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Food, Food, Food

AHH, THIS IS ALWAYS ONE OF MY FAVORITE ISSUES AND DREADED ISSUES.

Why dreaded, you ask? Because with every story we write, and every photo we showcase, I feel the pull to leave my desk and work behind, and head out to sample my way through every restaurant in the city. I mean, just look at these pages! Don't you feel your taste buds calling to you?

Yes, Chandler, you are in for a tasty treat—this month is all about food and drinks!

It's easy to get stuck in a rut and find yourself eating the same things each day. We get it—we're all busy, and we have our go-to meals that we know will feed the family. We return to our favorite restaurants and order our favorite dish every time because we know it is always amazing.

Now, it's time to branch out and tantalize your taste buds. Try something new—you might find a fresh staple to add to the rotation—plus, you'd be supporting local.

Our main feature showcases a selection of locally owned restaurants. The owners have poured their hearts into their locations. Meet them and learn their stories.

We also feature several female brewers. In a formerly male-dominated field, they are standing out and making waves (and good brews!).

And for those of you who are ready for a road trip, pack the car and head north to some of Arizona's wineries. We give you the low-down on the area.

Prefer to stay home? Check out our story on backyard fire pits. They're perfect for the fall season! (Don't forget the marshmallows!)

Read through these pages and be inspired—Chandler is full of amazingly talented chefs. As for me, I'll see you at the restaurants!

Yours,

Michelle Glicksman, Editor

CityLifestyle.com/Chandler



ON THE COVER Moreno's Mexican Grill
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDSAY BORG

OCTOBER 2020

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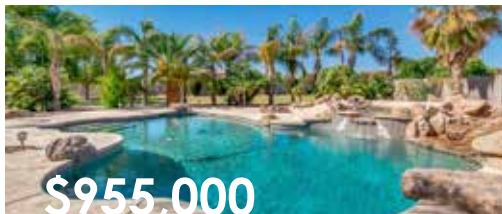
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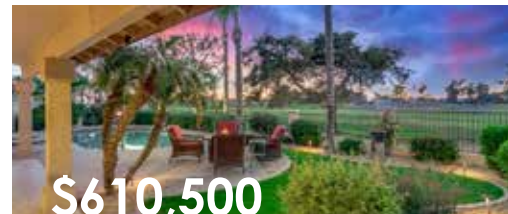
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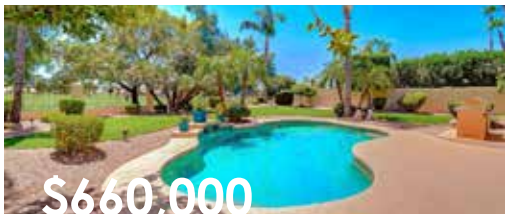
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INSIDE THE ISSUE

OCTOBER 2020

FEATURES

12 Firepits are a 'Hot' Must-Have

Everything You Need to Know About Creating One

16 Female Brewers Shaping the Brewing Industry

Meet Sommer Decker, Megan Greenwood, and Melissa Osborne

22 Ready to Serve

As the Food and Beverage Scene Opens Up, These Homegrown Local Restaurants are Salivating at the Opportunity to Flaunt Their Flavors

32 St. Amand

Newly Remodeled South Chandler Restaurant Welcomes the Community



16



32



12



22

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Lifestyle Letter
- 8 Around Town
- 12 DIY
- 16 Hops & Vine
- 22 Local Limelight
- 32 Open House
- 38 Road Trip

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OWNER AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF LAZADERM INDUCTED INTO ASLMS

Lornell E. Hansen II, MD, RPhS, DABVLM, owner and medical director of both Lazaderm and Physicians Vein Clinics, was recently inducted as a fellow into the American Society for Laser Medicine & Surgery, Inc. (ASLMS). Lazaderm has four clinic locations throughout the Midwest and Arizona, and Physicians Vein Clinics has grown to 11 locations.

The American Society for Laser Medicine & Surgery is the world's preeminent resource for biomedical laser and other energy-based technologies, research, education and clinical knowledge. Fellow status is the highest level to which a member can aspire. LazadermAZ.com



SUBARU HELPS LOCAL COMMUNITY THROUGH ITS SUBARU LOVE PROMISE INITIATIVES

Subaru believes in making the world a better place, and the Subaru Love Promise is its vision of respecting all people. This is its commitment to show love and respect to their customers, and to work to make a positive impact in the world.

At Subaru Superstore of Chandler and Subaru Superstore of Surprise, the Love Promise commitment can be witnessed in several local partnerships, including the United Food Bank. This year, Subaru donated over 150,000 meals to help feed the local community through the Food Bank.

Subaru would like to give a special shout-out to Melissa Forrester and her Food Bank team for partnering with Subaru to accomplish this. To learn more, visit ShopSubaru.com and find the About Us tab to learn more about the Love Promise initiatives to the community.



EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES, SKILLS TRAINING AVAILABLE THROUGH CHANDLER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Are you or someone you know looking for work? Needing to develop new job skills? Help is available at Chandler Public Library, which provides resources and access to technology for anyone in the process of looking for a job or trying to make themselves more marketable to employers.

"Chandler Library offers online and in-person options to patrons including virtual access to job and career resources along with 45-minute reservations to use computers, Wi-Fi, and equipment to fax, copy, scan, and print," says Librarian Ted Liebler. Those with a valid Chandler Public Library card or eCard also have free access to digital resources that are accessible at any of the four library locations or online. Some of the resources available include Career Transitions, Learning Express Library, lyndaLibrary, ReferenceUSA, and the Testing & Education Reference Center.

Users can browse career paths, assess their interests, and take online training courses. There are interactive questionnaires, resume and cover letter writing tips, practice tools for interview skills, and more. There's even a job search tool, and off-site links to assist those in a job search. Free career coaching is also available.

ChandlerLibrary.org/research-job-resources



COX BUSINESS DONATES PPE TO BANNER HEALTH'S CENTER IN CHANDLER

Cox Business recently donated more than \$200,000 worth of filtration and surgical masks to Banner Health at its supply chain processing center in Chandler. As Banner Health's frontline health care providers treat patients diagnosed with COVID-19, community partners such as Cox Business continue to show their support.

"This face mask donation is part of our ongoing efforts to support healthcare heroes and those in our communities during the pandemic," says Ed Aaronson, Cox Business vice president.

Acquiring personal protective equipment (PPE) remains a challenge for health care systems across the country. Banner Health has taken significant measures to ensure adequate equipment for team members on the front lines. This donation from Cox Business will ensure there's ample supply in the event future disruptions occur.

