



SHOW NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE SHOW NOTES

Episode Title: Becky Gordon's San Mateo

Episode # & Date: Episode #29 – May 14, 2020

About this Episode: Hometown girl and guest host Becky Gordon waxes poetic on her memories of growing up in San Mateo.

Episode Web Page: <https://sanmateofocus.com/becky-gordons-san-mateo/>

EPISODE SCRIPT

I'm Becky Gordon filling in this week for Judy Gordon and *this* is San Mateo Focus.

San Mateo is to this day one of the great loves of my life. I left home when I was 18 and, quite frankly, I don't think I ever really got over it. I tell everyone I meet how much I love San Mateo. My mom asked me to come onto this week's episode of San Mateo Focus to tell you why.

Growing up, I assumed everyone thought their city was the best but I have now spent many years away from home and I know this is not the case. For one, most people shockingly don't bleed nostalgia and sentimentality in the same, very painful way I do. But beyond that, I guess I was surprised to find many people don't give their home towns too much thought. There are some who grew out of where they grew up. There are others who don't feel like their home town represents who they have become, and some who just moved on. After moving away from home and realizing how deep of an appreciation I really had for where I came from I became curious about what made me love San Mateo so much. Was it that I simply loved the construct of home, or was there something truly unique about mine?

To get into this, I sat down to make a list of everything that came to mind when I thought about San Mateo. The first thought that immediately popped into my head, possibly because I hadn't eaten lunch yet, was Pancho Villa on B Street. Pancho Villa, though originating in San Francisco, is a San Mateo establishment. This is a place that makes you say, "Oh, we're driving through San Mateo, we *have* to stop at Pancho Villa." This is a place that makes you say, "Oh, I really loved visiting Paris, but my gosh, I could never live there because they don't have a Pancho Villa." This is a place where you say, "Oh, I'm getting married? I *HAVE* to serve my guests Pancho Villa!!!" OK well...at least I know I'll say the last one. I bring all of my out of town visitors to Pancho Villa, and they all say the same thing. What could be so special about this Burrito? Well, I'll tell you: I...don't...know. But what I do know is I have never failed turning these skeptics into full-on believers. Something magical goes on inside that brilliant factory of beans and carne asada. Their salsa verde and pico de gallo alone is worth the El Camino or 101 traffic from wherever you are in the Bay Area, trust me!

In addition to being rich with Mexican food and culture, the Bay Area plays an important role in Japanese-American history. This is evident in our food and I would be remiss not to mention another San Mateo establishment, Sushi Sam's. Now, for those of you who know, you may be skeptical about this one because of the often hour-long wait. But to that I say, it makes the reward that much more satisfying. Sushi Sam's is a minimalist, cozy neighborhood spot on 3rd Ave in downtown. The fish is



SHOW NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

fresh and the service is efficient and welcoming. I have yet to find a sushi spot in Los Angeles that rivals Sushi Sam's in both comfortable atmosphere and quality of sushi.

I could continue on with favorites like Jeffrey's Hamburger, Amici's Pizza, or Silver House Chinese on El Camino, but I'll end with this: San Mateo was serving high quality ramen years before others knew they could eat it outside of Styrofoam cups. I'm looking at you, Santa Ramen.

The next category on my list is nature. In this regard, San Mateo is unparalleled. Coming from LA, there is nothing like landing at SFO and exiting the airport to breathe in the crisp, clean air of the Bay Area. From the many sycamore and Douglas fir trees native to the San Mateo area, to the fresh-water Crystal Springs Reservoir just a 10-minute drive from downtown, to the hiking trails and marina views of Coyote Point there is an outstanding variety of nature everywhere you look. One of my favorite parts of returning home is enjoying the beauty of the uniquely distinct neighborhoods. The marshy parks of Bay Meadows, the hilly lookout points of Laurelwood, to the shady backroads of San Mateo Park, there is always something new to explore by foot, bike, or car. My favorite hour to walk San Mateo is twilight, when the sun has just made its way over to Half Moon Bay and the golden glow of the sky blankets the city. And though you may be unphased by seeing the view of San Francisco from the top of Alameda, I will always marvel at our front row view.

