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tucson  
**MEET OUR**  
*makers*

This is our first instillation of our Meet our Makers journalist newsletter. Every month we will feature a Tucsonan who is doing something in our community that is worth (in our approximation) highlighting. We'll dish with them to find out how they're moving the needle in ways that are putting Tucson (even more) on the map – be it through art, food, education, preservation, or a litany of other things.

Feel free to read on if you're so obliged. And feel free to share this with your journalist friends and encourage them to hit the button below.

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## Nate Ares: Ares Collective

When our group walks into Flora's Market Run on a recent afternoon, we are greeted by the smell of smoky, wood-fired pizzas, and the ebullient man who built this restaurant dynasty from the ground up. His name is Nate Ares, and he's the owner of Ares Collective, a compilation of Tucson restaurants that include Flora's, Prep & Pastry, Commoner & Co., and August Rhodes Bakery. He's also a husband (he and his wife Kate are in the picture above) and dad of three kids, the youngest of whom is only a few months old. His days are impossibly long, yet his passion for life and drive for success is unmatched.

He reveals his secret energy source is on the menu at Flora's Market Run – horchata coffee – and insists that our group try it. Each of us order one, and moments later we are sipping on an impossibly creamy pairing that's both sweet and savory, and packs a subtle, yet lethal dose of caffeine. He explains that the horchata is made in-house over the course of several days and has a cult following that means sometimes it's gone before the next batch is ready. But not for long, he says. Soon he'll be installing a metal cistern in the

restaurant that will allow him to produce larger quantities of the sought-after drink.

That's the thing about Nate. In having a conversation, you quickly realize he's highly skilled at identifying trends and finding solutions. That's how the drying, pickling, and fermentation portion of his business came to be. He's the only restaurateur in Tucson who is licensed to dry cure his own meats, which he serves up on pizzas like "Team Pineapple," featuring house-made prosciutto, pickled jalapeno, mozzarella, and wood fired pineapple. Our team quickly devours this mouthwatering delight before turning our attention to the "Fermented Tomato" pizza, featuring flavor-bursting, slightly vinegary tomatoes (fermented in-house), mozzarella, Sicilian sausage, kale, and kalamata olives.

The drying, pickling, and fermentation arm of Nate's business has been a labor of love. In addition to being licensed, his restaurants undergo rigorous inspections to ensure the quality of the meat is up to snuff. To Nate it's worth it because it differentiates his restaurants from others throughout the UNESCO City of Gastronomy.

During our conversation, he identifies another differentiator – his pastry program – which is spearheaded by 24-year-old corporate pastry chef Kianna Kilgore, a rising star in the industry. I can't argue with his assessment. After all, her pastries have passed the litmus test with my 3-year-old, who recently requested to stop by Prep & Pastry after a doctor's appointment to "taste test" a variety of Kianna's creations, including her chocolate croissant and blueberry scone. They were so on-point that our family retrieved a few more three days later.

But Nate isn't just a proponent of his own restaurants. He likes to taste test throughout the city, and has a long laundry list of locally owned, neighborhood restaurants he frequents. His favorites include Rollies Mexican Patio, Frida's Café, and Baja Café. He wishes each and every restaurant he dines at all the

success his business has been blessed with. Because according to him, Tucson is a city that is bursting with flavor. And judging by the tightness of my pants around my waist, I'd have to say I agree.

## What's New in Tucson?

Hispanic Heritage Month kicked off Sept. 15 and Tucson is at the epicenter of the celebration with its new ¡Viva Tucson! festival through Oct. 15. Read our **What's New Release** for additional insight on this and other hot-off-the-press happenings.



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