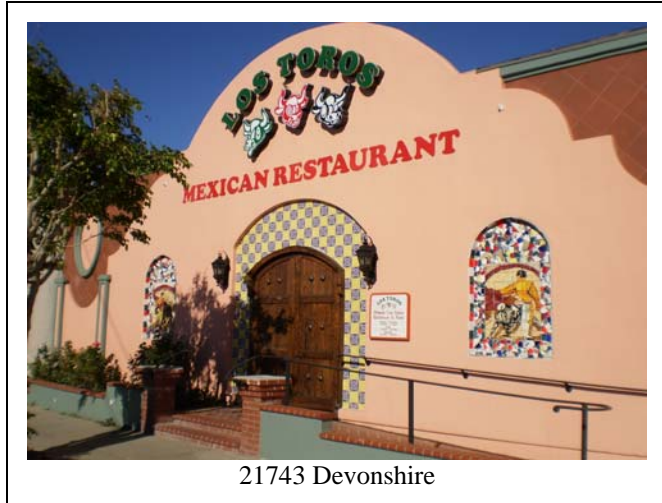


CHATSWORTH PAST & PRESENT

By Ann Vincent

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The Los Toros Restaurant is our featured business in this issue of the Smoke Signal. If you drive down Devonshire any evening, you will notice that it is the busiest place in town. And it has been a landmark in adding to the history and culture of Chatsworth.



The current owner of Los Toros is Nicolas (Nick) Montañó III, who runs the family business that was originally started by Nicolas Montañó II (Nick Jr) and his wife Dolores in 1967.

The original restaurant was located further east on Devonshire, which is the current location of Devonshire Preschool (across from Taco Bell). They began by serving tacos, hot dogs and hamburgers, and business grew.

In 1971, Nick Jr. purchased the Magdalena Mexican Deli owned by Joe Flores at 21743 Devonshire, which became Los Toros' current location. They started small, with a kitchen, café style counter top and six tables (photo below). They were the first sit-down patio in the Chatsworth area. Other eating establishments close by were Tony's House of Eggs and J.R.'s Roundup (now the Cowboy Palace).



The sign above advertises homemade Mexican food, ice cold beer and wine, air conditioning and a Beer Garden Patio. The sign mentions that parking is in the rear.



Through the years, demand resulted in the growth of the restaurant and occupied many of the other establishments on the block. Those businesses included The Red Room (now the main bar), H&R Block, a typewriter

repair shop and Colleen's Dress Shop.

Nick remembers long hours at the restaurant as a kid and working weekends with the family. It paid off, as the outside and inside of the building has an authentic colorful Mexican decor with tile artwork inside and out. The front of the building along Devonshire lets you know you have arrived, and the back --- where the entrance is located --- includes valet parking and a corral should you arrive on horseback.

Los Toros has become famous for their House Margarita and bean dip, however you will enjoy choosing from the menu which includes specialties named for patrons over the years.



The Montañó family has participated in our Chatsworth community supporting Chatsworth Little League for over 30 years. Nick now serves as the Kiwanis Club President and they currently meet at the Los Toros restaurant.

In addition to other community service, Nick's special effort in resurrecting the Chatsworth Parade has continued the long history of this event. The parade used to be a summer event scheduled in June or July back in the 60-70's, but was then discontinued. For the last 14 years it has been held in December and continues to draw large crowds and promotes community involvement.

Nick Montañó was recognized as Chatsworth Citizen of the Year for 2004-2005. Business owners such as the Montañó Family have helped shape our community and are now a part of our rich Chatsworth history.

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