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DOWNTOWNER[®]

THE INSIDER GUIDE TO DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

PAGE 4

WIGS & WAFFLES

Drag's Weekly Daytime Takeover
at The Standard



DUELLO

Allow Us To Reintroduce You

PAGE 6

MAP OF DOWNTOWN

Find your way

PAGE 8

BON TEMPS

A Very, Very Good Time

PAGE 10

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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

4 **WIGS & WAFFLES**

6 **DUELLO**

8 **MAP OF DOWNTOWN**

10 **BONTEMPS**

12 **DAMA**

14 **KASIH**



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WIGS & WAFFLES

DRAG'S WEEKLY DAYTIME TAKEOVER AT THE STANDARD

Written By Dakota Nate
Photographed By Robiee Ziegler

As you should know, last month was LGBTQ Pride Month nationwide, and let's face it, Los Angeles may be one of the best places in the country to celebrate. In search of festivities around town to explore, we came across two intrinsically influential individuals and perhaps one of the most exciting drag shows in LA — Wigs & Waffles at The Standard Hotel. Before this dynamic duo formed just two years ago, Maebe A. Girl and Indica Sativa had both come to the city of angels to pave their paths and further pursue their separate creative endeavors.

Maebe moved from Chicago, IL in 2014 and began her drag career in Highland Park with a group called Exposure Drag. "When I started there it was like a very new baby party, all of us were baby drag queens," says Maebe. "The party really grew within the first year to two years and it's a really popular night now. I truly owe my drag career to exposure drag because it really gave me the platform and the opportunity to perform and work on my craft week in and week out." As for Indica Sativa, after moving from New Orleans to attend FIT in Manhattan, she made her move to the west coast to work as a stylist, instead finding drag to spark her creative fire, which moved her to hit the ground running upon arrival — in stiletto thigh-high boots, of course.

"I started my drag career at Green Eggs and Glam," says Indica. "Green Eggs and Glam is my home, it's my favorite place in the world and there's really no where I'd rather be performing." What Indica is referring to is not some flashy Dr Seuss sequel — Green Eggs and Glam is a monthly drag brunch hosted at the Hyperion Lyrics Theatre in Silverlake where Indica and Mabe first joined forces in producing their own show. "She hit me up to perform in the show very early on," says Maebe. "I really enjoyed working with her and I asked her if she wanted to do it weekly, and we've been the best of friends ever since. We've produced a number of shows together."

As Indica Sativa's style is very reminiscent of her home town New Orleans — with bright colors and fun, flashy textures, Maebe's drag is much more on the political side. "For me drag is tied in with my gender identity," says Maebe. I identify as gender-fluid, I feel like a boy and a girl, so whenever I'm out in drag, it doesn't feel like a costume to me, it's just me expressing a different side of myself. I feel like my drag is funny, it's political, but it's also sexy and powerful." Impersonating a lineup of right-wing villains such as Kellyanne Conway, Melania Trump, Sarah Huckabee

Sanders, and Betsy Devoss, she brings a comedic light to the stage while also exposing the more controversial side of our current administration. Since we're talking politics, it's rather important to note that Maebe A. Girl was recently elected as California's first ever drag queen to be voted into public office, taking a chair on the Silverlake City Council in May. With issues at hand such as LGBTQIA homelessness, HIV outrage, and the dire need for preservation of a queer presence in Silverlake, Maebe has already been working closely with the homelessness committee and is also implementing the formation of Silverlake's LGBTQIA committee to tackle a variety of these very issues head on.

After producing and hosting a variety of drag shows together around town such as I Do What I Want at The Lash which is run monthly, and shows at both St. Felix of Hollywood and St. Felix of West Hollywood, Wigs & Waffles came to fruition. As you'll catch numbers featuring Maebe strutting around bright yellow banquettes in pumps and a cheetah-print pencil dress to Shania Twain's That Don't Impress Me Much and Indica shaking it in a lime green bodysuit to Sigala's Sweet Lovin', with a broad range of enticing talent such as Serena Infiniti-Rose, Loris, and LaDon Amour Balmain, you get to enjoy an exuberant variety of local drag stars performing number after number of glamorous, gut-busting goodness — all while you nosh on the most important meal of the day. Basically, for \$45 a head, you get your choice of either bottomless mimosas or bloody marys, and an endless array of eggs, bacon, and yes, that's right — waffles. Of course vegan and non-alcoholic options are always available as well.

