

MAR 2020

LA

ISSUE 67

DOWNTOWNER[®]

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

A FERROCONCRETE PUBLICATION

— ferroconcrete.com —

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PET PROJECT

**LEAVING THEIR PAW PRINT
ON SPRING STREET**

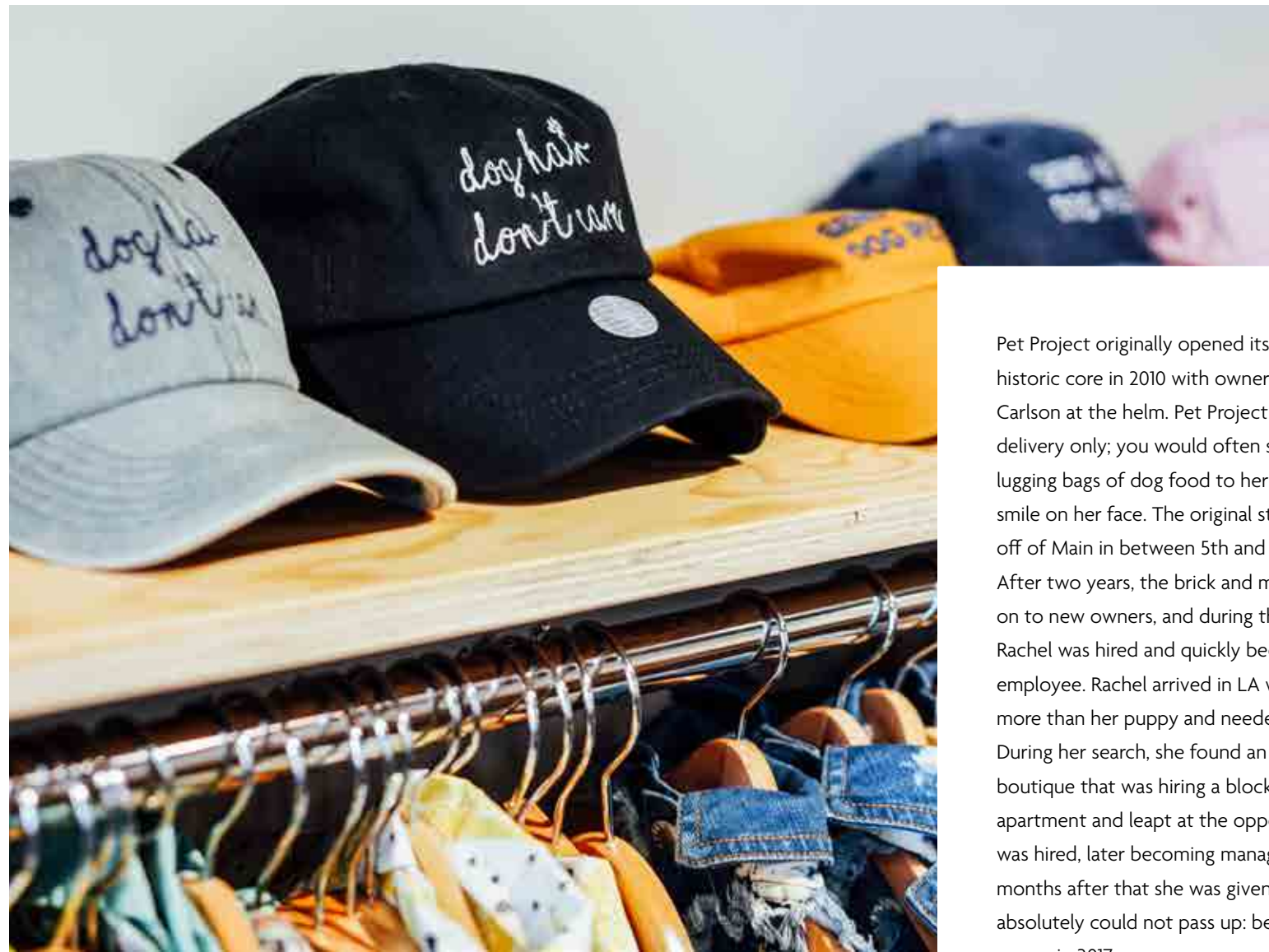
Written By Dakota Nate

Photographed By Robiee Ziegler

Committing to being a pet parent is one of the greatest things a person can do in our opinion, but at times it can be just as stressful as being a parent to a child. Okay, maybe not, but everything's relative right? Seriously though, much like raising a child, you have to make sure they're eating the right food, that they're safe—and perhaps most importantly—you have to love the ever-loving snot out of them. You want the best for your fur-baby, but it can be mighty tough to own a pet in an urban jungle. Cats and small dogs are easy for the most part, but you're typically not going to see someone walking a great dane down Broadway. We digress, but the bottom line is that we all want to treat our pets to the best we can. In the case of large chain pet supply retailers out there, the experience can be overwhelming in abundance of products, yet underwhelming when it comes to customer service. No need to fret, pet parents, a beloved DTLA pet boutique is here to answer all of your puppy prayers.

(Continued on Page 4)

