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LA

ISSUE 56

DOWNTOWNER®

THE INSIDER GUIDE TO DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES



SUPERFINE PIZZA

Pies Made in the Image of DTLA

PAGE 4

MAP OF DOWNTOWN

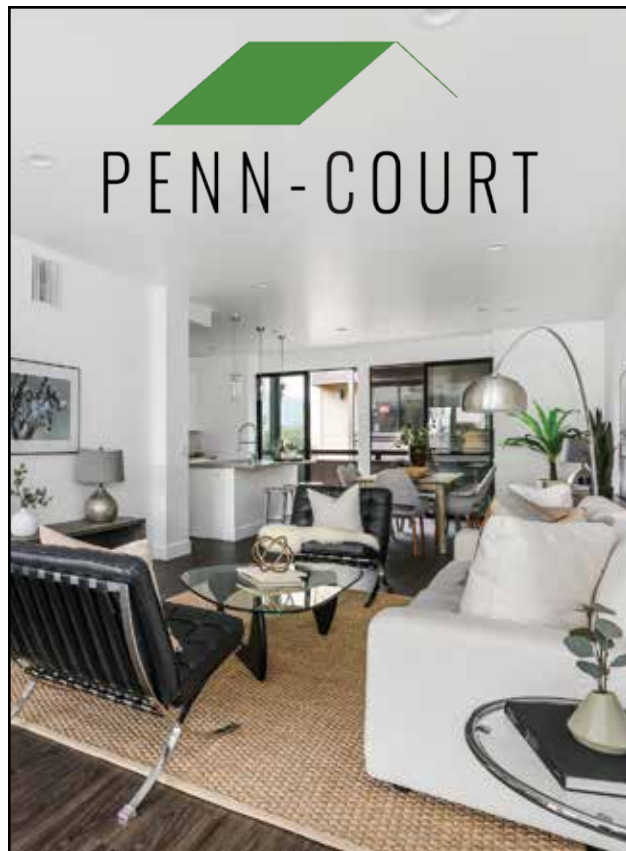
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PAGE 8

STILL LIFE CERAMICS

Ceramics Studio That's Defining A Growing Artistry In DTLA

PAGE 6



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THE INSIDER'S VIEW OF DOWNTOWN CULTURE, FOOD, DRINKS, FASHION & THE PEOPLE WHO SHAPE IT.

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IN THIS ISSUE

6 STILL LIFE CERAMICS

8 MAP OF DOWNTOWN

10 BOOZY BRUNCH

12 DONATSU

14 THE HUNT VILLAGE

SUPERFINE PIZZA

PIES MADE IN THE IMAGE OF DTLA

Written By Dakota Nate
Photographed By Robiee Ziegler

Some of the best things in life go as followed: long walks on the beach, milk straight out of the carton, and yes, you guessed correctly — a perfectly crafted pizza pie. The search for a sufficient slice in DTLA may not be the most difficult of tasks, but it's certainly worth surfing the internet for a bit to find something spectacular. This is exactly what you'll find as you saunter up to Superfine Pizza's bright yellow service window off of San Pedro and 11th Street. Nestled within what was once the original wholesale produce district of LA, Superfine offers up slices of their expert selection of specialty pizzas, as well as 18" pies and build-your-own options.

Chef Steve Samson, the mastermind behind the 7,000 square upscale Italian eatery Rossoblu, which happens to sit just around the corner from Superfine — and formerly of Soto — sticks true to his Bolognese roots, giving homage to the meals his mother cooked for him all his life. With the intent of creating a smaller, more focused project after taking on the painstaking creation of Rossoblu, Samson strived to offer up the basic components of the craftsmanship displayed in his culinary background. The aesthetic is that of a more technicolor era, and although Superfine may be small and slightly tucked away, you can't miss this glowing beacon from the street.

"It was basically my wife, Kevin, and Anna, his wife, Kevin helped us open Rossoblu," says Samson. "We first had this idea, like let's focus on produce and the fact that this used to be the produce district, so we were looking at old produce ads. We were looking at photos and one of the first things that came up was Superfine Plums, it was an old brand, and we're like, "Huh, Superfine, that's a great name." We came up with a few and that ended up being the best one."

(Continued on page 4)





The back-to-basics, laid-back attitude that emanates from the unadulterated simplicity of Superfine's kitchen is one of the key factors in their success in creating the perfectly cooked pizza. With a sweet spot of 650 degrees, a Swedish electric oven cooks each pizza evenly with the character of each chosen topping left intact. Neapolitan-esque, yet with heavy with components of a New York-style pizza, Samson refers to it as LA-style pizza, a harmonious marriage of stacked toppings and a thin and crispy crust.

"The oven's the only thing we have in there to cook. It's not like we have a stove so that we can cook stuff ahead of time then put it on the oven, so everything has to cook on the pizza, but there's nothing wrong with that," says Samson. "You have fresh vegetables you just have to throw on the pizza, so why not? That was kind of the idea going in, since we're in Southern California, we've got great produce."

