

WESTERN TRAVEL

SLEEPOVER

Reinventing the wheel-shaped hotel

By ROBIN RAUZI
Times Staff Writer

“LANDMARK” is a word perhaps too loosely applied in this day and age. Yet say, “Round building off the 405 at Sunset,” and what L.A. local doesn’t know the former Holiday Inn?

Passing motorists would be forgiven for not knowing that it is now the Hotel Angeleno, operated by San Francisco-based hospitality company Joie de Vivre. New paint and lights haven’t exactly reinvented the cylindrical exterior, but the 209 rooms inside have gotten more notable updates.

Bunking down: I find circular hotels disorienting, so I was relieved that my deluxe king room felt only slightly pie-shaped. The room was swathed in a silky fabric wallpaper, and a row of espresso-colored modular furnish-

ings included a desk, armoire, dresser and mini-fridge. A sliding frosted-glass door separated the sizable bathroom, done in tasteful tile and stocked with Aveda toiletries.

I felt like Goldilocks in the just-right pillow-topped bed. Not even the incessant dull roar of the 405 kept me from drifting off.

Hanging around: Why would Joie de Vivre buy an old Holiday Inn with freeway-adjacency issues? The 17th floor tells all. That’s where West, a new Italian steakhouse and lounge, floats over a view that stretches from downtown to the Pacific.

At night, guests and locals will surely sip cocktails and be mesmerized by the river of lights that is the freeway. But the sunlit happy-hour view was far superior — at least on a clear day.

Going out: This is a hotel that embraces the assertion that no one walks in L.A. — and it charges an unannounced \$18 a



KEN HIVELEY Los Angeles Times

SCENE-SETTING: *The view is fantastic — downtown to the Pacific — from Hotel Angeleno’s 17th floor steakhouse, West.*

day for valet parking. The hotel offers a free car service for destinations within three miles, which encompasses UCLA’s Royce Hall, the Skirball Cultural Center and the Getty Center.

Perks and peevs: Plenty of hotels brag about thread counts, but this was the first place where the bedding impressed me. And free wireless Internet felt luxurious too after being nickel-and-dimed at many high-end hotels.

Though the Angeleno has been hosting guests since February, the staff seemed puzzled by basic questions — “Coffee? Let me see if the front desk can help you with that” — even a few days after the grand opening earlier this month. The valet offered me someone else’s car.

Hotel Angeleno, 170 N. Church Lane, Los Angeles; (310) 476-6411, www.hotelangeleno.com. Doubles \$179-\$209.