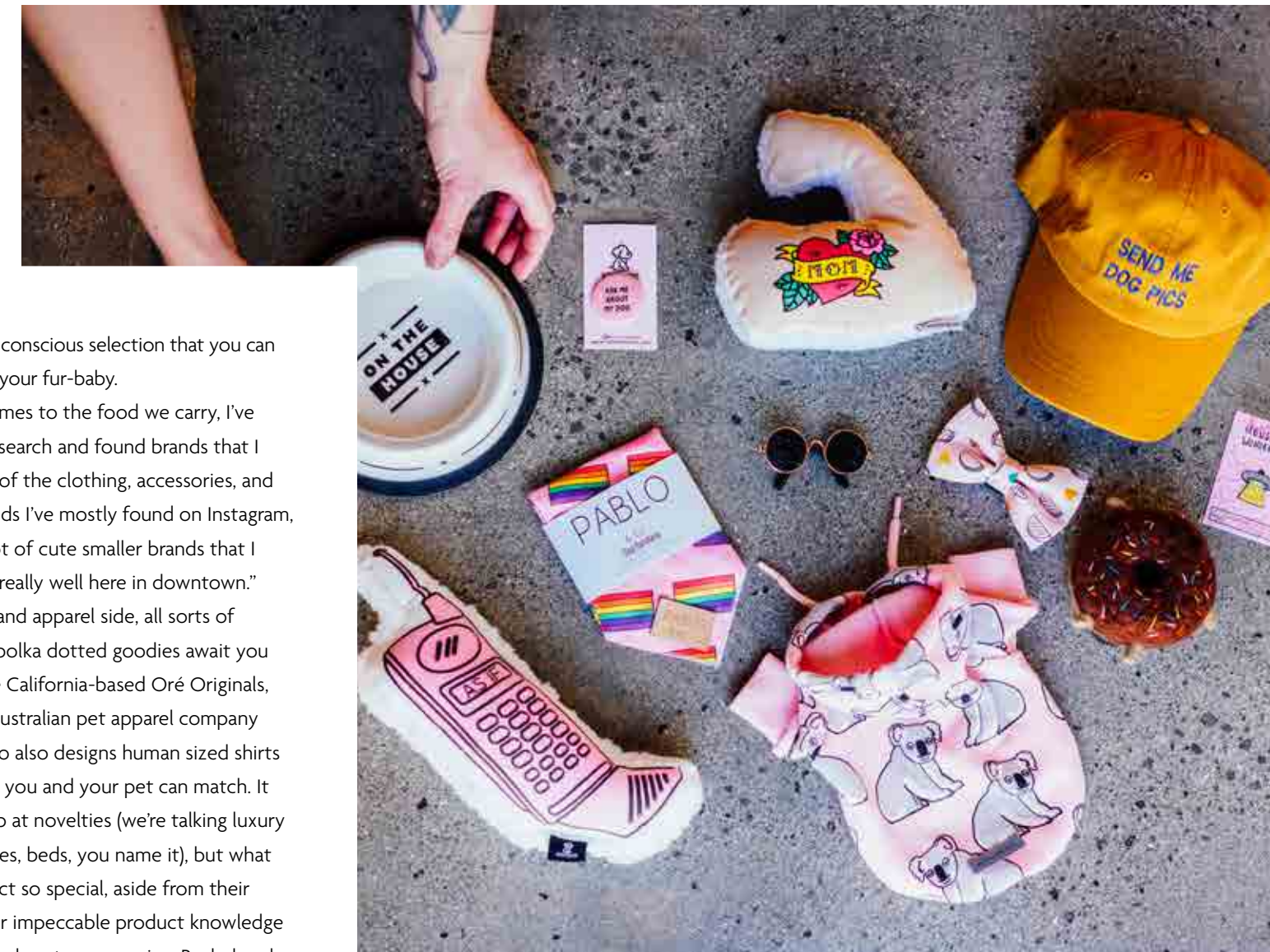
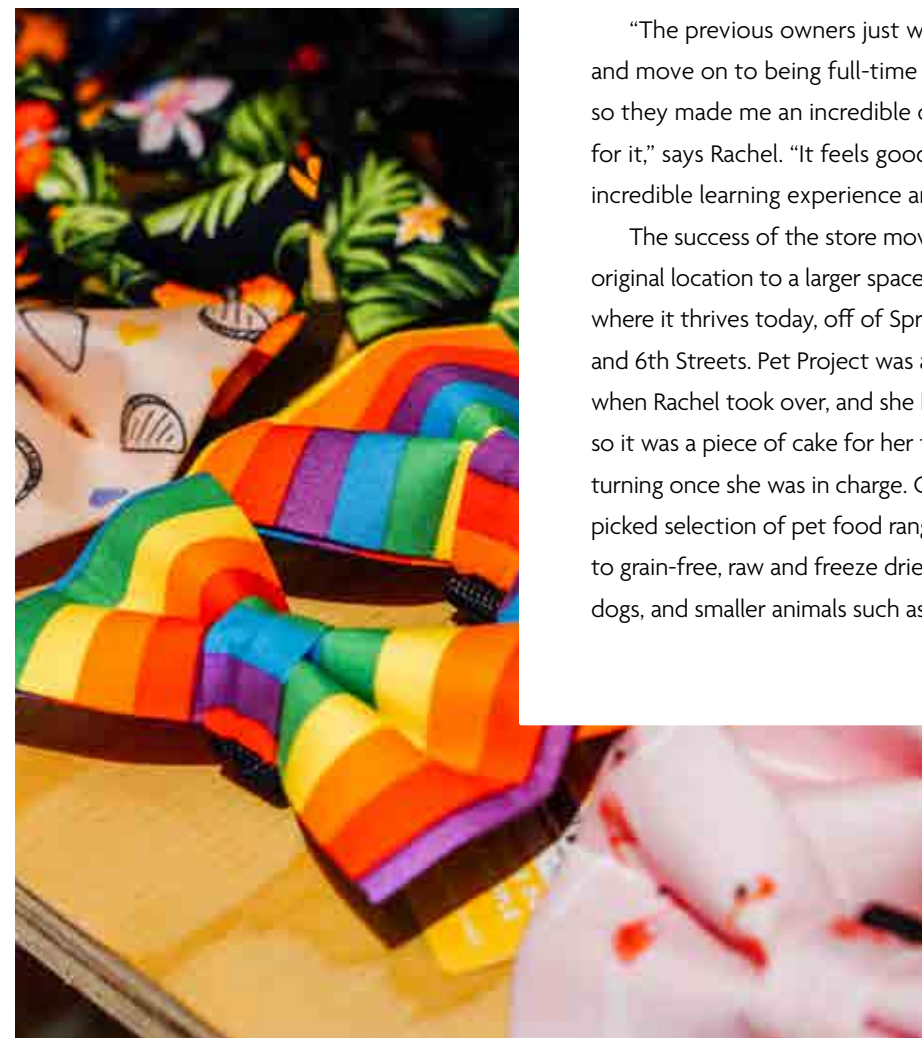




Pet Project originally opened its doors in the historic core in 2010 with owner Nancy-Jean Carlson at the helm. Pet Project started out as delivery only; you would often see Nancy-Jean lugging bags of dog food to her customers with a smile on her face. The original storefront opened off of Main in between 5th and 6th Streets. After two years, the brick and mortar was passed on to new owners, and during this ownership, Rachel was hired and quickly became their best employee. Rachel arrived in LA with not much more than her puppy and needed a job ASAP. During her search, she found an ad for a pet boutique that was hiring a block away from her apartment and leapt at the opportunity. Rachel was hired, later becoming manager, and just two months after that she was given an offer she absolutely could not pass up: becoming the third owner in 2017.

“The previous owners just wanted to retire and move on to being full-time grandparents so they made me an incredible offer and I went for it,” says Rachel. “It feels good. It’s been an incredible learning experience and lots of fun.”

The success of the store moved it from its original location to a larger space around the corner, where it thrives today, off of Spring in between 5th and 6th Streets. Pet Project was already flourishing when Rachel took over, and she knew the ropes, so it was a piece of cake for her to keep the wheel turning once she was in charge. Carrying a hand-picked selection of pet food ranging from organic to grain-free, raw and freeze dried foods for cats, dogs, and smaller animals such as guinea pigs, Pet



Project carries a conscious selection that you can trust to feed to your fur-baby. “When it comes to the food we carry, I’ve done a lot of research and found brands that I really like. A lot of the clothing, accessories, and smaller toy brands I’ve mostly found on Instagram, so there are a lot of cute smaller brands that I think would do really well here in downtown.”

On the toy and apparel side, all sorts of fluffy, squeaky, polka dotted goodies await you from brands like California-based Oré Originals, Wag City, and Australian pet apparel company Pablo & Co., who also designs human sized shirts and sweaters so you and your pet can match. It doesn’t just stop at novelties (we’re talking luxury carriers, harnesses, beds, you name it), but what makes Pet Project so special, aside from their products, is their impeccable product knowledge and uber-personal customer service. Rachel and the rest of their small team are always eager and smiling, ready to assist you in finding what works best for you and your pet.

If you’re in need of a new way to pamper your pup and you’re tired of trotting in under fluorescent lights to stare at a wall of dog food and overpriced toys at your usual retailer, give Rachel a visit down at Pet Project and let your furry best friend pick out a new sweater. If that’s not enough to make your pup an Instagram account, we don’t know what is.