In fact, fresh vegetables have a huge role in what makes each pizza an edible masterpiece. Bestsellers like Superfine's Es-ca-role, topped with escarole, chilis, red onion, and salt-cured olives atop a bed of mozzarella and smoked provolone tops the list along with their beloved vegan option, Veganissima – topped with a bed of herbs, tomato, garlic, capers, salt-cured olives, and olive oil. On the more carnivorous side of things, Superfine uses only humanely-raised antibiotic-free meats and much like the veggies, no detail in quality is spared in terms of their meat forward options either.

"Our Salami Honey with spicy salami and buckwheat honey, people love that one. That was also a pizza we did at Soto," mentions Samson. "Buckwheat honey isn't as sweet as other honeys. It has a little bitterness to it almost, so it's like cheesy, salty, cheesy, then with the sweetness and spiciness, it's really good."

Just steps from surrounding evening and weekend hotspots, on a night out in the Fashion District, Superfine is a must – especially if you need to soak up some of the wine in your belly. Even on a night in you can have a Superfine pie delivered to your door via Caviar, Postmates, and Uber Eats, with direct delivery becoming available in the near future, so now you have no excuse not to open your heart to all of the farm-fresh, cheesy goodness that Superfine has to offer. Superfine opens at 11 am Monday through Friday and 5 pm on the weekends, so don't just take our word for it, go ahead and find out for yourself!

FIND IT HERE:
1101 San Pedro St. unit f
superfinepizza.com



 A vibrant, abstract artwork featuring a woman's face in the foreground. The background is filled with colorful patterns and the repeated text 'KEEP YOUR SPIRITS FREE'. The text 'BLACK CHILDREN KEEP YOUR SPIRITS FREE' is also visible.

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Carolyn Lawrence, *Black Children Keep Your Spirits Free*, 1972. Acrylic on canvas. 49 x 51 x 2 in. Image courtesy of the artist. © Carolyn Mims Lawrence



STILL LIFE CERAMICS

CERAMICS STUDIO THAT'S DEFINING A GROWING ARTISTRY

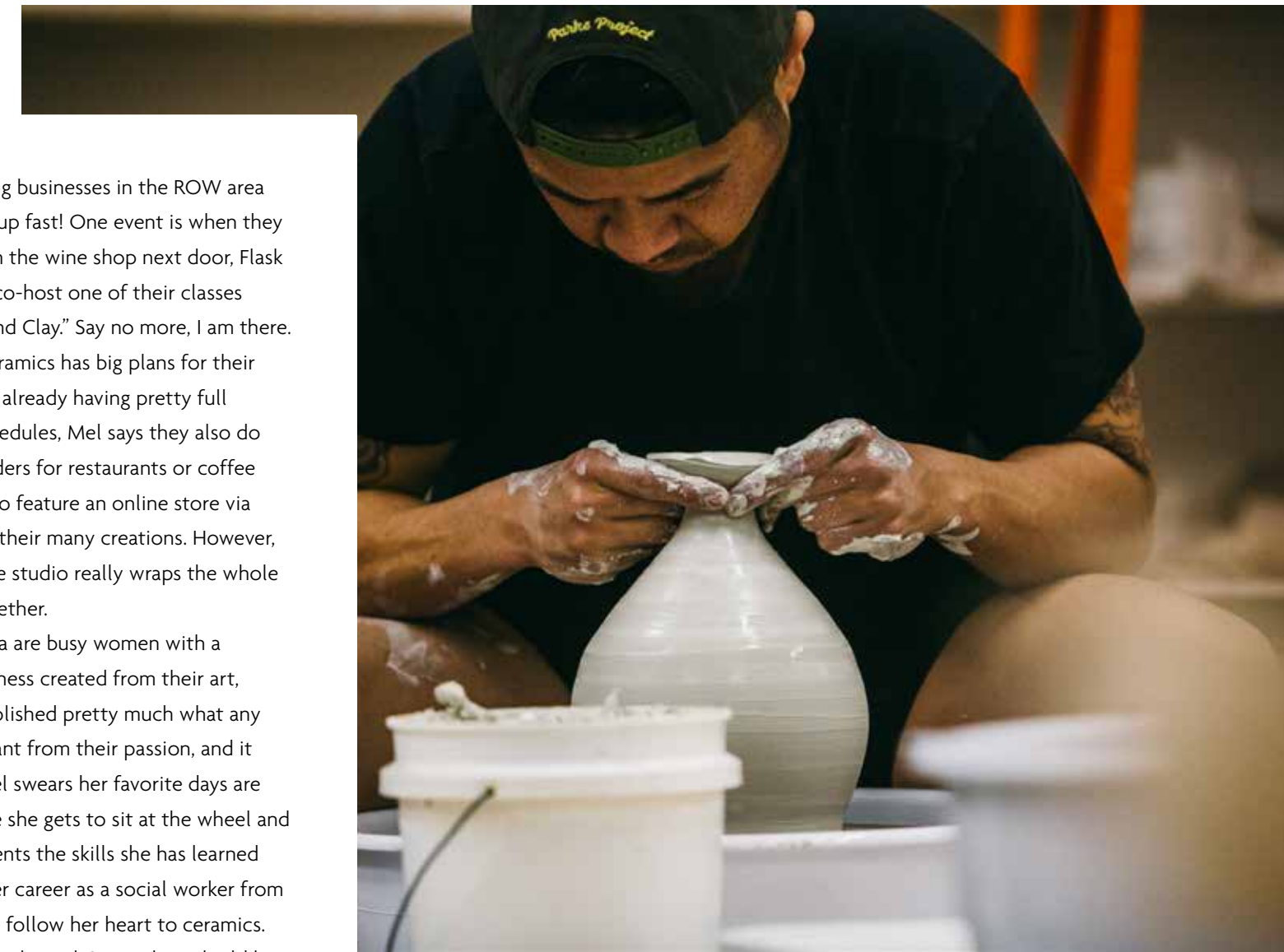
Written By Mariana Ramos
Photographed By GL Askew II

