



FACE OF THE 'HOOD

Jonathan Zaragoza

28, chef at Birrieria Zaragoza in Archer Heights
By Kris Vire Photograph by Jaclyn Rivas

→ 4852 S Pulaski Rd (773-523-3700, birrieriazaragoza.com)

For someone who's still in his twenties, you've amassed quite the résumé. How far back does your culinary experience go?

The family restaurant opened in 2007, but I've been cooking goat since I was 12 to 15 years old. My dad started learning how to make this *birria* [stew] in La Barca, Jalisco, where we're from [in Mexico], and he brought me with him. We built an oven in our backyard here on the South Side, and we would basically cook two goats a weekend.

You struck out on your own a bit, most notably at Masa Azul, before coming back to the family restaurant. Do you see yourself opening your own place in the next few years?

I'm so happy being able to share both everyday life and work life with my family. If I break off and do something else, I'm still representing them, in a way. That's been my biggest takeaway from what I'm doing right

now: learning to do things for everybody else, not just myself, not just my career. It's made me a better son.

Where do you like to eat when you're not working?

I live in Logan Square now, but I always like supporting friends around the South Side. I really love La Chaparrita in Little Village (2500 S Whipple St; 773-247-1402, facebook.com/lachaparritagrocery.1). As far as Archer Heights goes, check out El Solazo (5600 S Pulaski Rd; 773-627-5047, elsolazochicago.com)—my friend Pepe owns that. I actually just ran into him at another restaurant here, a mariscos joint called El Kora (5207 S Archer Ave; 773-284-2484, facebook.com/mariscoselkorarestaurant). They come into my restaurant, I go into their restaurant—we gotta support each other.

**WORD
ON THE
STREET**

The most ridiculous things we've overheard in Chicago recently

"Their music sounds like *Dead Poets Society* and appropriation."

"Teeth are nature's knife."

"I think he had his throat pierced."

"I live in fear of my Costco bill."

"The jukebox is a coat hanger now."

"Always keep your pancreas in the dark."

"Bring your millennial boyfriend."

"There were so many penises in Austin."

"It is, as the kids say, a bop."

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