FIND IT HERE:
528 S Spring St.
petprojectla.com





KABUTO

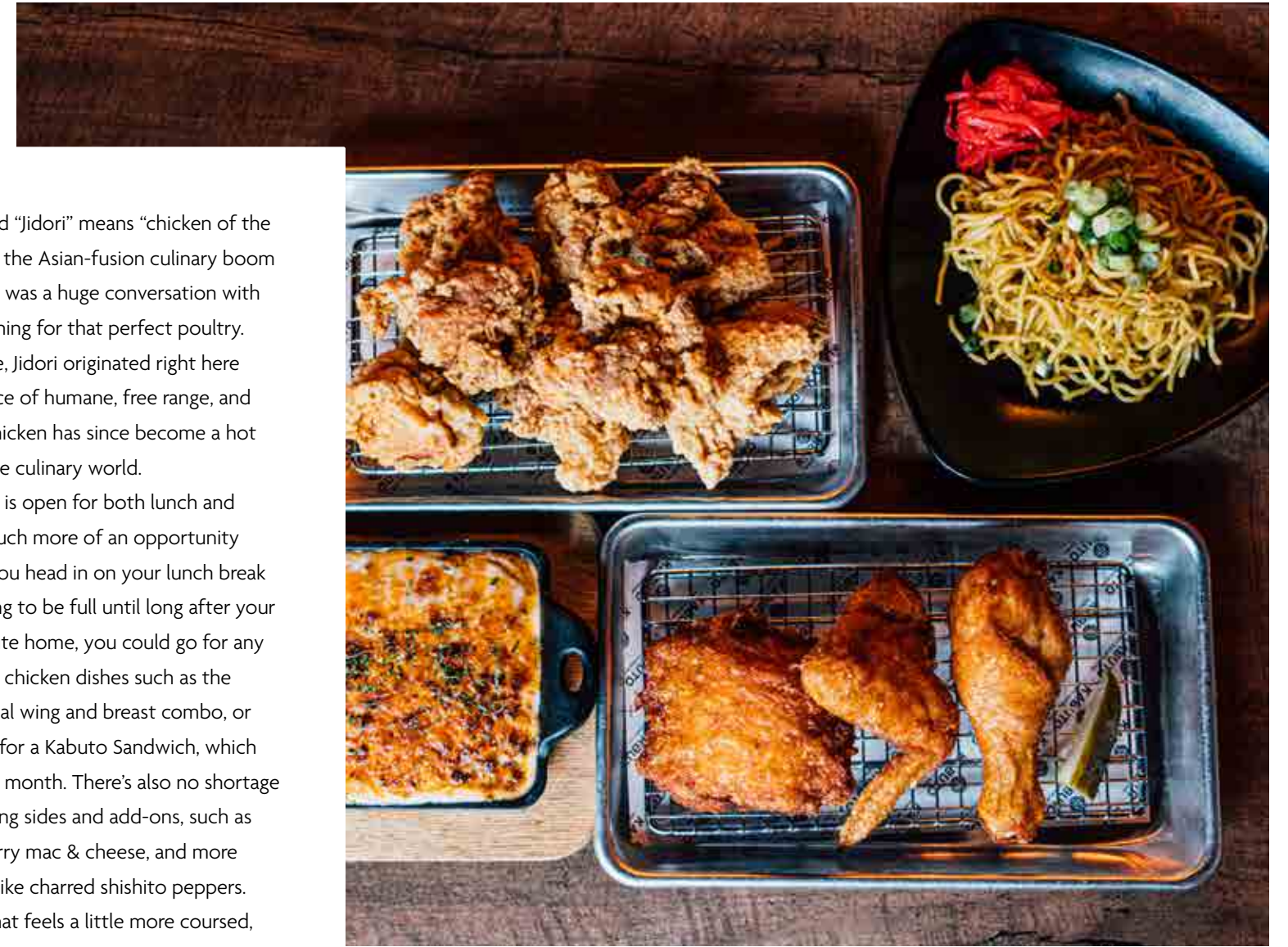
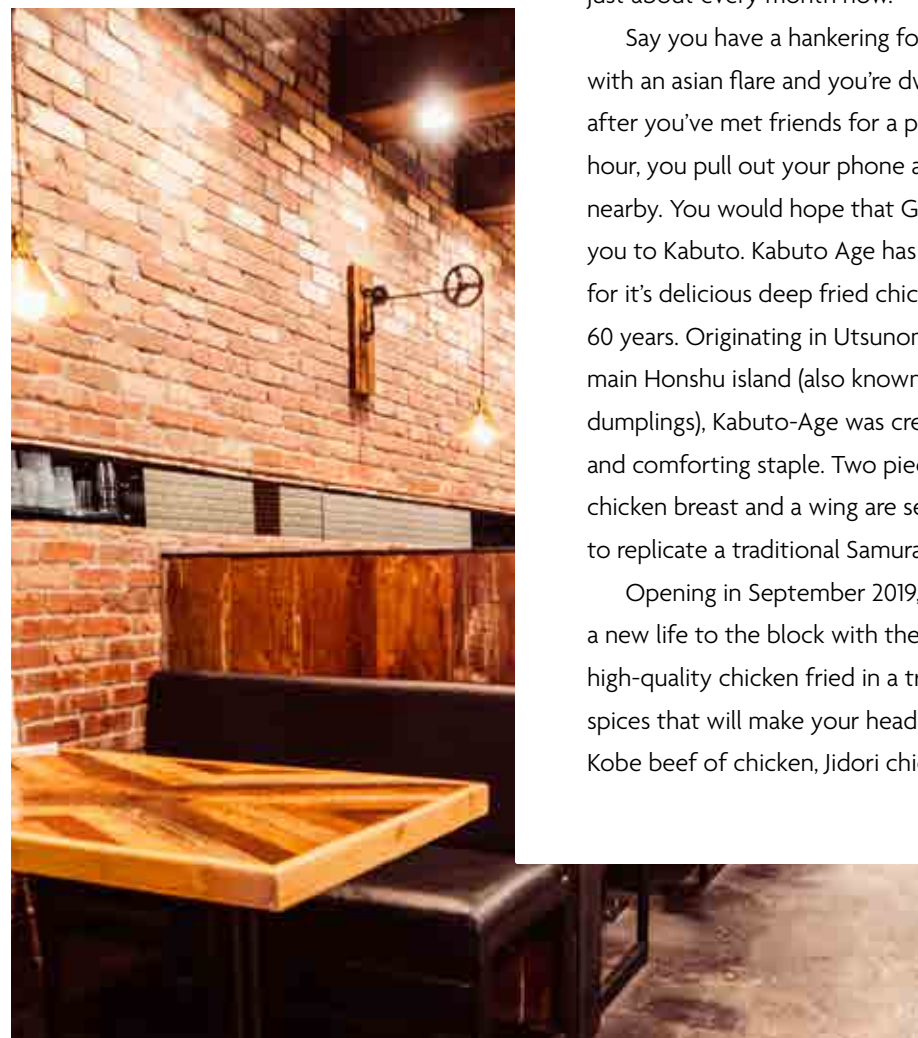
NOT YOUR FATHER'S KFC

Written By Dakota Nate
Photographed By Robiee Ziegler

This is probably not news to you, but Little Tokyo is one of the most happening cultural districts in all of Los Angeles. Its prime location makes it an ideal stop for tourists, business folk, foodies, and the just plain hungry. As you pass the many storefronts and Japanese restaurants from matcha cafes to ramen bars and everything in between, magical aromas emanate from every doorway tempting you with the tantalization of their delectable fare. Home to the largest Japanese-American population in North America, Little Tokyo has expanded rapidly in the last ten years and there's a new place to try for dinner opening just about every month now.