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"Banner Health has enjoyed a long and mutually respectful relationship with Cox for several years, and we are so thankful for the many ways they support our patient care programs and services," says Andy Kramer Petersen, president & CEO of the Banner Health Foundation.

+ LOS AMERICANX AT VISION GALLERY

For most of his life, photographer Edgar Cardenas has lived in the interstitial space between his two personas—Mexican ethnicity and American nationality—oscillating between the pride of his fluid identity and frustration of being ostracized from one or both cultures. In this series *Los Americanx* at Vision Gallery, open between Oct. 10-Nov. 14, Cardenas illuminates other disenfranchised individuals who have also grappled with their identity and struggled to be seen.

With *Los Americanx*, Cardenas invites viewers to think more deeply about identity and what it truly means to be American. VisionGallery.org



CHANDLER RESIDENT HONORED WITH 2020 SRP PRESIDENTS' VOLUNTEER SPIRIT AWARD

Five Salt River Project employees recently earned the 2020 SRP Presidents' Volunteer Spirit Award for exemplary dedication to their communities. Chandler resident Nancy Brooks, an SRP senior specialist of Energy Division, was one of the outstanding volunteers.

Brooks has volunteered with Helping Hands for Homeless Hounds since 2014. She volunteers hundreds of hours every year, and has hosted drives to collect blankets, pet and people food, and other essential items; used her animal welfare connections to secure free spay/neuter procedures and specialty care for pets with unusual illnesses

or injuries; and personally transported animals to appointments when needed.

+ NEW EXHIBITION DEBUTS AT CHANDLER MUSEUM

On March 22, 1967, at Madison Square Garden in New York City, two men faced off in the ring for boxing's Heavyweight Championship of the World. In the blue corner was the champ, Muhammad Ali. In the red corner was the challenger from Chandler, Zora Folley. What followed was more than a prize fight; it was an event at the crossroads of race, religion, sports and the politics of America in the 1960s.

Bigger Than Boxing: Zora Folley and the 1967 Heavyweight Title recently opened its year-long run at Chandler Museum. The 3,000-square-foot exhibition features the stories of these two boxers, the circumstances that weighed heavy on each man, and the fight that was a turning point in both of their careers.

Museum visitors will be able to see how they measure up next to Folley's and Ali's wingspans, listen to highlights of the fight as read from the news service ticker tape, and test their knowledge of boxing idioms and trivia. The exhibit also features original artwork by Jerome Fleming. ChandlerAZ.gov/museum

+ VIEW AL SON QUE ME TOQUEN: RECENT WORK BY EMILY COSTELLO AND FRANK YBARRA

Local artists Emily Costello and Frank Ybarra bring Mexican culture to life with bright vibrant paintings of the everyday, the iconic, and the sentimental. With the name "Why They Touch Me," this exhibition, which runs Oct. 10-Nov. 14 at The Gallery at CCA, draws viewers in so that the smells from abuelita's kitchen and the sound of a piñata cracking open seem to hop off the canvas.

The Gallery at the CCA is located at the Chandler Center for the Arts. VisionGallery.org

+ CHANDLER CHAMBER OSTRICH FESTIVAL TO BE RESCHEDULED

The Chandler Chamber Ostrich Festival has been a long-standing tradition. This year, it had been scheduled to be held Oct. 30-Nov. 1. However, due to COVID-19, the Chandler Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Steve LeVine Entertainment & Public Relations, announced that it will be postponed until March of 2021.

"The Ostrich Festival has been a long-standing community tradition and a year without it is difficult

for us to comprehend," says Terri Kimble, president/CEO of the Chandler Chamber of Commerce. "Our main focus remains the well-being of our attendees, staff, vendors, and all people involved in the festival. Because the state and federal executive orders on large gatherings are still in effect, the Ostrich Festival will be postponed until March of 2021. We look forward to bringing the community together again in March and can't wait to share more information on what's in store."

All 2020 tickets will be honored on the new spring dates. More information on the 2021 event will be released as soon as it's available. OstrichFestival.com



PITTFITNESS NOW OPEN IN CHANDLER

PittFitness recently opened its door in the heart of Chandler. Previously known for over a decade as ThePITT, PittFitness was acquired by local business entrepreneurs Dr. Radi Rahiminejad (president/CEO of BackFit Health + Spine) and Ryan Nouis (president/CEO of TruPath). Both Rahiminejad and Nouis were active members of the gym, and saw the value it brought to many members of the Chandler community.

PittFitness prides itself on providing group fitness and personal training for youth and adults. Pitt-Fitness.com

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ALL OF US ARE SPENDING MORE TIME AT HOME THIS YEAR, AND AS WE HEAD INTO COOLER WEATHER, FIRE PITS CAN IMPROVE THE USABILITY OF YOUR BACKYARD OR COURTYARD.

There are lots of options for your pit—ready-made, complete kits, or professional build.

If you prefer an extravagant fire pit design or want something more complicated, a contractor may be the best option because the quality of craftsmanship can add value to your home as you can expect to recoup 78% of your investment when you sell. But if you are looking for a DIY project, here are some considerations.

Before starting, have a game plan. There are great guides on DIY construction with step-by-step instructions. Research what you want your fire pit to look like, what materials you need, and where you want to put it. Pick the perfect spot by observing your yard, the terrain, and where you will be hanging out most.

Size is important, so consider how many people you would like to accommodate around it, and whether you want the top of the walls to serve as a footrest for those sitting around the fire or whether you want to comfortably sit directly on the edge of the pit.

Construction commonly consists of an inner wall, an outer wall, cap, and decorative stones or rocks in the center of the pit. The inner wall must be made of fireproof building materials—optimally fire brick. The

outer walls should still be heat-resistant, but can be made of traditional brick, stone masonry blocks, concrete pavers, or tile. Flagstone and crushed stone are ideal materials for the fire pit cap.

What you put in the bottom of the pit is critical. Some materials—like hard rock, gravel, or sand—aren't meant to reach high temperatures, and can spark and explode if your fire gets too hot. Instead, use lava rocks or lava glass beads as filler, as they are a safe way to create drainage and make your fire pit look nice.

There are many types of fuel to consider. Ethanol, propane, and natural gas are all sound fire pit fuel options, as they emit no smoke, sparks, or embers, and leave no ashes to clean up. But, these gases must be supplied to the pit properly and can be costly. Wood-burning fire pits require no gas lines, but they produce a high volume of smoke, sparks, and embers; call for frequent ash removal; *and* make large flames difficult to extinguish (why many municipalities forbid them).

