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LA

ISSUE 64

DOWNTOWNER[®]

THE INSIDER GUIDE TO DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

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

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JOHN THOMAS & SON

THE ONE-WOMAN SHOW

Written By Janica de Guzman
Photographed By Robiee Ziegler

Some people drink to relax, others drink to forget, but at John Thomas & Son, people drink to witness a sorcerer in action. It's a place where cocktails are the craft and the element of surprise is its mystical power. Here lies a hidden speakeasy located inside The House Of Machines and is also the secret lair to Amanda Colom (a.k.a. Bad Birdy), bartender and Global Cocktail Creative.

"John Thomas & Son was created with me in mind, we wanted to create an entirely different experience from The House Of Machines and what we have is something much more intimate, where I can talk to the guests, find out what kind of cocktails they'd like to experience and create a show for them," says Amanda.

The experience begins from the moment you search for the bar. Guests are given a numerical code to access a keypad fastened onto a secret door. It's an action that feels exclusive, yet parallels the security measures taken for Starbucks restrooms across America. Thankfully, the reveal is worlds apart. Inside John Thomas & Son, guests are welcomed into a dark and cozy lounge outfitted with leather, leaves, and liquor.

This particular bar has no menu. Instead, guests are presented with a tray of fresh herbs, fruits, syrups, and whatever Amanda has sourced from the farmer's market. Once their preferred ingredients and liquor are chosen, she goes behind the bar to create something entirely bespoke. This approach makes every cocktail custom and in confidence. It's like having complete control, yet none at all.



One of her signature drinks is the Bumble Bird, a gin-based cocktail featuring sage and orange peel infused honey, Angostura bitters, mint, pistachio oil, and the essence of fresh-cut grass. Observing Amanda craft a cocktail was like witnessing Fred Astaire finesse his way across a stage. She rattled a cocktail shaker to the beat of cha-cha and poured with elegance as she extended the tips of her tattoo covered fingers. Once poured, Amanda doesn't just stick a straw in it and serve you — that's not part of Bad Birdy's brand. The drink is served in a bee-shaped chalice and presented on a tray festooned with forestry and a brawny tea kettle. When it was carried from the bar to the lounge area, the tea kettle spewed an enormous amount of grass-scented smoke that would put any vaping competition to shame. Take a whiff, then take a sip. The sensorial experience was created to evoke a honey bee flying through the air.

One may think a concept like this would arise from a fever dream — or the imaginative mind of Amanda. When it comes to flavors, Amanda credits her inspiration to chefs. "When I go to restaurants and I am impressed by the ingredients and flavors, I'll figure out a way to translate them into cocktails." The inspiration is apparent with her famous Proper 86 cocktail, a smoked old fashioned with brûléed lemon. It's crafted with smoking techniques chefs use for meats and a torching technique used to caramelize the tops of crème brûlée.

"At the end of the night, I want everyone who comes here to feel like we're friends. I want them to go home and tell all their friends about the experience they had," says Amanda. John Thomas & Son is such an intimate space, that it allows for Amanda to chat, educate, and entertain guests as if they're welcomed into her own home. One word to the wise, Amanda's go-to drink is simply gin and soda, so the next time you're at John Thomas & Son, buy a round for Bad Birdy, too.

FIND IT HERE:
2028 E 7th St.
la.thehouseofmachines.com





YAPA

A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA FROM PERU TO LITTLE TOKYO