Say you have a hankering for fried chicken with an asian flare and you're dwelling 1st Street after you've met friends for a post-work happy hour, you pull out your phone and look up what's nearby. You would hope that Google guides you to Kabuto. Kabuto Age has been famous for its delicious deep fried chicken for almost 60 years. Originating in Utsunomiya on Japan's main Honshu island (also known for their gyoza dumplings), Kabuto-Age was created as a hearty and comforting staple. Two pieces of fried chicken breast and a wing are served connected to replicate a traditional Samurai helmet.

Opening in September 2019, Kabuto brought a new life to the block with the promise of high-quality chicken fried in a traditional blend of spices that will make your head spin. Called the Kobe beef of chicken, Jidori chicken rules all at



Kabuto. The word "Jidori" means "chicken of the earth", and when the Asian-fusion culinary boom occurred, quality was a huge conversation with every chef searching for that perfect poultry. Around that time, Jidori originated right here in LA. Their choice of humane, free range, and hormone-free chicken has since become a hot commodity in the culinary world.

Since Kabuto is open for both lunch and dinner, there's much more of an opportunity for variety. Say you head in on your lunch break and you're looking to be full until long after your daunting commute home, you could go for any variation of their chicken dishes such as the popular traditional wing and breast combo, or mix it up and go for a Kabuto Sandwich, which debuted just last month. There's also no shortage of mouth-watering sides and add-ons, such as their beloved curry mac & cheese, and more traditional sides like charred shishito peppers. For something that feels a little more coursed, the Jidori set is a fantastically adventurous run during your dining experience at Kabuto. You get three pieces of regular or spicy chicken, your choice of a side, as well as garlic chicken rice, pickles, and dipping sauce.

With a no-frills beer menu (and wine on the way), you can enjoy one of the most magical pairings known to man: beer and chicken. Afterwards, you'll find yourself left with the vitality to hunt down the best karaoke bar within walking distance. Whether you need a spot to refuel during a busy day of sightseeing or you're a weekend warrior looking for a location to begin your night out, do yourself a favor: go Kabuto.

