

15 MINUTES

## Labor of love

Vianey Martinez has been baking her whole life. Growing up in a Nicaraguan and Mexican household in Daly City, she was raised on Latin comfort food, her mother teaching her how to cook tortillas, cookies and cakes from a young age. Over the years, she would become a medical assistant and a reproductive specialist for different areas of the health care industry, but she never stopped baking. This summer, Martinez decided to take her kitchen skills to the next level, getting her business license and starting up Filbert Avenue Baking Co. Since then, she's stopped working in health care and started selling her goods at local coffee shops, community events and setting up outside her house, along with taking custom orders online. For more information, contact Martinez on her Filbert Avenue Baking Co. Facebook page, or on Instagram @citygirlcountrycarbs.

### Was there any specific inspiration that made you decide to start your own business?

When I was in health care, I'd always bake for a lot of friends. We relied a lot on treats and cake and carbs and caffeine, and so I started doing it more and more. You know that moment when everyone says "Do what makes you happy"? Well, this does make me happy, so I just decided, "What the hey," I'm gonna give it a go at doing what makes me happy.

### How do you operate right now?

It's still very small right now. It's just a tiny little home operation and I only very recently got the confidence to meander outside my front door. I'm at Blackbird Cafe on Mondays from 4-7 p.m. selling vegan, non-GMO tortillas, but that's a very recent venture and they're not sure if it's going to be year-round. Right now it's basically by appointment only. I take custom orders online [through social media] and deliver them.



PHOTO BY JOSH COZINE

### What's on the menu?

I'm still finishing the menu, but the things I can say are confidently on the menu are homemade tortillas, chewy chocolate chip cookies and an ode to my Mexican cookies I grew up with, *galletas gra-greas*—sugar cookies rolled in sprinkles, and made-to-order cakes.

### Any sort of risks involved?

You have to be respectful with food. Your kitchen has to be a sacred space—you're always running a real risk when you cook for people. I also never thought I'd be at this point where I would just literally leave something I loved so, so, so much in [health care], and change is scary. But leaving doesn't always have to mean you weren't happy, you just gotta grow.

### What are future business plans?

I applied to the farmers' market and I'm waiting to hear back, but the goal is to never stop doing this. If I got to a point where I could do this full-time, absolutely I would.

—JOSH COZINE

## THE GOODS

## Familiar faces



by  
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I got a sweet note the other day from a reader who shared a story of her recent visit to Red Bluff with great excitement. She was pleasantly surprised, she said, to see Ikkyu Japanese Restaurant had opened up there. "My husband and I were thrilled to find Ikkyu—our favorite Paradise restaurant—and enjoy their delicious Japanese food," Rae Lee writes. "The owners and staff are familiar faces, wearing impressive Paradise Camp Fire Strong T-shirts."

According to Ikkyu's Facebook page, the restaurant celebrated its seventh anniversary last month and the owners, Momo and Shige Kojima, seem to be doing pretty well after losing their business and two homes to the Camp Fire. They hope to someday rebuild in Paradise, but until then, visit them in Red Bluff at 645 Antelope Blvd., Ste. 4.

**WAIT, THERE'S MORE** I got word last week that Mamma Celeste's Gastropub & Pizzeria, which also lost its home on the Skyway last November, just signed a 20-year lease on a spot in Sparks, Nev. I (sadly) never made it to the Paradise location, but it was my go-to pizza joint in Chico while it was here. I'm sorry to see it go so far away—planned opening is next May—but hey, we can all still enjoy some great, familiar food and faces when we travel now. So, there is a silver lining. As owner Jim Flanagan says on Facebook, "On Nov 8th, 2018, [our] dream was interrupted, but not destroyed." Amen.

**OPEN ON THE RIDGE** It's not all news of businesses leaving town around here. No, I heard recently that Izzy's Burgers & BBQ reopened at 13915 S. Park Drive in Magalia earlier this month. Also, Mountain Mike's is back in biz in the Kmart shopping center in Paradise. And a new eatery, Nic's, recently opened up shop in the former Wine Room space on the Skyway. The photos and early reviews seem promising—the place was even open during the blackout last week, offering \$1 coffees and ports for plugging in electronics. Right on!

**LIE BACK, RELAX** In honor of Veterans Day Nov. 11, True Rest Float Spa is offering free floats for vets and active-duty military (in fact, the veteran-owned business does so on the 11th of every month). I haven't tried it yet, but a friend of mine who served in Afghanistan swears by this place—both the deprivation tanks and the service. Bonus for civilians: For every float you buy between Monday (Oct. 21) and Nov. 11, a vet will get one free.

**NOW IN CHICO** Ace Hardware announced last week that it's holding its grand opening on Saturday (Oct. 18), from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at its new home on East Avenue (next to Raley's in the old Orchard Supply Hardware space). I want to be excited, but here's the thing: It's an out-of-state company that opened up a hardware store literally across the street from recently opened, locally owned True Value Hardware. Naturally, Ace will employ local folks, which is good, but it just kind of stinks to do so in such close proximity to a local business. As always, shop local, people!

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