

From Quarantine Creations to Culinary Success



Scarlett Curtis and Jason Cervantes, the proud owners of Lil' Vegerie. Photo By Kevin Cody
Their love story is a recipe for success. Innovation took the form of delicious and clean food to promote a healthy and happy life.

Jason Cervantes is the owner and founder of Lil' Vegerie, a vegan takeout restaurant in Redondo Beach, California. He and his fiancé, Scarlett Curtis, opened the business in May 2022, after the COVID-19 outbreak.

During quarantine, the two combined their passions for cooking and their colorful backgrounds to create these delicious dishes.

“The concept was to make food that tastes really good, that’s good for you, and that’s convenient,” said Cervantes.

Not only did the pandemic give them the opportunity to create, but it also gave them the time to plan.

“So it was because of the pandemic that I had all the time to put together the business plan and then raise all the money.”

By waiting tables during the pandemic, Cervantes was able to earn enough money for the new business as well as find a spot for the restaurant and build a menu.

With all the success the business has had, it has still been difficult to afford produce and ingredients due to the economic impact of COVID-19.

“You have to keep your prices competitive, and because food is not cheap, it's hard to make money.”

It's a risky business, selling high-quality food at a lower price due to the money-conscious decisions people make. People buy meals based on affordability, no matter the quality.



Founder and chef of Lil' Vegerie, Jason Cervantes. Photo By Kevin Cody

Also, there is difficulty in finding employees and paying them fairly because of the hard-to-balance expenses. "It's hard to pay people a livable wage because it is so expensive to have a restaurant."

The increase in produce prices and the wage increases have made it nearly impossible for restaurant owners to operate.

There has been a fear, since the pandemic, of receiving COVID-19 by venturing into restaurants.

"Some customers would highly judge a place for how they followed COVID-19 protocols."

Even at Lil' Vegerie, a takeout restaurant, individuals would be nervous to order due to the fear of getting COVID-19. This put a strain on their income initially, but in more recent times, they have been able to share their wonderful dishes.

Lil' Vegerie has a five-star rating and is the number one restaurant on the Yelp list of "Top 100 Places to Eat in LA County 2023."

COVID-19 has led to the creation of something new for SoCal. Customers can now open themselves to new foods that promote their well-being at Lil' Vegerie.