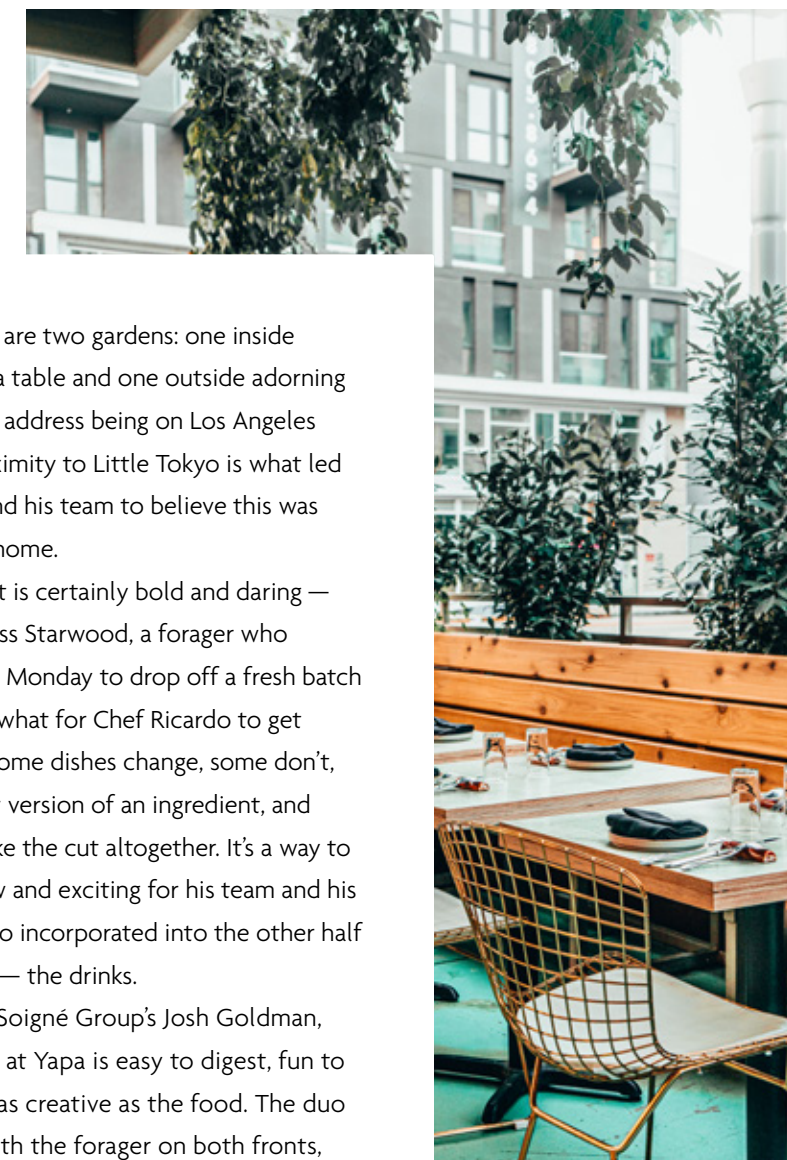
Written By Mariana Ramos
Photographed By Robiee Ziegler

Within the multicultural hub that is DTLA, the beloved neighborhood pocket that is Little Tokyo, has risen as one of the most influential gastronomical destinations in all of Los Angeles. However, it is not merely deep-rooted in Japanese traditions; Little Tokyo has a unique mix of cultures if you know where to look.

One of those culture-combos, if you will, is Peruvian. It may be news to you but the South American country, home to the magnificent Machu Picchu, is widely accustomed to traditional Japanese cuisine, traditions, and way of life. Thanks to a large influx of Japanese migrants to Peru in 1899, that influence has established roots in DTLA. A new player in the Little Tokyo ensemble is Chef Ricardo Lopez, whose recently opened restaurant, Yapa, is already a force to be reckoned with.

Born in Lima, Peru, Chef Ricardo's cuisine is widely influenced by his Peruvian upbringing and early cooking lessons from his grandma, as well as his past expertise in French kitchens. The name "Yapa" is derived from the Quechua word meaning "a little something extra", and when dining at Yapa, trust me, you're going to be asking for more.

The space is casual yet intimate, thanks to low lighting and wood panels that warm the



place up. There are two gardens: one inside hanging above a table and one outside adorning their patio. The address being on Los Angeles St. and the proximity to Little Tokyo is what led Chef Ricardo and his team to believe this was it — their new home.

The concept is certainly bold and daring — working with Jess Starwood, a forager who comes by every Monday to drop off a fresh batch of who-knows-what for Chef Ricardo to get creative with. Some dishes change, some don't, some get a new version of an ingredient, and some don't make the cut altogether. It's a way to keep things new and exciting for his team and his patrons. It is also incorporated into the other half of Yapa's menu — the drinks.

