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**Hillcrest's future, revised**

The Planning Commission views Hillcrest as an alternate downtown for San Diego, perfect for in-fill development to address the housing crisis while combatting sprawl amid climate change. (Photo by Drew Sitton)

# Planning Commission green lights PlanHillcrest

By DREW SITTON

After years of work, the Planning Commission approved the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment which adds the potential for 17,000 new housing units over a few blocks in the urban core of Hillcrest. Now, the amendment to the 2016 Uptown Community Plan, which did not include adding any housing in the area, is headed to the City Council's housing committee this month before going before the full City Council in July.

Meanwhile, the city's Parks and Recreation Board did not endorse PlanHillcrest over its lack of additional park space for the incoming residents. The plan includes incentives to developers to build promenades, but no large-scale public projects such as a moon-shot idea to cover the 163 with a park.

The amendment does not just make way for possible new housing but also includes road conversions to make the area more bike and pedestrian friendly. University and Robinson avenues between First and 10th avenues

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# Sudsy meals at The Original 40 Brewing Company

## Restaurant Review

By FRANK SABATINI JR.



Despite turning only five years old this year, The Original 40 Brewing Company feels like an established cornerstone to North Park's beer and food scene. The brewery's very name plays off the neighborhood's history, a reflection of the original 40-acre parcel of land that ultimately evolved into modern-day North Park.

Land developer James Monroe Hartley purchased the acreage from a property merchant in

1893 with the hopes of creating a sprawling lemon grove. The plan proved futile due to lack of water, so the Hartley family slowly began developing the area commercially.

Fast forward to the 21st Century and we find longtime North Park resident Steve Billings at the helm of this inviting food-centric brewery where beer, boards and beards rule the day.

The beer portfolio is prolific, as evidenced by several big fermentation tanks looming over the dining area, plus more than two dozen taps dedicated to beers that are brewed on site. You will undoubtedly find IPA's, blondes, goldens, and light lagers along with sours, ciders and seltzers. No imbibers are left behind and there are always new releases.

Westerly Flow IPA has become my favorite. It's a top seller with an acceptable alcohol level of 7% plus a sturdy but manageable hop level. The Extra Extra Extra Pale Ale impressed the palate of my companion visiting from Chicago. She observed that 100% of the



Short rib tacos

youngish male clientele were sporting attractive beards.

"This is bearded bro-ville central," I informed her of North Park before she noted that the ale offered a nicer, fuller flavor compared to (gasp!) the Michelob Ultra Light she normally drinks.

"Of course it does," I attested before even stealing a sip.

The food menu fits the brewery like a glove. A cheese and



An open-air exterior leads to a productive brewery. (Photos by Frank Sabatini Jr.)

charcuterie board provided us with about 20 minutes of grazing before polishing it off. The ratio of meats to cheeses to olives and nuts was adequate, although the accompanying grainy wine mustard from a company called Roland was sensational. Its smooth, European-like flavor had

me shopping for the stuff online the next day.

The glorious mustard also appeared on a charred beer-infused bratwurst tucked into a fresh French roll. The brat was juicy and the beer inside of it was discernible. My only complaint was that the grilled onions and peppers needed to be cooked longer until fully soft.

A trio of short rib street tacos captured the compatible flavors of the braised meat, Serrano chilies, cotija cheese and crema spiked with Poblano peppers. Scatterings of fresh corn and cilantro gave the tacos authentic south-of-the-border quality, which stood up to the hops in my beer.

In a different visit, I enthusiastically forked into "Patou's summer

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619-255-7380,  
www.original40brewing.com  
Food prices: Starters and salads, \$6.50 to 14; boards, \$12 and \$21; hot dogs, burgers, sandwiches and flat breads, \$8 to \$19; entrees, \$12 to \$28



Bratwurst and fries



A shareable grazing board



Extra, extra, extra pale ale and Westerly Flow

SEE ORIGINAL 40 BREWING, Page 11

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# Enjoy Little Italy's ever-growing culinary scene

**Little Italy News**  
By **CHRISTOPHER GOMEZ**

Summer has finally arrived in San Diego! With the return of the sunny season, locals and visitors are flocking to San Diego's most charming neighborhood to enjoy all that it has to offer. From new businesses to lively community events, Little Italy is the ideal neighborhood to create lasting memories this summer!

