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MESA VERDE

Living

The Ursinis and Marroquins

Rooted in Community and Traditions

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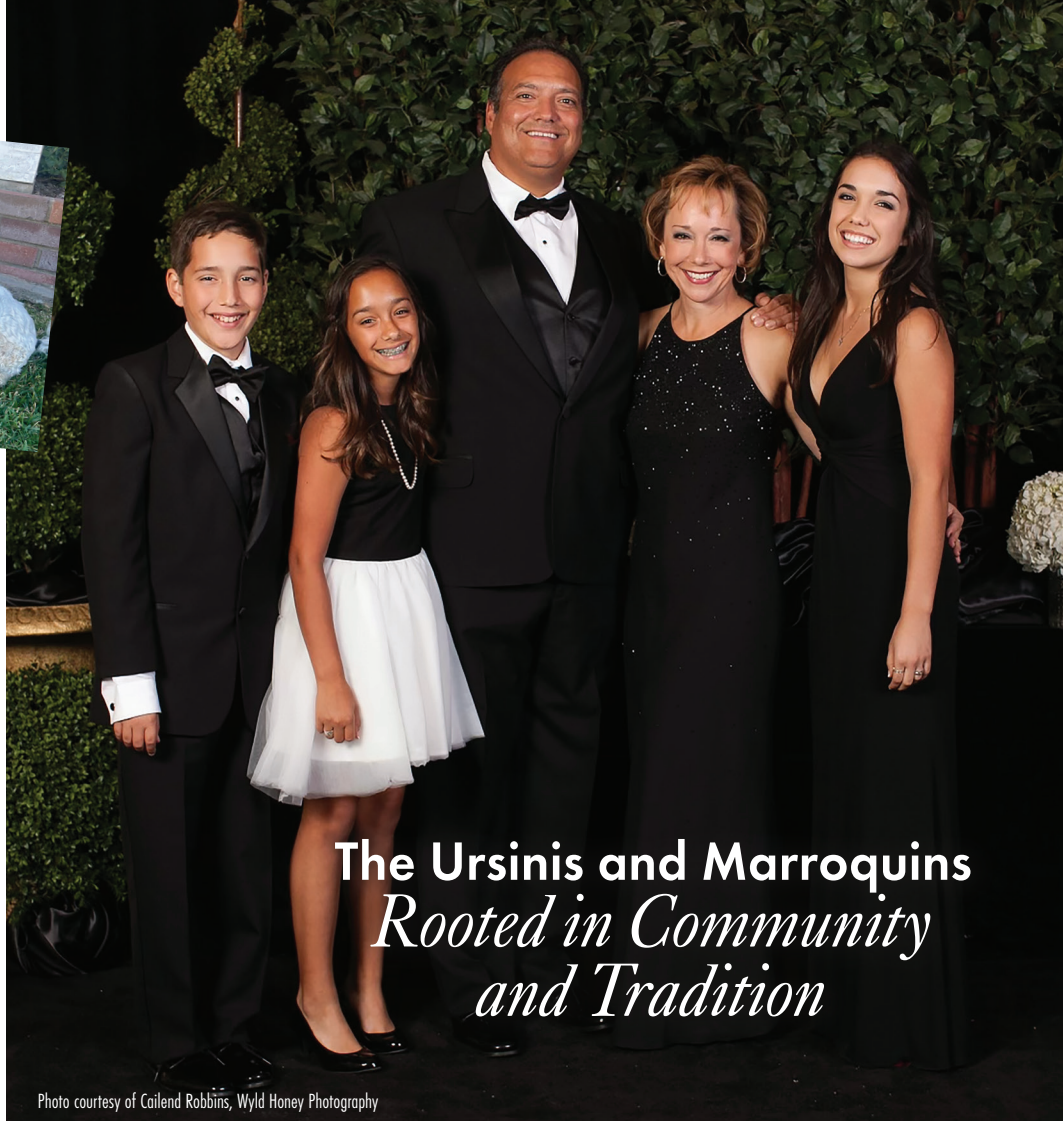


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PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHASTIN FLETCHER AND
MARROQUIN FAMILY

Before Laura Marroquin said “I do” to Jerry Marroquin, she was known as Laura Ursini, a member of the Ursini family which is deeply intertwined with the heart of our community.

The Ursini family’s legacy is one of culinary excellence and dedication to the community, primarily through their iconic establishment, the Newport Rib Company, celebrating its 40th year this month. Founded in 1984 by Laura’s father, Francis “Fran” Ursini, alongside Rich Penjoyan of Penjoyan Produce, the restaurant has become much more than a dining spot—it’s a treasured local landmark. “I love that our fam-



The Ursinis and Marroquins *Rooted in Community and Tradition*

Photo courtesy of Cailend Robbins, Wyld Honey Photography

ily restaurant has been a staple for 40 years. We’ve had the privilege of being part of our neighbors’ celebrations and life events, whether in the restaurant or through our catering services,” Laura reflects.

