Heritage is Long Beach’s 1st eatery to win a Michelin star. Why it matters.

Story by Caitlin Antonios
Photos by Thomas R. Cordova

How does a Michelin starred-chef celebrate the achievement? Fast-food pizza—they have work to do.

On Tuesday, July 18, the Michelin Guide handed out the famed Michelin stars to six new restaurants, including Long Beach’s own Heritage. The restaurant is owned by Chef Philip Pretty and his sister, Lauren. It’s a dinner-only six-course tasting menu restaurant that sources locally and aims to create zero waste. In addition to gaining a star, it also received Michelin’s Green Star, an award given to restaurants with eco-friendly commitments at the forefront of sustainable practices.

Prior to receiving its star, Heritage was recognized (meaning, recommended) by the Michelin Guide along with The Attic, Chiang Rai, and Sushi Nikkei. But Heritage was the first to break through that elusive bubble, bringing the first Michelin star to Long Beach.

“I get OpenTable reservation notifications directly to my phone,” Lauren Pretty, co-owner and director of operations at Heritage, said. “That night, my phone didn’t stop going off.”

The history of the French tire manufacturer that creates the famed guide is long and expansive, spreading from Formula 1 to space to hospitality and dining. And its impact on the dining world, for better or worse, cannot be understated.

The guide, which was initially free, was published to help travelers

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City denies appeal of large housing development near 2ND & PCH retail center

A proposed six-story, 281-unit housing development will move forward after the Long Beach City Council denied an appeal filed by multiple groups who said the project would create traffic issues and was not compliant with zoning laws.

By Jason Ruiz

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Vast lands veteran NASA astronaut

By Brandon Richardson

Vast lands veteran NASA astronaut Garrett Reisman has been tapped by space station developer Vast as its human spaceflight advisor, the company announced on July 18.

In a statement, Reisman said he is honored to join Vast, which is developing the first commercial space station as well as the first artificial gravity space station.

Commercial space stations and artificial-gravity space stations are both crucial components of humanity’s future in space,” Reisman said. “The Vast team is well-equipped to meet the needs of the growing in-space project Downtown and Volta on Pine, also with 751 units.

However, it was challenged by three groups who alleged the project needed a full environmental review to assess its effects on traffic and greenhouse gas emissions while adding that it ran contrary to the city’s design rules for the area.

Michelle Black, an attorney representing the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust, one of the applicants, said in a letter to the council that the project needed to be revised to comply with not only the city’s zoning but also California Coastal Zone law.

Black said the project does not conform with the city’s Southeast Area Specific Plan (SEASP), which was adopted by the council in 2017 and established a three-story height limit at the intersection of Studebaker and PCH, which was given a lower allowable height to provide a gradual increase at the gateway into the city.

City planners said on July 18 that the city has no control over awarding exemptions or density bonuses, and the city’s analysis said the project qualified for a waiver on its height because it included affordable units, is installing solar-powered facilities in the project and public art will be installed on the eastern side of the building facing PCH.

Continued on page 5

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Cargo movement slowed in Long Beach while LA saw growth

By Brandon Richardson

As cargo volumes at the Port of Long Beach dipped in June, Los Angeles saw a 4% increase in consecutive months of growth since a dismal February. During a press conference on July 12, Port of LA Executive Director Gene嫣 said July 19 that most of the airport's busiest June on record.

During the press conference, Mayor Eric Garcetti said, "I applaud the airport's ability to achieve a new high in traffic and revenue, and I'm excited to see what the future holds for Los Angeles International Airport." Kuykendall said July 18 that airport parking rates would be $12.5 million in the future.

"We're seeing an increase in the number of passengers and revenue generated through ticket sales and parking," said Kuykendall. "This is a positive trend for the airport's bottom line."
CSU union members and students rally for fair wages, against proposed tuition hike

By Tess Keenanoff

Faculty, staff, union members and students from across the California State University system rallied together on July 11 during the CSU Board of Trustees meeting in Long Beach to protest issues ranging from fair pay and compensation to proposed tuition hikes for students.

Most of the CSU workforce is currently in contract negotiations, and many union proposals are urging the university system to increase wages to be competitive with other comparable institutions and private employers, raise the floor for the lowest-paid faculty and staff, and to reiterate salary steps, which ended nearly 30 years ago and which union members’ claim has caused extreme pay disparities between long-time and newer CSU workers, according to the California Faculty Association.