Headed by Soigné Group's Josh Goldman, the drink menu at Yapa is easy to digest, fun to order, and just as creative as the food. The duo collaborates with the forager on both fronts, which inevitably keeps their lives exciting as they face a new and exciting challenge every Monday. Using liquors traditional to Peru like Pisco and some not so traditional like Arak, Josh has managed to make the cocktails a centerpiece of their own.

Both menus are plenty to make you want to stay at Yapa for longer than anticipated, and a new menu every week is certainly reason enough to revisit, but it's the feeling of home and welcoming conversation from the point of entry to the end of the experience that'll have you returning to Yapa time and time again.

FIND IT HERE:
236 S Los Angeles St. Suite G
yapa.la





DRINK

A

JOHN THOMAS & SON
2028 E 7th St.
la.thehouseofmachines.com



EAT

B

YAPA
236 S Los Angeles St. Suite G
yapa.la

C

MANUELA
907 E 3rd St.
manuela-la.com

D

SIBLING RIVAL
1060 S Broadway
siblingrivaldtla.com



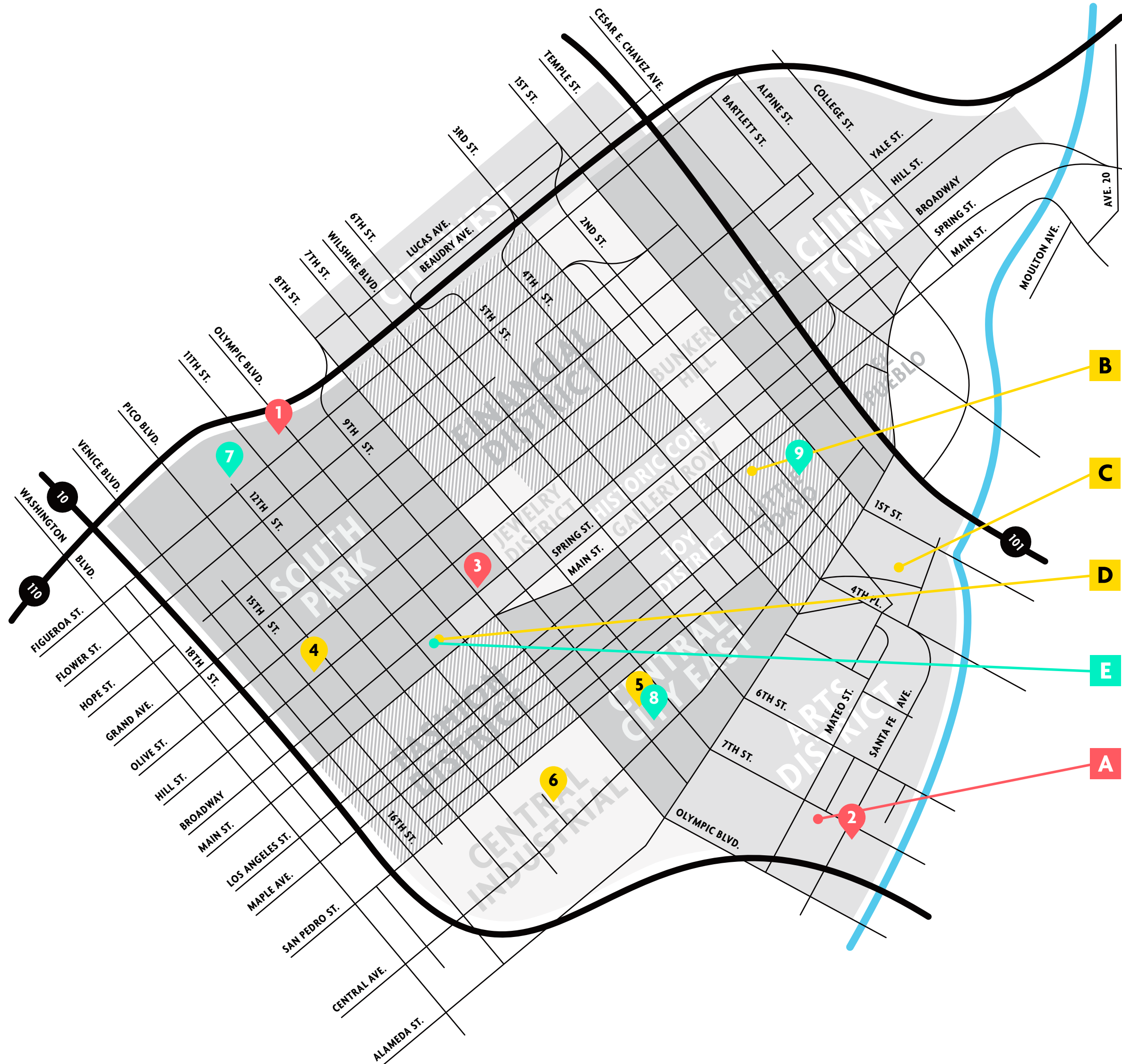
MOVE

E

THE HOXTON
1060 S Broadway
thehoxton.com

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

*MAP SIMPLIFIED & NOT TO SCALE



DOWNTOWN FAVORITES

- WP24**
900 W Olympic Blvd. — wolfgangpuck.com
Head up to the 24th floor of the Ritz Carlton for amazing city views and a solid bar. It gets packed on the weekends and before whatever's going on at Staples Center that evening, so if you're looking for the start of a baller night out, you've found your space.
- FIREHOUSE**
710 S Santa Fe Ave. — firehousea.com
Dustin Lancaster's tastefully appointed boutique hotel has a delightful restaurant on the ground floor, but it's the bar you want to saddle up to. A simple wine and cocktail list and some killer Arts District people watching is what you'll find.
- ILCAFFÈ**
855 S Broadway — [instagram.com/ilcaffelovesyou](https://www.instagram.com/ilcaffelovesyou)
