

SAN DIEGO HOME/GARDEN

LIFESTYLES

MAKING THEIR MARK
3 DESIGNERS BREAKING NEW GROUND



DOMESTIC BLISS
WHAT THE STARS SAY
ABOUT *your style*

BETTER
THAN BASIC
**BACKYARD
BBQ**
with recipes



Above: Sheldon's Service Station gives Jina Javier a lucky 13 table number for her avocado toast order.



IN LEAGUE WITH LA MESA

An entrepreneur shares the places that bring her joy in her city

IF COMMUNITY CONNECTION wasn't on the top of Jina Javier's priority list, Liv3, the San Marcos lifestyle shop selling accessories, gifts and women's clothing that she co-owns with her two younger sisters; and Leo, her North Park nail and massage salon, would be just that: a shop and a salon. Instead, they also create environments that are invitations to cozy camaraderie. Her penchant for reaching out to the community—plus the fact that she lives in La Mesa—made her the perfect person to take Gary and me around to show off her neck of the hood. Her tour menu was a tad food heavy, but Jina says La Mesa has more bars and restaurants than boutiques and shops. Her where-to-go choices made perfect sense, though. Since community connection makes her happy, why wouldn't her favorite places be where you convene with friends and family to enjoy conversation and food?

100 SAN DIEGO HOME/GARDEN LIFESTYLES • APRIL 2019

1 PUBLIC SQUARE

What better place to meet at 10 a.m. than a coffeehouse? Jina says she sometimes likes to come here alone, "to a spot where I can take a moment to think more clearly." The window announces Public Square is "Known For the Scone" and that they've got "Breakfast Served All Day, Hooray!" but Jina's up for "Great Coffee" and orders a latte with handcrafted black-sesame syrup. She says black sesame appears in all types of Asian food and makes her feel at home. Amazing barista latte art—a patterned leaf design—topped this smoky-flavored waker-upper. The coffee zaps Jina's taste buds—



...there is a surprise on the premises: a pastry kitchen.



4 SURF RIDER PIZZA CO.

It's nearing lunch time, so we head over to La Mesa's latest pizza place, which opened last November. "Leo, my 8-year-old, loves pizza and he was counting the days for it to open," Jina says. Another great outdoor space for kids, this surf-themed spot also has plenty of seating inside the 6,000-square-foot dining room. As expected from the diner's name, there's plenty of surfing memorabilia. That's to honor co-founder Hilary Rossi's surfer dad. Hilary hails from the Philly area, so it's also not a shock that the hand-tossed pizza delivers East Coast-style pie—think crispy crust and whole-milk mozzarella (you can thank Hilary's mom for the sauce; it's her recipe)—or that hot cheesesteak

sandwiches with authentic Amoroso rolls (a Philadelphia bakery) are on the menu. And, since the latest parlor landed in La Mesa to be part of this tight-knit community, it also makes sense that its Himmelberg Bar (where drinks have names like "Shaka" and "The Wipe Out") was dubbed after much-loved philanthropist and community member, the late Joey Himmelberg. But there is a surprise on the premises: a pastry kitchen. In fact, first on view is the display of Foundation Bakery's desserts. Since Jina didn't indulge in a pastry at Sheldon's, she deserves a little dessert for her sweet tooth before lunch. She nabs a banana Oreo pudding. Hey, it's got banana in it, so it's got to be healthy. 8381 La Mesa Blvd., 619-340-1270, SURFRIDER.PIZZA



5 FARMER'S TABLE Now it really is time for lunch. We could walk but we opt to drive down La Mesa Boulevard and across busy Spring Street to the rustic ambience of this "farm-to-fork neighborhood eatery." "There are so many modern places, it's nice to have a spot that's different," Jina says. "And all the decor items lend themselves to a great game of I Spy with the kids." I see what she means. A McCormick tractor greets us at the entrance. When there's a wait (there wasn't) diners can sit on a bench designed with a fragment from a classic Ford pickup truck. We sat on metal stools at a wood table with a base made from the body of a Massey Ferguson tractor. Flowers in galvanized milk-churn vases or dried wheat stalks in old milk jugs dress the tables. Some chair upholstery features chickens, and hats on display hang from chicken wire. When Jina does have the kids with her, they get a kick out of ordering the pizza that's shaped like a fish. She and her husband, Jeff, usually have the ratatouille risotto made with seasonal vegetables—"unless we come here for breakfast," she says. "Then we have the crab cake benedict with house-made crab cake." The idea of breakfast, though, changes her mind. Instead of lunch, she orders a Santa Fe omelet with shrimp, fresh mozzarella and cotija cheese, Oaxaca cream and homemade tortilla strips. (What? Not the banana foster French toast with bananas, brown sugar and rum? It's got bananas in it.)

8141 La Mesa Blvd., 619-724-6465, MYFARMERSTABLE.COM