Finally, think about safety gear. Keep a fire-retardant sheet usually made of fiberglass or Kevlar near the pit to help smother a fire on nearby objects or people. Also, keep a multipurpose dry chemical fire extinguisher nearby.

With so many options, prices run the gamut, from a couple hundred dollars for a DIY install; \$50-\$4,000 for a ready-made or kit; or \$1,400-\$10,000 for a professional install.

CONTINUED >

PRO TIPS

1 DON'T BUILD A FIRE PIT WITHOUT APPROVAL.

Your local government, homeowners association, and house deed may impose restrictions on the size, location, material, and fuel type of home fire pits—or forbid them altogether—due to the potential for fire-related property damages.

2 CHECK WITH YOUR UTILITY COMPANIES BEFORE DIGGING.

Call 811 or go to Call811.com to check the location of buried utility lines.

3 CONSIDER WHERE TO POSITION THE PIT.

Install the pit on level ground in an open area of the yard that's at least 25 feet from other structures, bushes, and trees.

4 CONSIDER ACCESSIBILITY WHEN CHOOSING A SIZE.

The pit should measure between 36 and 44 inches wide (including the width of the walls) to safely accommodate multiple people around. The pit height should be 12 to 14 inches from the base to the top of the walls,

or 18 to 20 inches tall if you want to comfortably sit directly on the edge of the pit.

5 DON'T USE FLAMMABLE OR NON-POROUS, WATER-RETAINING BUILDING MATERIALS.

Do not use flammable materials anywhere near the pit, nor non-porous materials that hold water (pea gravel, river rocks, compressed concrete blocks), as these materials can trap steam and eventually explode.

6 CONSIDER INSTALLING A STEEL RING.

As a non-combustible material, the steel will ward off heat and keep the outside wall itself from prematurely dehydrating and crumbling, while maintaining the structural integrity of your fire pit longer.

7 CREATE AIRHOLES.

Every pit needs air flow to provide oxygen to flames. Leave gaps in the outer structure in at least four opposite points.

8 CURE THE FIRE PIT BEFORE USING.

Give the cement and mortar a week to cure completely before lighting a fire in your pit.





MEET
Marky Mark!

Marky Mark is SO excited for Halloween this year! He has been trying on lots of costumes recently to find the best one, but we think he is leaning towards a chef this year. Make sure to keep your pets safe on Halloween and keep any candy or sweets out of their reach. We can't wait to see all of our patients in their fun costumes this October!



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MEET SOMMER DECKER, MEGAN GREENWOOD,
AND MELISSA OSBORNE



*Desert Monks Brewing.
Photo by Lindsay Borg*

Three Female Brewers Shaping the Brewing Industry



WHEN YOU THINK OF THE BREWING INDUSTRY, YOU MAY ASSUME THAT IT'S A MAN'S WORLD. But, history shows us that women were the original home brewers. In fact, in ancient Egypt and Samaria, they worshiped beer goddesses. Women were also tavern owners and "ale-wives" (women who made beer for their families then sold the extra), but as time went on, men began to dominate the industry as guilds were created and the Industrial Revolution began. Still, things are changing in the brewing industry as women brewers step back into the spotlight.

SOMMER DECKER

Partner and Brewer at Desert Monks Brewing Co.

DesertMonksBrewing.com

Sommer Decker and her husband Chris Decker, along with Arturo Ruiz, Daniel Rosales-Yeomans, and Jose Hinojosa, are the five partners and brewers at Desert Monks Brewing Co. in Gilbert. She has been brewing about five years.

"After my husband's first Afghanistan deployment, we took advantage of the military hotel in the Alps town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen for a pre-Christmas vacation," Decker recalls. "Before the trip, I would generally tell you that I didn't like beer. There, beer was literally cheaper than water by serving size, so I purchased the beer. This led to drinking Hefewiesens, which helped me figure out that I like malty, sweeter beers—not something readily available in the U.S. We came home and started brewing our own. With that, the brewing bug was caught and the rest is history."

Decker shares that, to her, brewing is an art form.

"I love the nearly endless list of flavors, textures, and experiences you can create by varying the grains (sugars), hops (flavor and preservation), yeast, and fruits and spices in a brew. It's a consumable art that is fun to make and more fun to enjoy."

She encourages non-beer drinkers to try local brews that might fit their taste better than big-name brands.

"... I encourage you to try a taproom such as ours that offers flights and variety of styles," she says. "You just might find that you actually really like beer and can responsibly enjoy it with friends and family, building better community as you do."

CONTINUED >



"Every day is something different, which makes it fun and challenging, and after 17 years I'm still learning."

Megan Greenwood.
Photo by David Apeji





*Melissa Osborne.
Photo by David Apeji*

MEGAN GREENWOOD

Owner and Brewer at Greenwood Brewing

GreenwoodBrews.com

Over the past five-and-a-half years, Megan Greenwood went from being a home brewer with a five-gallon brewery kit to the owner of her own company, Greenwood Brewing.

"I love the final product that gives a person rosy cheeks and puts a smile on their face," Greenwood says. "I love that craft beer includes manufacturing and art—we have a production facility which requires extreme precision and sanitation, but then we get to craft our own recipe and style of creating the beverage. It's a perfect blend of science, engineering, and art."

With a nod to women in brewing, Greenwood Brewing has a Herstory Brew.

"We created Herstory Brew to represent the women that inspire us, that share our brews, and that empower us to thrive in our business," Greenwood says. "It is a pale ale that 30-year-old beer drinkers enjoy, and non-beer drinkers enjoy. It's an intentional beer—crisp, easy-drinking, and delicious."

Greenwood says that her brewery wants to emphasize that it is an inclusive place.

"We want our beer drinkers to feel like they have a place in craft beer, and we want her to know that we think about her when we're creating our tasty brews," she adds. "At Greenwood Brewing, we believe in the 'power of the purposeful pint' and the strong conversations shared over craft beer. We want everyone to be part of these conversations."

MELISSA OSBORNE

Innovation Manager at Four Peaks Brewing Company

FourPeaks.com

Brewing is a lifelong career for Melissa Osborne, as she has been brewing professionally since 2003 and has been with Four Peaks since 2004. Her husband is Brewmaster Derek Osborne of BJ's Brewery, "so we're a two-brewer family," she says. After so long in the industry, her favorite beer is always "the one in my hand."

"Every day is something different, which makes it fun and challenging, and after 17 years I'm still learning," she says. "There's science, math, and physical work involved, and the end result is quality beer."

