

A New Kind of Note

Santa Monica's Buena Vida Tea Bar & Garden celebrates the good life

By Kamala Kirk

After a long and successful career in the Latin music industry, Mayra Vazquez decided to switch gears and pursue her passion for tea. Just last week, she and her fiancé, Marcelino Miyares Jr., opened Buena Vida Tea Bar & Garden in Santa Monica.

"I'm a foodie and before I fell in love with tea, I was studying wine and took courses," Vazquez said.

"Then tea found me. Wine and tea have share a lot of similarities in terms of the different notes, characteristics and growing regions. During the pandemic, I used my free time to educate myself all about tea. Once you start studying its origins and history, it's hard not to fall in love. I had always dreamed of owning a little café in the community where everyone knows your name. It's been an incredible tea journey."

Buena Vida is Spanish for "good life," and the tea shop reflects Vazquez's love for entertaining friends and family.

"I've always loved having people over and this is like an extension of having friends come hang out in your backyard," Vazquez said.

A Santa Monica resident since the 1980s, Vazquez walked by the cozy space on Montana Avenue when it was a flower shop.

"I was in love with the space, it was so cozy," Vazquez said. "Then magic happened and I was able to get it."

From the matcha green cabinets and the rose gold



Buena Vida Tea Bar & Garden was founded by Santa Monica resident Mayra Vazquez to offer the community a cozy space to enjoy a good cup of tea.

Teapresso machine to the lanterns and plants on the outdoor patio space, Buena Vida Tea Bar shares an eclectic and bohemian European vibe.

Vazquez works with a tea distributor and curator, who formerly managed a tea plantation in Sri Lanka. The menu offers a diverse assortment of approximately 30 loose leaf teas sourced from all over the world including China, Africa and South America. A state-of-the-art Teapresso machine brews the perfect cup of tea in 90 seconds, which can be served hot or cold. Their most popular varieties include Earl Grey and Rosa de Jamaica, which blends hibiscus leaves and lemon myrtle.

"Most of our teas are organic and kosher," Vazquez said.

"It's amazing what tea can do for you. It gives you energy and it helps you relax. Tea is about taking a break in the day and one of our mantras is that there is a time for any tea and a tea for any time. On any given day I have five or six different kinds of tea.

"In the morning I start with matcha, then mid-morning I like my Earl Grey with a splash of milk. After lunch I'll have lemongrass peppermint, then I'll drink rooibos after dinner. I also drink our hibiscus tea throughout the day and it's delicious hot or iced."

Aside from tea, Buena Vida Tea Bar collaborates with



PHOTOS CREDIT: BARNET PHOTOGRAPHY

In addition to a wide range of loose leaf teas sourced from different places, Buena Vida Tea Bar & Garden also serves scones, tea sandwiches and baked goods.

pastry chefs to serve an assortment of sweet and savory items including scones with clotted cream and organic jam, empanadas, shortbread, cookies, baklava, and tea sandwiches such as egg salad, salmon with cream cheese, and chicken tarragon.

Soon, Vazquez will offer high tea by reservation.

In the meantime, they are offering a trio of sweet and savory items with a pot of tea for \$20.

Vazquez also looks forward to hosting tea talks led by experts who will educate the community about tea and its benefits.

"It's so rewarding when all of the locals and neighbors compliment our tea and the

space," Vazquez said.

"It's a lot of fun, we are all about community and offering a place where people can come to relax and take a little break from their day.

"We have a very California coastal tea approach. We don't worry about the rules, we just strive to find the perfect cup of tea." ■

Buena Vida Tea Bar & Garden

726 Montana Avenue,
Santa Monica
424-234-6757
Monday to Sunday,
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
buenavidatea.com

"MAKING A DENT" (1/6/22)
By MATT SKOCZEN

I	T	C	H	E	D		H	A	G	A	R		P	S	Y	C	H	E	S	
M	O	R	A	L	E	S		I	N	A	N	E		R	O	U	L	A	D	E
B	R	I	L	L	O	P	A	D	D	I	N	G		E	N	M	A	S	S	E
A	M	B	L	E		O	S	E	S		I	L	S	A		S	T	E	P	
D	E	S	I		E	T	T	U		P	E	N	D	I	N	G	P	A	L	S
			N	A	E		I	N	R	E	G	A	R	D	T	O				
W	I	L	D	B	O	A	R	D	I	N	G		E	S	T	A	T	E	S	
I	M	P	E	A	C	H		E	P	A		W	A	S		A	H	M	E	
S	I	G	N		M	O	R	E		C	A	N		A	F	R	A	M	E	
E	T	A		L	I	A	R		R	O	T	C		S	L	O	W	E	D	
			F	U	N	D	I	N	G	I	N	T	H	E	S	U	N			
T	E	T	R	I	S		G	O	N	G		C	O	A	T	S		P	H	D
A	L	M	O	S	T		I	O	U		C	E	R	T		G	L	U	E	
R	O	A	M			C	N		B	A	N		E	S	P	O	U	S	E	
N	I	N	E	V	E	H		B	U	D	D	I	N	G	L	I	G	H	T	
			F	L	I	P	W	I	L	S	O	N		T	O	N				
E	P	I	C	W	I	N	D	I	N	G		R	P	M	S		S	A	R	A
P	A	T	H		C	A	A	N		I	S	E	E		L	T	G	O	V	
I	N	P	A	R	I	S		B	O	N	D	I	N	G	V	O	Y	A	G	E
S	E	R	R	A	T	E		I	C	E	I	N		S	I	L	L	I	E	R
C	L	O	S	E	S	T		G	R	E	E	G		P	L	E	N	T	Y	

If your business is located in Los Angeles County, we can publish your FBN notice



- Cost is \$50 for the required 4 weeks of publication.
- You must have filed your FBN statement with the LA County Clerk recently.
- Deadline is Friday for publication the following Thursday.

FOR ASSISTANCE ON DBA'S PLEASE CONTACT ANN TURRIETTA AT 626-584-8747 OR EMAIL ANN@ARGONAUTNEWS.COM