Many employees have gone years without a pay increase and are underpaid compared to other people who do the same work, said Michael Harris, a painter at Cal State Long Beach. Harris added that some people forget about the people who do the same work, said Michael Harris, a painter at Cal State Long Beach. Harris added that some

new employee, only to discover that the new employee was earning more than he was.

“I feel like I’ve been sucked in.”

Unger, who is part of the Teamsters Local 2010 union, which includes about 1,000 skilled tradesmen members across the 23 university campuses, plus additional members at UC schools, described interviewing, hiring and training a
graduate students beginning in fall 2014. While 13% of the increased revenue would support campus financial aid for low-income students, the CSU did not balance its budget on their backs and on their shoulders,” Toombs said.

CSU has been in contract negotiations with the California Faculty Association for several years.

“On my campus, morale is down,” said Gloria Unger, who has worked at Cal State Northridge for over 23 years. Unger, who is part of the Teamsters Local 2010 union, which includes about 1,000 skilled tradesmen members across the 23 university campuses, plus additional members at UC schools, described interviewing, hiring and training a

“...And get $ back

And get $ back

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City members approve study to analyze hotel worker wages

Long Beach hotel workers celebrate wage gains at the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach, Thursday, April 13, 2023

Long Beach began the process on Tuesday, July 11 of potentially putting a measure on the March 2024 ballot that would push hotel workers’ pay as high as $50 per hour by 2028.

By Jason Ruiz

City members approved a study to analyze hotel worker wages before the council makes a decision to put a wage increase question on the ballot. Some council members already indicated they wanted to do just that and asked for language other cities incorporated into similar ballot measures to be incorporated into Long Beach’s.

“I hope that voters approve this at the ballot box,” said Councilmember Cindy Allen, one of the co-sponsors of the item.

Other council members pointed to the city’s own employees, many of whom don’t make $30 an hour. Councilmember Al Austin said he supported the market analysis but said the irony of the city’s workforce pay scale was not lost on him.

“However, the project anticipated that health care facilities could close locations, raise prices for patients, or forego investments in the city to pay for higher wages.

For the report was limited because of the roughly 30 days the council gave the author’s, the author’s contacts expired, with several firms turning down the job because of the lack of time, before complete the report. No market analysis for the roughly 30 days the council gave the author’s, the author’s contacts expired, with several firms turning down the job because of the lack of time, before complete the report. No market analysis for the roughly 30 days the council gave the author’s, the author’s contacts expired, with several firms turning down the job because of the lack of time, before complete the report. No market analysis for the roughly 30 days the council gave the author’s, the author’s contacts expired, with several firms turning down the job because of the lack of time, before complete the report.
The purpose of the CSU system is to be accessible and to provide quality education. The bottom line is that the later you attend a CSU, the more you will pay, said Lee-Chang. “Students from disadvantaged communities, from our Latino communities, from our Black communities, from our Asian American communities—these are students that have been historically disadvantaged, and the CSU wants to put them at even more of a disadvantage. So we’re not only fighting for us, but for pretty much the future of California,” Cal State Long Beach student Luis Ortiz, also with the organization Students for Quality Education, said that access to free education, along with resources ranging from mental health support, food, and housing, accessibility ensures that students are able to land on their feet after graduating, rather than struggling, which is the case for many students and employees living in Long Beach. Meanwhile, within the Board of Trustees meeting, members discussed expanding accessibility and overall affordability for students, which includes assessing factors apart from tuition, particularly cost of living.

“We heard concerns that a tuition hike may decrease enrollment—we take that seriously,” said Trustee Julius Lopez during the board meeting. “The sticker price should never be the reason a student does not apply to college.”

The overall cost for students to attend a Cal State University school over a nine-month period from 2022 to 2023 (which can differ per campus) ranges from $21,333 for students who live at home, to $27,375 for students living on campus, and $30,341 for students who live off campus, which does not include costs for housing, food, and other expenses during summer months.

Trustee members noted that Cal Grants, Pell Grants and other scholarships assist many university students. While 64% of undergraduates (about 249,671 students) have their tuition fully covered, and 6% of CSU undergraduates receive financial aid, board members discussed the need for improved communication and accessibility, particularly when it comes to students connecting with high school students and their families about financial aid, as well as simplifying the overall financial aid process.

