

Meet Lynette La Mere of Pure Joy Catering in Santa Barbara



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VoyageLA

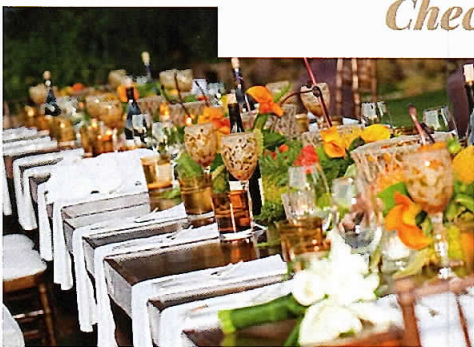
Lynette La Mere

**Today
we'd
like
to
introduce
you
to
Lynette
La Mere**

Thanks for sharing your story with us Lynette. So, let's start at the beginning and we can move on from there.

I had done catering in LA before getting married and having children. I remembered loving it very much, long hours, hard work, but I loved creating beautiful events. My marriage didn't work out. Just before the boys started school I moved to Santa Barbara, got a divorce and full custody of my sons. I always joke that all I got was two kids and a big pot, but it's pretty close to the truth. "Great dinner party hostess" doesn't make a great resume, so I went back to catering. I was able to support us in the first year and worked insane hours, raised the boys and had a really great time creating the company. The business grew quickly and I was able to buy a building to house the company in downtown Santa Barbara by my 7th year. Both my sons worked in the business since they were 11 and it was really good for them, they are great kids and we are very close. Every thanksgiving week and for two weeks over Christmas & New Year's I close the business, everyone gets paid and we travel. Each year my sons chose a

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country and its been just wonderful for the business, growing my knowledge of culinary diversity substantially, and it's been good for the boys as well. They both got accepted to Stanford, and have since both got their graduate degrees there as well.

It's been an incredible journey, now in our 16th year we are doing fantastic. That, I primarily credit to the awesome team of people who work for Pure Joy, it's like a great extended family of likeminded lovers of the event industry who have come together every day to create magic for our guests.

Overall, has it been relatively smooth? If not, what were some of the struggles along the way?

Being a single mom with no collateral or credit was the biggest challenge. It took a lot of work but I was able to eventually get released from my ex-husbands debt and build credit in my name. I couldn't get a loan, so every piece of equipment, van – everything I needed – had to come out of the business income only for the first eight years in business. Keeping a commercial kitchen is tough. I wanted to own my own building and was able to save up the 25% down and finally get a loan. It's a beautiful spot on Haley Street, it's just off of the main street downtown; State Street. It's got a big, wonderful kitchen with high ceilings and lots of light, a two-story warehouse full of event props and decor, a nice conference room and lots of offices – catering heaven!

Please tell us about pure joy catering.

Pure Joy Catering, voted Best Caterer in Central California, taking first place in every catering award for more than 14 years, simply because we love what we do, we're champions at the delicious art of off premise catering.

From corporate events, fun retreats, fundraisers, birthday bashes and wedding, we do it all with a lot of passion and integrity. We don't sell wedding food. We create the unforgettable moments of Pure Joy that unleash a lifetime of love. Every single thing we do – from the big picture down to the finest detail – we do with integrity, from scratch, deliciously and with great love and respect for our clients.

If you had to go back in time and start over, would you have done anything differently?

Learn accounting, get familiar with quick books. When it comes to staff, don't settle, hunt for the very best.

