

WORD OF MOUTH > LOCAL HEROES

QUITO COOL

In Ecuador's capital city, a collective of thoughtful entrepreneurs are fighting to keep their neighborhood local

In bohemian La Floresta, a walkable, mural-filled neighborhood lined with leafy walnut trees, Quito's culturati have banded together to preserve the barrio's small businesses. Working out of midcentury villas—cum—artist studios, stores, and restaurants, they're trying to keep big-box chains out and congestion at a minimum. Spearheading the effort is Amira Pérez, a graphic artist, community activist, and owner of La Farmacia, a concept boutique that sells a wide variety of La Floresta-based designers' work. She has created pop-up shopping fairs, a neighborhood map (available at most shops in the barrio for free), and now a brand-new app, De La Floresta, highlighting more than 60 businesses in the area to help Quiteños and travelers alike discover all that La Floresta has to offer. Here are a handful of Pérez's favorites to hit the next time you're in Quito. Bonus: knowing your dollars are staying in the neighborhood these creatives are working so hard to protect. **NORA WALSH**



Jervis Café

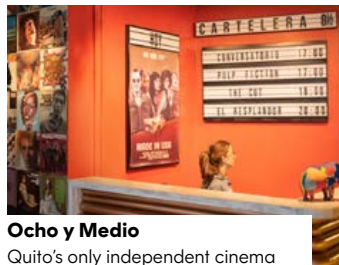
This third-wave coffee mecca serves up fine java in every imaginable way alongside delicious small bites. Stop by to find the occasional music event on the tiny premises, with patrons spilling onto seating outside. [instagram.com/jervis_cafe](https://www.instagram.com/jervis_cafe)

Quitu

Juan Sebastián Pérez is part of a younger generation of Quito-born chefs who believes in Ecuador's home-grown produce and culinary traditions. His restaurant has rotating five- and eight-course tasting menus built around Andean ingredients—all sourced from small farmers and producers. quitu.ec



Activist and business owner Amira Pérez



Ocho y Medio

Quito's only independent cinema screens Latin American and international art flicks and organizes film festivals around diverse themes; its colorful outdoor café is a popular haunt that's perfect for a pre- or post-movie cocktail. ochoymedio.net



Paccari

This carbon-neutral, vegan, fair-trade emporium of artisanal chocolate sells at least three dozen different flavors that range from the expected, like coffee, to the surprising, like Andean rose and guayusa (an herb reminiscent of creamy green tea). Plus: The tasting terrace boasts impressive views of Quito. paccari.com

Nudo Streetart Project

Resident graffiti artists run this shop and gallery, which sells prints and clothing inspired by their nearby murals. The collective is always thinking of ways to uplift the neighborhood: A recent project by artist Felipe Céspedes involved painting planters to help beautify the streets. [instagram.com/nudostreetartproject](https://www.instagram.com/nudostreetartproject)

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