The Board of Trustees is expected to vote on the tuition increase in September. "California continues to leave gaps on the table," said Trustee Lateefah Simon during the meeting. "Those young people—without support and hard work, can reignite the state if they're given the opportunity to come into our university system. But we have a long way to go."

Protestors urge CSU to increase pay for employees and to not implement a year tuition increase for students by July 11, 2023.
There’s big demand for affordable housing in Long Beach. So why are there so few units?

When a new affordable housing development in Central Long Beach opened its application window last week, thousands of people applied for the 47 units available to low-income households, which will be chosen via lottery — underscoring the city’s need for affordable units, which are both difficult and expensive to build.

The “Wallpaper” project at the corner of Walnut Avenue and Willow Street is Long Beach’s affordable unit stock by 87 units — one reserved for an on-site manager. But just 23 are being made available for formerly housed seniors and another 21 units have been set aside for households with housing subsidies, just 47 open to the application process.

The remaining 47 units were specifically reserved for people currently living in Long Beach, with the other 27 units available to any qualified applicant in the county.

By Jossen Ruiz

In 2021, during the pandemic, the city of Long Beach opened a 10,000-square-foot facility in Downtown Long Beach in 2021. The building reclassified and improved, the city said, was able to open our doors,” Saunders-Green said. “When it comes to creative careers, the arts, the music, the creativity, the art, the music, it’s all about the building’s facilities, plus workshops, events, business and personal development, and even an on-site therapist.

The city council has already committed to building more new housing, including a new development in the Long Beach area.

In 2021, during the pandemic, the city of Long Beach opened a 10,000-square-foot facility in Downtown Long Beach in 2021. The building reclassified and improved, the city said, was able to open our doors,” Saunders-Green said. “When it comes to creative careers, the arts, the music, the creativity, the art, the music, it’s all about the building’s facilities, plus workshops, events, business and personal development, and even an on-site therapist.

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But for Long Beach, if LA County measure on a future ballot for voters could allow Los Angeles County to pursue the full half-percent increase for LACAHSA. But for Long Beach, if LA County measure on a future ballot for voters could allow Los Angeles County to pursue the full half-percent increase for LACAHSA.

“Unfortunately, our current local property tax is not high enough,” Saunders-Green said. “I think that’s been the most powerful tool. And of course, paying people when we have the ability.”

At this point, about 12 former foster youth have worked with Green Pines Creative Inc., the organization that took over the space in 2021 and started building out a creative community.

“The agency has funded homelessness initiatives (Measure H), with which they could feel comfortable, we could continue to grow, eventually making the business stable, the business stable, the business stable,” Saunders-Green said.

“I would like to see people out there who would have a passion for entrepreneurship, look at social enterprise, because I think that’s a way to make a noticeable impact in our community,” Saunders-Green said.

“I think strongly of people who maybe have a passion for film, television, video games or advertisements, to having their art licensed by Green Pines. Green Pines licenses are available on a project-by-project basis, and profits are split, so artists are able to learn the process and eventually continue to grow, making the business stable, the business stable, the business stable,” Saunders-Green said.

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Jeff and Pam Kellogg take to the water list Los Cerritos house at $1.595 million

COLUMNIST: TIM GROBATY

For the Kelloggs, it was a do-it-now-or-never weeks left in the application window, according to Bridge.

Jeff and Pam Kellogg are among the scores of home buyers who are scrambling to make the most of the Federal Home Loan Bank’s Affordable Housing Program before it ends Aug. 15.

The Kelloggs, 68, are leaving the neighborhood of Studebaker Road with their 1950s marriage house of 2,200 square feet. The yard has a fireplace, a pool, a two-bedroom guest house, and a separate artist’s studio. The home’s only drawback is: If you’ve always wanted a Jack-and-Jill bathroom, you might be disappointed. It’s a fine family home in a great walkable neighborhood with brick streets in Southeast.

The home is at the end of a cul-de-sac, across the street from the Long Beach Medical Center. The Seventh Street Medical Center is the city’s other hospital.

That will provide low-cost housing to seniors and senior veterans who were formerly unhoused and low-income households. The building will be a permanent resource to serve the needy and house the homeless.

The development is on the site of a former medical clinic and the first year the city has paid into Measure H.

Jeff and Pam Kellogg take to the water list Los Cerritos house at $1.595 million

The first biennial budget report, approved by the City Council in January, accounted for a modest increase in sales tax revenues. The total budget for fiscal 2025-26 is $2.9 billion, with a projected $1.5 billion in sales tax revenues.

