

LA POP-UP RESTAURANTS LA EVENTS

LA's Weirdest Pop-Up Restaurant Explores the Art of Dining Alone

Artist Dean Baldwin's One Top is only running for one more week

by Farley Elliott | May 10, 2018, 11:49am PDT



The table setup at One Top | Farley Elliott

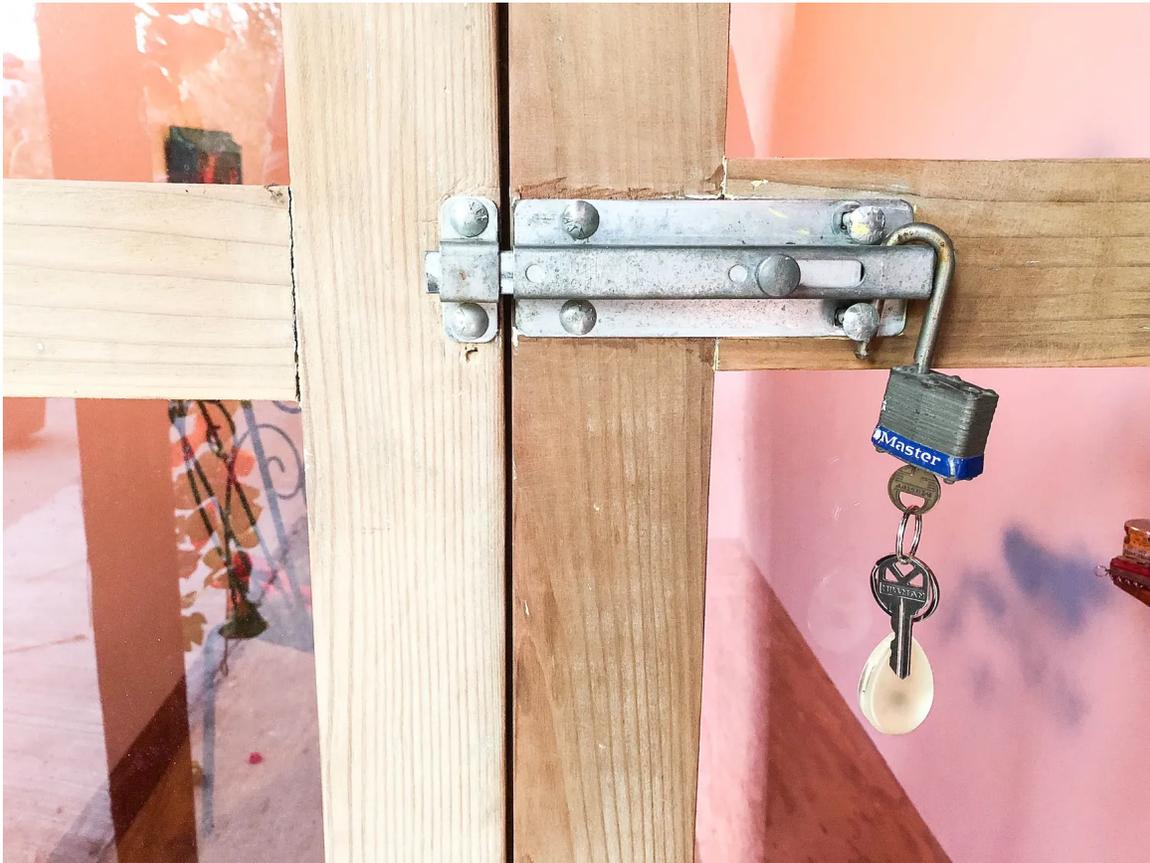
There's only one more week to experience **One Top**, a surreal new underground dining experience that is part art installation, part personal reflection, and all sorts of interesting.

First, some backstory. One Top is the name of the current curated exhibition being put on by Montreal artist **Dean Baldwin** in conjunction with the ongoing **67 Steps Gallery**. Baldwin has been putting on food-focused shows that reimagine the traditional restaurant (both in terms of location and food) **for years**.

Instead of operating as a true performance space or warehouse filled with hanging images, **67 Steps** is instead a semi-hidden collection of buildings populating a small plot of Echo Park hillside not far from upstart Australian **cafe Pollen**. It's down a small staircase between houses (hence the steps name), and is accessible only by appointment — or by hidden key.

So what is One Top specifically? It's a restaurant, sort of. There's a small room, maybe six feet wide by 10 or 12 feet long, mostly white and empty save for a single outdoor cafe table and chair. The table itself holds a number of real, edible things that ultimately make up an entire meal, from things like tinned fish to cheeses and drinks. The menu changes based on Baldwin's whims, and a meal inside comes with a handwritten menu and set of directions.

Baldwin allowed Eater to dine at the pop-up last week, and the experience is interesting to say the least. While there is a curated menu, a set reservation time, and an actual meal, there is no service, no ambiance save for the sounds outside the small room, and no other instructions on what to see/feel/do/eat, other than to lock up and leave the key when done. One Top diners literally don't interact with a single person the entire time, and can stay as long (or as short) as they'd like. There are some other small decor elements that can be interacted with from within the room, but there are (or does not seem to be?) no right or wrong choices inside. So does One Top count as a restaurant, or at least a pop-up food experience? That's a question for artist Dean Baldwin.



The padlocked entrance to the standalone One Top space | Farley Elliott

For those not actually dining at One Top, a closed display of the meal can be seen through glass doors on the property during open walkthroughs at 67 Steps on Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m. Those hoping to dine at One Top and experience what may be LA's most obscure pop-up in a long time should try [reaching out to 67 Steps Gallery](#) directly to see what might be possible. There are no guarantees, as Baldwin's show is expected to wrap next week, but for those eager to try something new and unique, it's definitely worth a shot.

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