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CLAIRE'S CAFÉ / CLAIRE JOHNSON, co-owner

Claire Johnson, an Illinois native born into a family of creative cooks, began her culinary career as a produce buyer and founded an organic food co-op on Chicago's north side. She relocated to Arizona in 1980 and became the head chef at the Blue Willow, followed by cooking stints at Oro Valley Country Club, Loews Ventana and C.B. Rye. In 1986, Claire bought Dyna Café and transformed it into the present day Claire's Café and Art Gallery.



ECLECTIC CAFÉ / MARK SMITH, owner

Born and raised in Tucson, Mark Smith is a Catalina High School graduate. He started working in restaurants as a teenager and took that training to open the Eclectic Café in October 1980 when he was 24.

Smith brings a variety of flavors to Eclectic Café's menu so that the whole family can be satisfied. He says the secret to the restaurant business is fresh ingredients, consistency and fast, friendly service. His goal is to make every guest feel special when they walk through the doors.

Smith has enjoyed seeing the generations of families come through the doors of the café and watching the staff go from high school graduates to college graduates to professionals in the work force. In his free time, Smith enjoys playing tennis, traveling and, no surprise, cooking!



EL CISNE / PHIL and GEORGE FERRANTI, co-owners

Phil Ferranti opened El Cisne Restaurant with his son, George, and team of Nancy Carnero and Alicia Gastelum in January 2013 at Swan and Sunrise (El Cisne means "The Swan" in Spanish). They added to the excitement of the now 25-year tradition by reuniting with many more staff members from Phil's previous establishment, La Placita Café in the Plaza Palomino.

El Cisne offers "Platillos de la Sala," dining-room dishes, in a relaxed yet elegant atmosphere. El Cisne is also a great place for lunch or happy hour cocktails at "The Black Swan Tequila Bar."



GOURMET GIRLS GLUTEN FREE BAKERY/BISTRO MARY STEIGER and SUSAN FULTON, chef/owners

Mary Steiger started cooking as a child and by the time she was 7, knew she wanted to be a baker when she grew up. Susan Fulton came from a family with a passion for food and always fantasized about owning a restaurant. The two traveled different roads until their paths met seven years ago in Tucson, where they discovered a mutual desire to promote wellness through food choices.

The dedicated, certified gluten-free bakery/bistro is the result of their collaboration.



GUSTO OSTERIA / GLENN "GUS" GERSON, owner

Gusto Osteria owner/operator Glenn "Gus" Gerson has been in the restaurant business for over 20 years. Originally from Ohio, Gus came to Tucson after service in the Navy and began with Bobby McGee's in his college days. Gus worked with Joey Scordato at Scordato's on Broadway, and stayed on when it became Olson's on Broadway. After a stretch in the advertising business, Gus rejoined Joe at Giuseppe's in Tucson's Northwest before bringing a similar home style Italian concept to Tucson's East Side with Gusto Osteria.



MAMA'S FAMOUS PIZZA & HEROES / ELEANOR and JOE SPINA

Eleanor and Joe Spina, aka Mama and Pop, were the inspiration behind Mama's Famous Pizza and Heroes, a Tucson tradition for more than two decades. When Eleanor and Joe retired from New York City to Tucson in 1975, their children, Joe Jr., Vinnie and Kathryn, soon decided to join them. Trading the construction business for pizza, they successfully

tested their restaurant concept in New York before moving west to open the first Mama's in Tucson in 1981. Choosing a name was easy: the word "Mama" represents family, home and love. The restaurant is still run by Eleanor and Joe's children and grandchildren.