Sales tax revenues have been a major source of funding for Long Beach’s capital projects, including the construction of the new Long Beach Convention and Performing Arts Center.

The city’s general fund, which is the primary source of operating revenue, was projected to have a $14 million surplus in fiscal 2025-26. The city’s budget includes $3.5 billion in total expenditures for the coming fiscal year.

The budget includes funding for various capital projects, including the construction of the new convention center, the renovation of the city’s stadium, and the expansion of the city’s public safety facilities.

The budget also includes funding for various social services programs, including programs for the homeless, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment.

The budget is expected to generate $2.9 billion in revenues, with $1.4 billion in sales tax revenues.

The city’s budget also includes a reserve fund of $30 million, which is intended to cover unexpected expenses and to help the city manage financial risks.

The budget is subject to approval by the California State Controller’s Office, which will issue an opinion on the budget’s legality and compliance with state laws.

The budget is expected to be adopted by the City Council in late May.

While the city’s budget is being developed, the city is also working on a long-term financial plan to ensure that the city has a stable financial foundation.

The city’s financial plan was adopted in November 2019 and includes a 20-year financial forecast, which projects that the city will have a balanced budget through the year 2040.

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The financial plan is expected to be reviewed by the California State Controller’s Office, which will issue an opinion on the plan’s legality and compliance with state laws.

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Downtown Long Beach Planet Fitness to open Aug. 1

The new gym took over the old Gold’s Gym location at the corner of Fourth Street and Pine Avenue, and work on the interior has been ongoing since the beginning of the year.

The new gym took over the old Gold’s Gym location at the corner of Fourth Street and Pine Avenue, and work on the interior has been ongoing since the beginning of the year. Gold’s Gym temporarily relocated to the corner of Fourth Street and Long Beach Boulevard as it waited for its new home at the Pike Outlets to be completed.

Planet Fitness is one of the most budget-friendly gym chains in the country, with monthly membership fees as low as $10 per month. With the addition of the Pine Avenue location, Long Beach will now have three Planet Fitness gyms including ones in North Long Beach and near the traffic Circle.

Cohon Parada, vice president of marketing for the gym, said in an email that the location is offering a fix-up sign-up promotion, with the first month of workouts free at the Pine Avenue location until July 31. The gym will open to the public Aug. 1.

The offer applies to both its $10 per month plan and its more expensive “FF Black Card,” which costs $24.99 per month but allows members to use any Planet Fitness location rather than just the one they sign up for, as well as access to tanning beds, massage chairs and the ability to bring a guest for free.

The Pine Avenue location will have six pieces of cardio equipment in addition to strength training equipment like free weights and other strength training machines.

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Long Beach local to open Juice It Up! on the east side of town

Owner Wesley Cureton said he wants to give back to Long Beach, where he has lived since 1987, by providing a fun and healthy option for students and residents.

By Brandon Richardson

Wesley Cureton was introduced to Long Beach as a kid completely by accident. Growing up in Compton, one day he and his friends were riding their bikes along Long Beach Boulevard. “We kept hearing this roar,” he said. “We heard it and we just followed the noise. It was the Long Beach Grand Prix.”

Seeing the high race and the atmosphere, Cureton, now 56, said he fell in love with the city. That love led him down a life path that is culminating in him opening his first-ever business, a Juice It Up! franchise, in Long Beach.

Cureton said the raw juice and smoothie bar concept used to have a location in Downtown, which has been closed for a number of years. So his forthcoming location at 6508 E. Spring St. — around the corner from Millikan High School, tucked between a home-thrashing business and a mailing service — will be the only one in the city.

Aside from raw juices and smoothies, Juice It Up! serves various fruit, acai and other bowls. The space is likely to open in January or February, Cureton said, adding that the road there has been long. He has always wanted to own his own business, Cureton said, and he knew he wanted to come back to the service industry. In high school, he worked at McDonald’s. While attending Los Angeles Harbor College, he worked at Font Locker.

In 1987, Cureton transferred to Cal State Long Beach, majoring in political science and minoring in public administration. He has lived in Long Beach ever since — first in a studio apartment at Redondo Avenue and Seventh Street, and now in a house about a mile from Millikan.

He worked on campus as the student union manager, then he worked in food and beverage at a Hyatt hotel.

His managerial skills, however, truly formed after he graduated from college in 1994, when he started as a case worker for a community correctional center, or halfway house, in Inglewood.