FIND IT HERE:
323 E 1st St.
kabutofriedchicken.com





EAT

A

KABUTO

323 E 1st St.
kabutofriedchicken.com

B

AZAY

226 E 1st St.
azaylittletokyo.com



MOVE

C

PET PROJECT

528 S Spring St.
petprojectla.com

D

ELSEWHERE AT THE MADCAP MOTEL

944 E 4th St.
madcapmotel.com

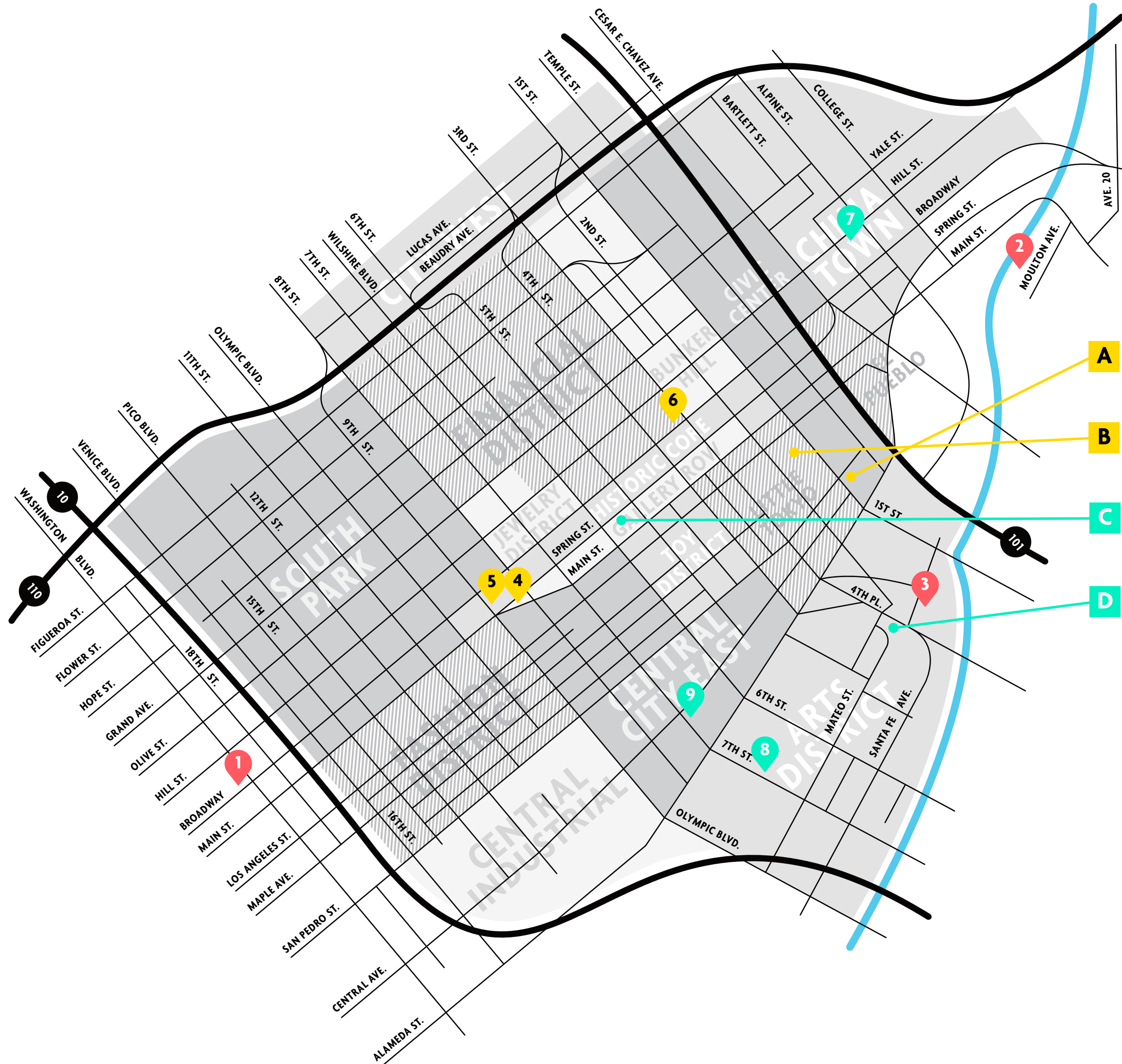
- CITY STREETS

- FREEWAYS

- LA RIVER

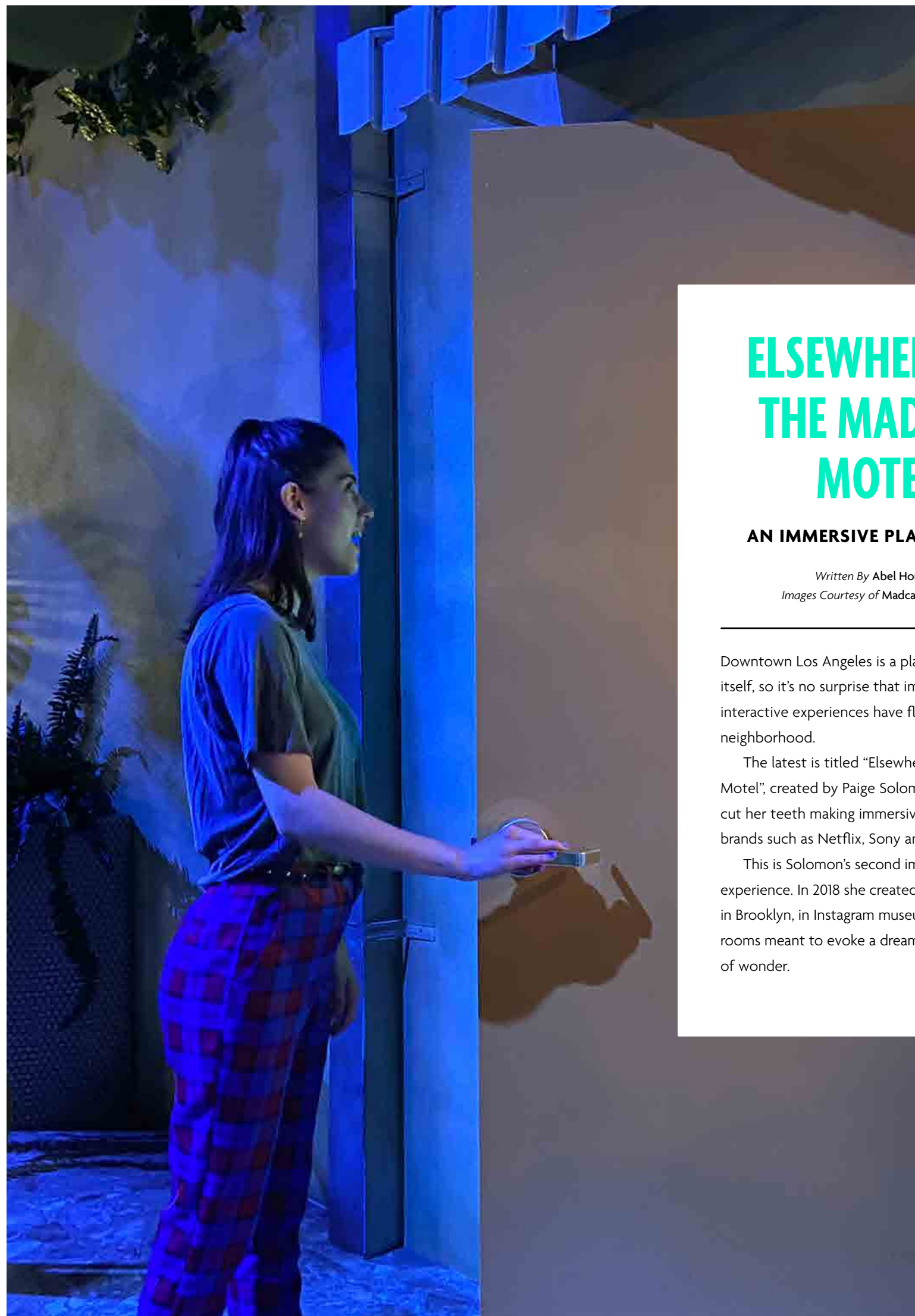
- METRO RAIL STATIONS

*MAP SIMPLIFIED & NOT TO SCALE



DOWNTOWN FAVORITES

- 1 COFFEE BY KOFI**
1933 S Broadway — coffeebykofi.com
The REEF building now has a giant wraparound digital billboard covering its top, attracting attention to this convention/art space just on the other side of the 10. When you stop in, make sure to say hi to Kofi at his coffee shop. Kofi took his high end coffee catering service and his coffee training in Ghana, Brooklyn and LA to make a charming, distinctive space.
- 2 SAN ANTONIO WINERY**
1100 S Wall St. #203 — sanantoniowinery.com
Operating since 1917, this downtown winery is a historical landmark and well worth a visit. Four generations of the Riboli family have shepherded the winery through Prohibition and LA's transition from farmland into the city we now call home. Dine in the Maddalena Restaurant, named in honor of Maddalena Riboli, the matriarch of the family.
- 3 BULLETPROOF COFFEE**
300 S Santa Fe Ave. — bulletproof.com
In 2004 Dave Asprey's quest to "hack" his body for optimal health led him to Nepal, where he was handed a cup of tea mixed with yak butter. He brought the idea back to the United States, putting high quality butter into his high quality coffee in an effort to start his morning with good fats. Their claim that a cup of Bulletproof coffee in the morning will give you the energy to get through your day without snacking has led to a multi-million dollar industry. Try it for yourself.
- 4 UNCLE PAULIE'S DELI**
820 S Spring St. — unclepauliesdeli.com
Because a good Italian deli sandwich is always welcome, Uncle Paulie's has ventured into DTLA. Lunch service for now, but expect their amazing bacon and egg bagels and a cup of coffee to anchor their breakfast menu in the upcoming months.
- 5 9TH STREET RAMEN**
111 W 9th St. — 9thstramen.com
With an interior design straight out of *Blade Runner*, 9th Street Ramen has been Chef Luke Reyes' passion project for years. Previously of Butchers & Barbers and Corner Door, Reyes has been training in Japan in anticipation of opening up a serious ramen joint.
- 6 FAT & FLOUR**
317 S Broadway — fatandflourla.com
Nicole Rucker knows her way around a pie. After the abrupt shuttering of Fiona last year, Rucker accepted a temporary pop up space in Grand Central Market to showcase her stunning desserts. Well, now she's made it permanent! Head to the Market to destroy your diet. #worthit
- 7 NOW SERVING**
727 N Broadway #133 — nowservingla.com
The only cooking bookstore in Los Angeles serves as a respite for both the professional and home chef to browse. Cookbooks are the most satisfying books one can flip through and chefs stop by all the time to host talks and hang out. How cool is this place?!
- 8 INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART**
1717 E 7th St. — theicala.org/en
Formerly the Santa Monica Museum of Art, the Institute of Contemporary Art moved to the Arts District in 2017. The ICALA is an independent and non-collecting art museum that exhibits the work of local, national, and international contemporary artists. Admission is free.
- 9 DOWNTOWN DOG RESCUE**
1309 E 7th St. — downtowndogrescue.org
Downtown Dog Rescue assists with spaying/neutering the dogs of the homeless residents of DTLA, in addition to dog training assistance, food, shelter, and helping strays find new homes. A worthy cause to donate/volunteer your time to.



