-age design and theme restaurants. Stern's reshaping of Las Vegas was completed in 1973 with the MGM Grand, now Bally's Las Vegas. Martin Stern died in Los Angeles in 2001.