From there, he entered the federal government as a probation officer for the Ninth Circuit Court, worked as a pre-trial investigator and finally landed in the U.S. Transportation Security Administration, where he has been supervisor overseeing operations throughout Southern California since 2011.

“I’ve done a lot of jobs, but I hope that [being a] supervisor is what will translate into owning a business,” Cureton said. For a long time, becoming an entrepreneur was a waiting game.

Candy Queen Jackie Sorkin, Amy Mason bring immersive candy haven to Belmont Shore

By Caitlin Antonios

If you asked North Long Beach native Jackie Sorkin and her Candidly co-owner Amy Mason to describe each other in one word, it would probably be “badass.”

The two have spent years cultivating successful, albeit radically different careers, although you wouldn’t know that if you met them now. They each wear heart-breaking, comy friendship necklaces, finish each other’s thoughts, and have supported one another through the extreme highs and lows of opening their first brick-and-mortar.

Their families have come together as well to help them set up the store, opening their first brick-and-mortar.

Candied co-owner Amy Mason to native Jackie Sorkin and her one giant candy giraffe at a time.

Their families have come together as well to help them set up the store, opening their first brick-and-mortar.

Continued on page 22
were delivering. It felt very gratifying."

Thrilling,” Sarmadi said. “It’s not just the recognition of the work we had done and what we had retained the past two years. It was thrilling, it was absolutely thrilling,” Sarmadi said. “It’s not just the excitement, it’s the recognition of the work we had done and what we were delivering. It felt very gratifying.”

The couple previously owned two critically-acclaimed restaurants in Downtown Los Angeles, Spring and Church & State, before moving their business to Costa Mesa and becoming one of only three Orange County restaurants to gain a star. When they had their restaurants in L.A., Michelin had pulled out of releasing selections in the area, a decision that Pretty said was unfortunate. The guide is a rolodex of restaurants that have been tried by people whose jobs it is to taste food and know what’s good. They’re different from critics because complete, maintained anonymity means chefs can’t cook to them specifically. They sit down, order and pay, just like any other guest. The stars also factor in the dining experience, meaning there is a level of hospitality and attentiveness to guest experience that goes above the norm.

There have been criticisms of Michelin’s selectiveness, its tendency to go above the norm. For example, there are currently no starred restaurants in Africa (yes, the entire continent) or Mexico. And some food critics and writers have advocated for Michelin to be done away with as a measure for excellence. But it is what it says it is—a guide, not an end-all-be-all with the only good food in a city. And it’s notoriously unprofitable industry, restaurants ending up on an internationally recognized list become an undeniable boost.

“We’re a small business with one investor. It was a struggle,” Pretty said. “Tonight has the most covers we’ve had, and that repeats for so weeks straight.” For Kipple Pretty, received its star, the business had a similar boom. People were coming from all over to dine there. “Not only do we get local traffic, we get traffic from other parts of California and even international—they’re not traveling here to dine at Kipple Pretty, but if they’re here, because they’ve heard of us through the Michelin Guide, they choose to come see us,” Sarmadi said.

“That’s meaningful.”

For Heritage, this is the first time Pretty hasn’t had to worry about getting people in the door. “It’s overwhelming and exciting to be in a place to pay bills and not have to worry about the state of finances,” Pretty said.

The demand means that while they are taking it all in, they’re also putting their heads down because they have hungry diners to feed. The demand is so high they have to hire a new cook—immediately. This will trickle down everywhere in the community,” Pretty said. More reservations means more spending at local farmers markets, more gardening at their farm down the street, Heritage Farm, and more local employees hired.

“We can continue to support the community even more and give people a place to work where they can be happy,” Pretty said. “That’s so important to us.”

Getting on the Michelin guide has made restaurants a destination—and not just restaurants with stars. In between star ceremonies, the Michelin Guide hands out additional recognitions separate from star rankings, like Bib Gourmand awards (good food at a moderate price), recommended restaurants, and new discoveries. Those restaurants appear on the same list as the starred restaurants, and new discoveries. Those restaurants appear on the same list as the starred restaurants, and new discoveries.

“Our congratulations to Heritage and all the recipients,” Sarmadi said. “Whether it’s a star or another recognition.”

Chefs from all over, including Chef Dina Habibeh, owner and executive chef of Hammara; and Chef Eric Samaniego of Michael’s on Naples, posted their congratulations to the Heritage team on their Instagram.