Quality is right, as "Four Peaks has entered many competitions, such as the World Beer Cup and Great American Beer Festival, and if you come to our brewery, you'll see a wall of awards."

At Four Peaks, she is involved in dozens of flavors, but Kilt Lifter is their flagship brew.

"When I started brewing we didn't have Girls Pint Out or Pink Boots Society, but there were some amazing women who were brewery owners to look up to," Osborne recalls. "I may not be able to physically do the job like my male counterparts, but I still get the job done. Women were the original brewers."



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DETAILS:

Address: 1245 S. Price Road

Phone: 480.500.5247

Website: TheParlayAZ.com

*Kyle and
Erica Walters*

THE PARLAY KITCHEN + COCKTAILS

After spending years in the industry, Erica and Kyle Walters finally achieved a longtime dream of owning a restaurant—but it was open for barely seven months when the pandemic threw a devastating pothole into what had been a smooth ride.

"We were just hitting our stride and getting over those opening struggles. It was a challenge that was so unforeseen that took the wind out of our sails," Erica says.

Still, they were able to successfully navigate those uncharted waters.

In August, they celebrated the one-year anniversary of Parlay, the establishment they opened and own with business partners Jason and Brittney Kafcas, owners of popular spot Fat Willy's.

The evolving menu draws inspiration from many places, along with customer and staff feedback. However, there are some items that will be mainstays because they hold special places in the Walters' hearts and on their palates.

For example, when Kyle proposed over a romantic dinner at a resort restaurant, they were lingering over an edamame appetizer—the muse for Parlay's warm spicy charred edamame seasoned with a togarashi and garlic blend. And Erica's passion for exceptional spinach and artichoke dip is the driver behind theirs, which is packed with chunks of artichokes and fresh whole leaf spinach, and served with a more elegant bread—rather than chips—companion.

The couple continues to experiment with new food and cocktail items, as well as different ways to combat these challenging times. The journey, while rocky, has been a fulfilling one.

"I have learned so much. It's so rewarding to be seeing all the different ends of the business," Erica says. "There's been a lot of personal growth in learning things, making mistakes, fixing them and not being closed off to being humble."

ARTICLE GEORGANN YARA | PHOTOGRAPHY LINDSAY BORG



Quy Nguyen and Tuan Huynh

DETAILS:

Address: 4055 S. Arizona Ave.

Phone: 480.895.9090

Website: PhoChandler.us

PHO CHANDLER

Her family ran a little pho shop in front of their house, located in a town about an hour outside of Hanoi. And when Thuy Nguyen opened her restaurant at the onset of the 2008 recession, her mother's recipes for comfort dishes and the cozy welcoming atmosphere she cultivated there were key to the new business' survival amid economic uncertainty.

"I just love cooking and seeing customers enjoying eating what I cook," says Nguyen, who owns and runs Pho Chandler with her husband, Thai Bach. "When we opened, there was nothing in this area and the economy was bad. So, we wanted to serve the community with good and healthy food at an affordable price."

A dozen different pho dishes are the main attraction. The same cook prepares it to Nguyen's original specifications the six days out of the week the restaurant is open. It's also cooked for several hours, simmering and getting happy overnight or over the course of the day. The key is oxtail.

"Not many people cook with oxtail because it's expensive. But it's more flavorful so we do," Nguyen says.

Nguyen and Bach work six days a week. It's common for Nguyen to start her day at 6 a.m., and lock the doors for the night at 10 p.m.

"I feel like if you're here all the time, you can make sure everything is running right," Nguyen says.

The consistency and service has been a crucial part of the recipe for success over the years.

"When customers say that this is the best pho they've ever had, or to find out that someone drove an hour just to come and eat here," Nguyen says. "It really makes my day."

CONTINUED >

Martina Moreno



DETAILS:

Address/Phone:

601 N. Arizona Ave., 480.782.1988

2100 S. Gilbert Road, 480.855.1877

4981 S. Arizona Ave., 480.494.5473

Website: MorenosMexicanGrillAZ.com

MORENO'S MEXICAN GRILL

The decision may not have been the most prudent at the time, but when Angel Moreno decided to upgrade his popular and successful hot dog cart on the corner of a Mesa intersection and purchase the brick-and-mortar building on that same corner, the move ended up being wisely lucrative.

Fifteen years and seven locations later, the Moreno family's thriving restaurant chain continues to draw long-time regulars and new faces with a menu that boasts a combination of family recipes and those that have evolved over the years.

"It's so hard to believe that out of that hot dog cart he was able to purchase that business. Coming from where it started, it's an amazing dream come true," says Martina Moreno, Angel's sister-in-law and one of the family owners.

The menu features traditional favorites and elevated takes on comfort dishes. But, the Moreno's Sonoran Hot

Dog was the item that sparked success and continues to be an iconic staple with its own following. Simple ingredients with a well-planned execution is the secret. From the buns made fresh exclusively for Moreno's and how the beans are cooked to the precise layering of the accouterments and the mustard fashioned into an "M" for Moreno's.

"With everything we do, we make it with pride. Even something as simple as a hot dog," Martina says.

Everyone gets excited when a new customer discloses that this will be the first time eating the food. They also value regulars for their loyalty, and every staff member at each location to deliver to make it happen.

"Even in hard times, we do what we can for our community. But we can never be grateful enough for all the support that keeps our doors open," Martina says.



Kevin Boxberger

A tried-and-true winning duo was the basis of the father-and-son partnership behind this laidback hangout spot.

"Burgers and beers, you can't mess it up," says Kevin Boxberger, who owns Mr. Brews Taphouse with his dad, Mitch.

Kevin did field maintenance for the Arizona Diamondbacks and Los Angeles Angels' spring training facilities, but wanted to indulge his entrepreneurial mind-set. Mitch had spent most of his professional life in the mortgage industry and craved a new venture that was different, yet simple.

Both worked in restaurants when they were young. Kevin is a home brewer with a passion for craft beer. When they came across the concept for the Wisconsin-based franchise, it screamed perfect fit. In 2019, they purchased the only location west of the Mississippi.

The menu boasts eight burgers made with Certified Hereford Beef raised by Midwestern ranchers, fresh-cut fries, and 24 beers on tap.

The stars of the lineup are the jalapeño popper burger topped with cream cheese sauce, sautéed jalapeños, crispy French fried onions and tangy barbecue sauce, and the signature Kentucky bourbon classic burger adorned with cheddar, bacon, crispy French fried onions and bourbon mayo. Naturally, the fried Wisconsin cheese curds are a perennial pleaser.