The one non-Swedish location of this sleek, hip and oh-so-good cafe, ilCaffè shares a wall with Acne Jeans. The coffee is excellent, and the vibe is European-chic. Sip your espresso on their patio while reading this paper for ultimate cool points.
- BO DADDY'S BBQ**
1415 S Hill St. — [instagram.com/bodaddysbbqdtla](https://www.instagram.com/bodaddysbbqdtla)
Bo Daddy grew up cooking, and opening his BBQ joint was a lifelong dream. This hole in the wall is friendly and welcoming, and the food is finger-licking good.
- M. GEORGINA**
777 Alameda St. Suite 114 — mgeorgina.com
Melissa Perello, who has a Michelin star for Octavia up in San Francisco, has opened M. Georgina in ROW DTLA. Expect California fresh cuisine coming out of the wood-burning ovens from this celebrated chef.
- MARISCOS JALISCO**
10th & Towne Ave. — [instagram.com/mariscosjalisco](https://www.instagram.com/mariscosjalisco)
20,000 Instagram followers can't be wrong! Mariscos Jalisco is a beloved seafood taco truck with three trucks, one parked in the Fashion District. Fresh, delicious seafood at a good price.
- HYDE LOUNGE AT STAPLES CENTER**
1111 S Figueroa St. — staplescenter.com/hyde-lounge
Hyde Lounge gets a stunning upgrade, so you and the rest of the high rollers can watch your sportsball game in luxury. Bottle service, amazing food, clean bathrooms, and the ability to look down upon us mere mortals as the action unfolds.
- DUMPLING & ASSOCIATES**
777 S Alameda St. — dumplingassociates.com
Running December through March 2020, Dumping & Associates takes over part of ROW DTLA to celebrate all things dumplings. People love Insta-museums, and people love dumplings, so this one's a bit of a no-brainer.
- 123 ASTRONAUT**
123 Astronaut Ellison S Onizuka St. — 123astronaut.la
A tiny art gallery in a Little Tokyo pagoda. Exhibits change often, there's no rhyme or reason to what is going in there, and sometimes the curators don't know what they're exhibiting until it gets installed. Where art meets chaos. Love it!