With Wigs & Waffles being hosted at The Standard every Saturday at noon, you have no excuse not to throw on your Saturday's best and get your grub on this weekend. Walk-ins are always welcome, but we highly suggest reserving a seat in advance. Also if you don't wish to opt for the all-you-can-eat option, you can always go a la carte while you throw your dollars in the air. On that note, pro tip: don't forget to bring some cash to tip your lovely performers. What can't Maebe A. Girl and Indica Sativa do when they put their perfectly teased heads together? The world shall never know for the saying, "Two is better than one" rings true in this instance. These two are taking over, and they're sticking together like glue.

"We turned ourselves into the brunch queens. We run brunch in LA," says Indica. "We firmly feel like that and we plan to get even bigger, but the great thing about Maebe and I's relationship is, we're best friends, but we're not best friends that sit and gossip, we come up with ideas. It is always something strategic on how we can capitalize on everything and anything that we're doing. That's how you make drag a business."

FIND IT HERE:
The Standard, 550 S Flower St.
standardhotels.com





DUELLO

ALLOW US TO REINTRODUCE YOU

*Written By Janica de Guzman
Photographed By Jack Strutz*

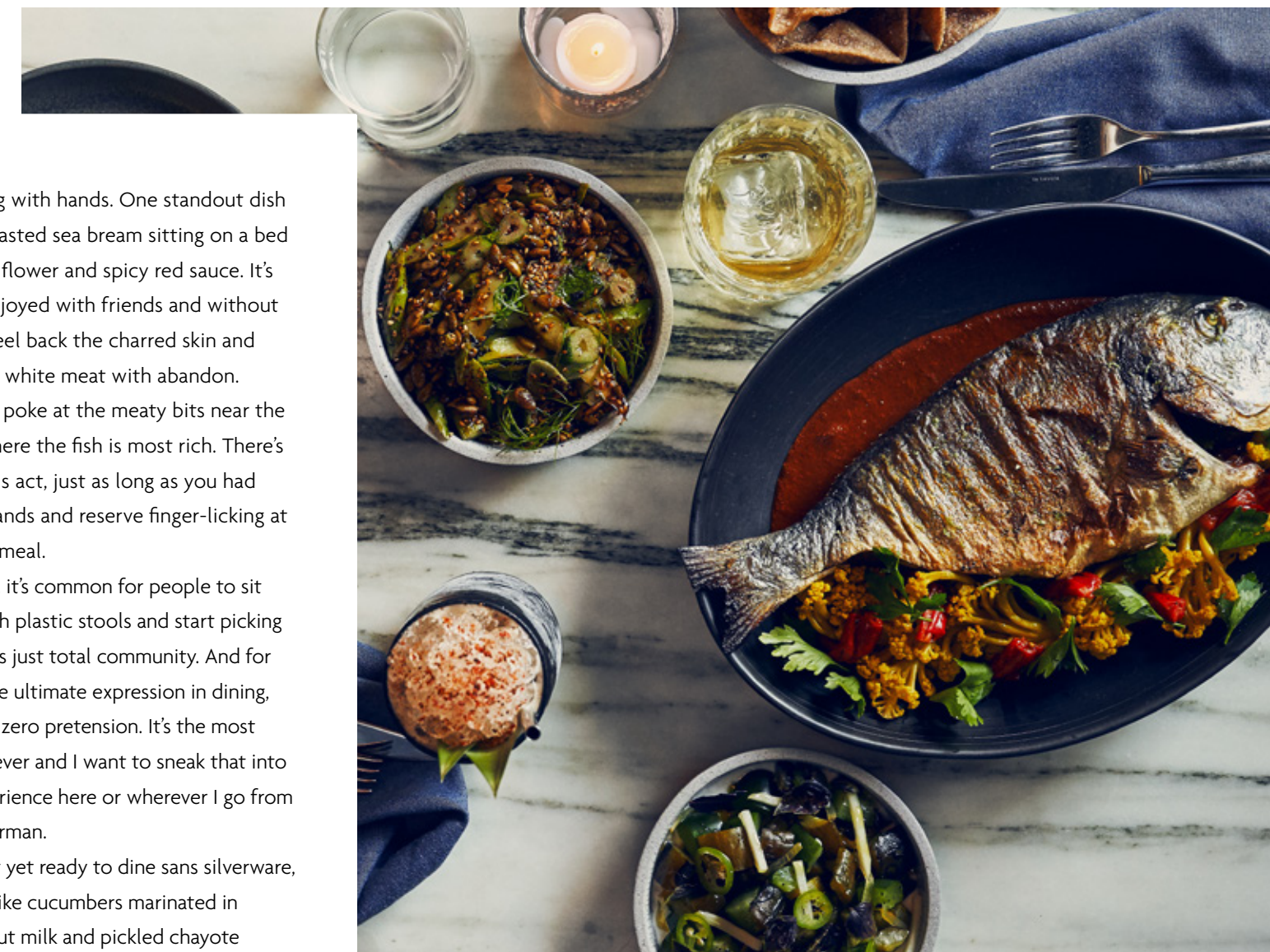
In relationships and restaurants, second chances are hard to come by. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, get blocked on social media and watch me take my money elsewhere. It seems the only way to seek mercy is an intervention and a complete menu overhaul.

