

# SAN DIEGO Reader



Bracero Cocina de Raíz no longer has Javier Plascencia ... but it still has two bars.

## Mexican food in Little Italy — why not?

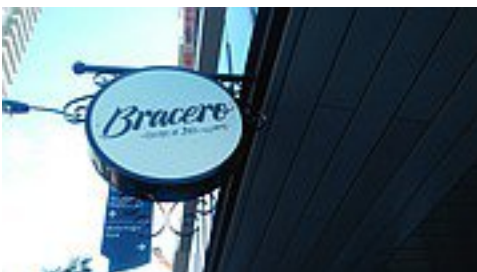
Brunch at Bracero Cocina de Raíz is worth the drive from anywhere

*By Candice Reed, Feb. 11, 2017*

I felt like checking out Little Italy on a sleepy Sunday morning in January, so I drove the distance from North County to meet my cousin for brunch at [Bracero Cocina de Raíz](#), a restaurant that I had not heard of until [chef Javier Plascencia](#) made the news that he had left his own restaurant.

### **Bracero Cocina de Raíz**

1490 Kettner Boulevard, Little Italy



Eating brunch sounded a little more upscale than my usual eggs with gravy, and I figured getting out of North County for a few hours would be a pleasant change.

Bracero Cocina de Raíz is now open for brunch.

When I arrived at Bracero a little before 10 a.m., the place was quiet and almost empty. I noticed that there was patio seating, tables on the first floor with a huge bar, and upstairs dining with another bar. Two bars — now that is impressive.

I grabbed a table in the corner with a view of the harbor and waited for Cissy to arrive. Within minutes my server stopped by, then ran off to get me some water and coffee. By the time my cousin and beverages arrived, the dining room had started to fill up — all in less than five minutes.

Large parties of laughing women brunching, young couples, and older folks like me began to fill the upstairs as we looked at the menu.

I chose the *machaca con huevos*, and Cissy ordered the chicken enchiladas in mole sauce. We also decided to order the guacamole with chips, although the menu listed "chickpeas, crispy beluga lentils and black bean hummus," but no avocado. When it arrived, we were both relieved that it was made with avocados and had a velvety texture. Cissy pronounced it delicious and not too citrusy while scooping chip after chip. I was saving room for my main course, so, although I enjoyed some of it, I let her dig in. (She took the leftover guacamole home.)



Guacamole with chickpeas (and avocado)

When our food came, I ordered a nice glass of [Glen Carlou chardonnay](#), because it was almost noon and I'm not much of a mimosa lover, although the amount of mimosas being delivered to other tables was remarkable.



Bracero's *machaca con huevos* — tender and spicy.

Cissy's enchiladas were not too spicy and just a little sweet. My brunch of scrambled eggs and *machaca* was just like I make it with the shredded beef seasoned and sauteed to perfection. The eggs were scrambled the way I like them as well — not overdone. The beans reminded me of the frijoles at [El Indio](#) (which is a good thing). We

both had potatoes on our plate, mixed with grilled onions, and they were crunchy on the outside and soft in the middle.

By the time we were done, the place was crowded, and our server had enlisted one of her colleagues and a busser to help us out. This Mexican restaurant in Little Italy was a treat and, although Señor Plascencia decided to leave and go back to Baja to open a new place, Cissy and I will both return.