The Ursini family moved to Mesa Verde from Mesa Del Mar in 1972, when Laura was just a toddler. Laura and her brothers, John and Dave, grew up working at the Newport Rib Company, learning not just the intricacies of running a restaurant but also the importance of giving back. “Giving back was a way of life our parents taught us. It’s something we all continue today,” says Laura.

Today, John Ursini manages the Newport Rib Company, while Dave oversees the Naples Rib Company in Long Beach, continuing the family’s culinary tradition. But the Ursini influence extends far beyond their restaurants. The family’s commitment to community service has been passed down from generation to generation.

Laura and her husband, Jerry Marroquin, now live in the same home on the Upper Bird streets where Laura grew up, reinforcing their deep ties to the neighborhood. After the birth of their eldest child, Amber, they moved back into Laura’s childhood home. Amber, the oldest of their three children, is followed by twins Justin and Jessica. The family is completed by their two dogs, Sobella, a 15-year-old Shih Tzu-poodle mix, and Charity, a five-year-old English Golden Retriever.

Laura and Jerry’s relationship began through their respective jobs, with Laura as a sales rep and Jerry as a buyer for Marriott in San Diego. Their bond grew stronger over time, leading to a Super Bowl bet in 1995 that marked the beginning of their future together. Jerry bet on his hometown team, the San Diego Chargers, while Laura rooted for the San Francisco 49ers. Although Jerry lost the bet, he still claims, “I lost the Super Bowl bet but won the real prize.” Nine months later, Jerry proposed, and the



couple married in October 1996 at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection.

In addition to their ties to the Newport Rib Company, Laura and Jerry are also prominent business owners in Newport Beach, where they operate 22nd Street Pizza and Pipeline Snack Shack. These eateries, located near Newport Pier, are steeped in family history. 22nd Street Pizza started as The Surfer, a burger and ice cream shop opened by Laura's grandfather, Nick Ursini, in 1963. When Nick passed the reins to his son Fran in 1967, the business continued to thrive. Laura's childhood is filled with memories of piling into the family station wagon to visit their dad at the shop, where she celebrated birthdays and watched her family's legacy grow.

In 2012, Laura and Jerry transformed The Surfer into the North Shore Shave Ice Shop, but soon realized that what the peninsula really needed was a pizza place. In early 2021, the shop evolved into 22nd Street Pizza, with the shave ice business moving around the corner and rebranding as Pipeline Snack Shack.

Instilling a strong work ethic in their children has been a priority for Laura and Jerry, just as it was for Laura's parents. "All of our kids have worked at Newport Rib at one point or another," Laura notes with pride. However, the couple also encourages their children to pursue their own passions, even if it takes them away from the family business. Amber, in particular, has embraced the Ursini tradition of giving back by teaching theater at TeWinkle Middle School and Estancia High School. Meanwhile, Justin is pursuing a career in film at the Los Angeles Film School, and Jessica is working toward a biology degree at Loyola Chicago.

The Ursini family's dedication to community service extends beyond their businesses. Laura is an active board member of the Costa Mesa Foundation, which organizes summer Concerts in the Park, a beloved local tradition. The family are also long-time members of the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, where they contribute their time and energy to church activities. Following in her parents'



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footsteps, Amber and her fiancé, Austin, were married this past July at the same church.

Family traditions are cherished by the Marroquins, particularly their annual beach week at the family's oceanfront apartment above the restaurant by the pier. Their most recent trip to Europe was highlighted by a memorable proposal—Austin asked for Amber's hand in marriage in the picturesque setting of Tuscany. Amber didn't hesitate to say yes.

For the Marroquins and Ursinis, the sense of community in Mesa Verde has always been a source of comfort and support. Laura fondly recalls the time when she was pregnant with the twins and was placed on bed rest. "The neighbors brought meals, offered support, and were always excited to see the twins as they grew. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else," she reminisces. Though she once joked, "I can't die in the same house I grew up in," she now acknowledges with a smile, "It might just happen!"

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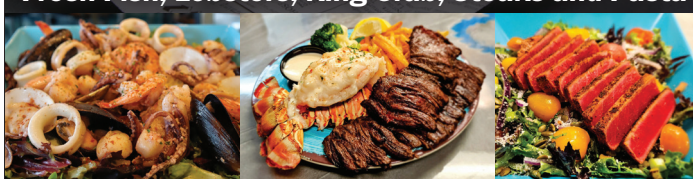
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