

HARDWARE SOLUTIONS FOR PALISADIANS

by John Beaver

With the recent closures of Norris Hardware, Orchard Supply Hardware, and Busy Bee Hardware, I decided to do my own study and determine which was the best hardware store to go to. Over the past month I visited the following hardware stores and here is what I learned.

(All distances are from the Palisades Village and times were calculated with Google maps at 10:30 on an average Thursday morning).

Fisher Lumber and Hardware. 1600 Lincoln Blvd, Santa Monica: 4.1 Miles, 10 minutes

Fisher is affiliated with “Do It Best” which is the same brand Norris was affiliated with so they have pretty much the same items as Norris; except they carry more brands and have more inventory and choices than Norris did. The employees I met were caring and helpful and seemed to have decent knowledge. The lumber section is small but will fit most home owners needs. They are also the closest location to the Palisades which is a huge benefit. During high traffic periods, you can cut through Santa Monica and still get there in a reasonable amount of time.

A few negatives: If you were used to Norris, you will be disappointed in their paint department. Since they are in Santa Monica, they are prevented from operating a table saw (another random Santa Monica Law), so if you need a sheet of plywood cut down to a specific size or to fit into your vehicle, they can't do it. Fortunately they do carry a nice selection of half and quarter sheets to solve that problem.

Highlight: Best place to go if you need something quickly.

Lincoln (True Value) True Value, 1609 Lincoln Blvd., Venice 6.0 Miles, 16 Minutes

Lincoln Hardware is affiliated with True Value and seems to be a typical True Value hardware store. In my opinion that leaves them with the fewest choices of product and the lowest quality. I found the employees here to be indifferent and lacking knowledge. I asked if they had a certain item, and the gentleman said “here's what we have” and walked away. “Here's what we have” did not include the item I was looking for. And you thought Norris employees were grumpy? The only real positive thing I can say is the parking lot is ample and easy to get in and out of.

Anawalt 11060 Pico, West Los Angeles: 7.4 Miles, 18 minutes (Can take 45 minutes or more if you leave after 2:00 on a week day)

Anawalt is a small chain consisting of 4 stores in the Los Angeles area. The advantage of being independent is they are not beholden to a larger corporation for purchasing decisions, and as such carry more variety and higher end brands than Fisher and Lincoln. The hardware store is large and well stocked. They **rent** a nice assortment of tools as well. They also have a pretty good selection of lumber and home building materials, although they were missing a few things I

thought they should have carried. The employees I dealt with were fairly knowledgeable and willing to help, though a few required a little more prompting than others.

Beware that their parking lot is small and tight and there is often a wait for a parking spot.

Highlight: Best choice if you want to avoid Home Depot. Especially on Sundays as Fisher and Bourget Bros. are both closed on Sunday.

Anawalt 3730 Cross Creek Road, Malibu: 10.9 Miles, 22 Minutes

If you feel like driving North instead of South you won't be disappointed with Malibu Anawalt. They appear to have an equal sized hardware department as their West L.A. store, but it's hard to tell because it's spread out among 5 different buildings/sheds. If you don't see what you're looking for, make sure to ask, as it's probably in a room you haven't found yet; but chances are high it's in there somewhere.

If you're looking for garden supplies, lumber, or building supplies, I would say they have the largest selection on the West Side, behind Home Depot. The employees are knowledgeable and willing to help. If you haven't been here, it's on Cross Creek Road just past the Malibu Country Mart.

Highlight: Best choice if you want to avoid Eastbound traffic, and a good choice either way.

Bourget Bros. 1636 11th Street, Santa Monica. 4.4 Miles, 14 Minutes.

Known for their stone and rocks, Bourget Bros. hardware store has a very limited paint department, only a smattering of lumber, and does not really carry household goods like lightbulbs, or door mats, or holiday decorations; but if you are looking for construction grade hardware and tools, this is the place to go. Their selection of nails, screws, sandpaper, building materials, drill bits, hand tools, pipe fittings etc. rivals Home Depot, and is often of better quality. It's probably not the place to go if you're looking for decorative items, but if you call yourself a professional, or you're getting into a project that your wife thinks is above your skill level, this would be a good place to start. To make it even better, the employees seem to have a knowledge and willingness to help that matches the selection and quality of inventory.

Another added benefit is their tool repair and sharpening service.

Depending on traffic you can get there via PCH and I-10, Through Santa Monica Canyon or across 26th street.

Highlight: Best choice for professionals and contractors.

BMC - Building Materials and Construction Supplies (Formerly S.T.O.C.K) 3860 Grand View Blvd, Mar Vista 9.8 Miles, 25 Minutes

You could drive around the westside all day and not drive past BMC. It's located on a lightly traveled street in Mar Vista between Inglewood and Centinela, just off Venice. It also used to go by a different name, so finding it on google is equally as challenging. That said, once you do

find it, you will be pleased with their selection. Intended as a construction supplier, it lives up to its name. They have a good supply of tools, lumber (which they will deliver for you) and building materials. They are also known for their window, door and millwork department. I'm not sure I would bother going here to supply a quick weekend project, but if you are adding a bedroom or garage, this would be a good place to start. The employees are knowledgeable and willing to help, and parking is usually easy, once you find the place.

Highlight: Best place to go if you are building your own home.

Anderson Plywood, 4020 Sepulveda, Culver City, 9.3 Miles, 22 Minutes

If you are a woodworker Anderson Plywood has an amazing selection of Plywood, a decent selection of Hard Woods, and a limited but high quality selection of woodworking tools and accessories. If you are not a woodworker, there isn't much here for you, unless you are looking to replace that broken cabinet door hinge, where they probably have the one you're looking for.

Home Depot, 12975 W. Jefferson, Playa del Rey. 8.9 Miles, 28 Minutes (Normally for me about 35 minutes)

What can I say. I don't love going to Home Depot, I don't love trying to find things there, I don't love parking there, but sometimes you just have to go there. Their selection and choices are amazing, and no one can beat their prices. Unfortunately this store is no longer open 24/7, but they are open until 11pm for those late night projects, and their automated check out helps the wait time tremendously. I find their employees to be hit-or-miss on their knowledge, but they usually know where things are, which is very important. I prefer to support local establishments, but I know if I need something, Home Depot will have it, and sometimes it's worth just going there directly rather than hoping one of the other stores will have that item you're looking for.

Note: If you are buying something with multiple parts, and the package looks like it's been opened, check it carefully. They have a very liberal return policy and often people buy something, take out the part they need and then return it.

amazon.com (used as a reference for all online shopping)

A trip to Home Depot and back takes me about 2 hours, and costs about \$5 in gas. An Amazon Prime membership now costs \$119 per year but often they can even deliver items the same day. Not counting travel time, it can still be cheaper to order from Amazon than driving to a store. When Norris was here I would always try them first, but now with the travel time and gas expenses, and the fact that there's no Palisades business to support, I think Amazon and other online retailers will be getting a lot more business.