

## Ahead of the Culinary Curve: Tula Kitchen's Recipe for Success

By Amanda Mactas



**WHEN TULA KITCHEN FIRST put down roots in Bay Shore almost eighteen years ago, no one could have foreseen that they would be paving the way for culinary diversity on the South Shore for decades to come – no one except owners Jackie Sharlup and Lina Rinaudo, and their lifelong chef Helvie Assaly.**

Tula's success is largely due to Jackie's passion-turned-vision which began when she was quite young. An early pioneer of vegetarianism, Jackie adopted the lifestyle at age four, when she took her first trip to a local farm. Her natural way of living was a direct reflection of her mother. Leaning towards eastern philosophies of healing and health, her mother took vigilant care of her father who battled with cancer. This way of living, ingrained in Jackie early on, is what led her down the path to start Tula Kitchen – she wanted everyone to experience the healing power of food.

After filling countless notebooks with her ideas, Jackie eventually turned to Lina, her business partner, who helped transform her ideas into reality. Sharing a mutual vision, Jackie and Lina meticulously crafted the design elements, culinary details and inspirations from around the world that would eventually become Tula Kitchen. The painstaking detail, dedication, and heart & soul the duo put into each and every aspect of the restaurant is evident upon stepping inside. In essence, Tula is a mirror of the energy and passion the women infused into the space.

"We come from two very different perspectives, but always wind up with the same vision and same outcome," explained Lina. Jackie brings with her a long history of art and culinary expertise, while Lina comes from a fashion and operational background. Balance is at the heart of everything they do. The women

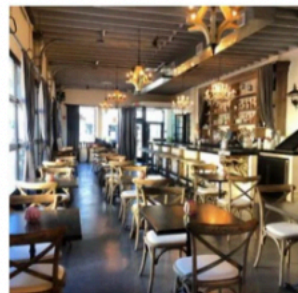
are intrinsically involved in every aspect of the restaurant – from the menu to the paint colors. Merging their talents produced an elegant, old-world-chic venue possessing a strong sense of community within its walls. Everything in Tula Kitchen is the product of a labor of love.

"I would love for everyone to learn how to become the best versions of themselves, and I can help foster this through Tula!" exclaimed Jackie. Their goal of creating a non-traditional space bursting with energy and filled with beauty is the result of a lifelong journey to inspire others. Jackie's success in this endeavor is palpable – customers return time and again to not only enjoy the delicious culinary creations but to revel in the sense of well-being the space provides.

But the road to opening Tula was not easy. Jackie faced skepticism as she treaded an uncharted path – limited finances, no restaurant background, and a vision that was ahead of its time in championing a predominantly vegetarian realm. It was a gamble at the time. Unwavering, it was Jackie's determined resolve that eventually turned her vision into a reality.

Today, the space that houses the original Tula Kitchen stands as a landmark the community knows and loves. The restaurant has evolved, adapting to changing times while remaining rooted in its values and original essence. "Tula Kitchen is always about reinventing and making sure we are still relevant," Lina explained. From offering healthy and delicious dishes in a space with a hip vibe to the opening of their new take-away juice bar, Tula Kitchen constantly shapes itself after the customers that frequent it, advancing with modern times. The welcoming space is known for its selection of vegetarian and vegan well-balanced fare, as well as seafood and poultry using only the highest quality natural ingredients. Dedicated to putting their customers first, all dishes are easily personalized to accommodate their guests' needs.

"All of our hearts are in this," said Jackie. "This isn't just a restaurant, you feed your whole soul here."



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*Tula Kitchen*