



MELA'S: A LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN IN LINCOLN HEIGHTS (dishes for VEGANS too)

Christopher Nyerges

I was famished and I needed lunch.

Not far from Five Points on Daly Street in Lincoln Heights, I ducked into a nearby Mexican food restaurant that I'd never noticed before, Mela's. Small benches were out on the sidewalk for those who wanted an al fresco eating experience. A lone guitarist plucked out tunes for the passersby.

Once inside, I met the friendly and gregarious owner, Daniel Diaz, and I felt as if I'd come back to my family home. I quickly met Daniel's brother Samuel, who works the restaurant as well.



Daniel on left and Samuel on right.
Photo by Christopher Nyerges

Daniel pointed to the simple menu on the wall. The menu is very basic, and good. A customer can still ask for any dish they want, and the chef might be able to conjure it up.

"We like to keep the menu simple," he explained, "because this is all a tribute to our beloved mother, Mela. We do this to honor her memory." Wow, I thought, that's beautiful.

I asked Daniel what he suggested I order for lunch and he brought me a steaming bowl of "Carne en su jugo," a delicious bowl of fresh stew with bits of beef and beans and flavored with cilantro. As I sat on the table gazing out the window onto Daly Street, listening to the traditional Mexican music in the background, savoring each bite, I thought that Daniel's mother Mela must have been a wonderful person.

As I enjoyed my little bit of heaven there in Lincoln Heights, Daniel told me that his mother came from Mexico into the United States in the 1950s. She and his grandmother came from the mountainous Zacatecas region in Mexico. "They fed the silver miners who came out of the mines in the mountains," said Daniel



Melas
Photo by Christopher Nyerges



Maintenance 1st Quarter '22

Trash bags removed	2,402
Trash weight	55,246
Graffiti tags removed	882
Bulky items:	875
Pressure washing hrs.	48



Security 1st Quarter '22

Patrol calls for service	304
Patrol client contacts	1,123
Public contacts	168
Graffiti Reported	89
Vehicle patrol hours	1,613

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

APRIL 15, 2022

11:00 A.M.

ZOOM INFO

MEETING ID: 861 1811 4163

PASSCODE: 083771



Daniel on left and cook on right
Photo by Christopher Nyerges

with great pride remembering his beloved mother. "Our store is our way to memorialize our mother and her traditional cooking." Indeed, I felt that this tidy restaurant was a window to the past, with the walls full of the family pictures and pictures of Mela.

"You've got to try the potato taco," bellowed Daniel, putting the attractive plate in front of me. Indeed, it was

a delicious taco, fit for vegans and vegetarians, and delicious to both the eyes and mouth.

Between helping other customers who came in for lunch, I spoke with Daniel and learned that he's also a musician who plays both guitar and keyboards. They plan to offer musical performance sometime beginning May 13th allowing local artists to have a voice. Though the inside seating area is tight, they have a back patio which can seat about 75 patrons (parking in the rear of building for patio entry is thru Daly street next to the Water and Power building) where they expect to have musical performances. He and his brother want to create a friendly environment with Mela's.

"In a way, it's like going into the past here where you can talk to anyone here," he explains. "You can leave your laptop at home," he bellows with a laugh.



The food was so good
Photo by Christopher Nyerges

Daniel Diaz just recently opened Mela's in March 25th of this year. It's located at 2423 Daly Street, and its hours are Monday thru Sunday 10-8 pm.

Mission Statement

To bring about the revitalization of the Lincoln Heights community

To bring about the investment of private and public capital within the Lincoln Heights community for public benefit and charitable purposes.

To bring about the increased provision of quality public improvements and educational, cultural, artist, charitable and social services within the Lincoln Heights community for public benefit and charitable purposes.

2022 Budget

Income

Assessments \$654,300

Expenses

Sidewalk Ops. & Beautification \$1,101,120
District ID, Org & Contingency \$196,350.

LH Board of Directors

Steve Kasten, President
Kasten Properties

Sampson Chan, Vice-President
YAT Corp

**Carlton Maese, Treasurer/
Parliamentarian**
Property Owner

Dave Mandala, Secretary
Property Owner

Richard Kim, Board Member
Young Nak

Ronnie Rudolph, Board Member
San Antonio Winery

Jason Taban, Board Member
Property Owner

Misty Iwatsu
Executive Director
Lincoln Heights Benefits Assoc. of LA

How You Can Help

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

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

Call maintenance with concerns at 347-563-1854 with any maintenance requests.

Visit: www.LHBALA.org and fill out a report