LATINLOVER

FOOD & TRAVEL MAGAZINE

ISSUE 3 – AUGUST 2012
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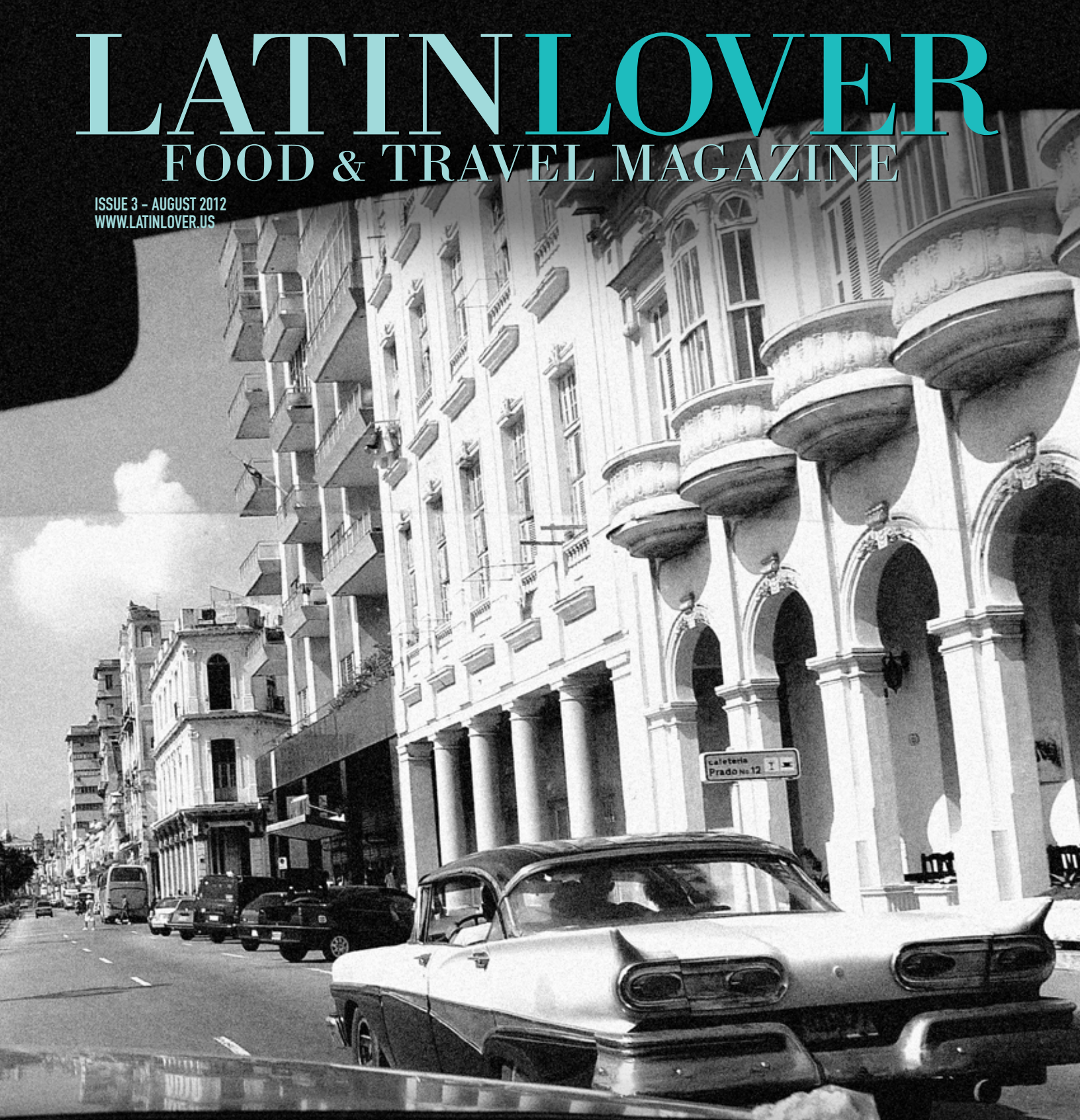

CARIBBEAN FLAVORS CONGA AND SALSA IN HAVANA | STEP INTO THE PAST AT COLONIAL SANTO DOMINGO | MEET DOMINICAN CHEF MIGUEL TRINIDAD | EXPLORE EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO | AUTHENTIC PUERTO RICAN FLAVORS AT CASA ADELA | INTRODUCING EXECUTIVE CHEF VICTORIANO LOPEZ AT LA MAR & MORE...

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COVER PHOTO: RIDDING ON AN "ALMENDRON" THROUGH PASEO DEL PRADO.
By Nicole Franchy

PERNIL AT CASA ADELA, A CARIBBEAN STAPLE
Photo by Aditi Das

Dreamy illustration inspired by our Caribbean Flavors by artist Carla Torres, www.carlatorres.com

CONTENT

PUERTO RICO

LATIN LOVER
FOOD & TRAVEL MAGAZINE

MORIR SOÑANDO

There is a well known Dominican drink called *Morir Soñando*, a velvety concoction of orange juice, milk, vanilla, ice. The name translates as "to die dreaming." That's the feeling we had in mind in planning our Caribbean issue, an exotic trip through Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

Join us in visiting La Havana's Biennal in Cuba. Enjoy a home-cooked Dominican meal from our Abuela's Recipe. Explore one of the most vibrant institutions in the New York City arts scene, El Museo del Barrio. Talk with the new Executive Chef at La Mar Cebicheria Peruana, and sit down with the ultimate Latin Lover, the great Diana Kennedy, who opens the doors of her home to us in Zitacuaro, Mexico.

Close your eyes, hold tight and let the dream wash over you.

Buen viaje!

CHRIS YONG-GARCÍA
FOUNDING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LATIN LOVER Food & Travel Magazine is
a publication of Garcia Media LLC,
629 West 135th Street, # 65 New York, NY 10031.

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Rocío Cerón was born in Mexico City in 1972. A poet, editor and travel writer, her books of poetry include *Basalto* (2002) which received the Gilberto Owen National Literature Prize in 2000; *Soma* (2003); *Imperio* (2008, Dominican Republic, 2010); *Imperio/Empire* (2009, interdisciplinary and bilingual edition) and *Tiento* (UANL, 2010). She´s a frequent contributor to the *National Geographic Traveler*, Latin America edition. She received the "2005 See America Award" for her chronicle about Portland, Oregon. Her books and poems have been translated into English, Finnish, Swedish and German. Currently, she is a grantee of the Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte. View more of her work at **www.rocioceron.blogspot.com**

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Ana De Orbegoso is a Peruvian visual artist based in New York, whose interdisciplinary art practice explores different aspects of the individual or social psyche through the use of popular iconography and staged situations. Fulfilling her passion for music, she has also created images for musician's records. Recipient of a 2008 NYFA, NALAC and *En Foco* fellowships, her work has been widely exhibited. Her project *Vírgenes Urbanas* based on colonial paintings of the School of Cusco, a non-stop traveling exhibit around Peru's different regions, cities and small towns, is to this day the most locally exhibited art project in Peruvian history.
www.anadeorbegoso.com

PAKO DOMINGUEZ
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Pako Dominguez is an experienced photographer who takes enormous pleasure in being part of your special day. He will document your exceptional moments with candid, lively, artfully-crafted photographs. Pako has photographed weddings and events internationally and offers excellent, personalized services in English, Spanish or French. **www.phototeka.net**

MELISSA FRANCHY
WANDERLUSTER

Melissa Franchy is a photographer, traveler, foodie, scuba diver and art lover, who is passionate about exploring the world broadly and authentically. Her travel research has taken her from swimming with whale sharks in Holbox, Mexico to learning how to cook Vietnamese food on an authentic junk boat over Halong Bay, Vietnam to camping in carpet tents on the Moroccan desert tasting tagine made by her nomadic Berber hosts. Born in Peru, Melissa moved to NYC 12 years ago. She has studied International Business and Photography. Her love for food, travel and global culture drives her to always crave her next travel adventure.

NICOLE FRANCHY
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Nicole holds a Graduate Degree in Audio Visual and Visual Arts from HISK, Belgium. Her work has been exhibited in several shows in Latin America, Europe and the U.S., including the recent Havana Biennial, Dublin Contemporary, and Lima Photography Biennial. Nicole currently lives between her native Lima and Berlin. She can be found roaming flea markets, searching for photos, old postcards and objects..

EDUARDO GONZÁLEZ-CUEVA
WRITER

Eduardo González Cueva is a Peruvian human rights activist and writer. A citizen of the world, he has been based in New York for 14 years, while crisscrossing the continents. He works at the International Center for Transitional Justice, where he specializes in researching war crimes. His human rights advocacy has been featured in *The New York Times*, *El País*, *Globe and Mail*, *Al Jazeera*, *BBC* and other media. His blog, in Spanish, "La Torre de Marfil", is dedicated to topics of culture and politics.

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TESSA LIEBMAN
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Tessa was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and has been traveling since she was little; she has eaten sheep's brain in a Moroccan market, spent way too much money on salt in Paris, bicycled around Lima and traveled on a research grant from The Culinary Trust, to Mexico (where she often visited her gringo artist grandparents as a child). She is a freelance food, travel and lifestyle writer and food stylist with work in *Epicurious*, *New World Review*, *WSJ Magazine*, *Brides* and *Manhattan* magazines. Her years in kitchens as a professional chef inform her work.

COCO MARTIN
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Coco Martin is an architect and a photographer. Martin's work has been exhibited in various venues since 1991, including the First Biennial of Photography of Puerto Rico (1998), Second Biennial of Lima, Peru (2000), at the Biennial of Photography of Quito, Ecuador (2001) and at the Organization of American States Museum in Washington, D.C. (2008). Additionally his work has been exhibited regularly and published in Peru, USA, Chile, Spain, El Salvador and Argentina and other parts of Latin America. After 8 years as a professor of photography in a private School of Visual Arts in Lima. Coco now lives and works in New York City. **www.cocomartin.us**

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Suzanne Oboler is Professor of Latin American and Latina/o Studies at John Jay College, of the City University of New York. She is Founding Editor of the academic journal, *Latino Studies*. Her research centers on human rights with a focus on Latino immigrant incarceration, and on race, immigration and belonging in the Americas. She is the author of *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States*; editor of *Latinos and Citizenship: The Dilemma of Belonging and Behind Bars: Latino/as and Prison in the United States*; and co-editor of *Neither Enemies nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos*. She is also co-editor in chief of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latino/as in the United States* (4 volumes) and of the forthcoming 2-volume, *Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in Contemporary Politics, Law and Social Movements*.

JORGE OCHOA
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After working as a Photojournalist in newspapers and magazines in Perú for 10 years, Jorge moved to New York to study Photography at the International Center of Photography. He then worked as a master color printer for top fashion photographers. Today, Jorge is a freelance portrait photographer and is developing personal art photography projects. He's also learning Digital Design to complement his skills as an image-maker.

CAITLIN PURDY
WRITER

Caitlin Purdy is a writer originally from Rochester, New York. She recently moved back to the US after living in Lima, Peru and currently resides in Boulder, Colorado, where she studies Comparative Literature at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She enjoys traveling, hiking, kayaking and all things Peruvian, especially pisco.

JESSICA SOLT
WRITER

Born in Boston but raised in chaotic Mexico City, Jessica Solt would choose a good taco al pastor over clam chowder any day. When she's not making a living typing furiously on her keyboard, Jessica muses about life, food and other weird things at **www.chesterwrites.blogspot.com**. The most important goal in her bucket list is to travel around the world. She likes spinning—bikes not bottles—books and wine. She lives in New York.

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R.E. TOLEDO
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Was born and raised in Mexico City, graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1994 with a B.S. in Communications and an M.A. in Spanish from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2002. R.E. has contributed for the Spanish Newspaper *Hola Tennessee* and for *Revista Esperanza* in México City. Her poem Chilancana was recently published in the Spring 2012 Issue of Label Me Latina/o. In 2010 she hosted "De Todo un Poco" a Community Service Spanish radio show. R.E. coedited Imanhattan 3, the 2012 issue of the magazine for the MFA in creative writing in Spanish at NYU.

CARLA TORRES
ILLUSTRATOR

Carla is an award-winning illustrator based in New York City. Her work has been exhibited in several venues locally and internationally. Her latest news includes: Being selected by DOT Urban Art Program to create temporary public artwork in Tribeca, an Award from *Applied Arts Magazine* Illustration Awards, a lecture at The University of Manitoba School of Art Canada, a mural commissioned by Materials for the Arts, a group exhibition in Chile and Ecuador, an upcoming publication of her children's book, *Larry & Friends*.

CAMILA VALDEAVELLANO
VISUAL ARTIST

Born in Lima in 1973, Camila has a degree in Interior Architecture & Object Design at École Camondo in Paris. She has created set designs for dance, theatre and film productions; illustrated publications, and designed commercial and industrial products. *Memorias de Salmo Trutta* (2007), her first stop-motion animation film, co-directed in NY with Cayetana Carrion, was exhibited in diverse international film festivals and has won two awards in Peru. Currently, she is living in Rio de Janeiro with her husband and daughter.

BRIAN WANIEWSKI
WRITER

Brian Waniewski is a poet, futurist and management and marketing consultant. He is cofounder and managing partner of the global future forecasting firm, Popular Operations, where he helps top organizations identify emerging opportunities, develop new visions and strategize to create new possibilities within existing structures. He also serves as managing director at the Institute of Play, a New York-based non-profit innovating at the intersection of games and learning. Brian studied history and literature in the US and Berlin and is currently on a crash course in Latin culture thanks to his Brazilian-Peruvian wife and baby daughter.

JAMES WILLIMETZ
WRITER

James Willimetz was born in Tennessee but grew up in Perú. He's been teaching ESL at Hunter College for over 25 years and is a big fan of Peruvian pisco. He imported his wife from Peru and has a teenaged daughter. He has a website for students (**www.goenglishing.com**) and a blog on pisco (**www.piscoquest.com**).

POSTCARD FROM CUBA:

CONGA IN HAVANA

Text and photos by
Nicole Franchy

Young Cuban Artist dancing at one of the Biennials Party

View of Havana from Roma´s apartment

Cuba, a long time desired trip was finally a reality this past May when I was invited to participate at the 11th Havana Biennial. I had always wanted to get to know and experience first hand my close family's hometown.

On arrival at Marti International Airport, the customs agent asked what my nationality was and all of a sudden I was involved in a conversation about our national liquors. Pisco and rum were discussed as if they were some sort of identity card exchange.