“Heritage’s star means Michelin inspectors are here and they’re paying attention to Long Beach. Not only are they eating their way through the city, other restaurants can have confidence they too can attain a star—because it has been done before.”

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The Vintage LBC creates a sit-down charcuterie experience

By Kat Schuster

Vanessa Harmon found something unexpected in the pandemic-induced office exile: solace from the confining walls of her law firm. She also found the gumption to fulfill a decades-long dream of opening a cheese shop.

Last September, she opened the doors to The Vintage LBC in Baby Knolls, a cheese and wine shop that offers custom charcuterie boards—those elaborate grazing platters that became a social media sensation during the long months of lockdown. Luckily for Harmon, they survived the era and are more popular than ever.

“It’s a fun, creative process. I mean, you’re really kind of designing a really intriguing ‘rival’ Harmon told the Post.

Opening The Vintage LBC meant returning to her roots in fine dining and fulfilling a decades-long dream of opening a cheese shop. Harmon, who still practices law full time from home, works at the shop any spare moment she can find—afternoons, mornings and weekends. She also delivers fresh bread each morning.

The Baby Knolls shop is a nostalgic and much more colorful evolution of Cheese Addiction, which previously operated in the space.

“So, when (Cheese Addiction) came up for sale, I was like, ‘Oh my gosh, this fulfills all of those fantasies that I’ve had for the last 20 years’,” Harmon said.

That shop was purely a retail space, but Harmon wants her customers to have the option of experiencing charcuterie on-site—something she says no one else in Long Beach is doing.

“It’s a party in the front, retail in the back,” she said. “The front aspect is very European, sit-down and have a cheese, wine, beer.”

Operating on a small budget, she illustrated her own logo, filled the space with art and furniture most of which she designed herself. The atmosphere seeks to harken back to the mid-1970s—hanging pendant swag lights, vibrant earth tone paint and colorful vintage nappy glassware all characterize the space.

“Just kind of undecorated my house and brought it in here,” she said.

Cheese board basics

“Are you a blue cheese hater?” Harmon jokes, slicing a bit of what she considers to be a delicious cheese.

Harmon sells about 75 to 100 different types of cheeses that are cut to order at any given time. She also offers jams, gourmet butter, sauces and chutneys, which, she reminds us, is just a 19th century French term for cultured meat (that’s cheese in case you were wondering).

But The Vintage LBC also has a robust amount of offerings for vegetarians and vegans alike.

“People don’t realize that a ton of really popular cheeses, really great cheeses, are vegetarian,” Harmon said. “That’s because they’re made with vegetable rennet instead of animal enzymes.”

But there are different from vegan cheeses, she said. “Extremely different.”

The remont is the substance that coagulates the curds of the cheese and traditionally rennet is the line of a calf’s stomach or cow’s stomach,” she said. “But they now make vegetarian rennets which do the same thing.... and that doesn’t flavor or change the flavor in any way... So it’s still made with milk obviously, but it’s not made with animal.”

For example, plant-based rennets can be produced with artichokes. Alternatively, vegan cheeses are often nut-based. As The Vintage LBC, Harmon offers a vegan cheese flight for $8.

The shop’s cheese flights and charcuterie plates, ranging from $9 to $14, are entirely customizable at the counter and can be ordered for dine in or takeout.

“For me, it goes cheese first, then meat and what I call accompaniments,” Harmon said. For those who aren’t confident in their charcuterie board building skills, Harmon and her staff are available to help. When it comes to charcuterie design, Harmon says there are no rules, but it’s always good to have a balance of complementary cheese and meat flavors as well as crackers and accompaniments.

“But I always let the customer take the lead,” she said. “Because the way they are going to learn about cheese is by experimenting.”

Here are four steps to building a charcuterie board:

Step 1: Consider the season

Like fruits and vegetables, there are seasons for some cheeses, but not all, Harmon said.

From, not all animals produce milk year round. Second, there are seasonal changes in milk composition, such as the Drunken Goat (goat’s milk); a soft, double-cream cheese such as Forager D’affinois or an aged Gouda. For example, you might want something a little lighter— but I always love an aged Gouda with the little salt crystals.”

Step 2: Choose your cheese

Balance between flavor and texture is important when it comes to selecting cheese. For example, you might want a strong or semi-firm cheese such as the Drunken Goat (goat’s milk); a soft, double-cream cheese such as Forager D’affinois or an aged Gouda.