When Mel Keedle and Ana Henton became a dynamic ceramic duo four years ago, they had no idea they'd be the pioneers in their artist community. Working from a studio in Mid-City wasn't cutting it but neither were the spaces available in DTLA. That all changed when ROW opened up and gave them a home of their own to transform into a haven for a growing community in the heart of DTLA.

A year ago Mel and Ana opened the doors to Still Life Ceramics and the rest is history, literally, they're doing something no other studios are- they have a retail section for artists. Their classes welcome levels ranging from beginners to advanced and they invite fellow artists to come to showcase their talents to their audiences and patrons.

Curious starters and seasoned vets from all over LA flock to Still Life Ceramics, a handful of locals have adopted it (much like the rest of ROW) and it makes sense. There's nothing DTLAers love more than convenience, that's most of the reason we all live here. Speaking from minor experience, ceramics can be a building experience, one that requires we love and accept all and any flaws as we create something beautiful with our hands.

Still Life Ceramics practices the same morality and the space they have built caters to the DTLA community. They are also neighborly, not only by teaming up with local artists but



also surrounding businesses in the ROW area which is filling up fast! One event is when they partner up with the wine shop next door, Flask and Field, and co-host one of their classes called, "Rose and Clay." Say no more, I am there.

Still Life Ceramics has big plans for their studio, besides already having pretty full classes and schedules, Mel says they also do small-batch orders for restaurants or coffee shops. They also feature an online store via the website of their many creations. However, coming into the studio really wraps the whole experience together.

Mel and Ana are busy women with a successful business created from their art, they've accomplished pretty much what any artist would want from their passion, and it shows. Still, Mel swears her favorite days are the ones where she gets to sit at the wheel and teach her students the skills she has learned since ending her career as a social worker from Melbourne and follow her heart to ceramics.

The studio only took 3 months to build but the team accomplished to make it comfortable for all the equipment shelving they needed to support their growing number of students, a few tables, and of course, two kilns.

According to Mel, this is just the beginning, "We are almost a year old [and] being at row has been amazing [especially] in terms of the exposure. We love it when locals come in because it feels like we are really bringing the community together. We're trying to build up the ceramics community with the help of the foundation from what was already here." Sign up for classes on their website, bring your glass of wine, try something new, make something new, and meet new people all at once.