Roma, my uncle's Cuban wife, picked up my fiancée Fernando and I from the Airport. On our way to her 18th floor apartment at the Vedado district, we drove by La Plaza de la Revolución, the image of Che Guevara, the José Martí memorial - all iconic places we knew from the media and lived in our imaginary. She had warned us about the elevator not working all the time. The thought of us climbing 18 floors prompted my aunt to come up with a plan B.

We pushed the black button in anticipation, heard a distant sound, peaked through a small window and saw the elevator belts moving. A few seconds later, a sudden bounce made us realize we had finally arrived at my aunt's floor. Once up there I walked towards the balcony, taking in a huge scoop of air while scanning the view all the way to the end of the old city and back along the malecón.

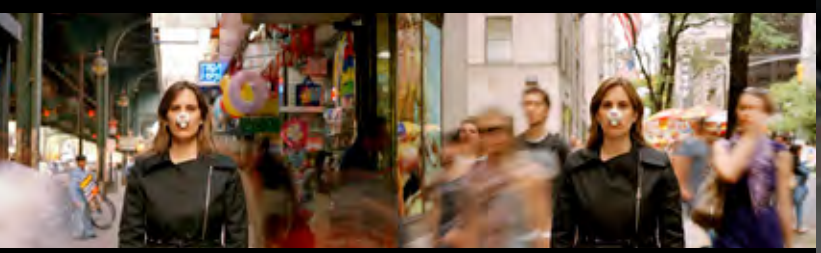
Once settled, I went to the Wilfredo Lam Contemporary Art Center, the Biennial's center of operation. One could sense the hype of the Biennial; we were all rushing to get things done. Logistics and technical aspects for setting

up the show demanded adapting to particular local ways and context difficulties. Getting a high capacity external hard drive or adapting artists' video technology to fit available software on the island was a challenge. One of the organizers said to me: In Cuba, if you think things are going wrong, it´s only about to get fixed. And at the end of the day, it was.

The Biennial was hosted among 50 venues and collateral events with artists from 43 different countries. This years edition theme was the relationship between visual productions and the social imaginary, spanning from intimate approaches to those reverberating on wider social issues.

The group show I participated in was, "You and Eye, Existential Cartographies & Urban itineraries," curated by Wendy Navarro and Ada Azor. Among other artists were Pedro Barateiro (Portugal), Itziar Barrio (Spain), Marcelo Cidade (Brasil), Humberto Diaz, (Cuba), Daniel García Andújar (Spain), Deborah Nofret (Cuba), Anne Lorenz (Switzerland), Avelino Sala (Spain).

Taking the Art out of institutions and galleries and into the streets to interact with the people was one of the Biennial's goals: site specific installations, urban



YOU AND EYE, by Nicole Franchy
Film Stills, Two Channel HD video Performance 9´ 02"

interventions, performances and outdoor projects took over the city. Visiting the Biennial scattered throughout La Havana was an atypical experience. We were mostly walking around and riding on Almendrones, (literally, big almonds), 50´s American Chevrolets, Buicks, Cadillacs used as "colectivos," shared cab rides with an established route. These brands and the old Russian Ladas are still the most seen in Havana.

Walking around with curators and artist friends while melting in the tropical weather, we headed to Paseo del Prado to see "Conga Irreversible", the fabulous performance by "Los Carpinteros", an artistic Cuban duet that presented a conga backwards in reverse in a parade through the historic Paseo del Prado, a comparsa all dressed in black was twirling and dancing to the beat of drums and metals by a live band. Local people mixed in with the international biennial crowd followed along, cheering and dancing. We kept bumping into friends and people from the art world.

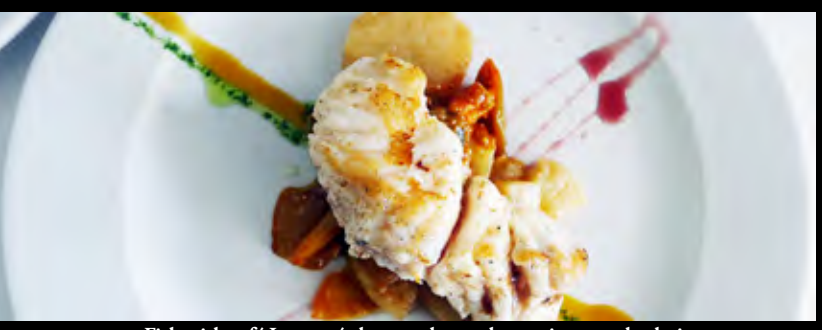
LOS CARPINTEROS *Conga Irreversible*, 2012 Performance held at Oncena Bienal de La Habana Photos by Ignacio Barros Courtesy of Galeria Fortes Vilaça

Craving a daiquiri, we stopped by La Floridita, a charming XIX century bar located at Habana Vieja, cradle of the daiquiri and one of Hemingway's favorite watering holes. The place was hopping with other thirsty conga followers, like our curator friend Christian, whom we met at the bar. Daiquiris kept coming, one after the other; first lemon then strawberry, guayaba…, my glass was swinging, looking like a pool someone had just jumped into, sticky arms but going for the next flavor, chatting away while another live band played in the background.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER by Rachel Valdés Camejo. Installation on the bay of La Havana. Huge mirror 16 mt_L x 3 H x 1 mt wide

Almendrones

Roma, Fernando and Nicole at café Laurent Paladar



Fish with café Laurent´s home salsa verde, marinera and tuboize

Fernando Bryce and Nicole Franchy

We rode a "bici taxi" into the Havana night. Fading away facades under the yellow lights, contrasting silence as the wheels kept spinning fueled by the strength of a 60 year old man named Enrique, as vigorous as a teenager. He told us stories about the times he had docked at the port of Callao in Peru, with a Cuban crew back in the early seventies.

Later that night, we drove along the endless malecón, one of the city's main meeting spots hosting biennial artwork, now attracting local and International visitors. We were heading to Miramar, a residential area where Carlos Garaicoa, a Cuban artist was hosting a Rum-fueled party. Curators, artists and Biennial groupies all came together, dancing to D.J Enrique Maresma´s crossover beats from salsa to house to electro-rock, till the break of dawn.

Mother's day was my farewell to this awe-inspiring city. Fernando and I took Roma to celebrate at the Café Laurent, the decor dated back to a 60s vintage style paladar located at a Vedado penthouse overlooking the iconic FOCSA building, the second tallest in Havana. The paladar is a phenomenon that started 10 years ago by homeowners transforming part of their houses or apartments into restaurants that allow up to 16 guests. There was a surge a year ago, when a new law passed that increased the number of guests and allowed the owners of paladares to buy most of the goods directly from the "guajiros" or farmers.

I ventured into the kitchen and met Chef Victor Ramón, who kindly welcomed me into his kitchen and described the dishes he was preparing, like the creamy meatballs with onions and peppers garnished with crunchy boniato, a white sweet potato I had never seen before. Next to him, Sous Chef Pepe shared with me the ingredients of their home Salsas for the fish dishes we were about to taste: Verde (parsley, jerez, garlic, olive oil), Marinera (roasted tomatoes, cognac and fish fumet) and Tuboize (olives, fish fumet, honey).

Back at the table, Roma was very excited to tell us that "Pablito" was sitting at the next table: The "Pablito" she was referring to, was the famous musician Pablo Milanés, one of the founders of Cuban Nueva Trova. Enjoying the wonderful meal paired with fascinating conversation, like many others we had during breakfast when Roma would unearth episodes of Cuban history and reminiss about her life and family experiences on the island, was a great ending to a visit beyond my expectations.

VIVIANA CARBALLO

Introduction by Louie Sloves
Text from "Havana Salsa" chapter X

"Havana Salsa is a collection of stories about her large, extended family, a rather eccentric group who conducted their lives against the extraordinary backdrop of Havana, and of her own experiences amid the city's former delicious decadence. It also showcases the food and recipes Carballo associates with each delightful family memory, beginning with her childhood in the forties (calabaza fritters, sweet plantain tortillas, and oxtail stew), through the sensual fifties (roast shoulder of lamb, Cuban bouillabaisse), and then the first eighteen months of Castro's revolution (mango pie, pollito en cazuela, and papas with chorizo)..."

"Havana Salsa tells the history of Carballo's Havana as only she can -- through the intimate and unifying experience of food, family, and friends."

Viviana at her 2nd birthday party

Viviana and her dad Carlos Carballo
a.k.a. Professor Carbell

Her face was smiling, beaming at me from the pages of *The New York Times* food section. She was teaching cooking at a school in her home on the Upper West Side. I had only been up there to go to Zabar's or the Museum of Natural History. This would be a new experience for me.

She had recently graduated from the Cordon Bleu in Paris, after traveling around the world as a stewardess for Eastern Airlines, and she was from Havana.

Our two worlds could not have been more different. I was raised near Pittsburgh and only came to New York City to go to school, but I loved food and was learning how to eat well, so off to Viviana's cooking school I went. I learned everything; how to make a souffle by whipping egg whites by hand in a copper bowl, how to make authentic mousse au chocolat, how to poach a salmon, braise a duck, and prepare a live lobster for it's final plunge. She was my own Julia Child, an expert in teaching French cooking and techniques with her own unique and outrageous Cuban flare.

We became friends and I absorbed not just cooking skills but a cultural awareness. We loved old movies shown on the big screen, hopefully double features with Fred Astaire. We went to museum openings, loved the costume exhibits at the Met.

We traveled together in search of wonderment and delicious food adventures. In Istanbul, she wouldn't let me rest after a 10 1/2 hour flight. She swept me off to the Grand Bazaar, where she had already charmed Ali, the owner of a carpet store. He greeted us with mint tea and freshly roasted lamb brought in by his father. Soon we were members of his family, eating, drinking and nodding with them in enjoyment and delight. One whole day after arriving and purchasing seven carpets, I finally got to sleep.

In Bilbao, we met many of the chefs on the cutting edge of building and deconstructing a new world cuisine. We visited the museum, the old town square, a flea market, we drank Txakoli and visited a winemaker on the Basque coast. Then to Madrid, for a gathering of chefs at their annual meeting, where they all became "her boys"; and back to Bilbao and more travels.

Through it all, never knowing what to wear and always debating how to accessorize, we always tried to create the perfect menu for the occasion. We lost husbands, got divorces, tipped the scale up and down, changed our hair color. We have shared a lifetime of experiences and remain friends, and that is the best adventure.

Pilgrimage to Regla

The black Virgen of Regla in Chipiona, a small coastal village near Cádiz, Spain, has mysterious origins. The legend claims that the Virgen has African origins- that St. Augustine himself, as Bishop of Hippo in North Africa in the fourth and fifth centuries, had commissioned her image to be carved out of a solid piece of wood. Later he sent the statue to Spain for protection from the vandals, but no one knew the fate of the statue. In the thirteen century, by a "miracle," the statue was found in Chipiona well hidden from view by a fig tree. Since then the Virgen de Regla has made her home in Chipiona in a beautiful sanctuary by the sea. Eventually her devotion reached Havana through the Augustine brothers and her depository was a hamlet at the entrance of the Bay of Havana. As the hamlet grew, it adopted the name of the Virgin, Regla. Here she had a view of the ocean too.

Upon arrival in Cuba, the Virgen de Regla's legend grew even more extraordinary. She became part of the Santería pantheon and merged with the powerful African deity Yemayá, the mother of all life. Yemayá counted Dulce among her more devoted daughters and as such Dulce kept a small shrine for her in our kitchen. Everything Dulce cooked was blessed by Yemayá. For a long time Dulce had wanted to introduce me to Yemayá, La Virgen de Regla, in person. I didn't quite understand what she meant, but I was eager to go on any adventure with her. Dulce was incredibly persuasive and after months of trying, finally got permission from my mother to take me to Yemayá's sanctuary, la Virgen de Regla Chapel.

In order to reach the town of Regla we had to travel across the Bay of Havana in the *lanchita*, a sputtering ferry (a very fitting vehicle for the goddess of the sea). On that day, a Friday (Yemayá's favorite day), we boarded the brightly painted ferry and sat to the side so we would get wet with the sea spray. The church, as well as most of Regla, was built on the side of a hill close to the water with an ample view of the bay. It was not an imposing church in size or treasure. It was modest, humble even, magnificent only in the devotion of its people to the black Madonna.

The image of the Virgin herself, placed in the center of the main altar, was not very large. She wore a white gown draped with a midnight blue cape that twinkled with tiny stars and a tall crown encrusted with semiprecious stones. La Virgen stood on a crescent moon with a halo of golden rays all around her and held a standing white baby Jesus on her lap. Her countenance was peaceful and sweet. It was easy for me to see why this particular saint in the guise of Yemayá was acclaimed as the mother of all, of having power over the moon and all female mysteries, maternity, conception, and childbirth. She was the ruler of the oceans.

I was overwhelmed with love when I saw her. She was so beautiful, so delicate, so gentle and kind. She looked right into my eyes, and I wanted her to hold me in her arms, to comfort me. I understood why Dulce loved this Virgin so much, why she softened when she spoke of Yemayá. Dulce saw I now understood everything, even how La Virgen de Regla and Yemayá could be one and the same. She put her arm around my shoulders to draw me closer.

As an offering, we had brought Yemayá's favorite foods, plantain chips and pork cracklings, black-eyed pea fritters and half a watermelon cut in slices, which Dulce had carefully and gently prepared that morning. When it was time, we sang a little song to her in Lucumí.

Mariquitas

Universal in the Spanish speaking Caribbean, plantain chips are claimed as their own by each and every single island. They've spread all over and you are just as likely to find them in chic establishments as in the corner bodega. The truth is there couldn't be a simpler and tastier alternative to potato chips. Eat them with consciousness as a tribute to Yemayá.

1 large very green plantain
Canola oil for frying
Sea salt to taste

To peel the green plantain, slice off the ends and cut the plantain in half. Make two lengthwise slits at the natural ridges of the skin, cutting through to the flesh. Lift the skin away with the edge of the knife, pulling across rather than lengthwise.

Into a large, deep pot (a Dutch oven is ideal), pour about 2 inches oil and heat to 375ºF.

While the oil heats, slice the plantain very thin with a mandoline (if available) or, with a very sharp, thin knife, slice as thinly as you can. The slices should be thin enough to be translucent. Keep in a bowl of cold water with a squint of lemon juice to avoid discoloration. If using a mandoline slice directly into the hot oil. Pat dry. Place the chips in the oil one right after another or they will stick together. Work quickly or they will burn. Swirl the oil with the back of a slotted spoon to keep them moving and as soon as the chips turn yellow, drain on paper towels.

Salt generously with sea salt. Once they have completely cooled they can be saved in an open paper bag and reheated later in a medium oven in the same bag.

