



The bright interior of La Señora.

Chris Malloy

# Old Town Boutique Hotel Restaurant Gets a Colorful Reboot, Jolt

**CHRIS MALLOY** | AUGUST 20, 2018 | 6:00AM

The Saguaro Hotel Scottsdale is a boutique hotel on the edge of Old Town where the minutes catch, slow, and clog together in a heedless mass, where time clots like glue. That might be because of the candy colors you see as you swing your ride in from Indian School Road.

Hashes of color beside windows. The pastel yellow of the entrance. And the pinks, sunset oranges, and yellows of the inner hotel, flaring right on into the cozy restaurant.

That restaurant has recently morphed into La Señora, a sleek space with exposed bulb lighting, indie music (The War on Drugs, etc.), and a menu more in the vivid spirit of all the colors.

"We had more of a bigger menu, meaning that there were more entrees," says chef Cesar Vasquez, who has been the hotel's chef for four years, on old versus new. "We want people to enjoy the food here because we have over 30 restaurants within walking distance."

Curiously, he adds that these other restaurants figured into the calculus of creating La Señora. Vasquez hopes that people will swing in and try a few small plates, then head off to enjoy small bites at other restaurants in the heart of Old Town.



Quesadillas, watermelon, and mixed pickles

**Chris Malloy**

Most plates at La Señora are smaller, even its tortas.

Vasquez, though, aims for flavors as huge as the colors. Watermelon wedges from Yuma are edged with Aleppo pepper and Tajin. Heirloom carrots get a lift from toasted sesame seeds, chile de arbol, and Requeson (ricotta-like cheese) made in-house from whole milk. A quesadilla hides nopales and oozes Chihuahua cheese, coins of orange chipotle remoulade dotting each slice. Nachos sport radishes and pickled serranos.

La Señora's menu is "more Southwestern with a little bit of mostly Mexican influence" relative to its immediate ancestor, Vasquez says. There certainly are encouraging flourishes, like house-mixed chorizo, an abundance of pickles, and that house-made cheese.





Modern accents and huge colors tune the vibes

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There looks to be plenty to pick on, to share, to jolt your senses.

Starters lean toward thoughtful crowd pleasers, plates like nachos, shishito peppers, watermelon, and queso fundido. A salad section looks perfunctory. And then there are sandwiches (labeled "tortas," though not all are), and fuller plates: potato flautas, chicken tinga quesadillas, and tacos.

Desserts look promising. Sopapilla sundae made from pastries Vasquez bakes in the kitchen. Magonada that is part traditional, part modern with meringue in the icy mix.

You can order sweets or breakfast or cocktails – and the rest of the menu – from the pool or the hotel, should you be in the midst of a staycation or hooky day.

**La Señora.** 4000 North Drinkwater Boulevard, Scottsdale; 480-970-4444.

Daily from 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

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