

With the opening of Barons Market, the Village is no longer a food desert (photo by Don Anderson).



Once an Irish pub, Carlsbad Village Books is a different kind of gathering place (photo by Jane Wallin).

WHAT'S NEW ON GRAND & MAD

As we mourn the loss of the old, we celebrate the new.

Written by WENDY HINMAN

Carlsbad has always gone through changes that can feel like loss. But the current changes seem faster and harder.

We lost our only market to a new development, making the Village a food desert. Smart & Final was located where Big Bear Market had been in the '60s, with a few other iterations in between. There are some businesses that anchor a community out of need. A market is one of those. There are also businesses that add character. When we lost the bookstore Fahrenheit 451 (and Lhoog

Books before it), it was like losing an old friend without knowing where to send the casserole. We looked at each other and said in sorrow, "Did you hear?"

When we lose elders we are often comforted by new birth. A new market has come to town, over on Madison where the old Mayfair Market used to be in the '50s. And a new bookstore has been born at the Old World Center in a space that had always been an Irish pub: Dooley McCluskey's, Tom Giblin's and O'Sullivan's.

BARONS MARKET

2800 Roosevelt St.
(858) 338-3800 • baronsmarket.com

“You’re going to love it!” a Temecula shopper at Barons Market says. “They have a great salad bar. Oh, and their soups are fantastic.” Barons Market was born in San Diego and is family owned and operated. It is a curated market with a selection of organic, natural and specialty products, which makes it perfect for the Village.

Curated? Less is more when it comes to choice. You won’t walk into Barons and be overwhelmed by all the brands of marinara on the shelf. Rachel Shemirani, senior vice president and daughter of founder Joe Shemirani, explained there are tasting panels that decide what products to offer. “Quality and price are the two main points we look at.” There may only be a few marinara sauces on the shelf, but you can trust they are top quality “and not 16 dollars a jar.” This also makes for a quicker shopping experience.

“If Whole Foods, Sprouts and Trader Joe’s had a baby, it would be Barons Market,” Shemirani says. We’d like to posit that we are getting our own Seaside Market of sorts in Barons.



Meats and bakery items are delivered fresh and sourced locally. There are also great bars in Barons: a salad bar, soup bar, olive bar. And there are multiple options for prepared entrees.

The original Barons began in Point Loma when the Shemirani family felt the need for a market and asked themselves, “What do we want?” There are now 10 Barons Markets in San Diego and Riverside counties. Why Carlsbad? Why now? “Hello! It’s the Village!” Shemirani says. “Dad has been working on this location for 12 years. We look for close-knit neighborhoods with a real sense of community.” And she added, “Carlsbad is a foodie community.”

It seems to work for our mix of loyal locals and tourists in the Village. When someone asks, “What’s for dinner tonight?” Barons makes for a quick trip to gather ingredients or to pick up something already well prepared. Either way, the answer to the question is good eating.



The shelves are stocked with curated goods (photos by Don Anderson).

“HELLO! IT’S THE VILLAGE!” SHEMIRANI SAYS. “WE LOOK FOR CLOSE-KNIT NEIGHBORHOODS WITH A REAL SENSE OF COMMUNITY. CARLSBAD IS A FOODIE COMMUNITY.”

Books, coffee, crafts and more are just some of the treasures that await at Carlsbad Village Books (photos by Jane Wallin).



CARLSBAD VILLAGE BOOKS

640 Grand Ave., Suite A
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“It began with a dream dinner,” Jayna Wrisley, Carlsbad Village Books store manager, says. A dream dinner is a weekly dinner out in the Village for Tim and Laura Wrisley and their kids, where the talk of big ideas keeps the subject matter rising above politics. A family reunion in a Scottish castle, a float down the Nile and starting yet another brewery in Carlsbad have been some of the ruminations. It has to be possible, if not plausible. But one night in Gregorio’s, the dream came with a hook. (Before the hook, we’ll give a caveat: Tim Wrisley is publisher of Carlsbad Magazine. Assume bias where you will.)

The first idea was to open a bookstore in the old Carlsbad Theater. The theater was up for auction right before its 100th birthday. A valiant effort by locals to “Save the Carlsbad Theater” was quashed by the building’s current owners. After good-faith attempts to buy the theater, the dream of a bookstore and community hub in a theater where films could still be played died. But the bookstore dream remained stuck in the Wrisley craw. Jayna was on an 80-book reading bender at the time, wondering if she should go back to school to be a librarian. Laura’s sister, Cinda, who lives in Bellingham, WA, sent ideas and inspiration from one of the best indie bookstores in the West—coincidentally called Village Books. Then Laura Wrisley’s brothers, Jon and David Heeren, independently said, “What about the Hobbit House?” meaning the Old World Center on Grand.

“Now it seems silly we didn’t think of this before,” Jayna says. When the landlords showed them the place, Laura says, “We



could just feel it.” It had special meaning because it was the late Ralph and Hope Wrisley’s local spot when it was Dooley McCluskey’s. They are Tim’s parents and mine. (Another caveat: Tim is my brother, so again with the bias.) Hope had a travel agency, A World of Travel, across the courtyard at the center for years. We watched the Lancer Day Parade from the balcony of the Old World Center the year Tim was Homecoming King.

“When my mom [Marla Heeren] passed, we were looking for a way to honor her,” Laura says. Marla was a bookworm who “reviewed books for the school district where she was a teacher.” The coffee house within the bookstore is named after her. Marla’s husband and Laura’s father, Bud, is the principal investor in the bookstore, followed by the Wrisleys, followed by members of the community. That is how Tim, Laura and Jayna knew it was a go, Laura says. Members of the community were ready to pitch in.

While it was being built, a group of these investors were looking the place over. As they were in the children’s section, Janell Cannon happened in. Cannon is the celebrated author of the children’s books “Stellaluna,” “Verdi” and “Crickwing,” among others. Her presence seemed to bring a blessing of confidence to the endeavor. Another piece of the dream puzzle falling into place.

The communal idea of the bookstore is to be an analog community connecting space. Book clubs, poetry slams, author talks, crochet nights, and letter-writing events are just some of the ways to linger and meet others with similar affinities. Laura’s son, Jack, will also lead tabletop board game events and Pokémon trades—a true family-owned-and-operated business.

When you walk into any bookstore, the imagination opens to the worlds you’ve read about before and the worlds in books yet to be discovered. It’s a very interior feeling that has an exterior, tangible touch. An inward emotion that wants outward expression. What began as one family’s dream dinner could turn into an inclusive community reality as Carlsbad’s living room.