Fiery Chicken Breasts with Sautéed Sweet Apples for Changó

Changó, an important Santería deity, is omnivorous and very partial to all fowl and lamb. He loves corn flour and apples, dried fish, red wine and rum. His favorite offering is an apple with drizzled honey; he may be be inclined to bring sweetness to your affairs. His color is red, his instrument the drums. He rules the dance and is a very virile deity, a man's man. He is irascible, capricious, and has many a contradictory *patakí*, the myths that describe the deity and its powers. One *patakí* states that Ochún, La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre, was his birth mother and that Yemayá had raised him as her son. Another says his birth mother was Obatalá, La Señora de la Mercedes, and it was Ochún who raised him. Yet another has Ochún, Obatalá and Yemaya living together and Changó coming to scold them for an infraction towards Elegguá, guardian of all doors and roads. And one better still, along the Oedipus line, involving Yemayá.

For the Chicken
2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut in half and lightly flattened
2 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
¾ teaspoon hot pimentón
2 tablespoons vegetable oil

For the Apples
2 tablespoons sweet butter
2 Gala or Fuji apples, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon dark honey
2 tablespoons dark rum

Rinse the chicken breast and pat dry with paper towels. Combine the flour with the seasonings and lightly dust the chicken breasts with this mixture.

In a non stick frying pan just large enough to hold the chicken breasts without overlapping, heat the oil at medium-high heat. Place the chicken in the pan and brown well on both sides, about 3 minutes on each side. Turn the heat down and cook for about 8 minutes total, depending on the thickness of the breast, or until the juices run clear when pricked with a fork.

Drain the chicken breasts over paper towels and keep warm.

To the same pan, add the butter and sauté the apple slices at medium-high heat for about 3 minutes until slightly soft. Drizzle the honey over apples and shake the pan to evenly distribute. Add the rum and ignite. Cook for 1 additional minute.

Transfer the chicken breasts to a serving platter and place the apple slices around them to serve.

Santería

The Yoruba religion, or la *Regla de Ochá*, to use its correct name, came to Cuba with the African slaves who had been brought to work the sugarcane fields. Much of the Yoruba pantheon assumed specific Catholic saints' images and personalities to become Santería. To the Catholic practitioner, the image of the saint is the representation of a spiritual entity who lived as a human at some point in history. To the practitioner of Santería, the Catholic image of the saint is the embodiment of a Yoruba god. Santería in its purest form is a worship of the saints, a curious mix of magical African rites and traditions of the Catholic Church.

The *orishás* (deities) were matched to the Catholic saints by character traits and by similarities in image representations. For example, Yemayá was a fecund deity who ruled the waters, so the fact that La Virgen de Regla lived by the sea made her a logical match for Yemayá.

Changó, who had power over thunder and was both male and female, was paired off with Santa Barbara. In both representational images, the male Changó and female Santa Barbara both wear crowns and carry arms; he, a double edged ax; she, a sword. She has been identified with storms and lightning; he rules fire, warriors and violence. When Changó attacked he was implacable, but just like a tropical tempest, his fury was soon spent.

Changó is the most popular of the gods among Cubans, and some of the old *babalaos* (high priests ofSantería), say that it is because his character resembles the Cubans' so much. He loves to dance, drink and eat, and he is a terror with women. Others claim that Changó is so popular because he is so feared. It is best to be on his good side, appeasing him daily with his favorite foods. Yemayá is the only one who can keep Changó in check. As terrifying as he is, he has to obey her, she is one of his mothers.

Credit an open mind or the infinite capacity of Cubans for all things fantastic and implausible, there was absolutely no duality in this form of worship (except for the

profoundly Catholic). Yemayá and the Virgen de Regla, Ochún and La Caridad del Cobre, Cuba's patron saint, Changó and St. Barbara, were to us one and the same.

The Yoruba religion has a convoluted cosmology and an intricate pantheon. The gods' fickle and complicated lives rival any in Greek mythology. Precisely because these deities fought, womanized, ate, drank and tricked each other, they seemed human and were that much more approachable as a result.

An *orishá*, so human in character, may also appear human in his needs, with well-defined tastes and preferences that may demand not only flowers and candles, but cigars and rum, as well as his favorite foods prepared a certain way. If you were to comply with the deity's wishes, you would be granted a special protection from evil, disease, and heartbreak, and be granted an abundance of health, wealth, and love. The relationships forged between gods and humans were familial ones with obligations on both sides.

There is at least one *patakí* for each *orishá* that justifies or explains in elaborate detail how each *orishá's* taste in a specific food came about. Those were the stories Dulce told me everyday.

Yemaya

Yemayá's sacrificial animals are lamb and fowl, fish, turtles and goats. Her offering foods include plantain chips, pork cracklings and black-eyed peas. She likes her food liberally spread with sugar cane molasses. Yemaya's favorite fruit is the watermelon. Her water is seawater. A beautiful way to honor her is to bring white flowers to the ocean's edge and float them as you dedicate them to her.

Yemayá is summoned at the seashore with a gourd rattle. She is very graceful and carries a fan made of duck feathers. To dance she undulates her body, at first gently, growing slowly to crescendo of waves in a storm.

Her colors are blue and white; her altar should be decorated with silver objects. She loves rings, seashells, starfish, and seahorses, anything that has to do with the ocean. All the offerings should be made in sets of seven, her favorite number. She likes her children to wear her necklaces of white and blue beads.

"PISCO, the clear grape spirit of South America, is emerging from the mist of history and bringing rich freshness to cocktails. In New York and other cities, liquor stores and bars that carried no pisco a few years ago have several now and are adding more, making it the fastest-growing spirit in the country…Melanie and Lizzie Asher, sisters who were born in Peru, attended Harvard and now live in Washington, introduced Macchu Pisco in 2006. Within a year, they were the biggest exporters of Peruvian pisco, and they say their sales have increased 30 percent every year…"

The New York Times. Article published on June 21, 2011

MACCHU PISCO

The Spirit of The Andes

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VICTORIANO LOPEZ: THE NEW NEW YORKER

By Chris Yong-García
Photos by Coco Martin

To many Peruvians, Gastón Acurio is a national hero. He has won the world over to the wonders of Peruvian cuisine by opening a string of top-notch restaurants. Last year it was New York City's turn, with La Mar Cebicheria Peruana. At the helm as Executive Chef: Victoriano Lopez, a man whose name nearly spells victory. He overcame tremendous odds in his own career and now stands ready to take on one of the most discerning cities for new restaurants on the planet!

Gastón Acurio is the chef and owner of restaurants in twelve countries around the world, and is known as the Ambassador of Peruvian Cuisine. His restaurants include: Astrid&Gastón, Tanta, La Mar Cebicheria Peruana, Chicha, Panchita and Madam Tusan. In addition to his restaurants, Gastón has been instrumental in creating a culinary school in Perú's capital city that offers education to underprivileged students and job placement following graduation.

Chef Victoriano was born into a humble family in the Andes, and at age 18 he went to Lima to work for an uncle as a street vendor. Victoriano landed a job at Astrid&Gastón, where Gastón discovered and developed Victoriano's talents in the kitchen. Victoriano has held many positions in Gastón's various restaurant kitchens, and has become his most trusted partner, overseeing the openings of new restaurants around the world. In addition to Gastón's restaurants, Victoriano has trained in the kitchens of top restaurants, including Cellar de Can Roca, Mugaritz, and Arzak.

Photos by Noah Fecks

LOMO SALTADO

PAPA A LA HUANCAINA

VICTORIANO & KATY

CEVICHE

CY: The restaurants you've opened are in cities like Madrid, Caracas, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Quito, Bogotá, Panama, Santiago de Chile in addition to several others in Lima. How does that young man who left his hometown of Chavin-Ancash in search of his fortune in Lima, the capital of Peru, and is now in New York the capital of the world, feel about that journey today?

VL: 17, 18, 19, 20 years have gone by since then… To begin with, in 1995, Gaston Acurio gave me the opportunity to work for him; but I never imagined that I would travel so much, or go to any of the countries you've just mentioned --much less that I would manage a restaurant in New York. It didn't even cross my mind…I have always liked to learn and to teach. That is the key to success--what I have learned from Gaston and what I can teach to others; Gaston dreams of having restaurants around the world and we all share that same idea. It's a way for us to be able to showcase our culture to the whole world through our food.

Look, I'm proud of my family, my parents and of myself for having been able to take advantage of the opportunities I've been given. And, well, here I am --with humbleness, here I am...

CY: Humility is one of your traits; but discipline is too, right?

VL: That's right, discipline is very important, and not only in the kitchen. Discipline is important in all areas. If there's no discipline, if there's no humility, if there's no dedication, there's no future.

You make it by doing things, by respecting, by teaching, liking, loving the people around you. There are different cultures, different people everywhere, in every city –and you meet all different kinds of people from all over. In this kitchen I have cooks from all over the world, Mexicans, Peruvians, Katy who is here, next to me, is my American *cevichera*…

CY: …And is Katy learning Spanish? Or are you learning English?

With a chuckle from him and everyone in the kitchen, Victoriano says:

VL: Katy learns more Spanish than I learn English… It's because of people like her, who are interested in cooking our food, that the work becomes so much easier. Just because you know how to cook, to do things well, doesn't mean you can do things alone. The team is important.

CY: You brought cooks from Peru, right?

VL: Yes, I do have Peruvians here. I work with some young cooks like Cesar Bellido, a young man who has a lot of talent, and is here learning from me. I'm sure he'll have his own restaurant one day, or he'll manage one of Gaston's restaurants. His work is very good.

CY: Besides your training with Gaston Acurio, you've also worked in other great restaurant kitchens around the world, like Arzak's, Cellar de Can Roca's, Mugaritz's. What did you gain from working for those great chefs?

VL: I gained a lot from my experiences with Arzak, Mugaritz and Cellar, because they've reached the place where they are because Spanish cuisine has reached a higher level. This makes me reflect on where we are. First, we have to cultivate and love what we have, and then do what they do. We have to value our own products, our work; we need to love ourselves; that's what I learned.

I have met great famous chefs like Joan, Andoni, Juan Mari—they're so humble and they communicate a sense of calmness. What I've learned from them is not to let it all go to my head just because I know more. On the contrary, I need to teach what I know. I saw a different kind of discipline in those 3 restaurants. And you realize that if you want to cook, you have to make a lot of sacrifices. You have to be dedicated and disciplined, you have to take care of the customers, spoil them; you have to stay on top of the products that arrive from our various suppliers, and make sure they're good; you have to take care of your cooks, and make sure they're happy. I've seen how they treat their people well, their discipline, their philosophy about what they want to do, what they want in their restaurants –it's

not only about having good food, it's also about making the whole experience memorable. That's what I've learned; and so it's what we want to do in this kitchen, in this restaurant. We want to make sure everyone here is happy: that the cooks are happy, and that the customers are happy.

CY: When you were there, did you make Peruvian food for them?

VL: They all loved Peruvian food. For example, Andoni would say that his passion and happiness was to eat Peruvian food. This restaurant hasn't even been open 6 months yet, and all the famous chefs have already eaten here. To have the privilege of cooking for Andoni, for Ferran Adria, Michelle Bras or Mario Batali --they've all been here—and or them to say "this food tastes so good" --well, that gives me strength --it makes the whole team feel strong!

CY: In 2009, you had the opportunity to cook for Queen Beatrice of Holland. You cooked for over 600 guests at a ceremony honoring Peruvian cuisine. What menu did you choose to prepare for our friends from Holland?

VL: We made ceviches, causas, aji de gallina, anticuchos, lomo saltado… We prepared a menu that may seem impossible to make for that number of people; but we tried our best and people were very happy.

CY: You brought some ingredients directly from Peru, right?

VL: Absolutely. And that's the work we all need to do, all of us as cooks and exporters in order to open more restaurants. Because, in Holland, you can't find Peruvian products. It's not like here in NY, where you can find many things. Down the line, we also need to improve the quality, and make sure that what we export gets to its destination in good shape. For example, we have to make sure that the *aji amarillo*, or the *rocoto*, or the *aji limo* arrive in good shape. You can't make ceviche with frozen *aji limo*. It has to be fresh.

CY: You've always gone with Gaston Acurio to open restaurants in different cities. You've opened them, set them up and left people in charge, and then gone back to Lima. This is the first time you have stayed as a permanent Executive Chef in a city as tough and challenging as New York. How do you feel about it?

VL: For starters, it's a privilege for me to be here. As I said earlier, I never thought I would manage a restaurant in New York. I think all chefs dream of being in a city like this one. Everyone asks me why Gaston has chosen me for this restaurant. I don't know the answer…

Still, with the exception of Madrid, of all the cities where I've opened a restaurant, this is definitely the most demanding one for food. Because all the different cultures are here --and they demand so much of you. In San Francisco, people were demanding, but here in New York, people are super demanding!

CY: It is never the same challenge, is it?

VL: That's right. Each country has a different culture. Some don't have the cultural habit of eating "aji" or cilantro. Some don't like the cilantro aroma. For example, in Spain, they don't eat cilantro, so if we want to make *arroz con pat*o, *arroz con pollo*, *seco de cordero*, it's complicated. The same goes for Bogotá and Caracas. They don't eat spicy food. So I had to explain to them that Peruvian food is spicy. We don't have to make it so spicy, but Peruvian food has to have onions, garlic, aji, and cilantro: without them, there is no Peruvian food.

CY: Who are your toughest critics? the Peruvian clientele or the food experts?

VL: Fellow Peruvians are critical, but they do it to help us improve. All criticism that helps us to improve is welcome. Thanks to our fellow Peruvians we can keep getting better.

CY: You've become one more immigrant in New York. How do you feel? Have you enjoyed the city at all? Have you had any time to do that?

VL: Very little. I've been very busy with work, but now that my family is arriving, I'll be able to do more, go out more, do some sightseeing with them.

CY: Is your family moving to New York?

VL: Yes. I've been given the opportunity to work here and I believe this isn't only a good opportunity for me, but also and especially for my children –because they'll have a chance to get to see and learn from other cultures; which I didn't have. I think they'll be able to benefit even more than me –because I've already done this, and I'm doing it; and I want to them to have this new experience.

CY: If you had to pick one dish from La Mar's menu, for an important guest who has never tasted Peruvian food, what would it be?

VL: *Ceviche Limeño*. I love that dish.

THE THREE AMIGOS

ABUELA's RECIPE

By Chris Yong-García
Photos by Pako Dominguez

When Latin Lover went out on the streets of New York in search of the best Dominican restaurant, we soon realized the best dishes didn't come with a maître d'. You have to know people. You need connections. If you want unparalleled Dominican food, go home. Home is where those recipes—the ones that have been passed from generation to generation—continue to live on. The place where all the magic happens has a table reserved only for the most privileged.