While the menu sticks to the corporate model, the Boxbergers have ways to give their restaurant its own vibe. A plethora of flat screens are primed for game-viewing, and the shaded patio's misters makes it an inviting option year-round. Patrons are fans of the reggae music often playing over the speakers.

"We have a chill atmosphere, and friendly and energetic staff," says Kevin, who also appreciates his regulars and knows many by name. "Just meeting people and building those relationships, that's what it's about." **CONTINUED >**

DETAILS:

Address: 2040 S. Alma School Road

Phone: 480.590.3901

Website: MrBrewsChandler.com

MR. BREWS TAPHOUSE

LOCAL LIMELIGHT (CONTINUED)

Paul and Elly Schommer



DETAILS:

Address: 1940 S. Alma School Road

Phone: 480.907.5893

Website: PittaSouvli.com

PITTA SOUVLI

How much did Paul and Lisa Schommer love one of their favorite restaurants? Enough to buy it.

The Schommers were regulars at Pitta Souvli since the day it opened. As the years went by, they entertained the idea of owning their own restaurant and started the search. A series of serendipitous circumstances led them to a place near and dear to their hearts.

"We enjoyed the restaurant, liked the food, the space, and we were super familiar with it. We loved it," Paul says.

It also allowed them to work with their grown daughter Elly, a single mother, and give her a solid job with flexible hours that allowed her to care for her young child.

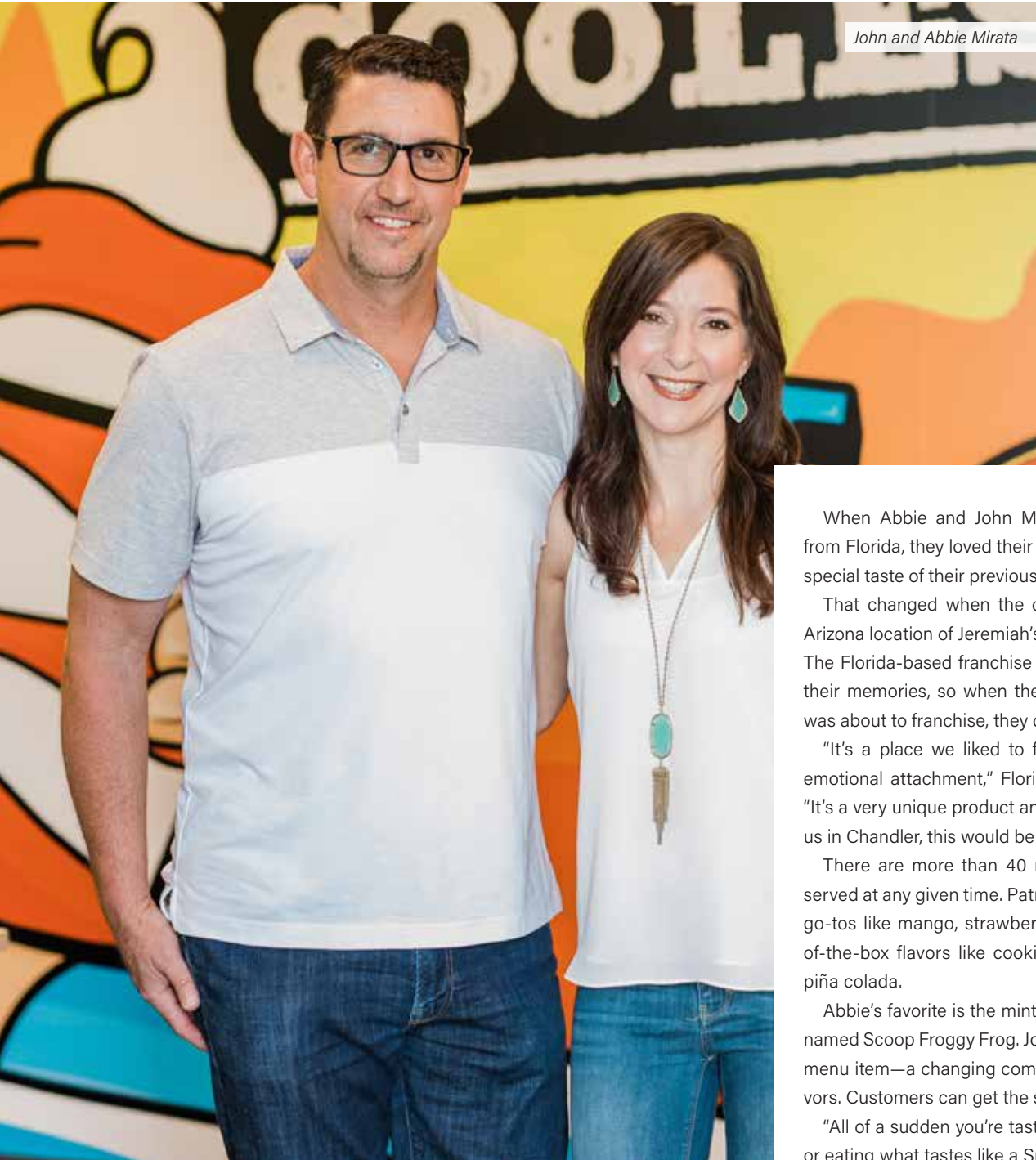
The Schommers did some interior improvements but kept much of the Mediterranean-inspired menu intact and most of the staff has remained since they took over in

2014. The four varieties of hummus—including a sweet and spicy fig—and house specialties like the gyro platter, lamb souvlaki, and grilled haloumi and mushroom platter are perennial pleasers. Loyal patrons know to save room for pourekia—crispy phyllo dough filled with Mediterranean sweet cheeses that's rolled in sugar, topped with honey, and dusted with cinnamon and powdered sugar.

And the charm that attracted the Schommers and many other regulars over the years also continues under their watch.

"The most rewarding part is the sense of serving the community. We're such a popular neighborhood spot, and our staff and customers are so regular, that there really is a feeling of belonging," Paul says. "It's like being around old friends all the time."

John and Abbie Mirata



DETAILS:

Address: 4050 S. Alma School Road

Phone: 480.702.0211

Website: JeremiahsIce.com

JEREMIAH'S ITALIAN ICE

When Abbie and John Mirata moved to Arizona from Florida, they loved their new home but missed a special taste of their previous one.

That changed when the couple brought the first Arizona location of Jeremiah's Italian Ice this summer. The Florida-based franchise held a nostalgic spot in their memories, so when they learned the company was about to franchise, they didn't think twice.

"It's a place we liked to frequent, so we had an emotional attachment," Florida native Abbie recalls. "It's a very unique product and culture and we felt for us in Chandler, this would be the perfect thing."