MANUELA

SALON SERIES IN THE GARDEN

Written By Janica de Guzman
Photographed By Jack Strutz

The Hauser & Wirth and Manuela compound is one of the few places in Downtown that unifies highbrow elegance with lowbrow charm, establishing an air of surprise — just like a well-maintained unibrow. It's a sprawling space where the aesthete can dine on buttered biscuits and chilaquiles, parents can sip seasonal cocktails within a graffiti-covered herb garden, and their designer-wearing toddler can admire live chickens. The art gallery and restaurant has created an atmosphere where all cultural enthusiasts can truly connect through art, cuisine, and community.

The newest experience they've added to the roster is their Salon Series in the Garden. A few times a year, patrons are invited to feast on shared plates, listen to a panel of experts, and discuss amongst strangers various themes ranging from urban ecology to natural wines. For intellectuals, it's a form of expression. For introverts, it's the ultimate challenge. For everyone else, it's an evening worth having.

On a crisp October evening, we had the opportunity to dine in Manuela's garden under string lights and on top of reclaimed furniture. It was a scene straight out of a rustic wedding reception featuring all of the thoughtful details without any rhythmless dancing. The night's particular topic focused on artist Dorothy Iannone's sexually charged masterpiece, 'A Cookbook,' featuring traditional recipes juxtaposed with eroticism: "Do you like my red snapper?" The suggestive quote was taken



straight out of the cookbook and nonchalantly recited by Evan Kleiman, host of KCRW's "Good Food" radio show. By her side were artist, Ben Kinmont, and curator, Laura Fried, as all three engaged in a volley of dialogue dissecting the life and intent behind Dorothy Iannone's choice of words, pictures, and recipes. It was like listening to a podcast, only this time, we could assign faces to the non-threatening, made-for-podcasting voices.

Throughout the evening, we were served a multi-course meal with recipes taken from the cookbook and prepared by Executive Chef Kris Tominaga. He took a step back from Manuela's usual menu which features Southern-inspired fare highlighting local ingredients to prepare chagiki, chicken liver pâté, baked trout meunière, and Tunisian couscous. Each dish was meant to be shared but large enough to go for seconds, or even thirds. One standout dish was the chicken liver pâté and it's silky, mousse-like consistency topped with shaved truffle and served with seeded bread so soft and squishy it would have made the gluten-free community run for their lives. For dessert, the entire dinner table was unprepared for the arrival of Zuppa Inglese; the collective gasp was louder than the reaction to Iannone's "red snapper" punchline. The Italian layered dessert featured custard, chocolate pudding, fresh fruit, and delicate cookies served in a glass pot akin to the size of a potted house plant.

Keep your eye out for Manuela's next Salon Series In The Garden event. Tickets range from \$60-\$70 per person and include a welcome drink, family-style dinner, and an evening of conversation.