ELSEWHERE AT THE MADCAP MOTEL

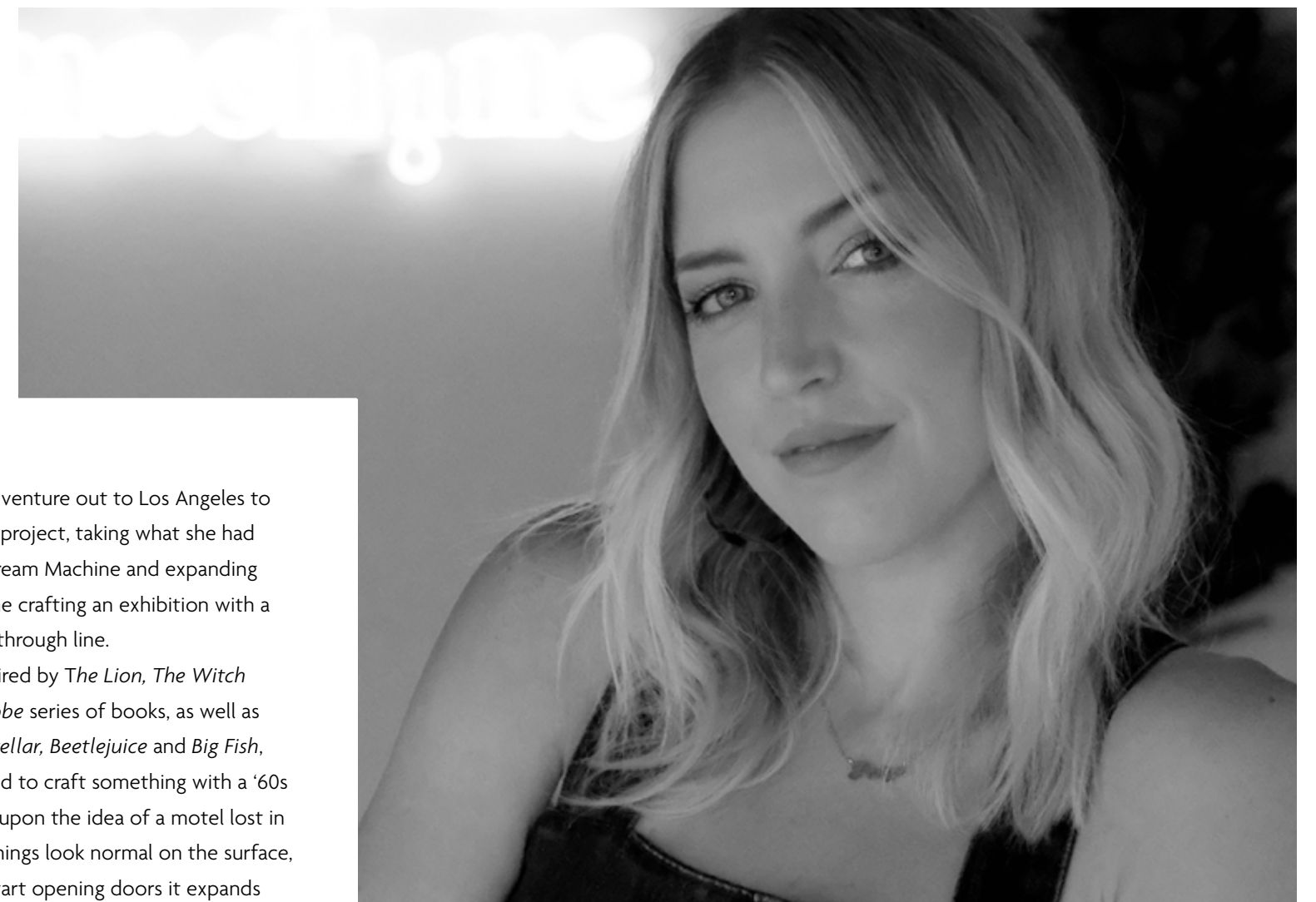
AN IMMERSIVE PLAYGROUND

Written By Abel Horwitz
Images Courtesy of Madcap Motel LA

Downtown Los Angeles is a playground unto itself, so it's no surprise that immersive and interactive experiences have flocked to the neighborhood.

The latest is titled "Elsewhere at the Madcap Motel", created by Paige Solomon, an artist who cut her teeth making immersive content for brands such as Netflix, Sony and UBER.

This is Solomon's second immersive experience. In 2018 she created Dream Machine in Brooklyn, in Instagram museum full of artsy rooms meant to evoke a dreamlike state of wonder.

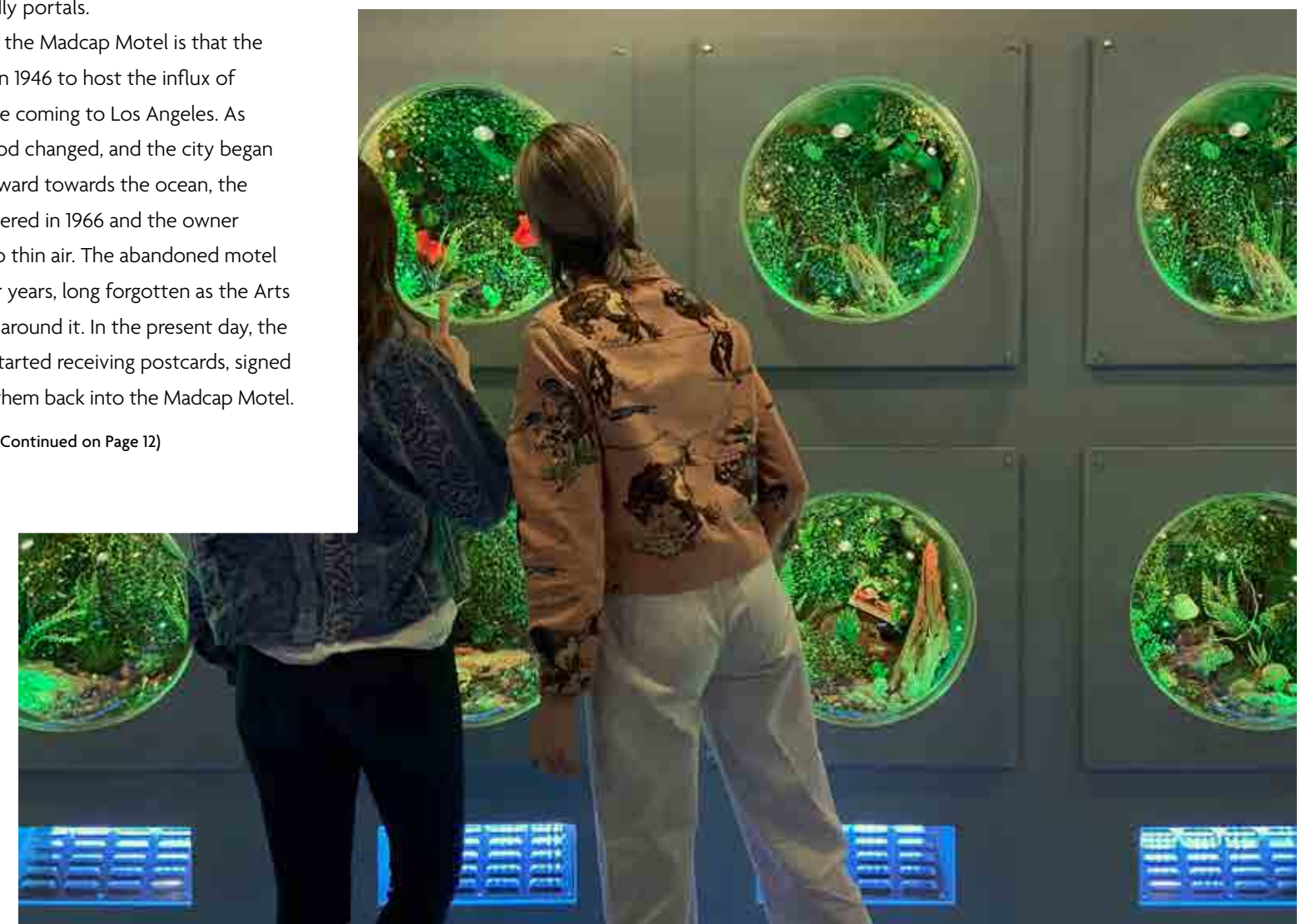


She decided to venture out to Los Angeles to create her next project, taking what she had learned from Dream Machine and expanding upon it, this time crafting an exhibition with a narrative and a through line.

Heavily inspired by *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* series of books, as well as the films *Interstellar*, *Beetlejuice* and *Big Fish*, Solomon wanted to craft something with a '60s vibe. She came upon the idea of a motel lost in time in which things look normal on the surface, but once you start opening doors it expands into otherworldly portals.