There are more than 40 rotating flavors with 24 served at any given time. Patrons can spot traditional go-tos like mango, strawberry and lemon, and out-of-the-box flavors like cookie butter, horchata, and piña colada.

Abbie's favorite is the mint chocolate chip, cleverly named Scoop Froggy Frog. John's is always the secret menu item—a changing combination of in-house flavors. Customers can get the scoop via the app.

"All of a sudden you're tasting banana cream pie... or eating what tastes like a Snickers," she says with a hint of giddiness in her voice.

Both came from the corporate world. Abbie also founded Kyndly, a nonprofit dedicated to mentoring and guiding youth to live a more purposeful and joyful life. For their next chapter, they sought a family-oriented venture that their grown children could get into.

And that overarching family concept comes at a perfect time.

"Sitting back and seeing families come in knowing this is a safe place to get out of the house and celebrate birthdays or any event," Abbie says. "We wanted to be part of and support our community, and that's very rewarding, especially right now." **CONTINUED >**

DETAILS:

Address: 159 W. Commonwealth Ave.

Phone: 480.275.5525

Website: HiddenHouseAZ.com

HIDDEN HOUSE



Elliott and Jackie Hall, and Gavin Jacobs

With an alluring combination of ambiance, elevated food and cocktail menus, and ideal execution for all, Gavin Jacobs' Hidden House couldn't live up to its name if it tried.

When Jacobs opened the establishment last year with co-owners Jackie and Elliott Hall, the trio of Chandler residents wanted to give downtown Chandler a unique spot to dine, drink, and linger amid a space that united inviting indoor and outdoor environs.

They succeeded, and keeping it a secret became impossible.

Selecting a 1939 cottage as the setting for four distinct seating areas that embrace stunning weather and span romantic white linen tablecloths to laidback beer garden terrace vibes was a good start.

"We wanted to do something different... vibrant, fresh, and airy for this hometown. They've been so supportive with the Brickyard," Jacobs says, referring to the nearby cocktail and tapas restaurant he owns with the Halls.

The seasonal menu complements the feel, with dishes like Jacobs' personal favorites lobster mac & cheese; Korean barbecue short rib that's slow cooked for five hours to fall-off-the-bone tender; and diver scallops accompanied by leek purée, chorizo, potato, charred sweet corn, and fava beans. And, the cleverly composed classic cocktail menu is broken down by era: pre-Prohibition, Prohibition, tiki, and New Age.

When the restaurant reopened for dine-in services, the team was excited to safely deliver the full in-real-life experience intended. It was also an opportunity to show appreciation for the outpouring of support during the shutdown and take-out only periods.

"I've never felt so much love," Jacobs says. "We wanted this restaurant and bar community to flourish. Whatever we can do to help and inspire others to do that is part of our values of what we are trying to do."



Monique Hughes and
Jackson Armstrong

DETAILS:

Address: 135 W. Ocotillo Road

Phone: 480.802.6659

Website: GingerMonkeyAZ.com

GINGER MONKEY GASTROPUB

Timing was on Ginger Monkey Gastropub owner Jackson Armstrong's side.

His restaurant was the subject of an episode of the Food Network's restaurant makeover show *Restaurant Impossible*. Six days after the show was filmed, the restaurant was forced to close due to the pandemic.

Rather than hit pause, Armstrong spent the hiatus renovating the bar and patio, building on the momentum created by the *Restaurant Impossible* crew's new dining room.

"People were hitting the brakes. We put our foot on the gas," Armstrong says.

Armstrong reopened just before his episode aired in June. He did so with a new staff and, thanks to show host/Celebrity Chef Robert Irvine and local chef, Executive Chef Albert Torrisi, who previously helmed kitchens for Gertrude's and Nico Heirloom Kitchen.

The 4-year-old restaurant was reborn.

"It breathed life into us more than anything else. It inspired Monique and myself, and gave us a break to be able to wipe the slate clean," Armstrong says, referring to his partner in business and life, fiancée Monique Hughes.

In addition to weekly chef's steak and fish specials, the upscale comfort food menu features dishes Irvine created just for Armstrong, like the Reuben burger.

"It's probably my favorite," Armstrong says. "I don't like sauerkraut, but when Robert cooked that burger for me, it was incredible."

The television appearance and refresh has drawn new customers, impressed regulars, and won back those disappointed in the past. Business is up compared to this time last year, there's discussions about a *Restaurant Impossible* revisit, and expansion plans are underway.

The stars continue to align.

"We clawed our way through tough times. I'm very proud of the way we've adapted and grown," Armstrong says. "I'm looking forward to next year."



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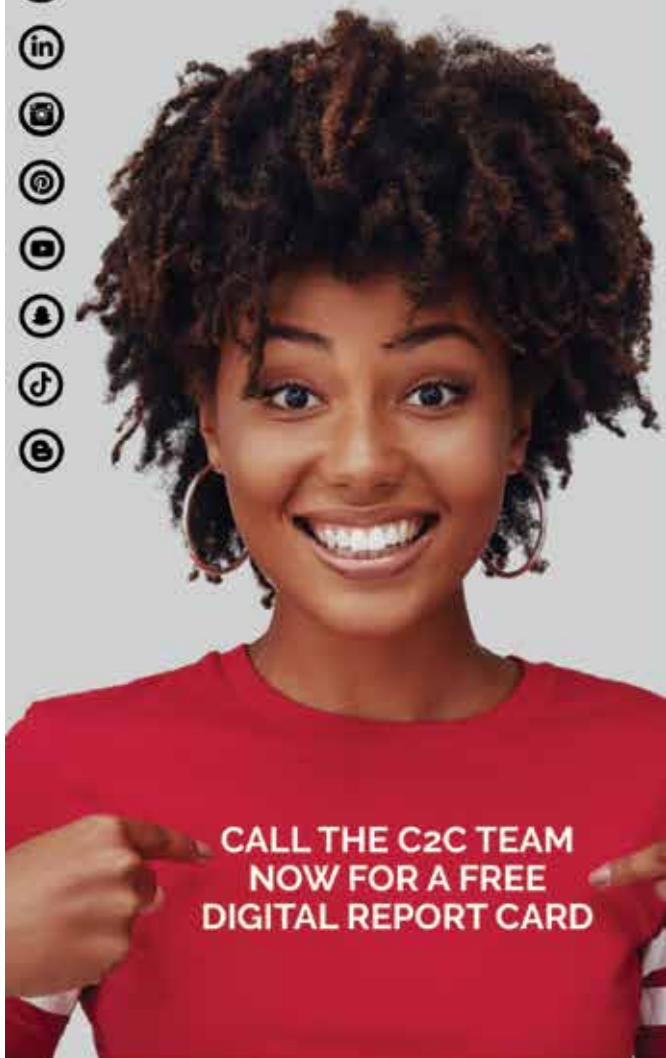
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St. Amand