FIND IT HERE:
907 E 3rd St.
manuela-la.com



THE HOXTON

YOUR FRIENDLY EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS

Written By Abel Horwitz
Photos Courtesy of The Hoxton, Downtown LA

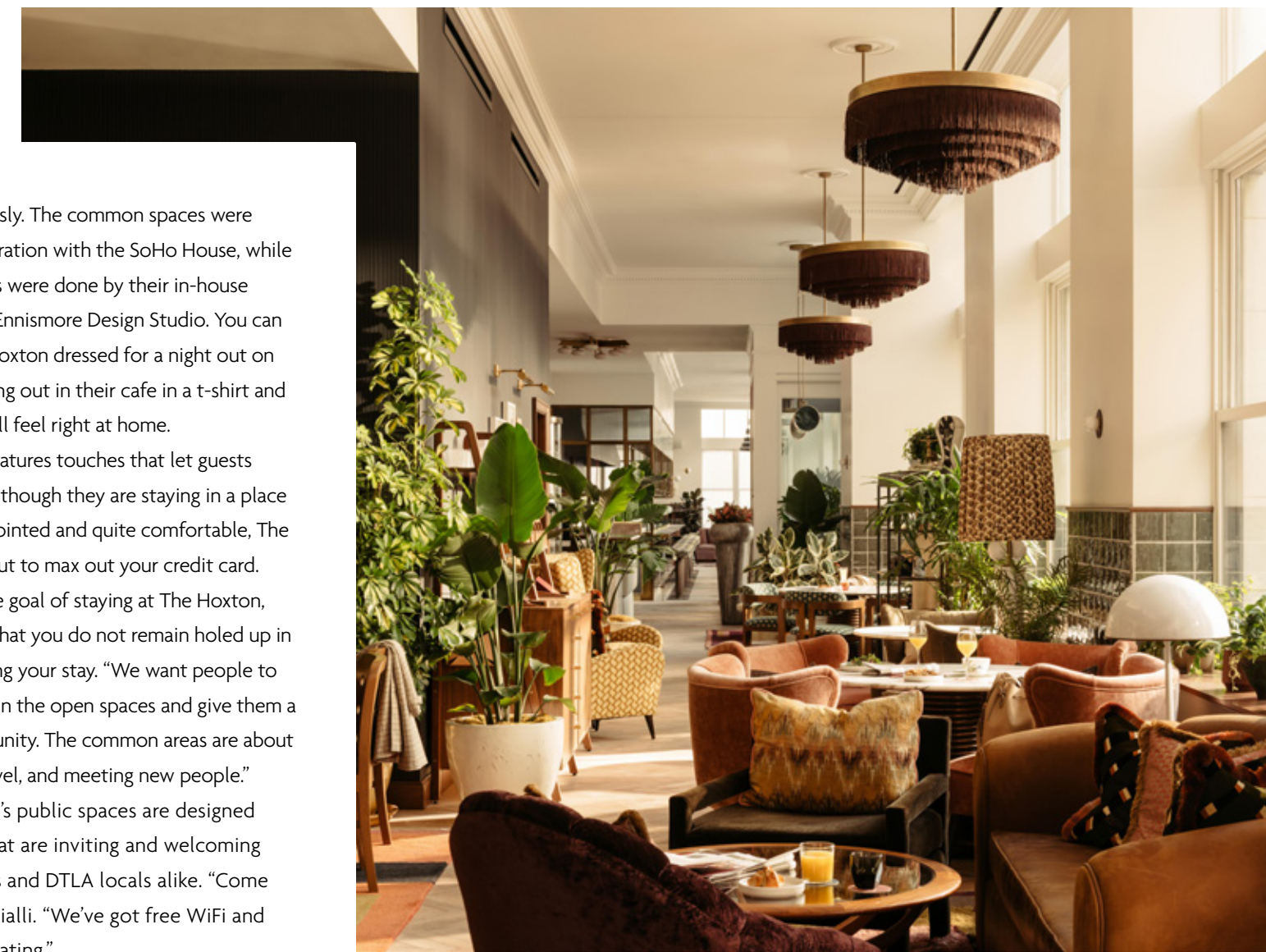
The Hoxton Downtown LA aims to be a welcoming and inviting space for both locals and visitors alike. The hotel brand, which is originally from London, is a 10-story, 174 room hotel that gives off the vibe of that chic European friend who always seems perfectly put together and cool in any situation. The Hoxton is hip, and their arrival in DTLA is more than welcome.

The hotel is located at 11th and Broadway in the old Los Angeles Railway Building. The Hoxton lovingly restored the building, which was built in 1922. "We're definitely drawn to buildings that have a rich history, like this one," says David Vialli, The Hoxton's West Coast Operations Director. "Restoring it back to its original grandeur and getting to share it with the neighborhood has been a huge undertaking and our design team worked overtime to bring it back to life."

"We want everyone who comes through to feel welcome," continues Vialli. "No matter if they're here to stay the night or have a quick drink. It's more than just the people visiting Los Angeles, but also those who work, live and play in the neighborhood."