FIND IT HERE:
767 S Alameda St. #198
stilllifeceramics.com



DRINK

A **PREUX & PROPER**
840 S Spring St.
preuxandproper.com

EAT

B **SUPERFINE PIZZA**
1101 San Pedro St. unit f
superfinepizza.com

C **DONATSU**
330 E 2nd St. Suite C
donatsudoughnuts.com

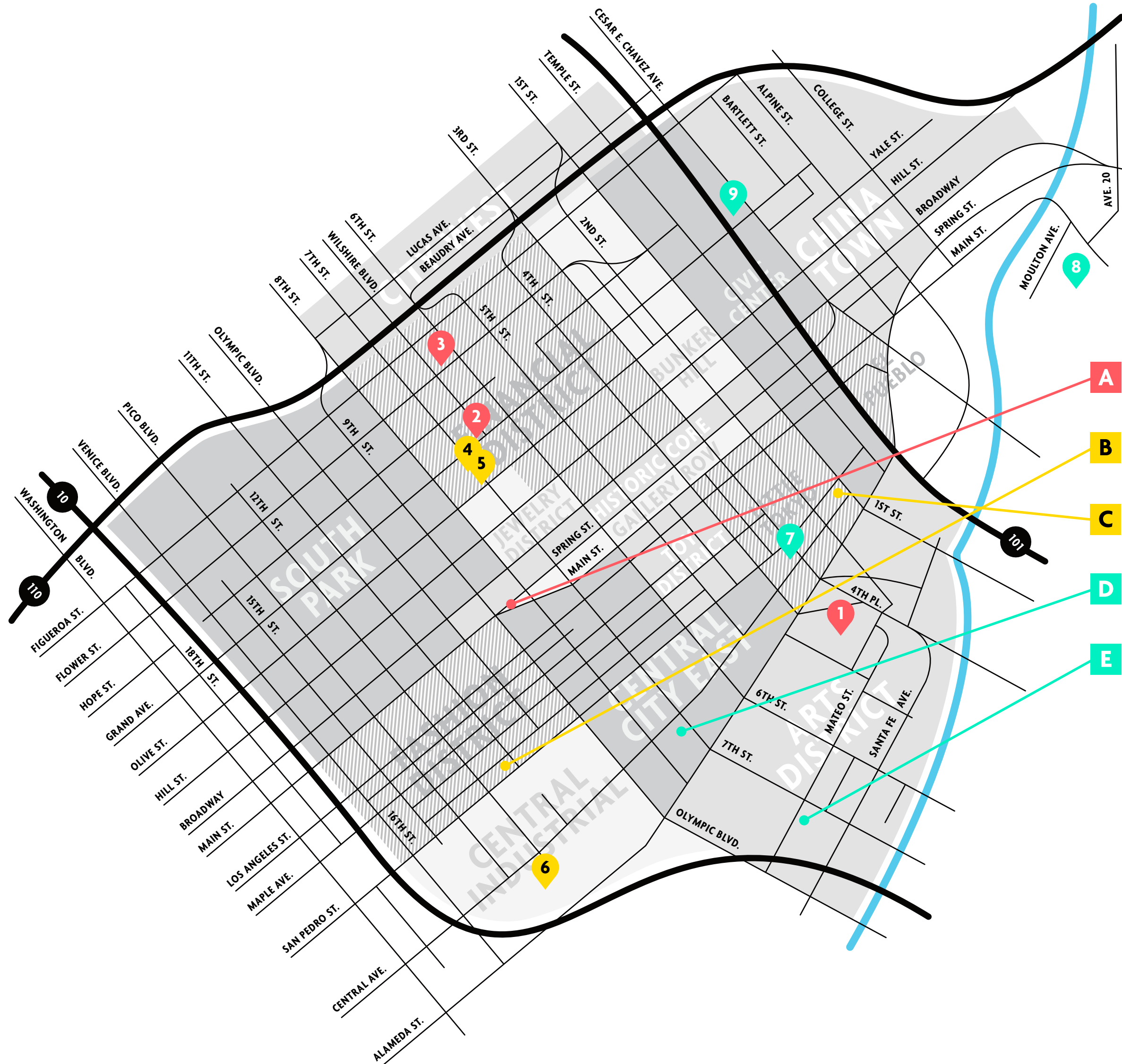
MOVE

D **STILL LIFE CERAMICS**
767 S Alameda St. #198
stilllifeceramics.com

E **THE HUNT VILLAGE**
812 Mateo St.
thehuntvintage.com

- CITY STREETS
- FREEWAYS
- LA RIVER
- M METRO RAIL STATIONS

*MAP SIMPLIFIED & NOT TO SCALE



DOWNTOWN FAVORITES

- URTH CAFFE**
451 S Hewitt St. — urthcaffe.com
Organic AF and a solid LA institution, Urth Caffe has a beautiful location in the Arts District that seems to be the epicenter of cool for the Arts District. Which is already cool. So Urth is where the heart is.
- KARL STRAUSS BREWERY**
600 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 100 — karlstraus.com
The outpost of this San Diego brewery is serious about their beer. They offer tours of their in-house brewing system, and is constantly shifting out their beer lineup depending on what's fresh.
- LIMERICKS TAVERN**
615 S Flower St. — limerickstavern.com
This brand new Irish gastropub just opened their DTLA location. 60 pints on tap and plenty of screens to watch your favorite sportsball game.
- BS TAQUERIA**
514 W 7th St. — bstaqueria.com
The wonderful BS Taqueria is closing its doors on April 13th after having lost its lease. Chef Ray Garcia promises to find a new location for this outstanding restaurant, but until then, if you haven't gone (or if you haven't been in a while) now is the time to get your fix of their amazing food, drinks, and oh, that tres leches cake...
- H&H BRAZILIAN STEAKHOUSE**
518 W 7th St. — hhsteakhouse.com
After spending a decade with Fogo de Chao, Henrique Huyer is throwing his hat into the ring with his own take on the Brazilian steakhouse. Drawing on his childhood in Brazil, Huyer is focused on organic and high quality ingredients. This means that all the meat comes from suppliers that raise their animals on an organic, grass-fed diet, all the produce is organic and his wine cellar is full of organic, biodynamic wines. Olé, Olé, Olé!
- ARTHUR'S GARDEN**
1240 Hooper Ave. — facebook.com/ArthursGarden
This hidden gem Mom and Pop restaurant serves delicious, authentic Persian food and has a cute outdoor garden. Yelp advises you to call in your order ahead of time. A bit of an undiscovered neighborhood in DTLA. Well worth a visit.
- THINK TANK GALLERY**
516 E 4th St. — thinktank.gallery
Ok cool kids, Think Tank has been hosting incredible art shows since 2010. They moved into their new location in January and are hosting an immersive light installation this month that looks positively lit (get it?).
- STRONGHOLD CLIMBING GYM**
650 S Ave. 21 — strongholdclimb.com
One of LA's best climbing gyms can be found in the Brewery Arts Plant and designated a historic building in 1988, this climbing gym features bouldering, roped climbing and yoga classes.
- CREATE NOW**
1611 S Hope St. — createnow.org
Create Now offers at-risk and high-risk youth and young adults a safe space to create art, build confidence, and help provide opportunities to get them off the streets. They are always looking for mentors to help guide their young people.



