

15 MINUTES

Olé, Chico!

Anna Isaacs fell in love with flamenco early, attending her first class at age 12. The Louisville, Ky., native was immediately hooked. Later, while attending college in Washington, she would ride the bus 90 minutes away to take classes from the closest teacher she could find. She also has studied at the National Institute of Flamenco in Albuquerque. Now a Chicoan, the 30-year-old launched Flamenco Chico last year, molding it in the likeness of the venerable New Mexico institution. While there is a small flamenco scene in town, Isaacs' goal is to form a hub that will promote the art form with an online presence, organize events and public performances, and teach lessons at Downtown Dance (163 E. Third St.). Her Sunday classes are offered as part of eight-week sessions focusing on technical and artistic aspects of the dance. You can find more information about lessons, upcoming performances and opportunities to play guitar for the dancers at chicodancesflamenco.com.

How did you get started with Flamenco Chico?

About a year and a half ago, I quit my full-time job, and started doing shows and teaching lessons. It's a very community-driven thing. We have a few guitarists, we have a few dancers and we have a lot of dance students, from high-school-age to people in their 60s. Flamenco is very family-oriented. This month has been very busy. We had a touring artist [Savannah Fuentes] come, and I'm going to be at Red Tavern with the group that performs there regularly [April 11-12].

Flamenco is an intense performing art. How do you encourage people who are interested, but perhaps a little intimidated?

Flamenco isn't *one* thing. Flamenco is the name given to the folk music, dance and singing of Andalusia, in southern Spain. There are many forms, or *palos*. In formal performance settings, you're going to see the most intense *palos*. But in a family setting or just hanging out, there are other *palos*, where you jump in, do a little sassy thing and jump



PHOTO BY NATE DALY

out. Or there's *sevillana*, a party dance. So there are lots of styles wrapped up into one, from beginner to very serious, advanced levels. Flamenco comes from the gitano Roma people who originated in India, traveled into Europe and contributed to many Gypsy traditions. In Spain, that happened to be flamenco. It's an art form that is about suffering and repression, but within that, there is a sense to find strength, beauty and joy.

How do you hope to promote flamenco in the community?

We have the performance troupe and we have the beginner class happening. The next move is to formalize the guitarist community to have them coming in and playing for students, and helping to grow the improv aspect of performance. As we grow, we'll probably also start separating classes into skill levels. Flamenco takes a lifetime to master because there are so many *palos*. It's endless learning.

—NATE DALY

THE GOODS

Fried chicken and fare-thee-wells



by
Meredith J. Cooper
meredithc@newsreview.com

Anyone who's stepped foot inside **Chicago's Pizza With a Twist** in the **Safeway** shopping center at West Sacramento and Nord avenues is in for a shock next time, as the already quirky pizza parlor has introduced yet another twist (the first: it's a mashup of Indian and Italian cuisines). As of last Thursday evening (April 4), its front counter now features a large display of fried chicken.

I happened to drive by the place on Friday as they were hanging a sign for **Krispy Krunchy Chicken** alongside the one advertizing pizza. I decided to stop in, as I'd been meaning to check out the place anyway. It's, shall we say, eclectic. On one side of the L-shaped counter is fried chicken and several digital menu boards with various combos, sides and other offerings. On the other is pizza-by-the-slice and additional menu boards with the wide range of toppings (from tikka sauce to butter chicken), as well as pastas (curry chicken penne, chicken alfredo), calzones and samosas.

It's a little overwhelming, but the clerk—who was very friendly and attentive—informed me they hoped to increase business by increasing their offerings. Judging by the traffic the day I was there, which included several groups of after-school kids, the plan was working. About half ordered chicken; the other half, pizza. I have yet to try the latter, but the former was good—similar to **Popeye's**, a step above Safeway. (Krispy Krunchy's headquarters are in Louisiana, as is Popeye's). And it's super affordable, to boot. I wish 'em luck.

SWEET FAREWELLS Entrepreneur **Jesse Smith** sent out a note to customers last week informing us that, after seven years in the business, he's closing **Five by Five Tonics**, a mostly wholesale outfit headquartered in Chico. I'd tasted some of his creations at local brewers' events and they were unique and delicious—think flavored bitters and a killer tonic syrup. His online shop (fivebyfivetonics.com) will be up through the month of April, so go snag a final bottle or three. He also has a book in the works, in case you want to try your hand at starting your own likeminded business. *Bitter Startup* will be on shelves soon.

Sadly, **Hooker Oak Distillery**, one of the first establishments in the so-called **Booze District** along South Park Avenue, also is closing. It sold its last bottles of locally made rum Saturday (April 6). The apple pie flavor was truly something different—and delicious! I'm sorry to see it go.

INSPIRATION This year's **Home and Garden Show**—set for this weekend, April 13-14, at the **Silver Dollar Fairgrounds**—promises cool new ideas, especially for those affected by the Camp Fire. There'll be fire-safe supplies and a chance to meet builders who specialize in quick home rebuilds in fire-stricken areas. I'm particularly interested in checking out the tiny homes, which will be set up for walk-throughs, plus the specialty food hall. And, I look forward to perusing the **Chico Horticultural Society's** always-impressive display—maybe this will be the year I finally start a garden! For more info (and \$2 off admission), go to chicohomeshow.com.

CHECK OUT TINY HOMES AT THE SHOW!

HOME & GARDEN SHOW
chicohomeshow.com

APRIL 13 & 14
Fairgrounds, Chico

\$2 OFF Admission

Valid for one adult admission (reg. \$7 per person) or one senior admission (reg. \$6 per person) WITH THIS AD. No cash value. Good April 13 & 14, 2019 only.

HUGE FLOWER SHOW AND SALE!