



EATcetera Restaurant

What started as a three-month vacation ended as an 18-year permanent move and a new business venture for Lena Pyles and Victoria Newsome. In 2005, they chose to visit Galveston to decompress from their high-stress jobs in hospitality and school security. What originally was to be a vacation home in the Silk Stocking district within three months became their permanent home.

DREAM CAREERS AND CHALLENGES

Executive Chef Lena Pyles

Pyles started cooking when she was 16 and followed her older brother to Dallas to pursue this passion. She moved up to an executive chef position at 25 and garnered accolades as a top Asian-fusion chef in Las Vegas, Atlanta, Austin, Dallas and Houston. While she loved the fast-paced environment, the demand of the restaurant business drove her close to burnout, and the tics she had experienced throughout her life worsened. This break in Galveston gave her time to focus on herself, and she was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome at 40. This diagnosis enabled her to learn more coping skills for Tourette's and make a fresh start with a renewed passion for cooking.

Head Baker Victoria Newsome

While Newsome's background is in computer programming and focused on school security, allergen-free recipes became part of her lifestyle in 1984 when she became a vegetarian. Without knowing that she suffered from autoimmune conditions, her diet kept her healthy, but the stress of being president of multiple companies took its toll. Years later, those autoimmune conditions became life-threatening, making a diet change a necessity. She discovered substitutes, hacks and methods for making her favorite meals through research and experimentation. She now uses these talents and her food service experience to create dessert recipes for the restaurant. After all, "everyone deserves to have a delicious birthday cake."



Like many IBCs (Islander By Choice), Pyles and Newsome fell immediately in love with the island's laid-back lifestyle. They are firmly rooted in Galveston and are now parents to a BOI teenager. While no longer a couple, they are still business and parenting partners.

FACING CHALLENGES WITH NEW OPPORTUNITIES

As luck would have it, one of their favorite spots on the island was EATcetera, owned by Andrea Hunting. When Hunting retired in 2017, the duo decided this restaurant was the right fit for a new endeavor; they reopened EATcetera in February 2018.

SERVING HERBIVORES, CARNIVORES AND OMNIVORES

EATcetera specializes in fresh, seasonal ingredients and is open for lunch/brunch Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. During ArtWalk, the restaurant opens from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. for dinner selections.

The restaurant offers vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options, plus standard fare. Pyles estimates that 50 percent of customers have specialized diets, food sensitivities and allergies.

The restaurant is known for its salads, sandwiches, paninis and desserts. EATcetera desserts are vegan and gluten-free. Every week, Pyles offers a new soup special and, every month, a new food feature.

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY, YOUTH, AND SUSTAINABILITY

EATcetera started the EATcetera Youth Arts program in 2019. This program provides free exhibit space for people 18 years and younger at the restaurant during ArtWalk. Artwork is generally displayed for a month and is available for sale. Proceeds from the sale of these pieces go to the individual artist.



Pictured are Executive Chef Lena Pyles, right, Head Baker Victoria Newsome, left, and their daughter, Presley Pyles.

EATcetera participates in GISD Educational Foundation's Eat-Out-for-Education Day and is a frequent sponsor for Ball High School's sports programs, providing game-day throws and gift certificates for youth-related organizations.

The restaurant has an in-house recycling program and uses eco-friendly compostable products for its take-out orders. The restaurant also partners with Rosenberg Library, offering a loaner book program.

EATCETERA EXPANDS TO RAILROAD MUSEUM

EATcetera opened its second location at the Galveston Railroad Museum, 123 25th Street, during Polar Express 2019. The museum asked the restaurant to remain a year-round vendor. The museum menu is a subset of the restaurant menu with kid-friendly options like hot dogs, hamburgers and grilled cheese. They also offer gluten-free and vegan substitutes at the museum. This second location is open Friday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the summer season, and restaurant patrons are not required to pay museum admission.

Now, EATcetera and the Galveston Railroad Museum host an EATcetera Kid Zone during ArtWalk evenings from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. The museum offers free admission and \$10 train



rides, while EATcetera provides bounce houses and games for children 12 and under with an accompanying adult. In addition, as part of the Youth Arts Program, art from student groups is displayed in the museum.

EVENTS AT EATCETERA

The restaurant is expanding its offerings to host private events in the evenings. The entire restaurant and sidewalk café is available for private events. Schedule a call to discuss options.

Galveston residents can appreciate the appeal of creating a new home in a place that started with a vacation which is precisely what the EATcetera owners did.