Duello, formerly Simone, has risen to the challenge. The highly-anticipated Arts District restaurant had been open for a mere seven months before Chef Jason Beberman was ushered in as executive chef and tasked to revamp Simone as Duello.

The new menu takes inspiration from Chef Beberman's travels throughout Asia, which features family-style entrees kicking with flavors rooted in acid, spice, and herbs. Meanwhile, his personal influence on cooking takes inspiration from the people that surround him. From Indian dinners in the homes of childhood friends to Mexican dishes prepared by the wives of dishwashers and prep cooks, Chef Beberman's exposure to various cultures has led him to quickly learn new ingredients and techniques. The result is an ever-evolving cooking style that's familiar in flavor but unique in experience.

"That's also the beauty of L.A. We're inspired by diversity and everything that's around, you know, we're not limited to anything. We have fused with a diverse community of people in the Arts District and across the river in Boyle Heights, literally every day" says Beberman.

Having spent time in Vietnam, Hong Kong, and Japan, it was only natural for Asian-inspired dining to have made its way onto the menu—



including eating with hands. One standout dish is the whole roasted sea bream sitting on a bed of pickled cauliflower and spicy red sauce. It's meant to be enjoyed with friends and without forks, simply peel back the charred skin and tear at its flaky, white meat with abandon. Don't forget to poke at the meaty bits near the collar, that's where the fish is most rich. There's no shame in this act, just as long as you had washed your hands and reserve finger-licking at the end of the meal.

"In Vietnam, it's common for people to sit on the curb with plastic stools and start picking at their food, it's just total community. And for me, that was the ultimate expression in dining, because there's zero pretension. It's the most informal thing ever and I want to sneak that into the dining experience here or wherever I go from here" says Beberman.

If you're not yet ready to dine sans silverware, smaller dishes like cucumbers marinated in cultured coconut milk and pickled chayote squash are excellent when shoveled by the spoonful. The crisp, refreshing taste of cucumber bites back with a hit of acid, then neutralized by creamy, coconut milk. Think of it as a flavor drive-by for your palate. For thirsty patrons, try The Dacian, a large format cocktail swimming with tequila, mango brandy, squavit, skyr, lemon, agave and served in a novelty skull cup. Sip it, share it, and definitely Instagram it.

In just a few short months, Duello has taken on a new persona in food, drink, and service. Chef Beberman's overhaul proves this restaurant doesn't need a second chance from DTLA but is establishing themselves as a brand new hot spot on the block. Duello, we're very pleased to meet you.