NEWLY REMODELED SOUTH CHANDLER RESTAURANT WELCOMES THE COMMUNITY

ARTICLE MICHELLE GUERRERO
PHOTOGRAPHY LINDSAY BORG

KEN MORROW AND LYNN CRESPO ARE THE PROPRIETORS OF ST. AMAND, A RESTAURANT IN THE HEART OF OCOTILLO THAT SERVES UNIQUE COCKTAILS LIKE A SWEET AND SOUR, SMOKING CITRUS MARTINI, AND CREATIVE DISHES, MANY OF THEM WITH AN INTERNATIONAL FLAIR. Morrow became a partner in the first part of 2019, during the thick of a remodel, and the couple acquired the restaurant in the fall.

Morrow was inspired to take on the restaurant because of his love for the community and his long history in South Chandler. He's lived in the Ocotillo area for 25 years, and enjoys catering to his neighbors.

"I'm a longtime general contractor who, by fate, happens to own a restaurant," says Morrow. "We feel we've created a refreshed, lighter, more open and inviting atmosphere. It's elegant, but not stuffy."

St. Amand has been around for about 13 years, but under a different name. It was previously known as D'Vine Bistro. Morrow and Crespo gutted the interior and relocated the bar, which is now their main attraction.

The four-sided bar seats 18 guests and is equipped with swinging windows, allowing for access to the outdoor patios. The dining room seats 64. They also have private dining space for a more secluded experience. They've made room for entertainment with their six televisions and the musician nook. Their overall theme is casual elegance.

"Lynn and I love our community, our patrons, and our cozy atmosphere. We love to walk in and mingle," he says. "We want people to be comfortable, yet we want them to expect professional and respectful service. Families and kids are always welcome."

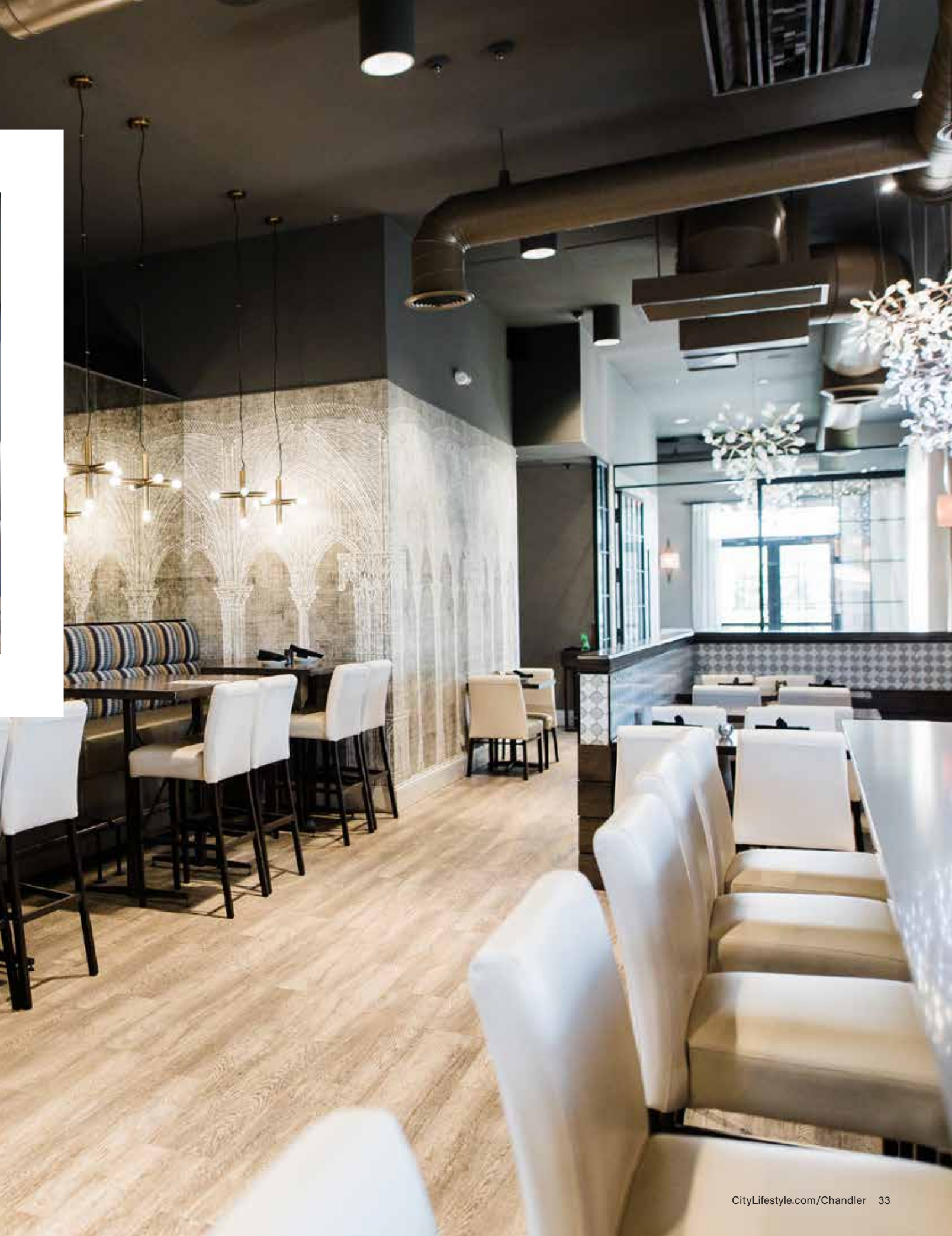
Morrow may be new to the restaurant business, but he's surrounded by years of experience. He hired Carlo Ventura, a friend who's been in the hotel and restaurant industry for 55 years. Ventura was also a deli owner.

CONTINUED >



Ken Morrow and Lynn Crespo





OPEN HOUSE (CONTINUED)

Ventura was born in Bari, located on the south-east coast of Italy on the Adriatic Sea. He lived in an orphanage from the age of 2 to 14. He spent summers with his grandparents when school was out.

"My grandmother was the one that inspired me in the love of cooking. I would spend endless time in the little room where she lived with my grandfather, Lorenzo. The little place had no running water or bathroom facility. My bed was two chairs put together and a pillow. I was in heaven," he says. "I would watch this little lady making miracles. Incredible imagination."