The story of the Madcap Motel is that the hotel was built in 1946 to host the influx of visitors that were coming to Los Angeles. As the neighborhood changed, and the city began expanding westward towards the ocean, the motel was shuttered in 1966 and the owner disappeared into thin air. The abandoned motel laid dormant for years, long forgotten as the Arts District built up around it. In the present day, the owner's family started receiving postcards, signed by him, inviting them back into the Madcap Motel.

(Continued on Page 12)



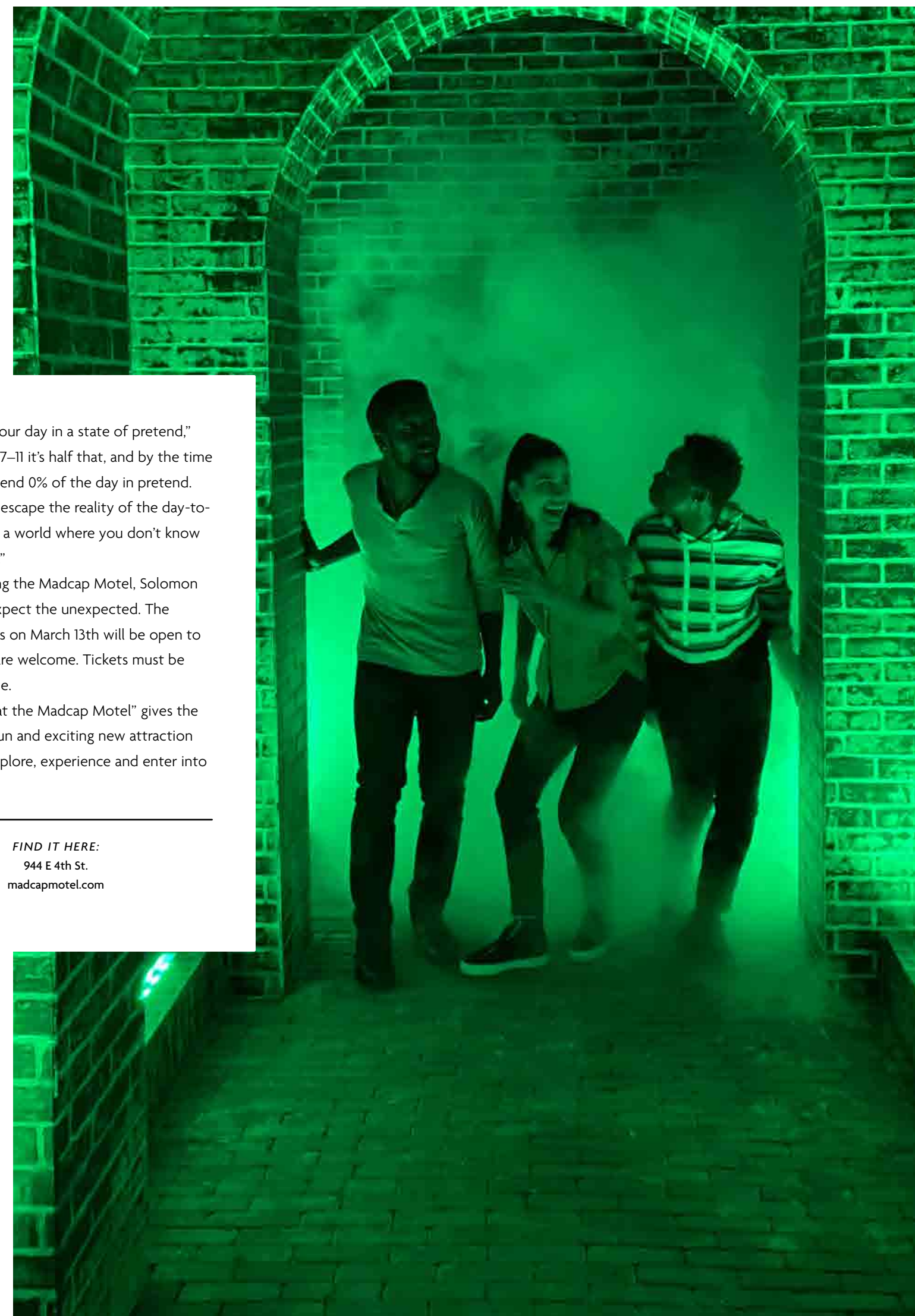


Thus begins the story of Downtown's latest immersive attraction. You are invited to come and explore the Madcap Motel, preserved in all of its mid-century glory. But of course, nothing is as it seems.

"This is a magical place," says Solomon. "We have a mixture of set design and actors and a bit of a 'Choose Your Own Adventure' vibe in places. I'm very curious to see how people respond to the experience."

DTLA provided a perfect backdrop for her project. "When I was downtown looking for locations, it almost felt like I was in Brooklyn again; it just felt right. Then we ended up finding this amazing property that's this old warehouse. I can't really explain it but when I walked out I knew that this was the property," says Solomon.

For Solomon, the notion of "play" is what inspires her work. "From the ages of 6-7 you