BOOZY BRUNCH

DTLA'S OTHER EXTREME SPORT

Written By Janica de Guzman
Photographed By Eric Cacioppo

We all, at one point in our lives, have been personally victimized by a boozy brunch. The all-day event may start innocently by offering an array of breakfast-lunch mashups and freshly squeezed juices accompanied by hangover coaxing libations. But few brunch spots know how to tap into millennial weaknesses: 2-for-1 specials, bottomless mimosas and natural lighting for the perfect #nofilter, filtered selfie. As one drink leads to another, chatter and cheers clash in incoordination and before we know it we're wine drunk on a patio asking ourselves, "where to next?" at eleven in the morning. Brunching has evolved into an extreme sport where the strong survive and the weak call it a night before sundown.

Preux & Proper checks all the boxes for an ideal boozy brunch. The beautiful flatiron building on the corner of Spring and Main Street features two levels of breezy, light-filled seating busy with gaggles of girlfriends, birthday celebrants, and couples whose dates continue from the night before. Owner Joshua Kopel and executive chef Sammy Monsour have crafted an environment and menu inspired by the energy of New Orleans but without regrettable Mardi Gras behavior. Their brunch menu is offered on Sundays between noon and 4 pm, providing four ample hours to take advantage of \$15 bottomless mimosas, bacon-infused bloody marys, and frozen daiquiris that can dually cause brain freeze and a stiff buzz. This goes to show that brunching has evolved into an event that is no longer about curing the hangover but creating the hangover. "Brunch is all



about getting dressed up and day drinking with your friends. If I woke up hungover then I'd stay home and order Postmates" says Karen, a fellow bruncher at Preux & Proper.

Like all good Cajun and Creole cooking, Preux & Proper's menu will have patrons loosening the buttons on their Sunday best. Try the Braised Collards with roasted pork shoulder and Fresno hot sauce, or order the Crawfish Roll with Louisiana crawfish and red remoulade on a toasted brioche. Other brunch favorites include Fried Chicken and Waffles with buttermilk cornbread and honey, the always faithful Baked Mac & Cheese, and an Avocado Toast with maitake mushrooms, charred leeks and kale sitting on a toasted bread that's as big as a bottle of champagne. All dishes are served family style, allowing diners to explore flavors like it's a tabletop buffet.

For brunch spots with free-flowing drinks, pant-stretching meals and shoulder-shimmying music, it's not uncommon for patrons to carve out a small space in a restaurant and claim it as their own personal dancefloor. And that's quite alright because sometimes, brunching is about creating memories you'll hate to remember. Here are a few other Downtown LA favorites where you can booze up and brunch:

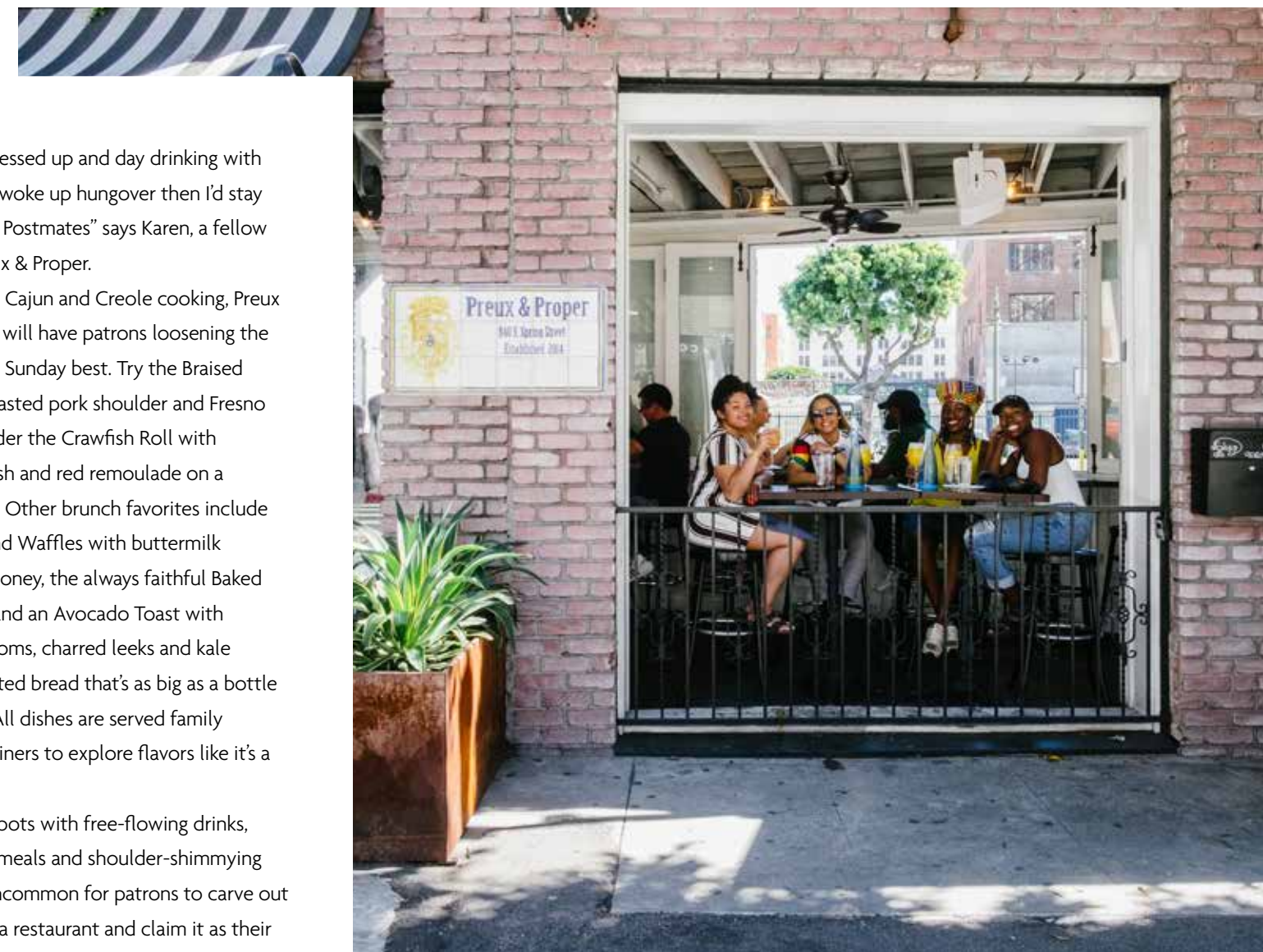
Build-Your-Own Bloody Mary Bar at La Cita
Sundays 2PM – 9PM