Downtown LA's General Manager, Kenan Jones, concurs. "If you live in the neighborhood we want this to be your neighborhood spot," he says. "Your home away from home."

When you walk in you notice just how welcoming and open The Hoxton is. The interior design is intentionally eclectic, giving the feel of both a luxe space and one that does not take



itself too seriously. The common spaces were done in collaboration with the SoHo House, while the hotel rooms were done by their in-house design team at Ennismore Design Studio. You can walk into The Hoxton dressed for a night out on the town, or hang out in their cafe in a t-shirt and sweats and you'll feel right at home.

The hotel features touches that let guests know that even though they are staying in a place that is well appointed and quite comfortable, The Hoxton is not out to max out your credit card.

The ultimate goal of staying at The Hoxton, states Jones, is that you do not remain holed up in your room during your stay. "We want people to be hanging out in the open spaces and give them a sense of community. The common areas are about exploration, travel, and meeting new people."

The Hoxton's public spaces are designed to be places that are inviting and welcoming to both visitors and DTLA locals alike. "Come say, 'Hi!'" says Vialli. "We've got free WiFi and comfortable seating."

The ground floor restaurant, Sibling Rivalry, can take care of guests from morning to night, with their coffee bar slash soft serve ice cream counter, cocktail bar, and full-service restaurant. On the rooftop, their restaurant Pilot gives guests an opportunity to dine al fresco under the DTLA sky. "I am always bringing friends up to Pilot bar on the rooftop for those killer views," says Vialli. The rooftop pool is welcome for locals to swim in starting at 11am.

The Hoxton is hip, chic and accessible to visitors and locals alike. "Our doors are open to all," emphasizes Vialli.

Stop by, grab a coffee, and welcome them to the neighborhood.

FIND IT HERE:
1060 S Broadway
thehoxton.com





SIBLING RIVAL

BROOKLYN BORN, DTLA RAISED

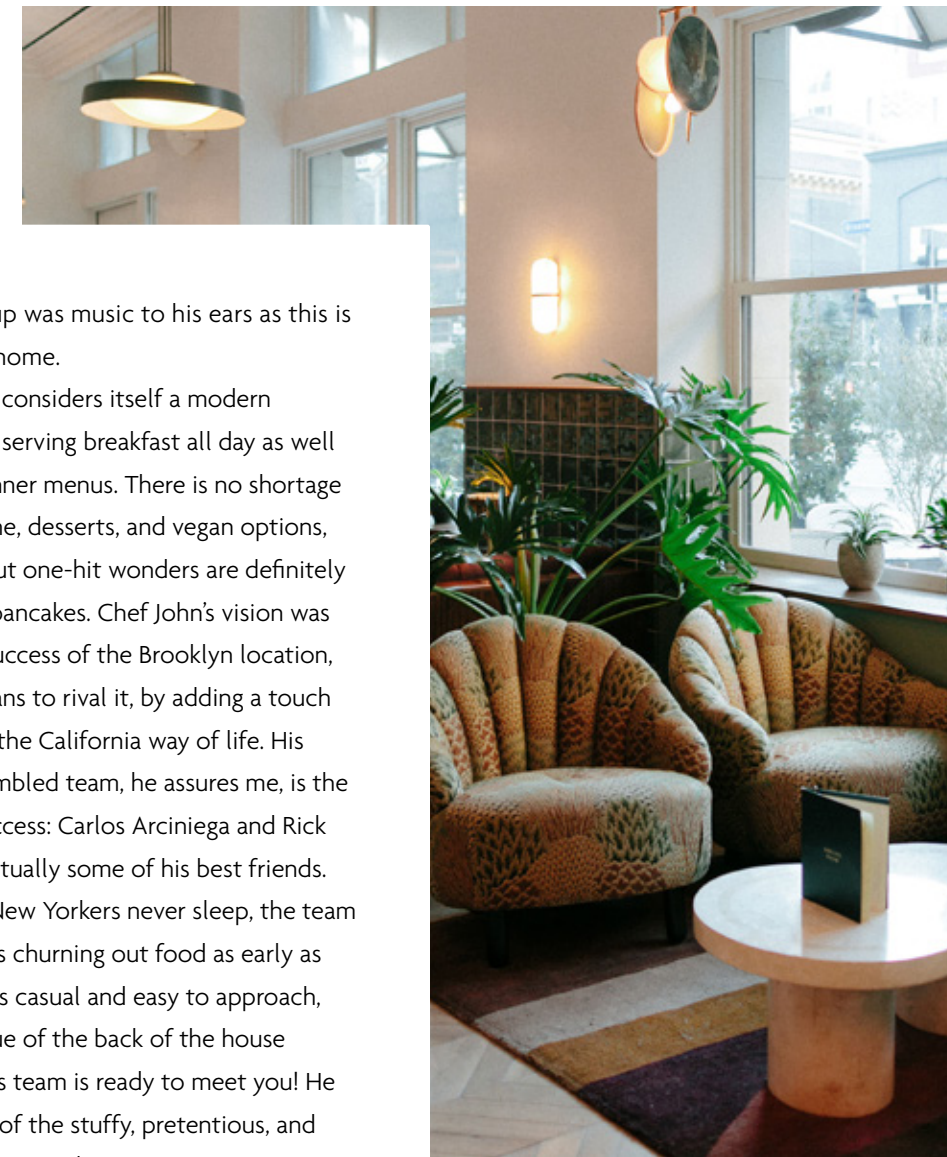
*Written By Mariana Ramos
Photographed By Rebekah Lemire*