THREE GENERATIONS, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
GUISELT, IDALIA (ABUELA) AND TERESA (MOTHER)

My golden opportunity came when I met Guiselt Jimenez-Carballido over a few *mezcalitos* in a Mexican event at Obra Negra (Casa Mezcal). She and Ignacio her husband invited me to try a family staple—*Rabo Encendido*. Guiselt, along with her mother, Teresa, and grandmother, Idalia, welcomed Latin Lover into their home and revealed the secrets behind the special dish. *Rabo Encendido*, which literally translates to Burning Oxtail, is a bony cut of meat slowly cooked to tender perfection. "When mom was a little girl," remembers Teresa, "they wouldn't eat the tails. These were usually thrown away. Today you can find them, but they're not cheap."

I was under the impression that *encendido* stood for spicy but it actually signifies that the meat has been marinated in liquor—Brugal Rum to be precise. "Ron Brugal can be very dangerous," says Teresa, "because there can only be two outcomes: you either fight or settle."

Even if Guiselt—who is expecting her first child—is a vegetarian, she still can't shy away from this special dish. "Well, this and Grandmother Idalia's *caldo de gallina* (chicken broth), which is given to women who have just given birth as an energizing elixir," says Guiselt.

Idalia and her daughter Teresa migrated to Washington Heights—where Guiselt grew up— in 1976 from San Francisco de Macorís, a small town located in the northeast portion of Dominican Republic. Today, they are part of three generations—almost four—who are spread between Brooklyn Heights, New Jersey, and Washington Heights. They get together every Sunday to share their passion for cooking and homemade meals. "My husband says we're always looking for an excuse to cook and have a party," laughs Teresa.

In all honesty, who can blame them?

GUISELT JIMENEZ-CARBALLIDO

Guiselt was born in New York City in 1980 and raised in Washington Heights. When she was twelve,, her parents decided to move across the river to Bergen County, New Jersey. And so they split their time between this new "All-American" life in Jersey and their Dominican roots in Washington Heights.

After high school, Guiselt commuted for four years to the Fashion Institute of Technology, where she graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Fashion Merchandising. She began a career as an Assistant Merchandiser at Calvin Klein Jeans, where she climbed the ladder to a Senior position before moving over to Kate Spade New York to help launch the women's apparel collection. After realizing something was missing, she dropped everything to pursue her dream of becoming a Floral Designer and start a family with her entrepreneur husband, Ignacio Carballido. Today you can find her in the market picking out weekly flowers and foliage for Casa Mezcal—where she works as an in-house florist and event planner—all while being radiantly pregnant with her first child. She's due in September 2012.

Rabo Encendido

"Burning Oxtail"

(Serve with rice, beans, avocado slices, or salad)

(serves 4-6)

Ingredients:

2 oxtails cut into 1 to 1 1/2 inch pieces

To season the meat:
2 tablespoons pureed garlic
(puree with water in a blender)
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1/4 cup soy sauce
Salt to taste
Black pepper to taste
Oregano to taste

Add to the almost-cooked meat:
1 red onion (cut in large slices)
1 green bell pepper (cut in large slices)
1 red pepper (cut in large slices)
Bunch of cilantro (Recaito)
Aged Dominican Rum (preferably Ron Brugal)

How to...

Before cutting the oxtails, wash under cold water and pat dry. Mix the seasonings and rub on meat. Let meat stand for at least 2 hours in the refrigerator. Cook the oxtails in a large pot at medium heat for at least 1 hour and 30 minutes until tender. Add the rum to the pot little by little. If you notice it starts to evaporate, add a cup of water and cover until the meat is fully cooked and tender. Just before the meat is cooked, add the onion, peppers, and cilantro. Cook for another 10 minutes. Add another splash of rum and it's ready to eat!

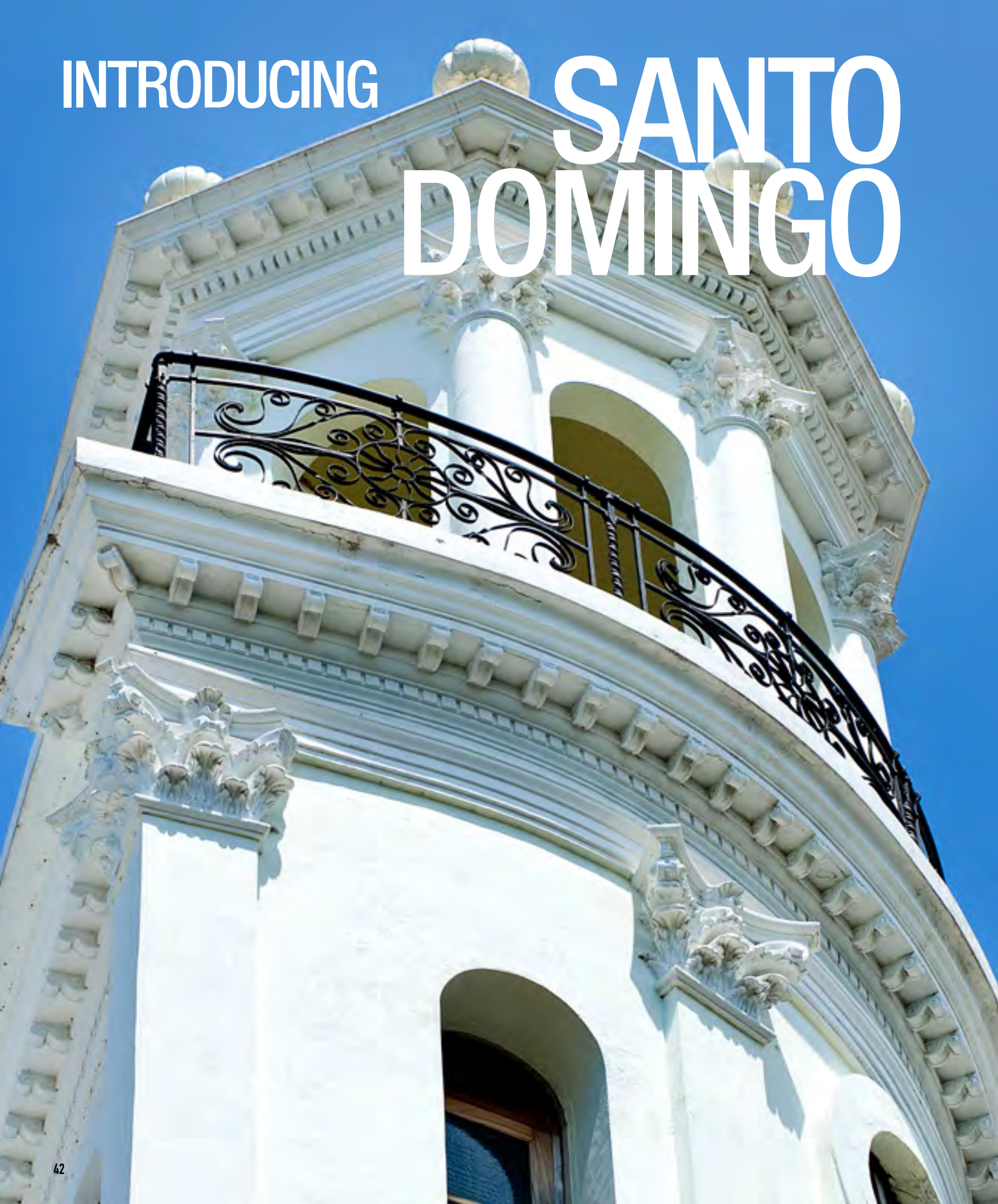
Ron Brugal can be very dangerous, says Teresa, "because there can only be two outcomes: you either fight or settle."

The Dominican Republic has an incredibly rich history. The walls and the cobblestoned streets of its Colonial City bear witness to its past as the first city founded in the Americas.

It was more than 500 years ago that the Dominican Republic began to write its history. The peaceful Taino Indians, who spent their days hunting, fishing and farming, first inhabited the island. Then on December 5, 1492, Admiral Christopher Columbus arrived on the island. He named it Hispaniola, setting into motion the meeting of two cultures that would later make Santo Domingo the first city in the Americas.

D.R.

INTRODUCING SANTO DOMINGO



Dominican Republic's capital city of Santo Domingo serves as the Caribbean's most culturally rich and historic destination and, arguably, its most vibrant. The city itself displays contrasts at every turn – contemporary hotels sit on ancient cobblestone streets, luxury cars park beside well-worn scooters, and exotic cuisine is served at chic restaurants while street vendors offer traditional Dominican fare. The city's restaurants specialize in both gourmet Dominican cuisine, as well as gastronomy from around the world. Santo Domingo also features a wealth of museums, galleries and theaters, ensuring no shortage of cultural experiences.

Nestled inside Santo Domingo on the Ozama River is America's first and oldest city, the Colonial City, which was established by Christopher Columbus and his brother Bartholomew in 1498. Here, visitors can walk cobblestone streets that conquistadors once strolled centuries ago.

The Colonial City is one of the most beautiful and romantic areas in all of the Caribbean, especially at night with restaurants, museums and ancient stone structures dating to the early 1500s. In fact, visitors usually notice that the well-preserved ancient city, which was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1990, makes them feel as if they had been transported back to another time.

LEFT: PALACIO CONSISTORIAL


Costelão
La Churrasquena


CIUDAD COLONIAL


MALECON


FARO A COLON


CATEDRAL DE SANTO DOMINGO


ALCAZAR DE COLON


CIUDAD COLONIAL


JUAN DOLIO

PLACES YOU MUST VISIT:

ALCÁZAR DE COLÓN

The Columbus Palace was built (1510-1512) by Christopher Columbus' son Diego, appointed Viceroy of the Indies to house the stately court he held with his wife María de Toledo, niece of the King of Spain. At the time, the Alcázar was the center of the Spanish court in the Americas, and the palace hosted the legendary Spanish explorers Hernán Cortés, Francisco Pizarro and Ponce de León. Today the Alcázar showcases authentic Medieval and Renaissance furniture and objects depicting domestic life of 16th century Spanish nobility in the Americas.

FORTALEZA OZAMA

The Ozama Fort, named after the Ozama River, is another historical monument that makes up the Colonial Zone. It was built from 1502 to 1508 by Fray Nicolas de Ovando, the governor of the island, in order to protect the city from attacks by pirates and conquerors. It was constructed out of stone and retains its original medieval appearance. Inside you can discover eerie tunnels and dungeons where prisoners, including Christopher Columbus, were once held captive.

CATEDRAL PRIMADA DE AMÉRICA

The Cathedral of Santo Domingo is the first cathedral of the New World. The gothic style building is highlighted with Renaissance details dating from 1514 to 1546. The architecture emphasizes its cultural and historical content. Its physical interior has great artwork, paintings and gravestones with the remains of archbishops, antique furniture and many other interesting items dating from the era of colonization.

PANTEÓN NACIONAL

Built in 1714-1745 as a Jesuit convent, later warehouse and cultural center. In 1956, it was designated the National Pantheon for historical figures behind its stone walls.

PUERTA DEL CONDE

The Count's Gate marks the spot where the founders of the Republic proclaimed independence from Haiti on 27 February 1844. The gate leads into Independence Park whose perimeter fence doubles as the city's largest outdoor arts and photography gallery. Independencia & Palo Hincado.

EL CONDE

Eight-block pedestrian bohemian-vibe street lined by Art Deco buildings loaded with small shops. Grab a Bon ice cream at the start or midway and stroll at leisure to appreciate the outstanding first half 20th century architecture (look up to the balconies).

CONVENTO DE LOS DOMINICOS

Built in 1510, this was the first site of the New World's oldest university (1538), now the *Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo* (UASD). From its pulpit, Fray Antón de Montesinos became the first to denounce colonial violations of human rights in the Americas, when he spoke out against the treatment of the Taino Indians.

PLAYA JUAN DOLIO

Juan Dolio Beach, located two miles (three kilometers) east of Guayacanes. High-rise beachfront residences cater to affluent city dwellers who make the commute to enjoy the sea views and food at the very good restaurants. The large expanse of shoreline allows for a relaxing day at the beach, while the resorts even sell one-day passes with all-inclusive minus the room.

BASEBALL

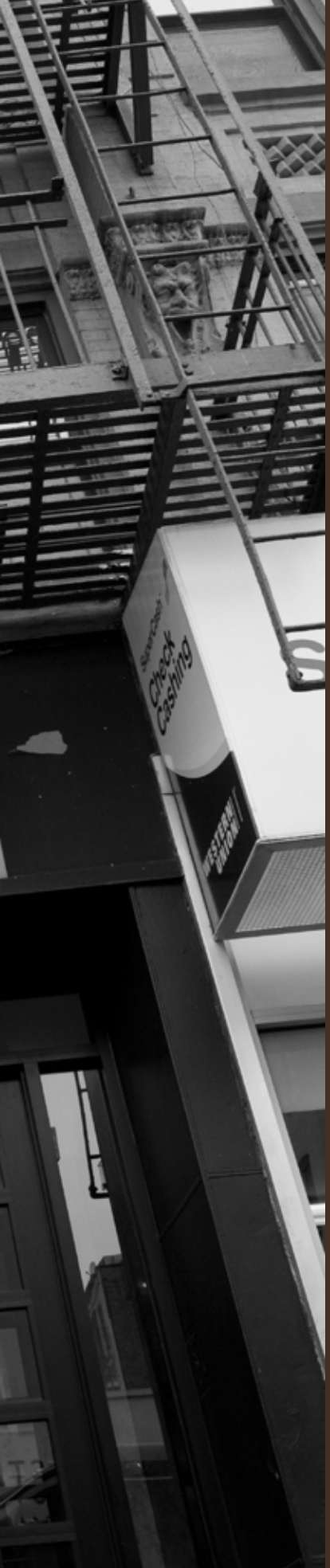
In December and January, Dominican Major League Baseball greats join their local teams to close the regular season and commence league season finals. Action in Santo Domingo is at the Quisqueya Ball Park. The regular season opens at the end of October and runs through the first week of February when the winner of the Winter Professional Baseball Championship gets to represent the country in the Caribbean Series. Baseball in Dominican Republic is not just a sport; it's a national pastime and passion that reflects the soul of the Dominican people. The distinctively Dominican experience of seeing future baseball stars play on their native soil is incomparable, especially to U.S. baseball fans.