DIY Mimosas at Faith & Flower
Saturdays & Sundays 10:30AM – 2:30PM

Champagne bottle service at Little Easy
Saturdays & Sundays 10AM – 3PM

Bottomless mimosas & rosé at Baldoria
Saturday & Sundays 11AM – 4PM

FIND IT HERE:
840 S Spring St.
preuxandproper.com





DONATSU

DONUT MISS THIS

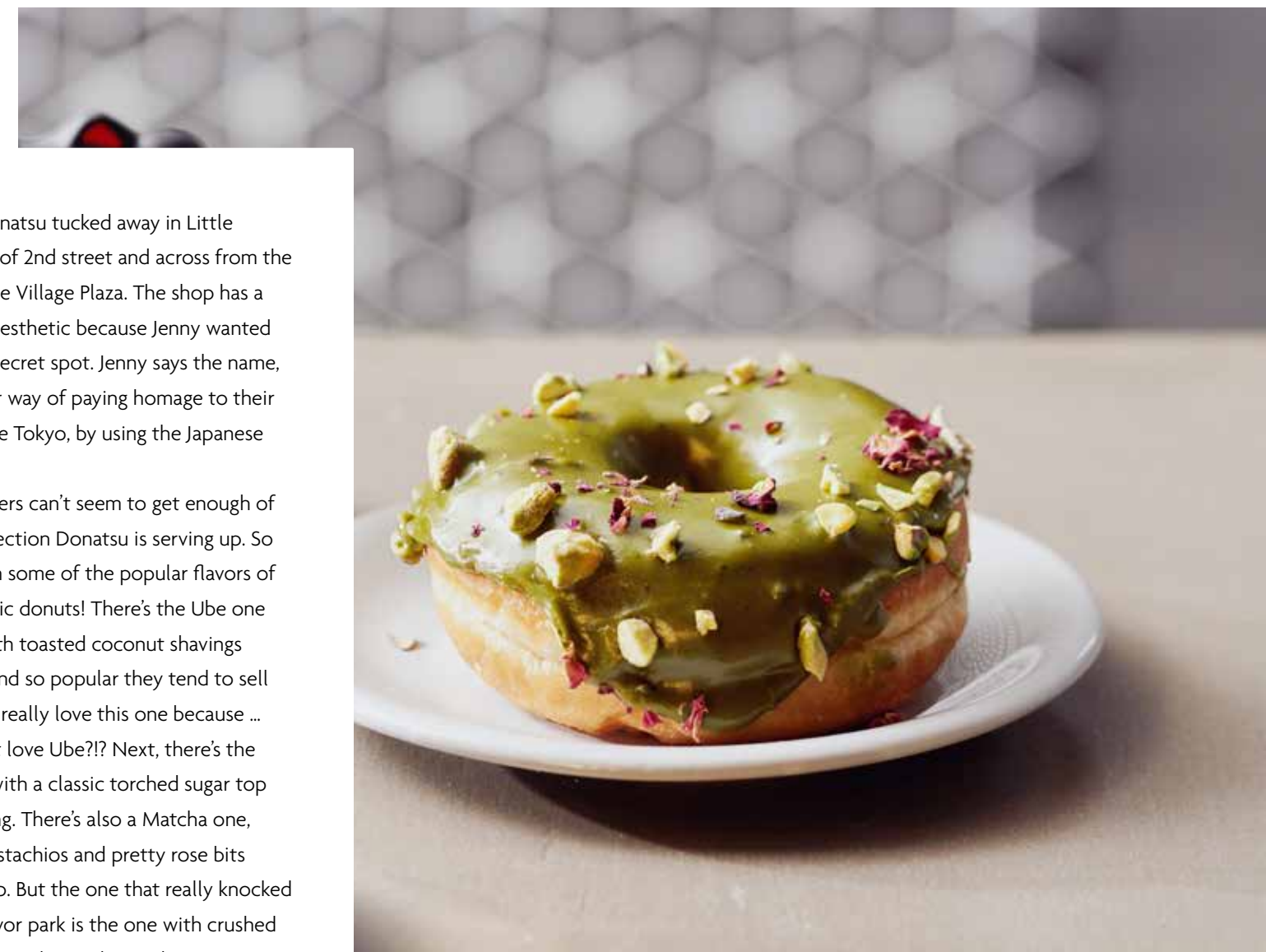
*Written By Linda Hosmer
Photographed By Jack Strutz*