Ventura cooked all over the world, including Paris and Dusseldorf, Germany. He's also worked across the U.S. in hotels and restaurants in Boston, Sedona and Phoenix. He's passionate about food and adds his international, culinary experience to the menu.

"Most of my life I worked in front of the house and not in the kitchen," says Ventura.

"I'm not a chef, but I love to cook."

Ventura may not consider himself a chef, but cooking is his forte. Much like St. Amand's menu, Ventura's accent has Italian, French and Spanish influence. He likes to use French sauces and has added traditional Italian meals to the menu. He also bakes many of St. Amand's desserts.

"I make desserts like tiramisu, carrot cake, and the pana cotta. I love pana cotta. The blackberry sauce, it's wonderful," he says.

He likes whipping up traditional dishes from his childhood, like lasagna. Also, among his favorites are dishes with history, like mac and cheese, but with a unique twist. Theirs is made with penne pasta, roasted garlic, applewood smoked bacon, chives, gouda cream sauce, and crispy onions. There's a little bit of everything on the menu, from seafood to burgers.

Ventura also has a long history in Chandler. He's worked in the area for 14 years. "St. Amand brings the perfect blend of custom cocktails, an extensive wine list, a fresh menu, and live music to the heart of Ocotillo," states Crespo.

She highlights the patio as one of the best in Chandler, sharing that her favorite spot for a cocktail or glass of wine is next to the large fire pit.

The pride they all have for St. Amand is clear.

"We are the best. We provide wonderful food, always fresh, and wonderful service," says Ventura.

Learn more at StAmandAZ.com.



Beef Pizzaiola

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- + 4 rib eye steaks, 8-10 oz. each, pounded just a little
- + 3-4 garlic cloves, chopped fine
- + 4 tbsp. of olive oil
- + 2 tsp. of dried oregano
- + 1-28 oz. of San Marzano peeled tomatoes, or San Marzano-style tomatoes will do
- + 1-2 cup of water

DIRECTIONS

In a food processor, add the tomatoes, blend for 5-10 seconds. In a large skillet, add oil and garlic, sauté at medium high heat until the garlic is translucent. Add the steaks, sear on all sides, add the tomatoes, oregano, salt, and pepper. Add one cup of water. Once it starts to boil, reduce heat to medium-low, stirring occasionally. Add the last cup of water, or more if necessary if you see that the sauce is reducing, and cook at least two hours until beef is very tender. Remove from stove and serve.

"I serve some of the sauce over pasta, sprinkled with grated Pecorino Romano first. Then serve the wonderful beef as a main course with the sauce, your favorite salad, or any side dish you like," says Ventura.



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Jerome, a historic former copper mining town at the far end of the valley, is not really on the way to anywhere. It's nestled into the side of the steep encircling mountains. Its heyday was a hundred years ago, but upon driving up into this little town of approximately 450 people, it becomes clear that a new pinnacle of interest has taken hold—over a million tourists visit per year.

Amidst the laid-back ambiance of the town, the history, the views, and more, which you will uncover along your way, are scattered throughout several wine tasting rooms.

Caduceus Cellars & Merkin Vineyards, on Main Street, was one of the first to call this town home. Maynard and Jennifer Keenan are the hands-on hardworking partners behind their family-owned and -operated winery. They farm the grapes in their meticulously maintained vineyards in the valley below. Upon harvest, the grapes make the short trip up the hill to their small facility here, and a new vintage is brought to life. This yearly cycle has been repeating itself for over 15 years now—the first bottle, Primer Paso, was produced in 2004.

The Caduceus Cellars Tasting Room opened in 2009 (pause at the only stop sign in Jerome,

turn right, and you've arrived). Housed below the lovingly restored Connor Hotel, built in 1898, are all of the Keenan's Caduceus wines. Several of these bottles are open for tasting each day, along with a small plates menu to choose from. Also browse the gourmet food section, which features many local Arizona products, as well as a comprehensive conservas and cocktail bitters selection.

Next door to Caduceus, the Keenans opened the Puscifer store in 2014. This venue gracefully encompasses a plethora of ideas—a music store that, as well as specializing in new and used vinyl, is part museum/art installation and event space. House-made gelato is also available here. This retail store, envisioned by Jennifer, also houses Barbifer (a barber shop - appointments can be made online), and Four Eight Wineworks.

Four Eight Wineworks provides emerging winemakers with a metaphorical leg up by providing them access to the space, equipment, and resources they need to produce world-class high elevation Arizona wines. Four Eight Wineworks is an incubator for the driven on their quest not only to survive, but to thrive and make their mark in Arizona wine country and beyond.

After a day in Jerome, backtracking down the hill on the way home, you will discover Old Town Cottonwood. In this pedestrian-friendly old section of town are many more wine tasting rooms and restaurants, among them the Merkin Vineyards Osteria & Tasting Room. Opened in 2016, this handsome lunch and dinner spot features the Keenan's Merkin Vineyards label

CONTINUED >

ARTICLE BRIAN SULLIVAN | PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED

The Caduceus Cellars Marzo Block.



Enjoy gelato at Merkin Vineyards.



ROAD TRIP (CONTINUED)



Caduceus storefront



Merkin Vineyards Osteria & Tasting Room



Four Eight Wineworks, located inside the Puscifer store.



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Arizona wines, accompanied by daily hand-made pastas prepared with Arizona-grown and milled wheat (from Hayden Flour Mills in Queen Creek). The menu reflects the season's offerings. The restaurant is open daily 11 a.m.-9 p.m., first-come, first-seated, no reservations.

The Merkin Osteria mission is to source everything possible from locally produced products. In light of that quest, portions of the Keenans' vineyards are given over to vegetable gardens, hydroponic green houses, a mushroom growing operation, and orchards (Keenan also produces hard cider). There is even a worm farm.

Growing grapes and produce in the Arizona high desert? Yes, farming has been going on here since Native American times. Modernity has allowed us to conveniently forget that our food can and should, when possible, be sourced locally. Regional, sustainable, and a sense of place are the goal and the legacy envisioned by Maynard and Jennifer Keenan.

It is probably ill advised to try to squeeze too many things into one Arizona road trip, as there is a lot of ground to cover in this huge state. Take time to relax into each stop and discover what's really going on under the surface. You can then plan your *next* visit or overnight stay accordingly.

Note: All of the Caduceus Cellars & Merkin Vineyards venues are strictly following current COVID-19 best practices. Call ahead for details.

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