## New restaurants in the neighborhood

Little Italy is constantly evolving, with new restaurants adding to the rich culinary scene in the neighborhood. One of those establishments is the long-awaited arrival of Postino Wine and Café. With locations all around the country, it's widely known as the perfect place to meet with your friends and family for a bite and a sip. Postino offers an ever-changing selection of boutique wines and craft brews paired with a decked-out menu of bruschetta, panini, salads and a lineup of crave-worthy charcuterie boards and shareables. Recently opened on Kettner Boulevard in April, Postino has already become a beloved space with a sophisticated twist.

Having opened its doors in February, Roman Wolves has created a culinary experience that engages all the senses. Inspired by

the vibrant spirit of Rome, the high-end eatery brings traditions and modernity together, with a menu and environment that embraces authenticity, quality and hospitality. Nestled in the heart of Little Italy, Roman Wolves stands as a testament to the timeless charm of Roman cuisine. From farm-to-table ingredients to curated wine selection, every element is chosen to enhance your dining experience.

Looking for a destination for authentic and delicious French pastries, cakes and desserts? Bon Jour Patisserie is the new place to be! The journey of Bon Jour Patisserie started in Bordeaux, France, where one of the founders and head pastry chef, Romain Mores, learned the art of making croissants, baguettes, macarons, and other delicacies from some of the best pastry chefs in the city. After moving to San Diego, Romain and his wife Marissa, began sharing their love for French baking with the sunny city. Here, Bon Jour Patisserie uses only the finest ingredients and traditional methods to create beautiful bites!

One of San Diego's most prominent restaurant families, the Busalacchi family, has expanded in Little Italy! Located on India St. next to Barbusa, LaLa is a cozy and stylish 1,000 square-foot restaurant and cocktail bar. The seasonal menu revolves around Italian classics with some elements of broader Mediterranean cuisine, featuring a strong focus



People lined up for samples at last year's Taste of Little Italy. (Photo courtesy Little Italy Association)

on appetizers that are perfect for sharing with friends and families.

Vincenzo Cucina & Lounge is the newest must-try spot in the heart of Little Italy. Located on the corner of India St. and the Piazza della Famiglia, founder and restaurateur Vincenzo Loverso is bringing something new to the neighborhood. Since opening in April, Vincenzo Italian restaurant has become a fan-favorite amongst locals and visitors of the neighborhood. With a full bar and lounge plus street-side sipping at the Aperol Spritz Bar, Vincenzo Cucina & Lounge is becoming the next big thing in the neighborhood.

## Taste of Little Italy

Be sure you mark your calendars now for the ultimate foodie event of the summer! Happening on June 18th and 19th from 4 to 8 p.m., Taste of Little Italy returns for two back-to-back nights of gastronomic

delights showcasing the diverse culinary landscape of the neighborhood. Attendees will get the chance to explore Little Italy through a new lens by tasting the delicious bites and sips offered across 48-blocks of the neighborhood. Beloved eateries such as Buon Appetito, Waterfront Bar & Grill, Cloak & Petal, Ballast Point, and more will be participating this year and you won't want to miss it! Upon arrival, attendees will receive a 'Taste Passport,' allowing them to wander around sampling culinary delights and enjoying live music at the Piazza della Famiglia and Piazza Basilone. Tickets are \$55 per day.

Little Italy is stacked with fun events this June that you simply can't miss!

For more information, please visit us at [LittleItalySD.com](http://LittleItalySD.com) or follow us on Instagram @LittleItalySD, Twitter @LittleItalySD and Facebook @LittleItalySD.

# Original 40 Brewing

CONTINUED FROM Page 10

salad," which brims with romaine lettuce, sweet corn, hearts of palm, grape tomatoes, and avocado. Dried mint and lemon vinaigrette increase the summer vibes of this foolproof medley.

A big thumbs-up should also be given to the "OG" house burger, thanks to the finely ground beef it uses, which adds tenderness. The generous patty is complemented by white cheddar, mild garlic aioli and fresh lettuce, tomatoes and red onions—nothing too over the top or overly greasy. The house-cut fries (served also with the bratwurst) land squarely into the addicting category.

The atmosphere at Original 40 is spacious, clean and casual. Customers are greeted with ample indoor-outdoor seating that looks out to the east end of North Park's main commercial district. The staff is friendly and knowledgeable about the food and beer, which also includes a short list of non-alcoholic suds from guest breweries such as Gruvi, Bravus and Athletic.

Select beer and wines are \$2 off during happy hour, which runs from 4 to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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