SOURCE:

Dominican Republic
Has it all

www.godominicanrepublic.com

Miguel's creations at Maharlika



THE SECRET INGREDIENTS OF CHEF MIGUEL TRINIDAD

By Brian Waniewski
Photos by Jorge Ochoa

At his chilhood's building

"Love, technique and talent," says chef Miguel Trinidad. That's what it takes to make great food. And it describes the trajectory of his own career, which he traces back to his mother . . . and Saturday morning cartoons.

Saturday mornings, when boy Trinidad awoke to win control of the TV from his siblings, he got hungry. One Saturday—after carefully observing his mother making breakfast all week—he fished a frying pan out of the cupboard, grabbed some eggs and cheese, pushed a chair up to the stove and got cooking. "What is *this*?" he heard his mother call from the doorway. But once they had settled down at the table with the eggs that he had scrambled, she was smiling. "From now on you can make breakfast for your brother and sister, and I can sleep in!" And that was how it started, in a little apartment in a then Dominican Lower East Side neighborhood not far from where, decades later, Trinidad and his business partners, Nicole Ponseca and Enzo Lim, opened their first restaurant, a modern Filipino place called Maharlika.

"Back then, when I was growing up down here," Trinidad remembers, "There were Dominican and Polish restaurants, a few diners. Indian row was the most exotic thing we had!" But back then people mostly ate in, especially Dominicans. So mostly Trinidad remembers his mother's love-filled dishes. There was her signature *lambi*, a preparation of ground conch, olive oil, onions and cilantro; her snapper, cooked in coconut milk with coconut rice on the side; and the classic rice, beans and steak he has tried and failed a million times to recreate. Today, at Maharlika, Trinidad's mother remains a kind of muse, despite the Filipino focus, supplying the restaurant with a spiced coconut-rum drink she still prepares by hand in the kitchen of Trinidad's boyhood.

The way from weekend egg-maker to New York City restauranteur was long and full of detours for Trinidad. There was a career in commercial photography, some cubicle time at dot-coms, a catering company and some odd years tending bar. Finally, at the magic age of thirty-three, Trinidad's calling called, and off he went to culinary school. Some of his technique he picked up there, but the real test came at the first real gig he landed: line cook at Lola, a dinner-and-show type soul food joint in Soho. There Trinidad soon rose to executive chef. "I had no clue what I

was doing!" he laughs. "So for the first few months I worked day and night, seven days a week, seven in the morning till midnight. I had to learn fast!" His now business partner, Ponseca, hired Trinidad into that job. His flexibility and facility for picking up new things made an impression. So when she began dreaming up Maharlika, she ultimately turned to him for a new take on a cuisine that was virtually unknown in the Manhattan restaurant scene.

It took Trinidad five years of trial and error in the kitchen, six months learning Tagalog—a lingua franca in a nation of seven thousand islands and almost as many cultures—and three months of non-stop travel and eating to feel his way into Filipino cuisine. In that time, Trinidad came to appreciate its parallels to the Dominican food he grew up with. Not surprising since the Philippines was a Spanish colony for more than three hundred years. Substitute adobo for ginger in a popular Filipino rice porridge, for instance, and you have the hearty Dominican stew, *asopao*. But Trinidad doesn't give much significance to the fact that he, as a Dominican New Yorker, has now become a kind of ambassador for Filipino food. Many chefs have fallen in love with a far-away culture and successfully translated its dishes or ingredients back home. Trinidad's goal is simply to bring new tastes out into the mainstream. Tastes like the poisonous-until-cooked taro root leaf or kalamansi, a lime-like citrus native to the islands. For Trinidad the test of his success are the old Filipino *lolas* and *yayas* who come in skeptical and go away soaring. "They've experienced what they've always known, but from a totally different perspective, a new angle," Trinidad says. "They taste the food, and then they're like, you're OK. This is good."

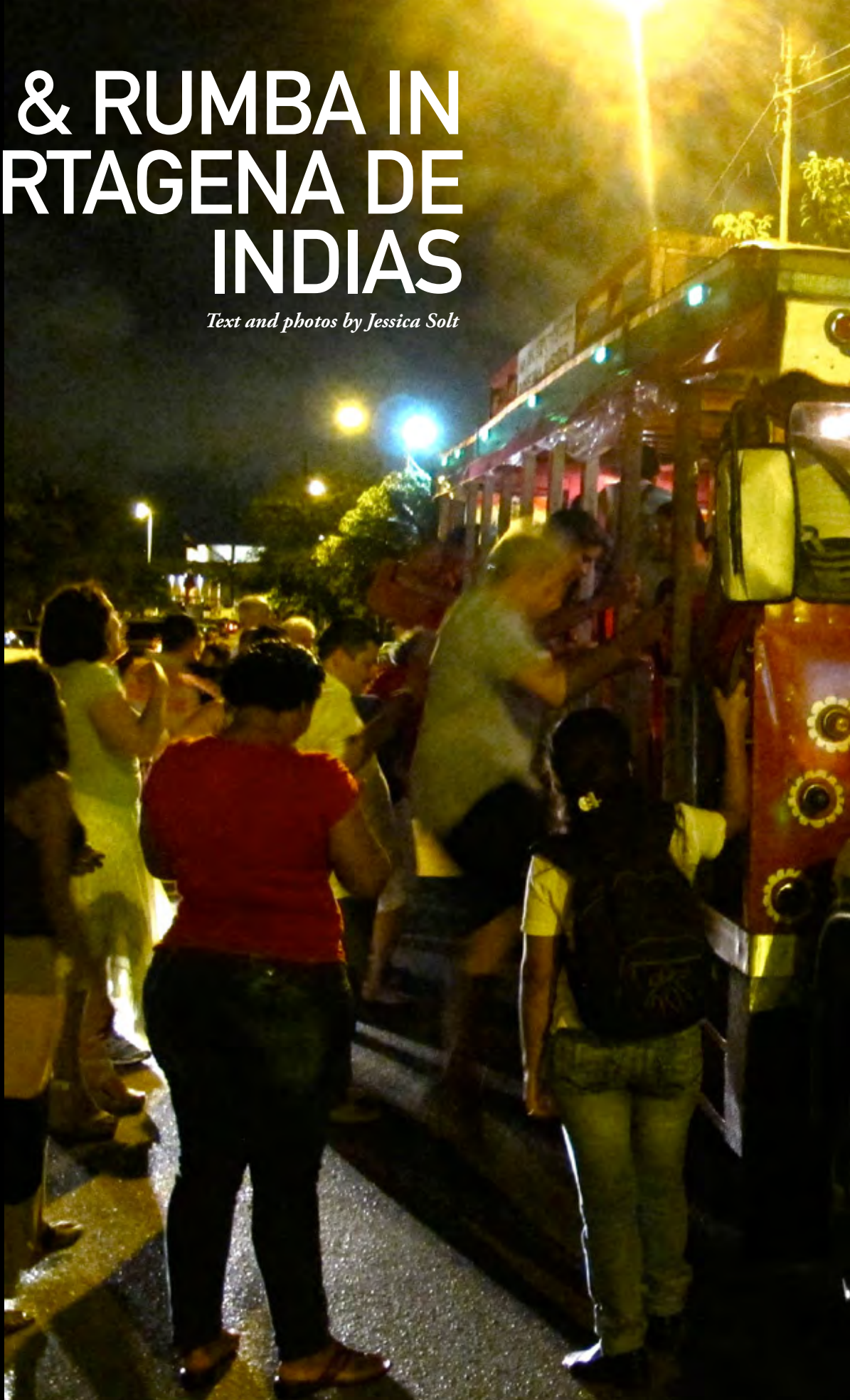
And Trinidad is just getting started. "I'm still new on the scene," he admits. "I'm a baby compared to these guys that have been in the business for ten, twenty years." But ask anyone which Dominican chef to watch in the city, and everyone agrees: Trinidad is talent. So check out Maharlika in Manhattan or at Brooklyn's Dekalb Market. And stay tuned for Trinidad's and Ponseca's next venture, set to launch later this year in the East Village.

Choosing only the best, at Essex Street Retail Market

Your friendly neighbor Miguel Trinidad

RUM & RUMBA IN CARTAGENA DE INDIAS

Text and photos by Jessica Solt



"Todo lo que me decía, lo traduje al español
tanto así que hasta me dijo, vente para Nueva York
le dije ven tú a Colombia, le dije ven tú a Colombia
que es una tierra muy buena consagramos
nuestro amor, en el Cabo de la Vela"

[From "La Gringa" by Silvestre Dangond]

A CHIVA RIDE TYPICALLY LASTS FOUR HOURS, COSTS AROUND $15 PER PERSON, AND IS EASILY ARRANGED BY YOUR HOTEL

PARTYING ON THE CHIVA

TWO WOMEN SIT ALONG PORTAL DE LOS DULCES

There is a place bathed by the Caribbean Sea where sunsets are so heavenly they hang framed in your memory forever. The sun might be disappearing into Cartagena's horizon, but laughter and celebration begins to sprout all over the city, like tiny bubbles before reaching boiling point. The old Cartagena de Indias suddenly becomes lit by antique lanterns, revealing wandering tourists, handicraft vendors, horse carriages, and couples walking hand in hand or taking bike rides through the labyrinth streets of the fenced city.

As Colombia's fifth largest city and one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country, visitors flock to Cartagena de Indias year-round. This attraction isn't new. Historically, Cartagena's excellent geographic location made the city an ideal target for colonization and exploitation. In pre-Columbian times the coast was inhabited by Caribbean Indians who fought expeditionists fresh off the boat, looking for new lands. Greedy invaders hailed from England, France and Spain with intentions of turning Cartagena into a commercial port and slave trading area. Protecting the city from trespassers became a priority as early as the XVI Century, hence the construction of forts and the need to encase an entire city behind stoned walls. The statue that stands in front of the old port shows a woman holding an open hand straight ahead toward the sea. A short message reads *Noli Me Tangere*—Don't Touch Me—warning pirates and other invaders to keep out. But don't take this too literally. Today Cartagena welcomes everyone with open arms.

With temperatures soaring as high as 90°F by day, it's no surprise that the best time to venture through this enchanted town is at night. First-time travelers who are willing to let loose—at least for a couple of hours—should break the ice with Cartagena aboard a *Chiva Rumbera*, a colorful party bus of sorts that offers passengers a taste of what this place is all about: mystery, fun, dancing, singing, and mere madness.

What exactly is a chiva?

A chiva is a rustic bus—once used for public transportation—that was adapted over the years to become a way for tourists to explore the city. But the moment you add *rumbera*—from the word rumba, a type of Cuban folk dance with Spanish and African elements—to the equation, it ceases being a means of transportation and becomes an experience. A chiva is hard to miss. With colorful designs of patriotic insignia, religious and humorous messages, and distinct names (you don't want to confuse your ride) painted on the outside, these vehicles are recognized as symbols of Colombian culture.

Let's give this a try

While you wouldn't normally find me drinking on a vehicle, tonight is different. I take the first row—the seats are bench like—right behind the driver because I want to have a good front view and appreciate how much everyone is partying in the back. Before long, the chiva takes off and the coke and rum begin to flow freely. The gigantic rearview window offers the spectacle of dozens of adults beginning to warm up. The chiva is peppered with large glass holders that welcome anything from tiny ice buckets to drinks in disposable cups.

Traveling aboard a chiva is all about the attitude. Our guide, Reina, is a vivacious woman who speaks uninhibitedly into the microphone. The chiva is the venue and we are her audience. The worst thing that could happen would be to bore us to death. Experience tells her that's not an option. She pulls out at least a dozen little bottles of Tres Esquinas Rum—a high-quality liquor with a delicate flavor. I'll pause to mention that while Colombia's national drink is *aguardiente*, which literally mean "burning water", the majority of Colombians prefer the smooth taste of rum.

It's time to pick our poison. You can either drink the rum straight up or chug it down with a bit of coke. Ice is mandatory and abundant—nobody likes a lukewarm drink—but even when the ice here melts quickly, you want to enjoy every sip. Now, it wouldn't be a party without music. Behind me, nestled in the crowd, sit *Los Gomelos*, the live band that will be delighting us with vallenatos, salsas and boleros to spice up the adventure.

We ride through Bocagrande and into Getsemaní, getting a good look at Cartagena's bay. Reina pinpoints Puerta del Reloj, Cartagena's symbol of excellence. We go around Parque Centenario, where *cartageneros* rent books on weekends and read them under the shade. We continue into Zona Rosa and over the Puente Román, where colonial houses greet us on the other side. At the San Felipe de Barajas Castle the Colombian flag flies high. By this time we're already reasonably merry. Reina initiates a battle of the sexes and it's men vs. women to see who can party the hardest. "*Vamos a mover la colita*," she screams into the microphone, meaning we have to move our bottoms with rhythm. Everyone complies in a sea of uncontrollable laughter. Some of the passengers are starting to get an itch for dancing. After all, there is no way to properly engage in this activity on board.

MUSICIANS AT THE BASTION OF SANTA CATALINA

At Santander avenue, we are dropped off and taken to the Bastion of Santa Catalina. For the next hour or so people dance, sing, and drink under the stars. Partygoers from other chivas join in. The music brings everyone together. Wandering around is a young man holding a sloth. He places it around your neck before you can change your mind and expects some compensation for the unique photo you're about to take. Don't shoo Pepe the sloth away, he's worth every penny. Everyone marches back to the chiva and we are greeted by a tasting of Cartagena's cuisine: *arepa de huevo* and *empanadas*. The goodies are gone before we know it. The ride is about to come to an end when we arrive at our final destination, Café del Mar. Situated on top of the Bastion of Santo Domingo's ancient walls, this open air lounge offers fantastic views of both the city and the Caribbean Sea. *La fiesta sigue* for us. For the rest of the chiva crew, it's time to call it a night.

Gabriel García Márquez once admitted that all of his books had loose threads of Cartagena in them, even though he only spent a short period there in the late 1940s. Just as it's easy to be seduced by Cartagena in one night, it is also hard to rub off its pulsating charm.

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THE ULTIMATE LATIN LOVER

By Rocío Cerón & Julen Ladrón de Guevara

DIANA KENNEDY

A British citizen, Diana Southwood went to Mexico in 1957 to marry Paul P. Kennedy of the New York Times. Today she is widely considered the foremost researcher, teacher, and writer on the regional foods of Mexico and has written eight books on the subject. She has been bestowed the highest honor given to foreigners by the Mexican government, the Order of the Aztec Eagle, for her work of disseminating Mexican culture through its foods. She has also received numerous awards from other gastronomic institutions and was decorated with an MBE by Queen Elizabeth for her work in strengthening cultural relations between Mexico and the United Kingdom, as well as for her work for the environment, which is always reflected in her texts. For the past thirty years, her studies have been centered around her ecological house in the state of Michoacán.