The surge of new restaurants in DTLA has not only brought us more great food from more great chefs, it has also brought us a handful of new hotels. Ever since independent restaurants started to become destinations, hotels have stepped their game up by hiring top-notch talent. One such hotel that absolutely nailed it is the new Hoxton Hotel on Broadway.

Getting Sibling Rival to Los Angeles was a combined effort by the Brooklyn-based Sunday Hospitality team and the Hoxton. Staying true to their East Coast roots the interior decor of Sibling Rival is essential New York vibes from the entrance to the patio. Given that it occupies the majority of the entrance to the Hoxton itself, the ambiance almost embraces you in a warm hug with top-notch hospitality and delicious food.

Usually, when big outsiders come into DTLA there is a healthy concern about the East to West mesh-up and locals fear the art of California culture might take a backseat. I am happy to report this is not the case at Sibling Rival, thanks to the man behind the action, Chef John Taube IV, formerly of the NoMad Hotel.

When it comes to hotels in DTLA Chef John already has 6 years of experience working at a high-caliber and high-demand group, but Sibling Rival's concept was enticing enough to draw him in and dial the concept to appeal to the West Coast audiences. The fact that they picked



DTLA to open up was music to his ears as this is where he calls home.

Sibling Rival considers itself a modern American diner, serving breakfast all day as well as lunch and dinner menus. There is no shortage of cocktails, wine, desserts, and vegan options, but the stand out one-hit wonders are definitely their signature pancakes. Chef John's vision was an ode to the success of the Brooklyn location, with all the means to rival it, by adding a touch of hip-hop and the California way of life. His personally assembled team, he assures me, is the secret to his success: Carlos Arciniega and Rick Pettigrew are actually some of his best friends.

Given that New Yorkers never sleep, the team at Sibling Rival is churning out food as early as 7 am. The staff is casual and easy to approach, which is also true of the back of the house staff; Chef John's team is ready to meet you! He claims the days of the stuffy, pretentious, and quiet chefs are over — his team wants to say hi. They love cooking together in a fast-paced environment, so a couple of stretches prior to service are necessary but their most important value is to have fun while serving elevated comfort food such as Chef John's favorite the scramble or Carlos' burrito.

Meshing East Coast with West Coast has never been an easy feat and only a few places can claim the fame of doing it right. You can go ahead and add Sibling Rival to that list. The fact they opened their doors in DTLA means our metropolis is growing and will soon rival the Big Apple.

FIND IT HERE:
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