FIND IT HERE:
449 S Hewitt St.
duellodtla.com



DRINK

- A** **DUELLO**
449 S Hewitt St.
duellodtla.com
- B** **DAMA**
612 E 11th St.
damafashiondistrict.com

EAT

- C** **WIGS & WAFFLES**
The Standard, 550 S Flower St.
standardhotels.com
- D** **BON TEMPS**
712 S Santa Fe Ave.
bontempsla.com
- E** **KASIH**
200 S Los Angeles St.
kasih.la

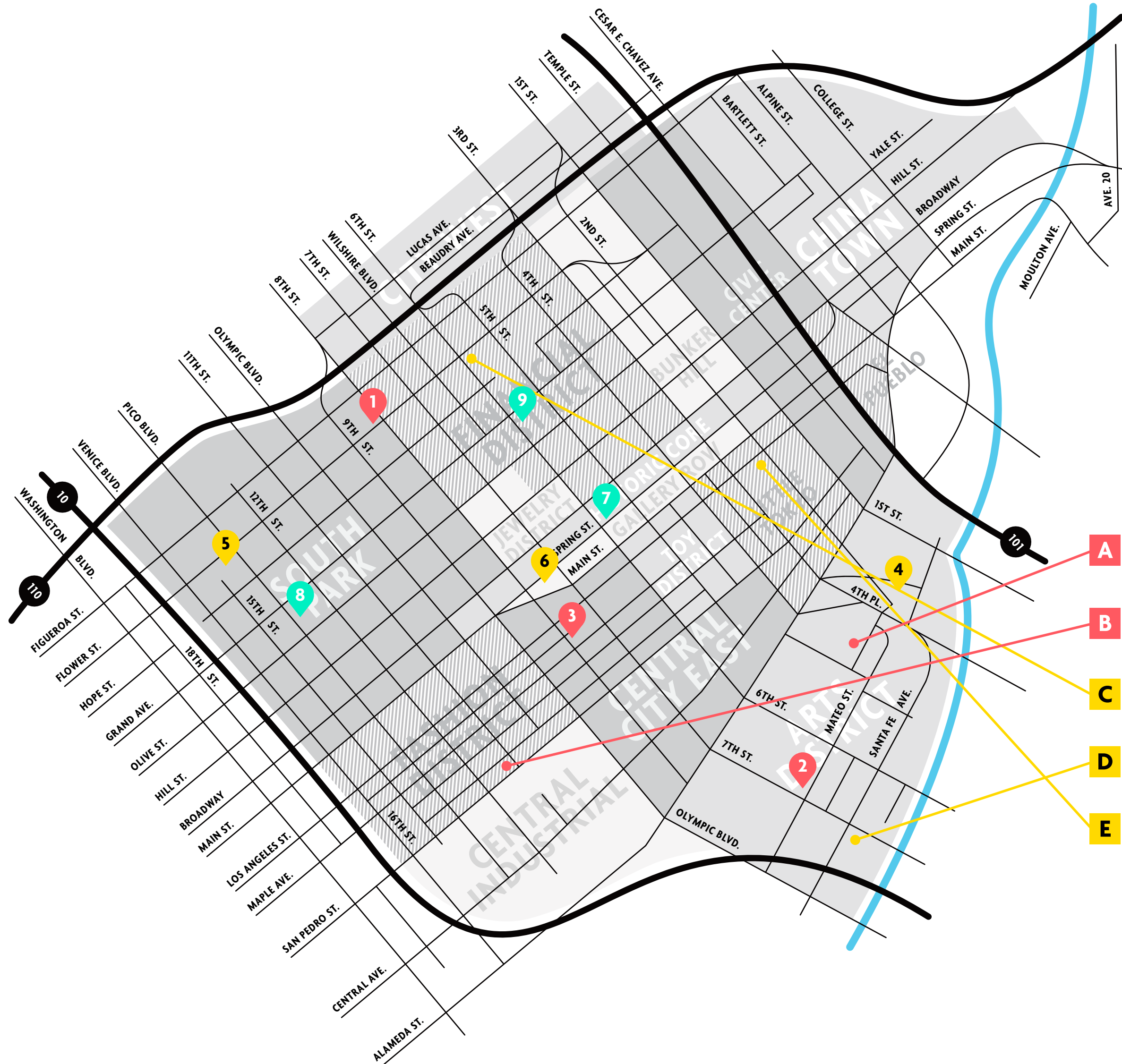
CITY STREETS

FREEWAYS

LA RIVER

M METRO RAIL STATIONS

*MAP SIMPLIFIED & NOT TO SCALE



DOWNTOWN FAVORITES

- 1** **THE QUEENSBURY**
819 S Flower St. — circa93.com/the-queensberry
Rising from the ashes of the beloved Honeycut, The Queensberry takes over the hidden bar tucked behind the O Hotel. The light up disco floor remains, but the vibe now feels like a private club in London, and they claim to have be serving whisky from all fifty US states.
- 2** **CHURCH & STATE**
1850 Industrial St. — churchandstatela.com
Church & State put the Arts District on the map in 2008 by bringing fine dining to DTLA's warehouse neighborhood. Fast forward eleven years and we've got the next iteration of this sublime restaurant. New owners, a new chef and a new menu seek to reclaim Church & State's status as one of the Arts District's destination restaurants. We wish them nothing but success.
- 3** **NO GHOST BEARS**
305 E 8th St. #3 — instagram.com/noghostbears
The ghost bears that decorate this place are cute as shit, but these guys take their coffee seriously. Or, perhaps not too seriously, as they're known for filling up those bear-shaped honey containers with cold brew and matcha for you to take to your latest hipster party. Be sure to check out their La Marzocco espresso machine decked out in anime characters.
- 4** **BREADLAM**
826 E 3rd St. — breadlam.com
Breadlam proclaims the power of simple ingredients to make their outstanding sandwiches. Their menu changes daily based on what they have available, and their bread is seriously on point.
- 5** **KILLA RIBS**
1324 S Flower St. — killaribs.com
This popup rib joint fills the air around South Park with the decadent, wonderful smell of barbequed beef. The ribs are indeed killa, but save room for dessert because holy cats is their baklava cheesecake sublime. Currently open just Fridays and Saturdays.
- 6** **SOOM SOOM**
724 S Spring St. — soomsoomfresh.com
Located in the Corporation Food Hall, Soom Soom makes fresh and tasty Middle Eastern fare at an extremely reasonable price. Their hummus is creamy and delicious and their portions are huge.