Diana Kennedy may well be the woman who best knows Mexico's regional cuisines. Since she arrived in Mexico when she was 34 years old she has dedicated herself wholeheartedly to the task of researching the variety of foods that people eat throughout the country. She has made of her life a never-ending quest that began with the palate leading her down unknown paths that turned out to be her gastronomic routes.

Her curiosity and sense of adventure was spurred on by reading the regional works of Josefina Velazquez de Leon. She wanted to know where those ingredients she had read about came from; what the countryside that produced them looked like and who the people were who grew them. She would load her pick-up truck with a sleeping bag and cot; pack notebooks and tape-recorder and head off to some remote rancherias and villages.

Although she is now in her 90th year her odyssey is not yet over.

Diana notes that many things have changed in Mexico since those first days in the late 1950's: in particular the quality of the foodstuffs and their deterioration, especially through the uncontrolled use of chemicals used in intensive, non-sustainable farming methods. She makes no secret of this and voices it on every possible occasion --even when heating the *tamales* that she was going to serve us with the coffee from beans grown and prepared right there.

Before getting down to serious conversation, she insisted that we needed to eat. It is no good trying to concentrate on a empty stomach after the early morning trip from Mexico City to Zitacuaro in Michoacan. Besides, how can one say no? Diana is a renowned cook and for many her "sazón" is unforgettable.

She doesn't waste much time in her day. On this occasion she served *tamale*s from recipes she learned in Veracruz and San Luis Potosi accompanied by the best beans we have ever tasted. She asks us about them because she is worried that there is not a strong enough flavor of *epazote*. She had first cooked them in a pressure cooker finishing them off in a clay pot so as to conserve gas. She tells us that she does not like to soak them overnight as many people do since they lose flavor and nutritional value. She had bought the black beans she served us on a previous trip to Oaxaca but they were a little old and took longer to cook than usual; thereupon she put a note to that effect in the glass jar in which the rest were stored. That's pure Diana Kennedy, with a constant eye for detail in the kitchen.

For years you have been exploring every corner of the country in your car....

Not every corner but much of the country because it was, and still is, a fascinating and never-ending quest to discover often little-known gastronomic treasures. But, of course in the end I wanted to write about it. Of course it is not easy to find a publisher for this type of in-depth gastronomy but I have been lucky to have had books published, like *Oaxaca al Gusto*, by the prestigious Texas University Press.

I can imagine the work involved in writing your books because practically every recipe has a family history background --and then to have to cook them all!

Yes, but it is fascinating to try to re-create the recipes as faithfully as possible and give them their proper context. The other day I was re-reading *My Mexico* for its re-publication by Texas University Press and it brought back so many memories of my journeys and the people who had shared their recipes with me. This is so important. For example not long ago a neighbor in the village came to the gate with relatives who live in Los Angeles. They had brought with them the Spanish edition of two of my books for my signature. "We love how you write about out country," they said. I was so touched and gratified.

One often sees more clearly what is going on in Mexico through the eyes of a foreigner. Do you think that is so in your case?

Yes, because you take the details of your daily life and even the cooking of your grandmother or aunts for granted. But out of curiosity and pure "gula" I started asking people, mostly women, like your grandmothers and aunts for their recipes.

What motivated you to dedicate yourself to researching Mexican gastronomy?

I suppose it came naturally. As young women in England before and during World War II my sister and I were expected to take part and learn whatever my mother prepared. Then when I emigrated to Canada for a few years I was fascinated to find all the new foods to cook with, so you can imagine what happened when I was first introduced to the Mexican markets. I just had to cook and at that time, I was strongly influenced by the wonderful food writing of Elizabeth David.

After living, cooking and eating here for so many years how do you see Mexican food?

First of all you cannot define Mexican food without explaining that it differs, in some cases radically, from one region to another especially in terms of ingredients like *chiles* and corn and how they are used.

After all the research you've done you must have noticed that very little is known in Mexico about its own gastronomy.

Mexico City has always been a center of national gastronomy because of all the regional restaurants there. Of course there are some exceptional dishes that have become popular, very ubiquitous, like *mole poblano* and *cochinita pibil* from Yucatan. Now I think there is a new wave of interest promoted by current star chefs in Oaxaca, black mole for instance, and *aguachile* from the northern west coast for example.

What are the most surprising findings you have had in your trips?

All the wild plants: wild greens called *quelites*, the flowers, young shoots or roots of an endless number of plants, bushes and trees, not forgetting insects, that are either eaten raw or cooked in different ways to provide a free, natural and totally organic diet.

The Mexican cuisine you encountered many years ago was more virgin; how do you see it now?

Many of the wonderful, indigenous ingredients have been blown up with the so-called "semillas mejoradas", improved seeds, and the over-use of chemicals as if bigger is better. The end result is that those wonderful intense flavors, say, of chiles and tomatoes, in particular, have been noticeably diluted.

One of the most important ingredients in the Mexican cuisine are chiles. How many kinds do you know?

I have never counted but more than anyone else I know. I have a large number of slides, photographs of different regional chiles taken on my repeated and seasonal trips to many of the lesser known parts of the country.

What was the first thing you learned to cook well in Mexico?

Tamales; but first learning how to prepare dried corn (*maize*) in different ways for the varied types of *masa*. That in itself is a complex subject enough to fill a book.

Photo: Arturo Rodríguez Doring

How many kinds of *tamales* have you made?

Again, I have never counted but there is a large variety of them in my books. The ones I have just served were so-called San Luis. I say so-called because it is a recipe that I re-constructed from a century-old, family cookbook in a manuscript from the State of Mexico. The *nixtamal* was washed and strained before grinding it twice in a hand-grinder. It was then sieved to remove the pedicels. To make the masa the home-made lard was beaten with 'agua sentada de tequesquite' (almost too elaborated to explan here in detail) but a strained solution of natural salt that acts as a raising agent—pre-hispanic without doubt. The corn, resembling a meal, was then beaten in until it was well aerated and the tamales formed in dried corn husks.

There are old cookbooks with recipes that are impossible to make today because of the way they kept time while they cooked. For example, "the rice has to be cooked within six rosaries." Or, "put five cents worth of sugar in the *atole*"… What are your recipe books like?

They are all very entertaining to read but the present-day cook would not want to buy your book. As I prepare the recipes I keep very careful time because if I am innocent enough to ask a cook who is giving me a recipe "how long will it take to cook?" she will say: "it will tell you" or "until it is done" or, on frying rice: "it will sound like dried beans moving around in the cazuela.

Corn is very important in Mexico, not only because it is a great food, but also because of everything that surrounds it.

It could be named as the "mother plant" of Mexico. When you think of it providing the base for so many foods in the Mexican regional cuisines. Besides every part of the plant is used: tender corn, *elote*, or dried corn kernels, *maiz*; the husks, both fresh and dried and the long corn leaf used for *tamales*; the tassels used for a cure for kidney problems as well as toasted for a certain type of *tamales*; the anthers used for *tamales* de espiga; the fungus known as *cuitlacoche*, is used both fresh and dried, and the corn stalk, chewed, used as substitute for sugarcane or more often used as fodder for cattle, and so on.

There is also a very close relationship between women and food…

Without a doubt, and particularly in the countryside, the women are the cooks. Of course that usually, but not entirely, changes in restaurants in the cities when the majority of the cooks are men. Curiously, if you visit kitchens in an American restaurant, as I do, the cooks are usually Mexican men, the majority of whom would never have cooked in their native villages. Alas, I have nothing more profound to add to this question.

What do you think is the future of Mexican cuisines?

I have no idea. I do not have crystal ball.

Besides Mexican food, what other food do you like?

I have always loved and cooked French, Middle-Eastern and Italian foods. I love, but rarely cook Chinese, Thai and Indian foods.

Which ingredient would you chose as the most representative of the country?

Corn, followed by *chiles* and squash.

And what would be the Mexican dish?

Tamales and *atole*.

And if you had to send one dish to the moon that represented us?

A green *pipian*.

What made you fall in love with this country?

The breathtaking landscapes, the native markets.

Which place have you liked getting to know the most?

Tlacotalpan, Veracruz , Campeche, Chilapa y Guerrero.

Finally, what does Mexico mean to you?

A country of incredible beauty and tantalizing variations which are not appreciated by either its politicians, business magnates nor its people. I am so frustrated that I haven't had time to discover and research more because I have had to earn a living as well.

Before we left we asked her to show us her home. The kitchen, a very warm rustic space, has all the utensils, including a lot of *cazuelas* and *ollas,* needed to cook. One wall is hung with copper pots and the "stove" is a large elongated adobe structure covered with tiles from Zinapecuaro, Michoacan, with burners of various sizes set in at regular intervals. It is anchored to a wall of rock on which the house is built. The kitchen doubles as the dining room, with a round table made of old wooden beams and "equipal" chairs.

The living room is on a lower level, conforming to the natural slope of the land, divided by a huge rock from the dramatic backdrop of a greenhouse alive with tropical plants. The main structure of the house is of adobe, all originally made on site, with the walls colored with a water-based paint mixed with the same soil as the adobe.

There is a large terrace outside the kitchen with adobe ovens used for baking her bread or smoking meats. The space is dotted with lime, Seville orange, sour pomegranate as well as ornamental trees, and lined with clay pots with culinary herbs.

Inside again, the greenhouse is planted with tropical culinary herbs, *habanero chiles,* vanilla vines and in an open-air extension is a raised-bed construction based on what Diana copied from a Yucatecan village garden, a can'che, filled with thriving herbs: chervil, parsley, basil, chives, thyme and marjoram.

The small guest bedroom, which opens onto a terrace surrounded by dense vegetation, is enlivened by large cushions made of multi-colored "tenangos," which she bought in Hidalgo about 40 years ago. "One of my treasures," she says as we photograph them.

We then go down to what is actually the drainage area in front of the house, planted with citrus trees: oranges, tangerines, calamondin, with plums and figs, then past the chicken enclosure down a steep slope to the vegetable garden, with the composting to one side. A larger flat area is planted with corn studded with very young fruit trees and a spectacular bushy citron tree in full production.

She insists that it is all very casual and there is not a straight line anywhere. Around the house is a straggling (her word) intensively-treed area dotted with coffee bushes.

As we walk back to the kitchen terrace the very simple metal solar collectors are being adjusted towards the sun to heat water and pots for cooking later in the day.

Finally she says goodbye at the door. She seemed much sweeter than when we arrived –she is known, and admits, that she can be very irascible at times especially when people turn up uninvited. She seems very strong and walks with a firm step despite her age. She tells us she feels sad to think of what might happen to Quinta Diana when she dies... She is 89 years old—and who will continue with the research that she has devoted so much time to and preserve the land that she has so carefully nurtured for 32 years, especially given the rather precarious situation that prevails in much of Michoacan.

She stays behind, a smile on her face, standing on the porch of her home, the person who best knows Mexico's gastronomic soul, and is the most knowledgeable about its food, *chiles*, corn, and *tamales*; someone whose legacy is immeasurable for this country.

The Latin Lover team and Ximena

THE HAVE-A-LITTLE PISCO QUIZ

By James Willimetz
Photos by Ana De Orbegoso

Quick! Can you name the four, classic lime-based cocktails from Latin America?

Surely you guessed the margarita (Mexico) and the mojito (Cuba), right? What are the other two? Hint: Brazil. Yes, the caipirinha (the "little hillbilly"). And the last one is, obviously, the pisco sour.

The first two are made from tequila and rum, both well-established spirits here in the USA. The producers of cachaça (similar to rum) and pisco (grape brandy) are hungry to increase their foothold in liquor stores and bars in the United States (and your home).

Cachaça producers have seen a steady increase in the sale of their spirit, and hope to catch a boost from the forthcoming excitement for World Cup 2014 in Brazil.

And together with a rapidly growing interest in Peruvian cuisine here in the big cities of the US, Pisco is having its own boom.

"Yeah, we're selling more pisco," mixologist Ximena Yrala said. "But I think most Americans don't know that much about pisco, no? They just don't know what they're missing." This short quiz is a small remedy to this most unfortunate situation. It is inspired by a get-together of pisco-minded Peruvians one afternoon in the Manhattan apartment of photographer Ana De Orbegoso. Latin Lover's Chris Yong-Garcia and Melissa Franchy were the event's organizers. Lizzy Asher, a pisco producer, arrived bearing the event's fire power: two bottles of Macchu Pisco and one of La Diablada, her high-end pisco.

The star of the day, as it turned out, was Ximena, Latin Lover's favorite pisco mixologist from Panca restaurant in the West Village. She filled us in on, or rather up with, some good pisco drinks she concocted as well as stories of her life in the Peruvian brandy. Born to a pisco-producing family in Ica, Peru's most famous pisco region, she said her mother sometimes laced her baby bottles with a little pisco to keep her from crying. While she told us of her life, she made wonderful pisco cocktails for us, with cucumber, lime and cranberry juice. They were so refreshing on that hot, blistery day. She is the best pisco host!

Let's start the quiz…. Ready?


MACCHU
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Spirit of the A

1. How is a pisco sour best made?

a. in a blender b. in a cocktail shaker

You've seen the scene, right? James Bond suavely looks at the bartender and asks for his martini, "Shaken, not stirred."

Now picture this. Pisco Porton's Johnny Schuler, Peru's pisco ambassador to the world, suavely looks at the bartender and asks for his pisco sour, "From a shaker, not a blender." He says a shaken pisco sour tastes better, because it stays icy cold but is not diluted by the ice. A valid point.

However, most Peruvians swear by the blender. It is much easier and more practical, especially if you are making the drinks for a crowd. "With the shaker," Ximena warns, "if one ingredient is off, the whole drink is off. The blender is more forgiving. "

The most memorable pisco sours I have had are from a blender. How about we have Johnny on the shaker and Ximena on the blender for a blind-taste challenge?

2. What is the best way to drink pisco?

a. pisco sour b. some other pisco cocktail
c. straight d. on the rocks with a splash of water

"There is only one way to drink pisco," Ximena told me. "And that is, any way you like it."

The old timers like it straight, "seco y voltea'o" ("bottoms up"). Some of the young timers (like Ximena) like it this way too. "It's the best way to taste the different grapes," she said.

A well-made pisco sour, of course, is the king of all pisco drinks and will never be dethroned. It'll get any party off to a good start.

The chilcano (ginger ale and pisco) is another classic pisco workhorse and quite a happy marriage. It's the second most popular pisco cocktail in Peru. There are a slew of other hot (cold) new pisco cocktails being offered all the time, just waiting for you to check them out.

