



SHOW NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE SHOW NOTES

Episode Title: Taqueria Los Primos

Episode # & Date: Episode #28 – May 7, 2020

About this Episode: Judy digs beneath the surface of two local taquerias and finds a family-rich story beneath the delicious food.

Episode Web Page: <https://sanmateofocus.com/taqueria-los-primos/>

EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

I'm Judy Gordon, and *this* is San Mateo Focus.

Before we begin, we've noticed that many of you are listening to San Mateo Focus episodes right on our website or social media posts—and that's great—but there is no automatic notification method that tells you when a new episode has dropped. So, I am asking you—please—go to the Podcast App on your smartphone, or to iTunes on your Mac or PC...search for "San Mateo Focus" and click SUBSCRIBE. Now onto this week's episode.

The words community and family are heard often when you talk to Olga Marquez, who is an owner of the two Taquerias Los Primos in San Mateo. One is located at 85 North B Street and the other on the corner of Ellsworth and Poplar. She owns the restaurants with family - her husband Jesus, and his brother Ramone and wife Juanita. Olga's brother owns Tres Amigos in Half Moon Bay, where Jesus worked until they decided to open up the North B Street location of Los Primos in 1993. Two years later, they opened up the Ellsworth Taqueria. All four of the owners work at the two restaurants. There are three employees at each restaurant, including the owners.

To Olga, the community is both the neighborhood and the customers that she serves at the restaurants. On North B Street, where there are a cluster of restaurants and small shops selling treats and drinks, she says that people will grab a burrito at her place and go across the street for dessert. They know their customers. As she was making a burrito the other day for two men, one of them said to his friend, "I'm 37, and my mother used to bring me here when I was little. This is the best burrito around." One of the specialties of the restaurants are their soups, which are made fresh daily. Menudo, a tripe soup, is served on the weekends. The chicken soup and the beef shank soup are started early in the morning, and they are like a comfort food, says Olga. It reminds people of their home. The variety of meats are prepared in the morning for the day and Olga said that their salsas are prepared the way they learned when they grew up. I asked her about the difference in salsas at taquerias around town, and she said that most taqueria owners stick with the ones they learned early in their lives. They also serve fresh juices - apple, orange, carrot, and celery. She sees people from a variety of cultural backgrounds who come to the restaurant because they've learned that certain meats are prepared a different way than they're accustomed, and they've grown to like it. They have loyal customers from the neighborhood, and some who come in from Foster City, the East Bay, and also from the startups that are downtown.



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For the last five years, the B Street Merchants have been meeting at Los Primos on the first Tuesday of the month from 8:30 to 9:30 in the morning. The meeting includes business owners, San Mateo Police Officers, the Downtown Association—along with people who live in the neighborhood. Olga points out that since the business owners are in their stores working all day, they can't keep an eye out on the street. The meetings were started to discuss problems that needed the attention of the city that would make the street better for everyone. North B Street is a strong community and they all have the same people coming into the restaurants, groceries, and variety stores. She is thankful that there have been great improvements in safety, traffic, and homeless issues since the meetings started. They also use the time to be informed about what's going on in the city and to plan for the festivals and events that they want to offer to thank their customers. The B Street Merchant meeting is open to the public, and hopefully will start back up again soon.

Like restaurants all over town, Los Primos has seen a decline in business since the middle of March. They are still doing takeout, and have a website with all menu items on it. She's hopeful, as construction and other businesses begin working again, that they will see the business pick up. Olga says that the family lives in Half Moon Bay, and works in San Mateo, which gives them two homes to care about. Recently the connection of work, family, and community all came together when Olga's niece, who works at the San Mateo Law firm Galine, Frys, Fitting, and Francos, decided that she wanted to help people who were working in the farms in Half Moon Bay by providing them with food from Los Primos. When the firm heard of her plan, they offered to pay for it every Friday for at least a month. Los Primos prepares 100 taco meals, and the food is taken from the restaurant in San Mateo to Half Moon Bay by members of the Marquez family. Then Half Moon Bay nonprofit, ALAS, helps distribute the dinners to people working on the farms.

Olga says that she and the rest of her family try to do their best. They're known for being friendly and welcoming and want people to feel at home when they are at the restaurant. Now, since it's takeout only, they still enjoy seeing the smiling eyes of customers, even with their masks on as they pick up the food that gives them comfort. They've shown how they care for their customers, the city, and their business. So, *Here's the Deal*: check out the Taqueria Los Primos menu on their website, and give them a call, and pick up your lunch or dinner. When you pick it up, make sure that you let Olga, Jesus, Ramon, or Juanita know that you heard about them from San Mateo Focus.

Okay, that's all the time we have for this episode. Have a great week. Thanks to Jack Radsliff for the original music to this podcast. And please don't forget to Subscribe to San Mateo Focus on your favorite Podcast app or iTunes. As always, if you'd like more information about our sponsor or the topics in today's episode, visit sanmateofocus.com.

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PODCAST SHOW NOTES

Podcast Name: San Mateo Focus

Logo:



Description: Whether you're new to San Mateo, California, or a long time resident, the San Mateo Focus Podcast is the place to learn about local history, good eats, and things to do.

Website: <http://www.sanmateofocus.com>

Email: info@sanmateofocus.com

Host & Founder: Judy Gordon

Producer/Co-host: Peter Radsliff

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