- 7** **TINY BEANS KITTEN LOUNGE**
551 S Spring St. — catcafelounge.com
Pop an allergy pill and pack an extra lint roller for this maximum dose of cuteness coming out of the Tiny Beans Kitten Lounge. The lounge is a summer pop up filled with adorable, adoptable kittens for you to play with. A 50-minute reservation helps the nonprofit CatCafe Lounge in West LA keep doing what it's doing. Sounds purrfect (sorry, couldn't resist).
- 8** **CROSSFIT MUSE**
1354 Margo St. — crossfitmuse.com
The first rule of CrossFit is that you do not talk about Crossfit. Ha ha, jk, you tell everyone. But seriously, people gab about Crossfit because it works. This high impact, high intensity training workout is designed to get you into incredible shape fast. CrossFit Muse opened last August and people are loving the positive vibe that this place is serving up.
- 9** **LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY**
523 W 6th St. — laconservancy.org/tours
The Los Angeles Conservancy was formed in 1978 to prevent the demolition of the Downtown Central Library, for which we are eternally grateful. One of the main reasons DTLA has such a wonderful concentration of historic buildings is because of the Conservancy's tireless efforts. They have DTLA walking tours that take place throughout the week, and are a great way to fall in love all over again with this wonderful neighborhood.



BON TEMPS

A VERY, VERY GOOD TIME

Written By Travis Platt
Photographed By GL Askew II

Amongst the movement and deep within the elder Angeleno bricks of our city, we find a warm feeling, we find our neighborhoods. A neighborhood doesn't have to be officially marked by city lines, or defined by a coordinate on a map. As downtowners, we help define the term neighborhood by connecting to a feeling of unity and homage, one that you can always return to at the beginning or end of the day. It's a place where daily paths cross with familiar faces as weekly routines unwind, truly the hive of where we've chosen to spend our daily lives. In the evolving Arts District, we say hello to a new chic ecosystem to gather, a place built for an all-day dining and gathering experience. Our new neighbor, Bon Temps, is a modern California brasserie rooted in French foundation, offering in bulk what the name simply translates to, good time.

