



Meet Ray Adamyk, Healer of Historic Buildings

He's restored iconic landmarks including the Hollywood Bowl, Hearst Castle.

[Bekah Wright](#) | June 16, 2015



Tower of London, Buckingham Palace, Stonehenge...

The beauty of these iconic structures in Ray Adamyk's native England has always struck him to his core. As a transplant to North America, Adamyk founded a painting business, known today as [Spectra Company](#), restoring iconic buildings with care in a way that speaks to a sense of place.

When Adamyk arrived in California, the tides were just beginning to turn when it came to restoration in the state. "There wasn't much in the way of preservation," Adamyk says. "Then the Los Angeles Conservancy and California Preservation Foundation began and suddenly laws, ordinances and tax credits were put into place to protect California's cherished buildings."

Suddenly, there was a need for specialized artisans. Having worked on projects like the Hollywood Pantages Theatre and Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, Spectra was becoming known for its "Artisan Army." "We're the largest company in the western United States that has artisans and craftsmen who do this type of work."



Before and after shots of the restoration work done on the walls of The Brand Library in Glendale, CA. Indeed, the Pomona, Calif.-based Spectra Company, which has a 150-member staff, has been lauded for keeping careers in certain crafts viable. The Artisan Army tackles what Adamyk terms the historic fabric of a project.

"That can be anything from curtains to plastics, wood, stone, ornamental plasters and metals," he lists. "There's often a need to recreate something that's missing in a building from scratch. That's what our craftsmen do."

Though the renaissance of Downtown L.A. has occurred in fits and starts, Adamyk is heartened by the progress he's witnessed over the last two years. "There are 92 buildings downtown that are being renovated, restored or newly built," he says. "That's a lot going on." Of late, Spectra, which has as many as 10 projects underway at a time, has been focusing much of its attention on Los Angeles' Downtown and Broadway Corridors.

Like a proud papa talking about his children, Adamyk launches into the history of a current project, the Broadway Trade Center. "The old May Company was located there," he says. "It was the largest department store, and had the first escalator, west of Chicago."

Learning about a building's background is all part of the Spectra's process. The company, which often acts as a project's historic consultant, has conservators and researchers on staff, who work hand-in-hand with

historic architects, archeologists and consultants when drawing up plans for buildings to gain eligibility as landmarks or inclusion on historic registers.



Howard Hughes' original office

Listening to Adamyk recount Spectra's projects is a veritable history lesson.

"We restored Howard Hughes' private office in Playa Vista's Hercules Campus," he says. "In a time when households of eight shared one bathroom, he had his own private, office bathroom, which was a big deal in the day."

Another project involved restoring "grotesques" on the Villa Riviera. Many of the gargoyle-like figures — dogs, bears, griffins and eagles — were missing from the structure. "There were 42 of them on 16th floor balconies," says Adamyk. "They obstructed ocean views, so people cut them down. We restored, replicated and put them back in place."

Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis House, Catalina Casino, Gamble House, The Biltmore Hotel, Bradbury Building, El Capitan Theater, Hearst Castle, Santa Barbara Mission, Union Station, the Hollywood Bowl... the list of Adamyk's projects goes on and on, and each has historic, character-defining features.

"The greenest building is the one that already exists," Adamyk has been quoted saying. "Preserving and restoring nearly always expends fewer resources than building anew. Plus, it is just the right thing to do."

"It's satisfying to know we're having an impact on the rich heritage of these buildings," he added.

As for those of us who've visited these landmarks and come away with indelible impressions... Well, we couldn't agree more.