Mmm donuts (in a not-so-good, but oh so applicable Homer Simpson voice!)

Ok so we all know donuts as coffee's OG soul mate and the reward our parents would buy us after class if we passed a big test or didn't get in trouble or just survived church without throwing a fit. Simply put, donuts are a reliable hit of happiness, a bite of nostalgia and a full circle lesson in immigrant entrepreneurship deeply woven into the fabric of Los Angeles. "If you look into the background of donuts, it is mainly made up of Cambodian families," says Donatsu co-owner Jenny Ban. California Magazine estimates 1,500 donut shops across California are primarily run by Cambodian families, an extraordinary legacy Jenny doesn't take for granted.

Jenny's husband, Nite Ban, is Cambodian and his family's deep ties to the donut business here in L.A. motivate them to both preserve the tradition while throwing their own modern spin on the much-loved, palm-sized fried dough cake.

Since Donatsu opened its doors in January, Jenny and Nite have been dedicated to thinking outside of the donut box when it comes to creating fun flavors for a new generation to devour. Their donuts are vegan and look just as good as they taste. "We wanted to be different because there are competitors everywhere. We wanted to be innovative and offer different flavors. When you bite into our donuts we want you to think of us when you try other donuts then come back to Donatsu," says Jenny laughing.



You can find Donatsu tucked away in Little Tokyo, right off of 2nd street and across from the popular Japanese Village Plaza. The shop has a dark and sleek aesthetic because Jenny wanted it to feel like a secret spot. Jenny says the name, Donatsu, is their way of paying homage to their new home, Little Tokyo, by using the Japanese word for donut.

And customers can't seem to get enough of the colorful selection Donatsu is serving up. So let's run through some of the popular flavors of these photogenic donuts! There's the Ube one (purple yam) with toasted coconut shavings that's so good and so popular they tend to sell out quickly. We really love this one because ... um who doesn't love Ube?!? Next, there's the Crème Brûlée, with a classic torched sugar top with cream filling. There's also a Matcha one, with crunchy pistachios and pretty rose bits scattered on top. But the one that really knocked it out of the flavor park is the one with crushed Biscoff cookies, you know the cookies your grandma probably had laying around the kitchen table, next to the Yuban coffee container... yep those. It's crunchy and sweet in all the right ways without being too overwhelming. There's also a delicious Churro one... Mmm Churros! And the list goes on and on but we're not here to spoil it for you. We're just here to tell you to go and check it out for yourself.

Just walk into Donatsu, order up one of their coffees and let your eyes scope out the selection until you land on the donut of your decadent dreams. Because what's life without donuts... BASURA, that's what.