Lincoln Carson understands the importance of California's local ingredients. As Chef and partner of Bon Temps, he taps into over 28 years of industry knowledge and experience to craft a high level of hospitality. Not to mention, he is a local neighbor in the Arts District — fitting of course. His journey to Bon Temps starts just like any local inhabitant or visitor, a trek down an inviting and curious brick alley to reveal a 45 person patio, capped off with two native olive trees at the end.

Stepping inside from the alley you'll be faced with the helm of the ship, a 30-foot Carrara marble bar top with a partitioned display. The bones of the building reveal the gritty skeleton of steel and concrete, while douglas fir wood, leaning spotlights, and cognac leather give a modern polish to the awakened soul of the space — you



can taste the divine atmosphere before you even order a dish or sip a drink.

If you're a morning person, the case on the bar will be decorated with mouth-watering baked goods and pastries, a nod to Carson's years as a coveted pastry chef. The display transitions into a raw bar as the sun shadows flip from east to west through the large floor to ceiling windows. Treat yourself with a good book at the bar, or stop in to take a well-deserved break amongst a busy work day for a satisfying lunch.

A friendly forewarning, lunch can quickly turn to early evening appetizers or dinner service when guided by Bar Director Mike Lay's shaken or stirred imbibes. Mike is meticulous and focused, while simultaneously carrying a laid back free spirited mindset. The menu focuses on a French drinking culture and is broken into three categories featuring Avant cocktails, or aperitifs. Trou Normand, mixtures meant to re-engage the appetite, and Apres, or digestifs — whatever state you find yourself in, Mike has a mixture to match your current mindset.

The Intoxication moves far beyond the spirits. Bon Temps modern renditions of brasserie flow from the kitchen in forms of dishes like Dungeness crab cakes with sweetbreads, fresh Bibb lettuce salads with crispy pig ears, or opt for larger dishes like the two-bone, 45-day dry-aged Creekstone ribeye served table-side — each dish or offering executed with passion and precision.

Bon Temps is open for dinner and will expand hours to all-day dining, opening its alleyway doors to the neighborhood for any kind of visitor, thus adding an unmatched atmosphere to gather within when seeking a good time. It offers that feeling that you can return to at the beginning or end of the day in the form of hospitality, one that you could only hope to exist in every neighborhood you chose to live in.

FIND IT HERE:
712 S Santa Fe Ave.
bontempsla.com





DAMA

THE FLAVORS OF SOUTH AMERICA REPRESENTED BOLDLY

Written By Mariana Ramos
Photographed By GL Askew II

The LA Fashion District is giving the Arts District a run for its money with the number of dining establishments making a home here. On one block you can get some of the best Italian food DTLA has to offer with Rossoblu, solid coffee options from Cognoscenti Coffee, the new SuperFine Pizza, the NOLA styles of Preux and Propper, and now DAMA. A true force to be reckoned with, DAMA is a South/Latin American heaven from beginning to end.

City Market South's open-air design has everything Carolina Wicker needed to build the vision of a paradise that takes you to places like Colombia, Argentina, and Mexico. Mixed in with the tropical vibes of the Caribbean, the vibes in DAMA are unique to the LA dining scene, but brand new to DTLA.

When entering the pink hues, the use of wicker, the tiles on the patio floor, just about everything from top to bottom begs you to stare in awe. Master Chef All-Star and LA Native Chef Antonia Lofaso is the driving force behind all of this culture, and she reassures me that my feelings are not exaggerated- the main countries behind the inspiration for her cuisine at DAMA are indeed Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Spain, but with the Angeleno twist, of course.

Coming from a long line of successful restaurants, i.e. Scopa Italian Roots, she made DAMA with the vision to bring forth a missing spotlight on the dishes of Latin America combined by her growing up in LA. Inspired by her travels, Chef Antonia handpicked her all-star team and a year ago DAMA opened its doors. They're all people she has worked with in the past because according to Lofaso, "It is so important to have people around that know your next move before you do it because of the

intensity of opening a restaurant."