The next category I had on my list is entertainment. I was fortunate enough to be raised by my loving parents...and the Hillsdale Mall (*what*, I'm a 90s kid!). When it comes to Bay Area Malls besides Hillsdale, the next closest are Stanford Mall down in Palo Alto and Tanforan Shopping Center in San Bruno. So to have our very own shopping center is pretty special. And the Hillsdale Mall has been there for you. Whether it was a last-minute birthday gift or for the craziness of Holiday shopping, you bought it at Hillsdale. So please, when we're all able to go out again, remember to head over there, even just for a walk. I worry about it while I'm away.

In addition to the mall, we have movie theatres, bowling alleys, a State Fair, and a brewery to name a few. I could go on and on with this love letter to San Mateo, and call me nostalgic, because I am, but I know I'm not alone. Many of my friends who grew up there see what I see. They've since left, some have returned, but wherever we are we share a deep appreciation for our little pocket of home in the middle of the Peninsula and we realize we really did have it good. During my last summer in San Mateo, I babysat for a new family in my neighborhood. They had come from the East Coast so they were overjoyed with the moderate temperature, hilly terrain and vibrant community. I was really lucky to once again see my home through their brand-new eyes as I made my final leap out of the nest.

Living in Los Angeles, a city I love for its own unique characteristics, I still find myself searching for San Mateo. When I go for walks, I look for the streets lined with Sycamore trees. Some days, when I have nothing better to do, I walk across the street to the mostly empty indoor mall just to pay some respect to an old friend. I have yet to find a burrito that comes remotely close to rivaling Pancho Villa, but I'll keep looking. And though twilight hour is still beautiful in Hollywood, with our own breeze from the Southern California ocean and vast desert plains, know that there is something particularly unique about the way your San Mateo sky reflects its beloved, rare city.



SHOW NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

That's all the time we have for this episode. Thank you so much and have a great week. And thanks to my next door neighbor and old friend Jack Radsliff for the original music to this podcast. 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 sponsors or the topics in today's episode, visit: sanmateofocus.com.

HELPFUL LINKS:

[Website: Pancho Villa Taqueria](#)

[Website: Sushi Sams - Japanese Sushi Restaurant](#)

[Website: Amicis East Coast Pizzeria](#)

[Website: Bay Watch Restaurant](#)

[Webpage: Silver House Chinese Restaurant](#)

[Facebook Page: Santa Ramen](#)

[Webpage: Crystal Springs Regional Trail](#)

[Webpage: Central Park & Japanese Garden](#)

[Website: Hillsdale Mall](#)

[Website: Bel Mateo Bowling Alley](#)

[Website: Fieldwork Brewing Company](#)

TAGS:

#sanmateo #panchovilla #santaramen #belmateobowl #fieldworkbrewery #sushisams #baymeadows #sanmateopark #crystalspringsreservoir #century12 #cinopolis #pinstripes #baywood #hillsdale #centralpark

— end of episode information > podcast show notes below —

SHOW NOTES & TRANSCRIPT



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

Where to listen: [Apple Podcasts](#) | [Google Podcasts](#) | [Spotify Podcasts](#) | [Stitcher Podcasts](#) | [TuneIn Podcasts](#) | [iHeartRadio](#) | [Facebook](#) | [San Mateo Focus Website](#)

How to listen:

- 1) On the San Mateo Focus **website**: <http://www.sanmateofocus.com>
- 2) On your favorite **iPhone** or **Android** smartphone podcast app:
i.e. Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, TuneIn Podcasts, Spotify Podcasts, iHeartRadio Podcasts
- 3) On your favorite smart speaker:
 - For **Amazon Echo**, say: *"Alexa, play the podcast, San Mateo Focus."*
 - For **Google Home**, say: *"OK Google, play the podcast, San Mateo Focus."*
 - For **Apple HomePod**, say: *"Hey Siri, play the podcast, San Mateo Focus."*
- 4) On an **iPhone**, say: *"Hey Siri, play the podcast, San Mateo Focus."*
- 5) On an **Android** phone, say: *"OK Google, play the podcast, San Mateo Focus."*