Harmon suggested that it’s important to taste a few cheeses before committing to them on a cheese flight or a charcuterie order.

“I would say not to limit yourself with one kind of cheese—don’t have five hard cheeses,” she said. “You’ve got to have a variety and range of milks and textures.”

Step 3: Choose your charcuterie (cured meats)

After selecting a balance of cheese textures and flavors, it’s time to select the charcuterie, which, if you remember, just translates to cured meats.

“At that point it was super creamy cheese, let’s get you some prosciutto,” Harmon said. “Something really nice to kind of balance that flavor.”

To pair with a hard cheese, Harmon suggested salami or a paté.

Step 4: Make it pretty, fill in the gaps

Asides from the delights of grazing culture, the world falls in love with the pandemic era charcuterie platter for its colorful palettes and endless possibilities from vegan platters to Mediterranean amuse-bouche.

“I’m always learning new techniques,” Harmon said. “You can make the meats into a salad so you can make these little bridges. There’s different ways of folding and cutting cheeses... if it’s a nice firm cheese, you can make these nice little geometric shapes.”

Then, Harmon fills in the gaps with sweet and savory accompaniments like fresh and dried fruit, chocolate, honey, jams, tomatoes, roasted tomatoes and olives.

“Lot’s of queso fresco (melted cauliflower) or goat cheese are wonderful,” she said. “It goes very nicely with the cheese.”

After that, the sky is the cheese board limit when it comes to adorning it with the finishing touches—from edible flowers to rosemary:

“Fresh sage is also beautiful, especially during Christmas and Thanksgiving,” she said.

The Vintage LBC is located at 3526 Atlantic Ave. in Long Beach and open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The Vintage LBC creates a sit-down charcuterie experience

By Kat Schuster

Vanessa Harmon, a Baby Knolls resident who practices law, designed every inch of The Vintage LBC.

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Vanessa Harmon, a Baby Knolls resident who practices law, designed every inch of The Vintage LBC.
struck out on her own and formed Brand Masonry. The two paths crossing happened serendipitously—Sorkin and Mason have the same hairdresser. But it could not have been a more perfect match. Sorkin is the creative, Mason is the corporate. Together, Candified was born.

“With everything going on, especially the pandemic, there’s so much sadness and darkness in the world,” Mason said. “We combined our superpowers to create something that will make people happy, and we’re using candy to spark that.”

Tucked in the middle of Belmont Shore’s Second Street next to a macaron shop opening soon, Candified transports guests into the candy haven of their childhood dreams. The store is stocked with nostalgic candy like Necco candy wafers, sour candy sodas and squishmallows (if sugary goodness doesn’t entice).

Sorkin’s childhood growing up in North Long Beach “without a silver spoon” and Mason’s mission for purpose-driven business are at the forefront of their minds when it comes to accessibility. They plan on using the store to host community groups, create a pass program so kids can come in multiple times at a reduced price, and offer workshops where they set aside funds to cover costs.

“In addition to the retail and photo opportunities, which pedestrians passing by were clamoring for when the store was still prepping to open last week, the store will have a creation station, filled with multiple build-your-own projects. Basically the candy version of a Build-A-Bear or Color-Me-Mine, two brands Sorkin has always looked up to over the years.

“It’s a teenage dream, somewhere where you never have to grow up,” Sorkin said. It’s also a place that will continue to change and evolve. Part of what make Sorkin a hot commodity for events was her ginormous candy sculptures. The duo plans to constantly change out the storefront with rotating candy sculptures so people can always see something new. The creation station will also have new activities rotated in.

While Sorkin’s immersive candy pop-up experience, Candytopia, has been successful since it launched in 2018, a brick-and-mortar is a daunting commitment.

“Jackie kept raving about Second Street, and we wanted to be part of its renaissance and revitalization,” Mason said.

For Sorkin, it was a return to home. There were certainly other places in Southern California, like L.A. or Orange County, that would have welcomed Candified, but it felt important to set up shop in the city where she was born and raised.

Their primary hope for the store is that it’s a place where people can come together, leave their problems at the door, and have some outrageous moments of joy.

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**Co-owner Jackie Sorkin makes a candy cookie pizza inside her new shop Candified in Belmont Shore.**

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**Art made out of thousands of pieces of candy are on display inside Candified in Belmont Shore.**

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**Brandon Richardson / Business Journal**

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