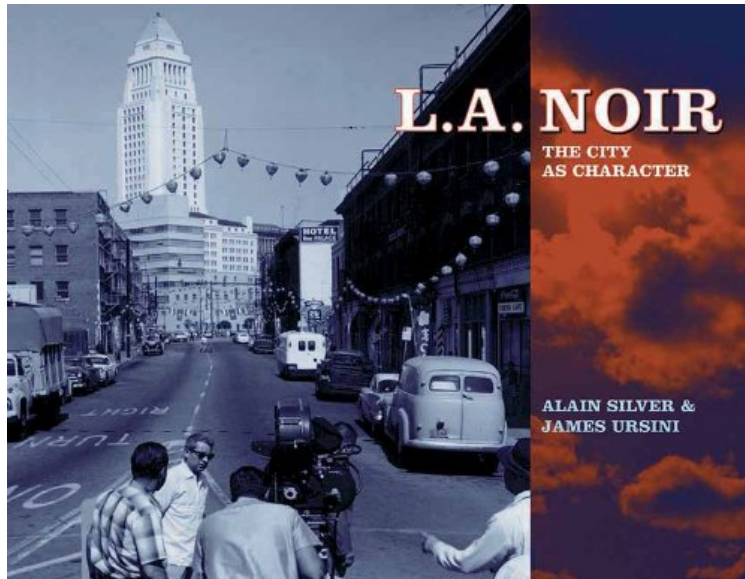


(Free read ebook) L.A. Noir: The City as Character

## L.A. Noir: The City as Character

*Alain Silver, James Ursini*

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**Alain Silver, James Ursini : L.A. Noir: The City as Character** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised L.A. Noir: The City as Character:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Los Angeles history buff, but no new pictures of ...By P. HowellLos Angeles history buff, but no new pictures of different parts of the city,same old photo found in almost all books on the subject.15 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Locations, locations, locationsBy Daniel QuinnThe book doesn't quite live up to its subtitle: "The City as Character," though the authors do a whole lot of talking about L.A. You have to admire the effort that went into tracking down all these film locations, though many of them ("Present-day tunnel through Bunker Hill where Steve Thomson is dropped of in Criss Cross") are of the "so what" variety. Lots of film stills, but on the whole the book didn't seem worth the price. If you absolutely must have every book connected with noir films, then you might feel differently.11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Film Noir in Los Angeles, and Vice Versa, 1942-2004.By mirasreviewsIn "L.A. Noir: The City as Character", film noir historians Alain Silver and James Ursini take a different approach to the films that they have written so much about in other books. This book looks at film noir, both classic and neo-noir, for which "Los Angeles and its environs serve as essential elements in the invocation of the noir mood." Silver and Ursini discuss over 40 films, noting their themes and characters, with an emphasis on the role location plays in the movies. The book is organized into four chapters: "Hollywood", "The West Side and the Coast", "Downtown Los Angeles", and "The 'Burbs". A brief history of the area introduces each chapter, and some films are included in more than one section.Locations don't mean much if we can't see them, so "L.A. Noir" is packed with pictures. There are about 150 black-and-white photos, including production stills, behind-the-scenes photos, and 64 location photos. The location photos are also indexed in the back of the book with thumbnails and precise locations, so you could find the places yourself. Reproduction quality is good. To accommodate the photos, the book is much wider than it is tall. That would be fine in a hardback, but it's a minor annoyance in softcover, as the book flops awkwardly when open. I can't say that "L.A. Noir" is essential for film noir

enthusiasts, but it goes over old territory with a different emphasis. Film noir aficionados living in the Los Angeles area may find it particularly interesting.

Los Angeles has always been as much a star in film noir as any actor, be it Humphrey Bogart, Barbara Stanwyck, Burt Lancaster, Ava Gardner or Jack Nicholson. In *L.A. Noir: The City as Character* renowned film historians Alain Silver and James Ursini explore the world of noir cinema in the context of Los Angeles. The book features dozens of noir and neo-noir landmark films from *Double Indemnity*, *Criss Cross*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Gun Crazy*, *The Big Heat*, *Kiss Me Deadly*, and *Touch of Evil* in the classic period (1940-1960) to such neo-noir notables as *Chinatown*, *L.A. Confidential*, *Mulholland Drive*, and *Pulp Fiction*. *L.A. Noir* illustrates how these noir films use L.A.'s diverse cityscape and architecture to convey a unique vision of urban corruption and existential fatalism, not only in the ever-changing, chaotic downtown of Bunker Hill, Main Street, and Chinatown, but in its affluent coastal communities (Santa Monica, Malibu) as well as its deceptively sunny suburbs (South Bay, San Fernando Valley). The authors deftly analyze the key films of noir while integrating them into the geography and history of this "dark city" which became such an important icon of noir literature and film. *L.A. Noir* is profusely illustrated with approximately 150 photographs-many of them appearing in print for the very first time-including production stills from the movies discussed, archival photos of the locations from the films and new photographs of the locations today, chronicling the ever-changing cityscape of this noir character-Los Angeles.

From Booklist Film noir continues to generate a remarkable outpouring of pedantic prose, but the would-be scholars may have expended the most effort while achieving the least on the topic of how the genre uses the urban landscape. Only Nicholas Christopher, in *Somewhere in the Night* (1997), managed to say something truly memorable about how, in the best noir films, the labyrinth of the postwar city came to reflect the psychic wounds of its inhabitants. This extensively illustrated guide to Los Angeles as a noir setting makes a useful adjunct to the Christopher book. Moving throughout the city, from downtown to the Westside, the Pacific Coast, and on to the suburbs, the authors show how specific streets and buildings helped set the mood and convey the dark messages in such classic noirs as *Criss Cross* and *Kiss Me Deadly* as well as in neo-noirs, including *Chinatown* and *Blade Runner*. The black-and-white illustrations of cityscapes prove every bit as evocative as the actual film stills, eloquently making the point that place is every bit as capable of driving meaning as action. Bill Ott Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "No one is better qualified to explore the L.A. noir connection than [the authors] who cover [it] with style and savvy." Leonard Maltin, *Entertainment Tonight*