

Brazilian Style in the Valley? You Bet!

By Leslie A. Westbrook

It's easy to develop affection for all things Brazilian, whether it's friendships with the warm people of this tropical country, a penchant for the South American country's tasty cuisine, a desire to join in with sexy samba dancers on the dance floor or just root loudly for Brazil's stellar soccer players. Many transplanted Brazilians have been fashionably integrating portions of their culture quite nicely into the laid-back Southern California lifestyle. From home décor to bikinis, native dishes, libations, music and sports, Brazilian style has found its way into the San Fernando Valley and points beyond.

The joyous and affectionate ways of the Brazilian people are contagious and it's easy to integrate this into your own home: put a Caetano Veloso CD on the stereo, pour a *caipirinha* (the Brazilian cocktail of choice) for your guests, and samba to the enticing rhythms. Serve Brazilian style barbecue and you've got it! Easy, or *facil* as they say in Portuguese, the melodious language of Brazil!



Brother and sister Luis and Eduardo Coutino of Kitanda Market in Sherman Oaks.



Interior designer Gail Claridge creates many custom orders for her design projects working closely with Brazilian importer Andrea Fonseca. The 3,000 showroom carries pieces from Brazil Baroque including hand-painted coffee tables, side tables and hand-tooled leather chairs.

The South
American
Country's Design,
Music and Cuisine
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Brazilian music is world-famous, but in the last few years, a number of other Brazilian imports have been introduced to our culture ranging from food to furniture. Typical cuisine of Brazil includes fresh hearts of palm and *pao de queijo* (a delicious cheese roll) for starters, but the most well-known dish is *feijoada*, a stew-like dish traditionally served mid-day on Saturdays that consists of simmered sausage, pork ribs and pieces, and black beans, served with rice and cooked greens. The hearty meal is sprinkled with *farofa*, a cooked yucca or manioc flour.

In Northridge, Raidel Alba, owner of La Plaza Market, recently began stocking ingredients from Brazil for *feijoada* and other dishes and reports Brazilian items are selling well. Rio de Janeiro natives Monica and Luis Eduardo Coutinho, who are brother and sister, took over Kitanda Market in Sherman Oaks almost a year ago. The family-run business stocks everything from itsy-bitsy bikinis to *berimbaus* (a traditional string instrument). In addition to ingredients to make authentic Brazilian dishes, Kitanda (which means "little market" in Portuguese) also sells CDs, magazines, hammocks, some women's clothing and Hawaiian rubber thongs (the shoes, not the bikini!) imported from Brazil.

"I'm always amazed by how many Brazilians come in to our store every day," said Monica, "there are plenty, plenty in the Valley!"

In the future, Monica and her brother hope to serve coffee and snacks at Kitanda, but in the meantime she recommends Gaucho Village, an authentic *churrascaria* in Glendale. Churrascarias (or barbecues) – where waiters yield large sabers stacked with various types of meat, fish and organs brought tableside – are extremely popular in Brazil and several have made their way to Southern California.

"Gaucho Village is very authentic and the food is incredible!" said Monica.

At Rio Lounge & Grill, a restaurant and nightclub in Encino, you can take a trip to Brazil without the jetlag on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Thursday's "Brazilian Night" features sizzling samba dancers. Tropidanza's samba