Upon looking at the impressive menu- go for the Whipped Beans, Chef Antonia's favorite to prepare,

"Bean tostadas are something I had growing up in LA. It was an item that was accessible on the street, so the challenge for me was to find my interpretation of the specific flavor profile, but elevate its quality to put on the menu here at DAMA."

Speaking of cocktails and wine, the bar program and wine list should not be looked over. Steve Livigni and Pablo Moix, both having worked with Lofaso at Black Market Liquor, are the creative minds behind the cocktails and imbibe-quality of the drinks such as the refreshing mezcal-based Sierra Norte. Taylor Grant, the sommelier extraordinaire and Wine Director at DAMA, features a list to pair perfectly with any dish Lofaso sends out.

Having been featured on Master Chef not once but twice, the biggest takeaway Lofaso gained from the experience is her timing and efficiency, both aspects are well executed. It shows her team in the back have all learned from her. What she hopes to teach people working anywhere near her environment is,

"I hope that all the young people, even if this is their first job, or if they've worked in other restaurants, but have not felt important to the overall structure of the business - that they actually feel that when they come to work, whether it is or isn't where they spend the rest of their lives - that they feel like they are part of something better than just the average - that they come in every single day and feel a sense of pride for what it is that they do."

DAMA isn't going anywhere anytime soon so if you haven't visited summer is here and it is a perfect time. As for Chef Antonia, she isn't done taking over the world yet, look out for her new book, more traveling, and hopefully an airport line of restaurants soon.

FIND IT HERE:
449 S Hewitt St.
duellodtla.com





KASIH

REVISITING ONE OF DTLA'S MOST EXCITING RESTAURANTS

Written By Abel Horwitz
Photographed By Rebekah Lemire

One of the joys of being a Downtowner is getting introduced to the unique and wonderful restaurants that live in this neighborhood. Kasih was featured in the May 2018 issue, and while we were eager to taste this new Indonesian restaurant on the edge of Little Tokyo, we had no idea what to expect and could only approach the restaurant with a full heart and an empty stomach.

The restaurant turned out to be sublime. Indonesian food is delightful, and it was easy to see how proud of their cuisine the restaurant was. During our evening of dining and photographing, the chef, the owners and the bartenders kept stopping by to check in on us to discuss various highlights and nuances of the cuisine.

It wasn't hard for them to sell us on the food: we were already stunned by the flavors and charmed by the vibe and overall feel of the space. All of it was fantastic.

A year later Kasih invited The Downtowner back. In the year they've been open they've been refining their menu. It's no secret that the restaurant business is tough, and Kasih has worked hard to remain relevant and innovative.

Executive Chef Zachary Hamel spent a considerable amount of time in Southeast Asia as a child, as well as training at Le Cordon Bleu Bangkok. He has worked in kitchens in New York, Sydney and Los Angeles, and after getting hired at Kasih he went to Indonesia to get extensive training in the nuances of Indonesian cuisine.

Starting in January, Kasih began serving a nasi tumpang feast, a traditional Indonesian celebratory meal where a table is covered with banana leaves and then topped with yellow turmeric coconut rice. On top of the rice a variety of meats and vegetables are placed. Kasih finishes the table by placing their wonderful sambal tasting spread on edge of the rice, and each diner gets a fresh coconut to drink out of.

"This is a hands-on feast," explains Chef Hamel. "It's usually reserved for a big event like a wedding. We wanted to do something different and something exciting and fun. We wanted our customers to get their hands on it and see what the experience is like."

The experience is happily overwhelming in its scope and ambition. They recommend it for a party of four at the minimum, and after the meal was set it's easy to see why: it takes up an entire table!

Revisiting Kasih was a reminder of the flavors and innovations coming out of one of DTLA's most exciting kitchens. The feast is truly special, and one that is best experienced with a table full of your loved ones. The sense of eating with your hands, scooping up a handful of sticky rice, putting a delicious protein on top of it, and filling your mouth with the spicy, sweet, savory and exotic flavors of an Indonesian meal are well worth seeking out.

FIND IT HERE:
200 S Los Angeles St.
kasih.la

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