My own preference these days is to drink it on the rocks with a splash of water. It seems to opens up the pisco and is less harsh on the stomach. And you still taste the distinctive flavor of each pisco.

3. In addition to grapes, what else can Peruvian pisco contain?

a. water b. sugar c. natural flavors d. nothing

When I really got into pisco 23 years ago, I asked a taxi driver in Lima what he liked to drink. "I like pisco," he said. "But the one I like is made from grapes." What? Peruvian Pisco can ONLY be made from grapes. "Those were pisco's dark years," Ximena remembers. "They had Pisco 3 pasitas, a rum for your stove with 3 raisins in it to justify calling it pisco." A lot of the pisco sold in Peru was adulterated because it was made mostly from cane sugar. No wonder even Peruvians avoided it. Today, pisco is back and most of the pisco on the market is good and legitimate. It's one of Peru's top-selling spirits. It's become fashionable to take a bottle to a friend, instead of wine.

4. Is this pisco boom in the USA bona fide?

a. yes b. no c. maybe

These days in the liquor stores of New York City, you can find a number of very decent bottles of Peruvian pisco offered. At this moment, Astor Wines, one of the biggest in Manhattan, offers Pisco Porton, Macchu Pisco, La Diablada, Barsol, Campo de Encanto. You see less of the Chilean and the bad Peruvian piscos we used to get. The city now has at least three pisco bars. One sign of this boom is the fact that Richard Sandoval, a Mexican who has a chain of high-end Mexican restaurants, has just opened Raymi, a Peruvian restaurant and pisco bar. My question to the producers is: Can they keep up with increasing demand? Previous pisco booms have fizzled out due to a lack of supply.

5. If I offer my guests some pisco, what kind of a toast can I make?

a. Well, there is always the classic standby, "Salud!" ("Cheers!").

b. My dad used to start his parties by having all his guests repeat after him, "Arriba! Abajo! Al centro! Adentro!" ("Up! Down! To the center! Inside!"

c. My own favorite is, "Pisco bendito, dulce sustento, que haces pa' fuera, vente pa' dentro." ("Blessed pisco, sweet sustenance, whatcha doing out there, come on in.")

6. When Ximena is on her deathbed after a long, long life, her IV drip bag in the hospital will be filled with . . .

a. saline solution b. pisco

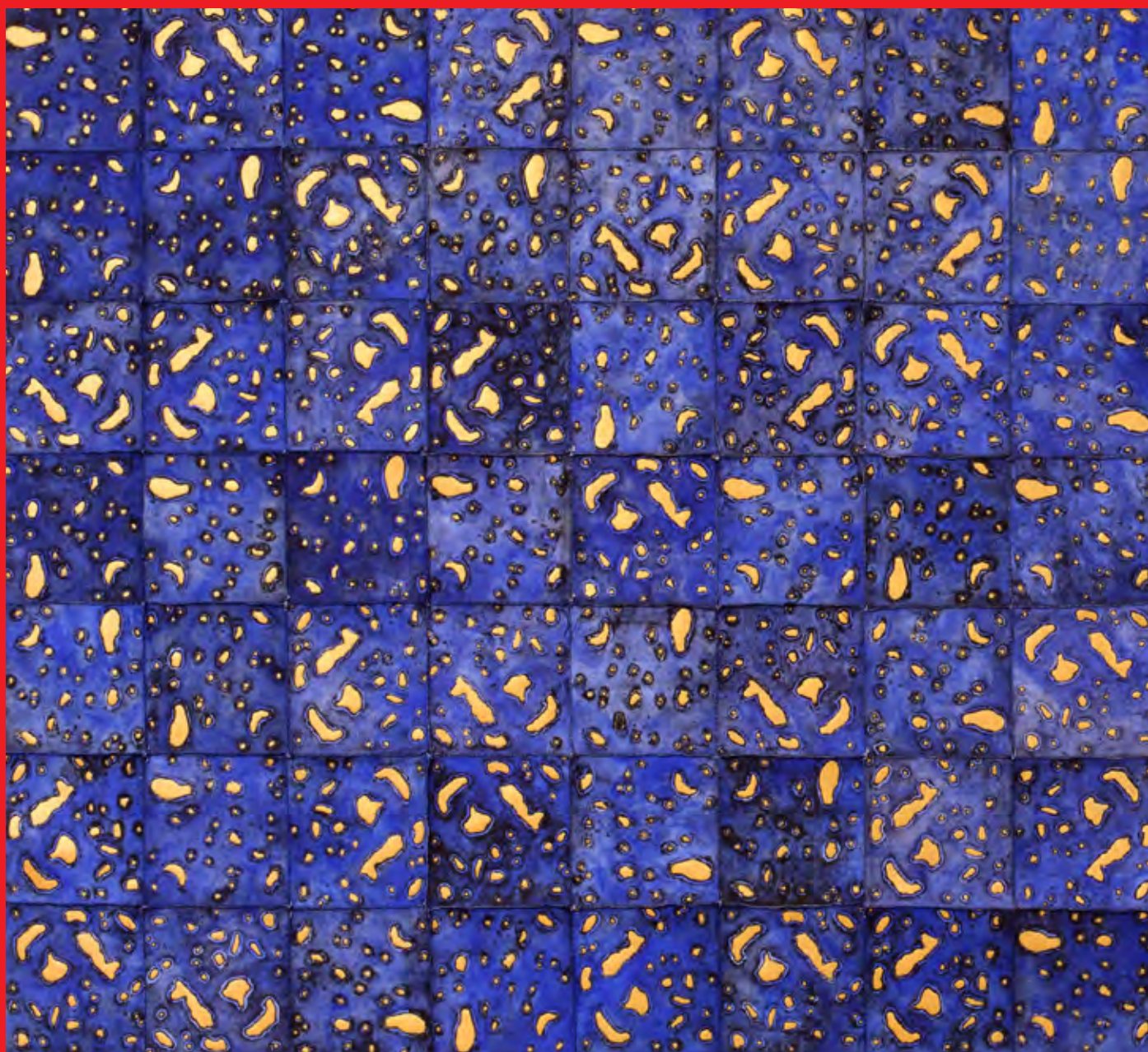
There is a promotional video of a busload of Peruvians who descend on Peru, Nebraska. One of the guys who gets off the bus uses a megaphone to tell the residents, "You are from Peru. You have the right to eat delicious food," --meaning Peruvian, of course. He could have added, "And you have the right to drink great pisco." True for Peru, Nebraska. True for the rest of the world. True for you. And you can start exercising this right this way: go to the West Village, find Ximena, ask her to prepare for you whatever pisco cocktail inspires her. Ask her to tell you more about pisco. She's the perfect pisco host.

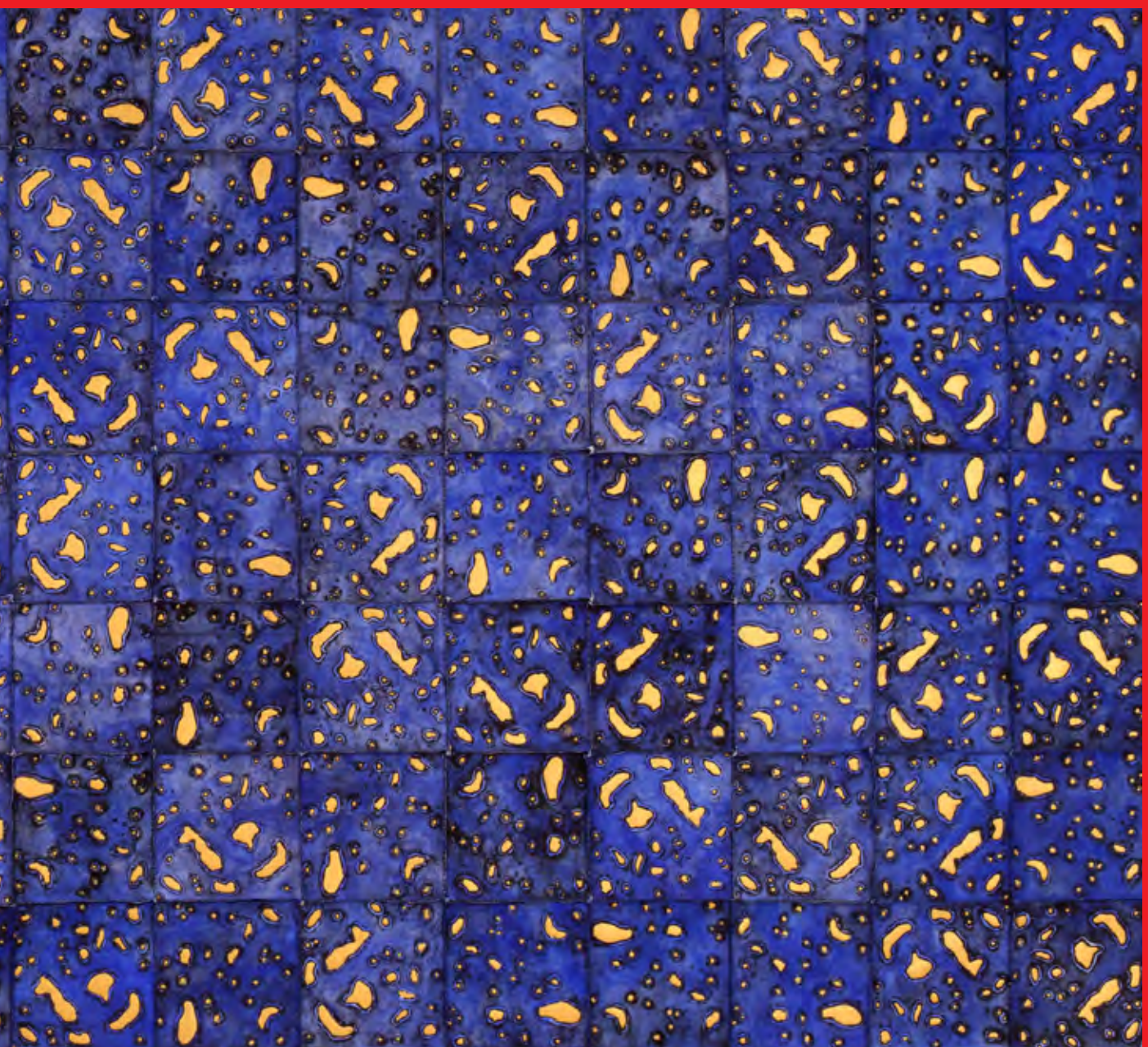
The Latin Lover team drank responsibly during this "Pisco Session" thanks to the support of our friends at

MACCHU PISCO
The Spirit of The Andes

THE SUBTLE LANGUAGE OF CARIBBEAN IDENTITY – A VISIT TO EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

Text by Eduardo González-Cueva





Rossana Martínez (Puerto Rico)
Golden Islands, 2000
Stitched hand-colored collograph prints on paper, 60 x 140 in.
Gift of the artist, 2006

Photos by Jorge Ochoa

Eduardo Gonzáles-Cueva and curator Elvis Fuentes

Abel Barroso (Pinar del Río, Cuba 1971)
Cigars with Ideology (Puros con ideología), 2001
Multiple of wood cigar box with woodcut and lithograph,Edition: 60;
Publisher/Printer: Graphic Studio, University of South Florida, Tampa
box: 9 x 16 3/8 x 3 in.
The Museum of Modern Art, Richard A. Epstein Fund

A New York subway rider going north along Lexington Avenue, will realize that right after 96th Street a noticeable demographic change takes place in the train. It is as if an invisible border has been crossed: the fancy clothes leave the train in God-awful boring York City and, suddenly, a new imaginary country assaults the senses. Most of the riders speak Spanish now, with the accents of the Caribbean; Blacks and Latinos make up the majority in the car, and working-class smarts replace fashion smart.

Walking out of the subway at 103rd Street, the traveler takes the first steps into Spanish Harlem. Puerto Rican flags hanging from the windows of the apartments mark the territory clearly, a mural celebrates Celia Cruz, and the bodegas bustle with the comings and goings of the neighbors. These gritty streets were once walked by the likes of Ray Barreto, Tito Puente, Marc Anthony. Who knows—they are probably being walked today, by the next big star of salsa, jazz, or some other genre we can't even imagine. That a neighborhood hard hit by poverty and unemployment manages to be a cradle for writers and poets is not really a mystery: where identity is strong, young, creative minds thrive.

A flagship of this creativity is El Museo del Barrio. Founded in late 60s to host Latino artists, it has become a burning core for cultural life and has expanded into a massive collection, far overflowing its handsome galleries on 5th Avenue. All the questions about Latino identity converge here, as the original Puerto Rican sediment becomes the foundation over which new voices--Mexican, Guatemalan, Colombian--build stories for themselves.

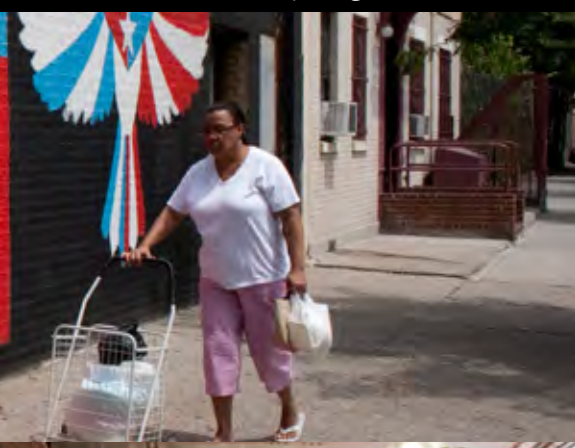
When I visited El Museo, it was featuring the exhibition "Caribbean: Crossroads of the World," the result of years of painstaking work by curator Elvis Fuentes at the head of a team in three different museums in New York. The exhibit defies the assumptions of the visitor by showing unexpected connections, material, ideological, artistic, between the Caribbean and New York.

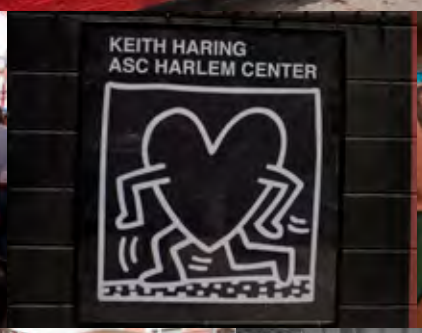
"Caribbean…" is a meditation on the linkages between the centuries-long exploitation of the region's resources and people, and the emergence of ideas of liberation and universalism. From the early depictions of the disappeared Taíno Indians, exterminated by the gold-driven Conquistadors, to the economies of sugar and tobacco, the Caribbean has been imagined as a region of unimaginable riches. All major Western empires have disputed the products of the region, but, little by little, New York City has absorbed most of its traffic and has proven to be a Mecca to its people.