FIND IT HERE:
330 E 2nd St. Suite C
donatsudoughnuts.com





THE HUNT VILLAGE

EXPLORE AN ARTS DISTRICT TREASURE CHEST

Written By Abel Horwitz
Photographed By Rebekah Lemire

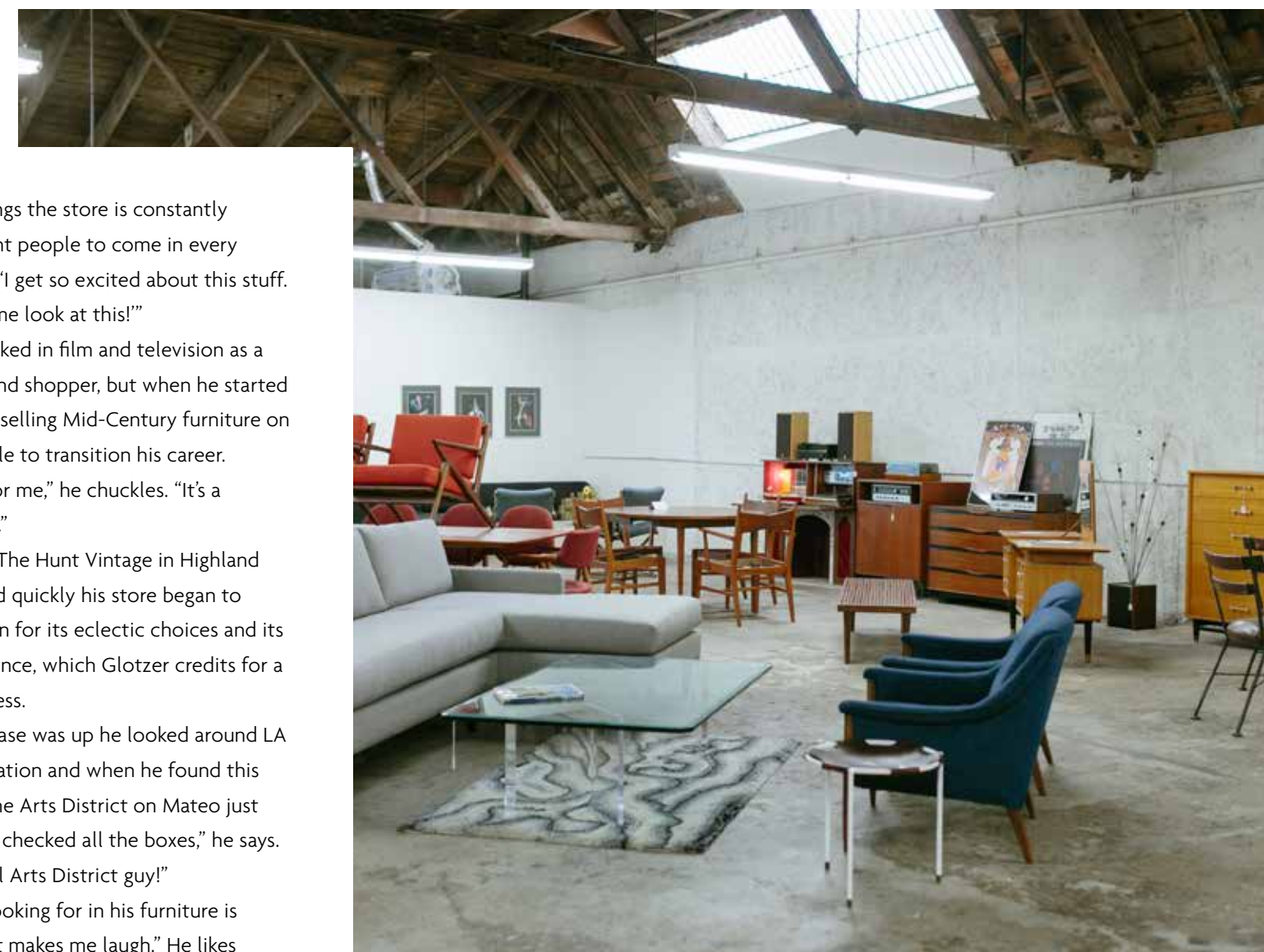
Michael Glotzer, the owner of The Hunt Vintage in the Arts District, stands in his shop surrounded by Mid-Century furniture and housewares. Record players and typewriters dot the store and vintage art hangs on the wall. The soundtrack playing through his speakers is chill and inviting — think The XX and The Shins — and you get the sense that you're not in a cookie-cutter furniture store. The energy of The Hunt Vintage is different. It's a place that rewards curiosity. A place where the furniture has a personality and an eclectic vibe.

This is a place you might wander into after dining at Guerilla Tacos a few blocks away. You walk in because it's a cavernous warehouse filled with furniture that looks like it might be interesting.

At the front of the store are a few custom pieces that Glotzer has designed, and if you let yourself go in deeper you'll start to see the treasures unfold around you.

Do yourself a favor and introduce yourself to Glotzer if he's there. He'll be happy you came to check out what he has on the floor this week. His enthusiasm is infectious. His love of people, his love of design, and his love of the items in his store make it easy to wander around with him, listening to him tell stories about each piece.

Because he's constantly selling things and



buying new things the store is constantly changing. "I want people to come in every week," he says. "I get so excited about this stuff. 'Hey!' I say, 'Come look at this!'"

Glotzer worked in film and television as a set decorator and shopper, but when he started purchasing and selling Mid-Century furniture on eBay, he was able to transition his career. "It's not work for me," he chuckles. "It's a lucrative hobby."

He opened The Hunt Vintage in Highland Park in 2014, and quickly his store began to attract attention for its eclectic choices and its Instagram presence, which Glotzer credits for a lot of his business.

When his lease was up he looked around LA for another location and when he found this warehouse in the Arts District on Mateo just south of 7th "it checked all the boxes," he says. "Now I'm a cool Arts District guy!"

What he's looking for in his furniture is "something that makes me laugh." He likes cheeky, kitschy things. "I just have to like it," he says. "It doesn't matter the value."

Glotzer offers free delivery for purchased furniture if it's within the neighborhood. "I love this because I get to see inside a lot of cool lofts."

"I love that people love vintage furniture," he says. "They're good people. They get it."

Glotzer recently commissioned graffiti artist Jason Naylor to paint a 150 foot mural on the side of his warehouse. The wall now proclaims "California Love" in Naylor's signature pastel palette to all those passing by.

Go in and say hi to Glotzer. Tell him The Downtowner sent you. He's sure to be thrilled.

FIND IT HERE:
812 Mateo St.
thehuntvintage.com





ROW DTLA

rowdtla.com

SHOP DINE EXPLORE