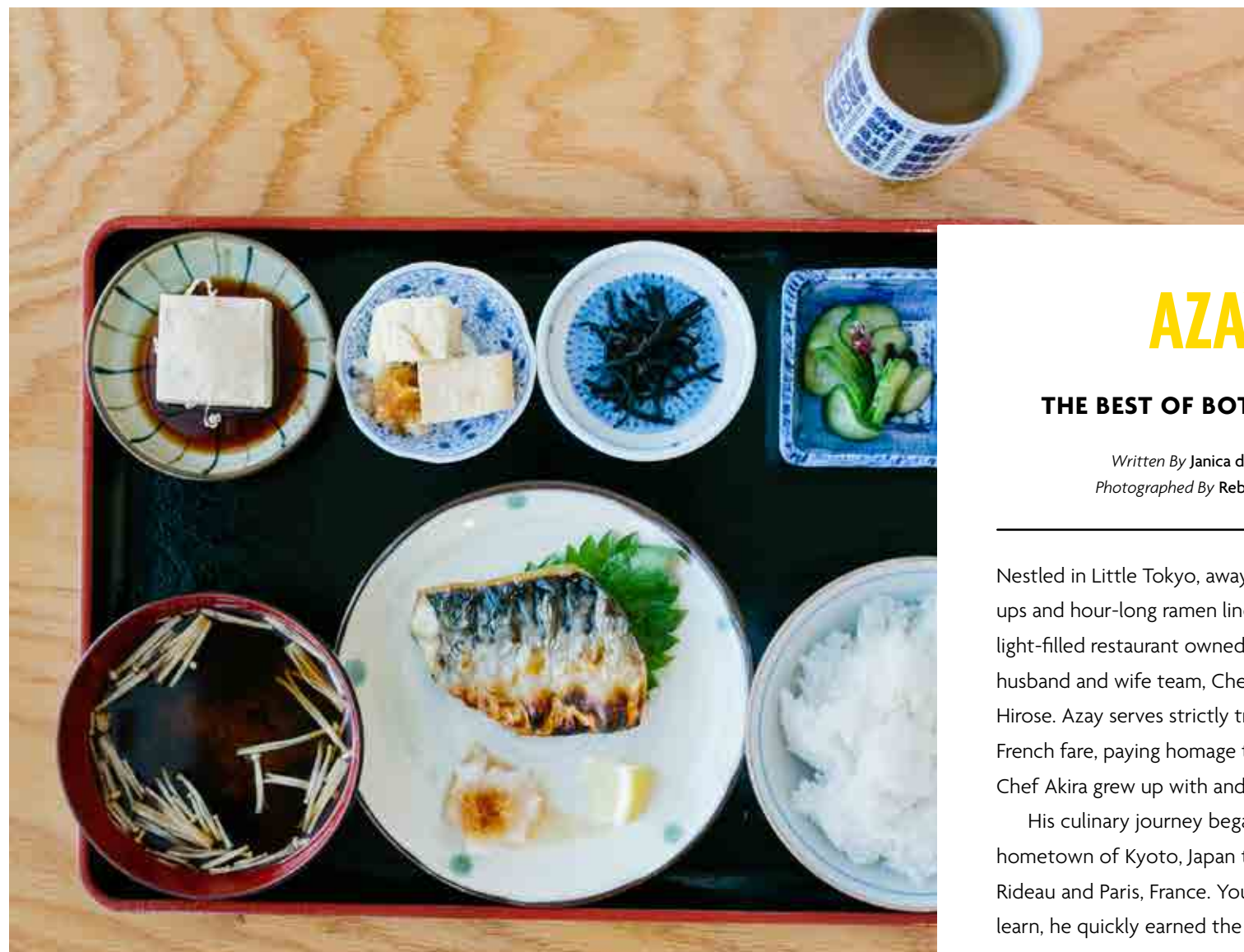


spend 90% of your day in a state of pretend," she says. "From 7-11 it's half that, and by the time you're 12 you spend 0% of the day in pretend. This is a way to escape the reality of the day-to-day and go into a world where you don't know what to expect."

When visiting the Madcap Motel, Solomon wants you to expect the unexpected. The attraction opens on March 13th will be open to all, so children are welcome. Tickets must be purchased online.

"Elsewhere at the Madcap Motel" gives the Arts District a fun and exciting new attraction for guests to explore, experience and enter into another world.

FIND IT HERE:
944 E 4th St.
madcapmotel.com



AZAY

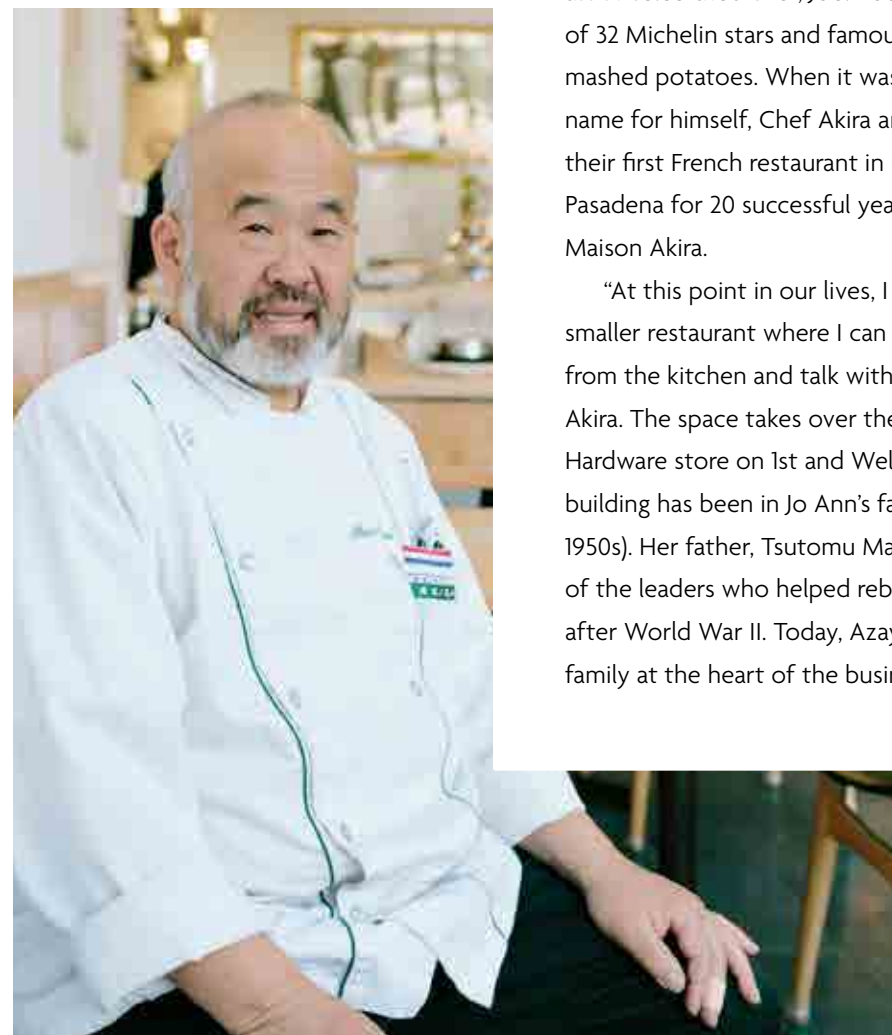
THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Written By Janica de Guzman
Photographed By Rebekah Lemire

Nestled in Little Tokyo, away from Anime meet-ups and hour-long ramen lines, lies Azay, a quiet, light-filled restaurant owned and operated by husband and wife team, Chef Akira and Jo Ann Hirose. Azay serves strictly traditional Japanese or French fare, paying homage to the two cultures Chef Akira grew up with and grew to love.

His culinary journey began when he left his hometown of Kyoto, Japan to train in Azay-Le-Rideau and Paris, France. Young and eager to learn, he quickly earned the coveted spot to assist celebrated chef, Joël Robuchon, winner of 32 Michelin stars and famously known silky mashed potatoes. When it was time to make a name for himself, Chef Akira and Jo Ann opened their first French restaurant in Kyoto, then in Pasadena for 20 successful years known as Maison Akira.

"At this point in our lives, I wanted to open a smaller restaurant where I can see the customers from the kitchen and talk with them," says Chef Akira. The space takes over the former Anzen Hardware store on 1st and Weller Street (the building has been in Jo Ann's family since the 1950s). Her father, Tsutomu Maehara, was one of the leaders who helped rebuild Little Tokyo after World War II. Today, Azay continues to put family at the heart of the business through the



help of their son, Philip.

The menu is divided into two sections: Japanese breakfast and lunch, mirrored by French *petit déjeuner* and *déjeuner*.

"The menu is dual cultural identity; my father grew up in Japan and France liberated him from becoming a typical Japanese salaryman. And a lot of us in the US have a dual identity of being American and rooted in our ethnic identity. With this, we're exploring separate cuisines instead of mashing them together," says Philip.

The Japanese breakfast entrée features an elegant tray of savory offerings like broiled Spanish mackerel, tsukemono, tamago, miso soup, and rice. All components are meticulously prepared and perfectly placed, compelling the eater to voluntarily bow as it served before you. The French counterpart is an omelette Francaise with fresh herbs, mixed greens, and a potato galette. For lunchtime diners, the Daily Bento features a personal tasting tray of pork katsu, cha soba, seasonal vegetables, tofu, a jammy egg, and tsukemono. If you're looking for something heartier, opt for the Boeuf Bourguignon, a beef dish braised in red wine until it is cut-with-a-spoon tender and complemented with vegetables.

All of this can be enjoyed starting at 8am and lunch at 11am. Chef Akira's jolly demeanor and Jo Ann's welcoming presence are extra elements that add to the restaurant's overall ambiance.

FIND IT HERE:
226 E 1st St.
azaylittletokyo.com

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