



Old L.A. News

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Two Brothers who built a Highland Park establishment



Photo by Christopher Nyerges

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Antigua Bakery opened its doors on North Figueroa in 2007, and has since become one of those places that locals just can't get enough of.

Besides excellent coffee straight from Guatemala, the shop features pastries, and a range of dishes ranging from huevos rancheros to burritos to burgers. Lovers of tamales will find their Guatemalan-style tamales exceptional – but you have to get there early each day before these sell out.

The owners, Dennis and Miguel Hernandez, were both born in Guatemala City, Guatemala, so they named their coffee house after their home town. (Antigua is the name of the "old" Guatemala City.)

They both moved to Los Angeles in 1999 as teens, moving to the U.S. with their father. They both worked at similar jobs, including food industry jobs which got them interested in starting their own coffeehouse. It was the memories of growing up watching their uncle bake that solidified their choice to open a bakery.

According to Miguel Hernandez, "When we created our menu, we wanted to make sure we featured the pastries we grew up with and the flavors of Guatemala, especially breakfast. Our menu became a mesh of Guatemalan and American foods. While few items have

changed over the years, the menu as a whole has remained unchanged. We have added a few Guatemalan dishes over the years, such as the popular Mayan Breakfast," he says with a smile.

With the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions, patrons can now eat inside – the inside seats 46 -- or outside in the back alfresco dining area that seats another 20 or so.

If you've even been to the old city of Antigua in Guatemala, you'll feel right at home here where the walls are decorated with Guatemalan art, and a selection of cups and woven bags from the motherland are also available for purchase.

But it was a long and hard path to get this little piece of Guatemala started. As Miguel Hernandez puts it, "It was not always straight-forward with our construction. There were many hours of navigating the uncharted territory of city permits, plans, and building inspections before their dream became a reality. But after lots of late nights and hard work, we finally started Antigua at 5703 N. Figueroa in September of 2007. The memory of getting that signed piece of paper from the city saying they were finally ready to open is a moment that is as fresh today as it was 14 years ago! Now, every year being open has been a blessing and tes-



Photo by Christopher Nyerges

tament to all of our dedication and hard work."

Today, besides buying a cup of hot (or cold) coffee, you can buy a large bag of whole beans from Guatemala to take home. It is something that means a great deal to the brothers to be able to showcase coffee from their homeland, Guatemala.

The Hernandez brothers also do their share of environmental action. Last



Security

4th Quarter '21

Patrol calls for service	36
Patrol BID contacts	869
Public contacts	810
Vehicle patrol hours	1,511
Bike patrol hours	0



Maintenance

4th Quarter '21

Trash Bags (removed)	2,461
Trash weight lbs	56,603
Graffiti tags removed:	303
Bulky items:	275
Pressure Washing hrs	24

year, when I was entering the café from the rear -- from the Old L.A. Farmers Market -- I noticed a new flower bed.

Where there was once trash and dead weeds, now there was now a beautiful wood-framed garden bed with colorful flowers and even some vegetables. This was a project that Miguel and his daughter Kathy planned and implemented.

RECYCLING COFFEE GROUNDS

“You know we throw a lot of coffee grounds away, right?” Miguel asked me. “Well, we filled that little raised bed garden with lots of our coffee grounds. It’s a really good way to recycle the grounds.” Miguel pointed out that they still end up tossing some used coffee grounds away, because they use so much. They do give some away to gardeners and mushroom growers, and they plan to continually find a home for their used grounds.

Miguel pointed out that he also waters the garden from the water that drips out of their air conditioning system. “See that tube up there,” points Miguel. “I ran a tube from the AC to that bucket, and the water from the bucket drips down and waters the garden. Why not put that water to use?,” he asked.

Miguel wasn’t sure if the AC condensation would be sufficient to water the garden, but to his surprise, he found that the water from Antigua’s AC system filled the five gallon jug at least three times a day, and up to five times during hot weather

SETTING AN EXAMPLE

The Hernandez brothers also recycle as many of their used cans as possible, in which they receive certain food items. And during very hot weather, they put out a jug of water and cups on the front entrance for passers-by to get a drink. “A lot of people, even



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homeless, really need a drink and sometimes they are a bit too embarrassed to just ask for water,” explains Miguel. They also put out a water dish for dogs.

“We’re just trying to do the right thing to give back to the community,” explains Miguel. “And if we do this, maybe others will do so also, and we’ll all make a difference to our community.”

NFA Goals

- Provide Educational, Cultural, Artistic, Charitable, Social Service and public improvements.
- Increase economic well being for property owners, employees and businesses.
- Provide improvements and activities to assist in economic and commercial revitalization.
- Provide clean, safe and beautification programs to improve economic prosperity for property owners, businesses and the community.
- Bring about investment of public and private capital within the Business Improvement District and surrounding area for public benefit and charitable purposes.

Mission Statement

North Figueroa Association is the management organization for the Highland Park Business Improvement District and is an advocate for the North Figueroa Property owners by empowering and aiding in the stimulation of growth, development, revitalization and maintaining the historic value of the North Figueroa Corridor.

The North Figueroa Assoc. will support an environment in which stakeholders can conduct commerce, live and play.

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Contact: 323-255-5030

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Annual Budget 2021

Public Right of Way	\$376,854.64	(65%)
Corporate Identity & Organization	\$110,000.00	(35%)
Total Annual Budget	\$486,854.64	(100%)

How You Can Help

You can help keep the district clean, safe and pedestrian friendly by:

- Making sure your businesses do not place their trash in the sidewalk receptacles. These receptacles are for pedestrians only.
- Keep windows & awnings clean
- Take down any old, torn or faded signs or banners.
- Sweep your store front. While the crews sweep the streets, they do not sweep private property
- Post store hours in windows.
- Call security with concerns. The number is: 800-350-1944. Report to LAPD, as well.