A MUSEUM IS A SCHOOL: THE ARTIST LEARNS TO COMMUNICATE.THE PUBLIC LEARNS TO MAKE CONNECTIONS.


IWA

El Barrio: Photos by Jorge Ochoa





New York was made rich to a large extent by the massive transportation of sugar and rum from the West Indies and tobacco from Cuba; and similarly, it became a space of encounter, not just for robber barons and financiers, but for revolutionaries and liberators: Alexander Hamilton, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, Simón Bolívar, the liberator of South America, and José Martí, apostle of the independence of Cuba, all personified these linkages of Caribbean lands and the salons of New York where Utopia was imagined to replace a reality of slavery and oppression.

That an oppressive reality can coexist with the lush colors of the land and the bright light of the sun, is reflected in the different directions explored by the artists: exoticism, primitivism, impressionism, surrealism; the Caribbean has been an explosive arena for painting. A precious, small-format painting by the Puerto Rican master Francisco Oller shows Cezanne reclined in the grass, and that little square of color causes a jolt of joyful connections among Oller, Camille Pisarro, Paul Cezanne, and Paul Gauguin.

But the sugar and tobacco that replaced gold as the connection of the Caribbean with the world economy, are themselves being replaced by the search for oil, and the invention of an immaterial industry --one of imaginary landscapes and theatralized life: tourism. The center of the Caribbean is displaced from Cuba and Haiti to Venezuela, Mexico, Trinidad: photography and installations become suddenly in the exhibition, a poignant black and white presence, replacing a waning, colorful world.

The original product, tobacco, is replaced by the image of tobacco: a performance, simulacra of times past and imagined futures: Cuban artist Abel Barroso is featured with a little box of habanos that he has transformed into a rolling image of Socialist kitsch. “Puros con ideología” (Habanos with ideology) offers artifacts that convey the uncertainty of a fluid region, a changing landscape and the demands of an explosive life that overwhelms any ideology.

As you leave El Museo del Barrio, it takes some time to adapt to the regular images of New York. A stop at the museum’s cafeteria provides nourishment and another assault on the eyes, as the place mocks one of the local bodegas through its assortment of bright-colored sodas. Your walking becomes more tentative, your senses more acute, as you are granted access to the creative horizon of Spanish Harlem. As 103rd street climbs the heights of Lexington Avenue, you start to perceive in yourself the subtle music of Latino identity in the northernmost Spanish-speaking city of the Americas.

Photo by Aditi Das

ADELA
LA ADORADA

By Tessa Liebman

In front of me, along a wall of racks of giant pots, is a small, discreet statue of the Virgin Mother above a fishing boat standing next to a municipally-mandated food allergy poster that I'm almost certain is tolerated only because the yellow matches the hue of the Hickory 6.5, the magical rotisserie that pumps out Casa Adela's mania-inducing chicken. I am here on a mini-tour, conducted during a somewhat quiet hour of a scorching Tuesday morning. At this point in the day, Adela Fargas has been here for several hours. She is in every day at 5 a.m. to cook the pernil, a gorgeous hunk of pork shoulder that is lovingly massaged and therefore bears the very special *toque*, that touch that brings hordes of adoring fans to Casa Adela seven days a week from near and very far. This tour, both culinary and historical begins as most good Puerto Rican food does, with a sofrito. On the back left burner of a gas range sits a heavy iron pot with no handles, a stainless mixing bowl nestled on top. When removed it reveals what is left of the day's sofrito; red and thick, as full of life force, purpose and very specific DNA as the blood running through our veins, it is the only secret Adela will admit to. She doesn't have to mention the million others, which are not as tangible, identifiable or specific, but just as palpable and real.

Photos by Tessa Liebman

"Adela at Caprice" Photo by © Marlis Momber: All Rights Reserved

She is telling me the story of coming here. To New York City. To the Lower East Side. To Loisaida. When Adela came here in the 1970s at 37 years old, she already had a family in a city in the north of Puerto Rico along the Atlantic Ocean. I follow her from sofrito to salon, where the tables are adorned with plexiglassed-in placemats illustrated with colorful Puerto Rican history, sayings and maps. On the largest of the six tables in the restaurant, which could seat at the most 8, is a map of Puerto Rico, it's plantains, avocadoes, palm trees and coquis.

The top of the map says "Mi Cocina." This could be interpreted as the cocina of a people, Puerto Rico, or a person who is showing me that town right now, a place called Carolina not far from San Juan. As she bent over, studying the map from behind her smart black-framed glasses she explained that she came here to work in a factory, leaving her family temporarily behind. Her plan was that they would join her, which they did. What she never, in her wildest dreams had planned, was to have a restaurant oddered her that would welcome more family, mostly adopted for better or for worse over the years by the Fargas/Rivera family.

She had always cooked. Her mother showed her everything from the aforementioned sofrito to an array of classic Boricua dishes, like soulful oxtail *sancocho*, traditional Christmastime pasteles and perfect rice and beans. When she came to the Avenue C area there was already a strong and growing network of Puerto Ricans, many from Carolina and San Juan. While this Nuyorican community didn't inspire a Broadway musical a la "West Side Story," the Lower East Side story has been told many times over by poets and artists. Casa Adela's walls are covered with photos by photographer Marlis Momber, showing the neighborhood over the years, including one of a younger Adela, ruling over a giant pot of rice in Casa Adela's first incarnation two blocks away.

At about that time the neighborhood had been hit harder than most New York City neighborhoods with crime, poverty and derelict buildings. Most of the city was decidedly dangerous. Through all of it, through blackouts and burning cars, Adela opened a small restaurant and made the dishes that she always had. And people who, like her, were new to this city and without family were welcomed with a *cafecito* or a freshly fried *chuleta*.

Many of the same people still come. They may have since moved to New Jersey, Brooklyn, London, but they come back. I saw this as people passed through, hugging and joking with Luis Rivera, Adela's son and default general manager, or greeting the wait staff and counter people whom they have known for years and who never end up working anywhere else after they start at Adela. This seems to be what might happen to Gadriel Rivera, Fargas' nineteen year-old grandson, who many nights is the smiling face behind the counter. He explains that he wants to go to culinary school and keep cooking the food he learned from his grandmother, growing up beneath the aforementioned rotisserie that calls from inside the great glass windows that both brighten the block and illuminate the inside with their elegant script, "Casa Adela, Cafe Restaurant, Authentic Puerto Rican Cuisine."

These days, you're maybe more likely to find a wine bar than a bodega and hear as much German and Japanese on Avenue C as you are the particular brand of Borinquen Spanglish that as of 1992 inspired the newly-official name of Avenue C, "Loisaida Avenue," thanks to a poem by Nuyorican Poets' Society legend Bimbo Rivas. However, here she is. Every day. Even during her tenth, twelfth, thirteenth hour at the restaurant, when she is no longer looking after the breakfast, lunch and dinner customers along with her army of devoted staff. She is there, seated beneath a television blaring *Don Francisco* or *Casa Cerrado*, or some of her other favorite *telenovelas*. She might be griping or gossiping with long-time friends and neighbors or quietly scratching off lottery tickets with the same skill and intention as she squeezes oranges for one of the most delicious *Morir Soñando* in the city. When asked what she might do with the money if she won the lottery, Gadriel guesses that she would probably do the same thing she does every day. And that is to wake up at 4 a.m. to arrive at her *Cocina* --her *Casa*, and everyone's.

Q&A

DENISSE M. OLLER

By Chris Yong-García

Denisse Oller is an advocate, spokesperson and champion of the Latino experience. Through her professional work as a journalist, chef and community leader, Ms. Oller supports educational initiatives that are at the forefront of the Latino community.

Over the past 20 years, Ms. Oller received widespread recognition for her work as a journalist, including positions as News Anchor at Telemundo and Univision. During this time, she received five Emmys and nine nominations; five A.C.E. Awards; two Gracie Awards and the Edward R. Murrow Award for excellence in investigative reporting. She was also named by Hispanic Business Magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential Hispanic Personalities in the United States. Ms. Oller continues her work in journalism as a guest broadcaster on Univision radio.

As one of the prominent Food and Nutrition Experts for AARP's on-line Spanish language food channel at www.aarp.org/espanol/cocina, Ms. Oller hosts a monthly web-based cooking program and is a featured writer for AARP/VIVA. Her work with AARP enables Ms. Oller to reinvent Latino cuisine, bringing healthy eating choices to thousands of families. Ms. Oller is also working on her first cookbook, and teaches recreational classes at The Institute of Culinary Education in New York City.

Outside of the kitchen, Ms. Oller is the Executive Director for The Joseph A. Unanue Institute for Latin Studies at Seton Hall University. The goal of the institute is to inspire, educate and empower Seton Hall students to become the next generation of Latino leaders.

1- What place in Puerto Rico has your most fondest memories?

When I get off the plane in Puerto Rico, the very first thing I do is go visit Old San Juan. The place is an architectural and visual gem, with its churches, forts, alleyways, narrow streets, the Governor's residence, and views of the sea. As a child my parents would always take me to Old San Juan on weekends. I loved it. I yearned for my weekly pastry from La Mallorquina, or a *piragua* (shaved ice with fruit syrup) to cool off during the hot days of our almost year-long summer season. I could spend hours looking at the sea. The good old days. I remember them fondly.

2- Five years ago, with tears in your eyes, you said goodbye to your TV audience at Univision, and started on a new journey… What did you lose, and what did you gain as a result of that decision?

Tough, tough question. I lost the routine, the stability, the rhythm of a 9 to 5, well, in this case a 2:30 to 11:30 p.m. job. I lost the daily feedback of our audience and the working routine with my colleagues. Most of all, I missed covering breaking news.

In turn, I gained my freedom. My creative freedom, my freedom from living by a set of rules, written in a contract that tied me

down with a lists of do's and mostly don'ts, that extended to my off time. After more than 20 years of being in a business that rewarded loyalty and discouraged self-expression and creativity, I was out of a gilded cage, ready to see what else was out there.

It was not an easy transition---there were lots of adjustments to be made- but, for the first time in my life I was able to run my life—to experiment—to see what works and doesn't work and where I can go with my skills, abilities and knowledge. I have a great food business at www.denisseoller.com, I am a top collaborator for AARP, and I work as executive director of the Latino Institute at Seton Hall University, plus I am spokesperson for several entities whose message of health and fitness and empowerment I embrace. I make a great living and I decide when to go on vacations and for how long!!

3- Certainly leaving Univision was a bold move in your career; you followed your heart in order to pursue your other passions. What would you say to people who want to follow their dreams?
It is very tough. Extremely so, especially in these rough economic times. First thing to do, is to plan ahead—thoroughly—have plan A, B, C. Have savings for more than a year, two/three is even safer. Study as much as you can about your next move. Surround yourself with the best people possible—a very loyal team. And when you are ready----go for it!!!

4- Today, you also have the mission of empowering Latino and Latina students at The Joseph A. Unanue Institute… Do you see this new generation of US-born Latinos identifying with their Latin roots? And if you do, what do you think of their way of understanding their Latinidad?
I am so impressed by what I see every day. These young kids, second or third generation Latinos, are so identified with their parents and grandparents and their heritage and their culture and roots, and of course, their language. And yet, they are Americans, and proudly so. That is the beauty and wonder of dealing with this generation. They are young, determined to study, to work, to forge ahead. They are part of the fabric of this great country, while celebrating their sense of identity. I am so proud of them, of their Latinidad.

5- You've interviewed many world leaders, including former US Presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in addition to prominent artists and writers, such as Isabel Allende and Mario Vargas Llosa. Did you ever discuss their culinary preferences?
Not really, except with the legendary Spanish actress/singer Sara Montiel. I asked if she cooked ever, and she replied that she would prepare "huevos con puntilla",(fried eggs with lace) for Marlon Brando. By huevos con puntilla, she meant she would fry the eggs at a certain temperature so the whites would crisp and curl, thus the lace. Marlon Brando loved it!!!!

6- New York is a melting pot of races and cultures, and it seems that a lot of non-Latin people are falling in love with our cuisine. High-end restaurants are on the rise, for instance Richard Sandoval the great Mexican chef and entrepreneur just opened Raymi, his first Peruvian restaurant. What do you make of the growing popularity of Latino American cuisine in this city?
God bless. Keep it coming---About time…Our food is rich in history, tradition, variety and abundance of many varieties of meat, fowl, grains and vegetables!!!! We are a world unto ourselves, from others to learn and share. I trained at Le Bernardin and I was a witness of how much Chef Ripert loves and gets inspiration from the Caribbean and South America. It is about time we become an integral part of the global food landscape.

7- Do you think there is such a thing as a Latin-American cuisine? How does Puerto Rican cuisine fit into this rubric?
Of course there is a Latin American cuisine. Imagine an orchestra called Latin America- we all have something to contribute to the great symphony with the best we have. Our diversity, our cuisines, our preparations, our traditions are unparalleled. And our beverages, from *horchatas* to *aguas frescas*, are just as varied and distinct as our food. This is a universe just now being discovered.

Puerto Rican food is so rich; our influences so varied, from the Amerindians, Africans, Spanish/European, and the U.S. It is a treasure. So many chefs, including uber chef Eric Ripert find so much inspiration from the Island. If he does, need I say more???

8- For several years, you've been an advocate for healthy eating. HBO's new series "The Weight of the Nation" addresses the obesity issue in the US as an epidemic. It's definitely a serious issue that US society has to deal with. What do you think might be the best way to transform bad eating habits into healthy ones, and still have the pleasure of eating?
Look , the main cause of the obesity epidemic is excess calories. This is due to unhealthy eating habits and insufficient physical activity. We have to understand not only the causes of obesity among Latinos, like propensity to diabetes, but also the culture, history and environment that cause us to eat the way we do, in order to educate ourselves and make us aware of every single choice we make.

9- If you have the opportunity to invite to your home the person who you admire the most in the world, what would you cook for him or her?
Hey—this has been one tough question after another—and I am cheating a little, here. The man I admired the most, Chef Maximo Tejada, died three months ago from an asthma attack. He is the chef I most admired for his knowledge, experience, artistry, and generosity. Anything I cook nowadays I think of him and whether it has his sign of approval.

10-. What's the Puerto Rican dish that you can't live without?
Toughest question of all. *Arroz con gandules*, *pasteles navideños* –like Grandma used to make them, and *serenata de bacalao*—are my absolute favorite--do or die.

So can I make it three instead of one????

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Photo by Camila Valdeavellano.