


[Croce's Restaurant & Jazz Bar](#)
[Jim Croce—The Official Site](#)
[The Croce Store](#)
[Ingrid Croce](#)
[Dinner Reservations](#)
[Hotel & Attraction Packages](#)
[Menus](#)
[News](#)
[Group Sales/Catering](#)
[Music Schedule](#)
[Get Connected](#)
[Contact](#)
[Fan Mail](#)
[Awards](#)
[Employment](#)


General Manager/Sommelier Chris Miller presents wine from Croce's Wine Spectator award-winning wine list.

## CROCE'S RESTAURANT & JAZZ BAR

### San Diego, California

**Location:** Corner of Fifth & F, downtown San Diego

**Priority Seating:** (619)233-4355

**Hours:** 5:30 pm to midnight Monday-Friday; 10:00 am to midnight on weekends.

**Cuisine:** Contemporary American

**Music:** Live Music Nightly

### The Heartbeat of the Gaslamp Quarter

*Long before the sidewalks of the Gaslamp District teemed with tourists and restaurants huddled wall-to-wall along Fifth Avenue, there was Croce's Restaurant. It occupied the corner of Fifth and F streets at a time when the term "scruffy" was a more apt description of the Gaslamp than "chic" or "fashionable" or "must-do." Although it may seem implausible, Croce's was there when you could push the speed limit along Fifth Avenue on a Saturday night. Amazing.*

*Before Ingrid Croce opened the restaurant in honor of her late husband, Jim, the same corner was home to her blintz-based establishment, Blinchiki's. When the ultra casual Blinchiki morphed into the stately Croce's, things changed. Croce's became a dining destination. Its kitchen attracted acclaimed chefs whose cooking helped create a strong local client base, and international visitors.*

*Croce's was all about serving wonderful food. But music is in Ingrid Croce's soul, and it is hard to limit her to just one passion. So once Croce's was well established, Ingrid began an orderly march up Fifth Avenue. She took over the spot next door, and then the space next door to that. Soon, the upscale restaurant acquired several satellites: a café, a bar, a party space, and a live music venue that hosted headlining talent including Croce's son, A.J. The sounds of music transformed the street, and Fifth Avenue started to jump. Before long, Croce's had become the epicenter of the Gaslamp. Today, as the Gaslamp spreads in all directions, Croce's remains its heart and soul.*

-Stephen Silverman, *San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles Magazine*

### History of Croce's Restaurant & Jazz Bar



Hi! I'm Ingrid Croce and I'd like to tell you how Croce's Restaurant & Jazz Bar began. It was long before my husband, Jim Croce, hit the charts with classics like *Bad, Bad*, *Leroy Brown*, *Time in a Bottle*, and *Operator*.

Jim Croce was born in South Philadelphia in 1943. We met in 1963 when I was a sophomore in high school and Jim was a sophomore at Villanova University. My band, *The Rumrunners*, took first place in a folk-singing contest and Jim was one of the judges. We began singing together, fell in love and were married in 1966.

In 1968, we moved to New York City to pursue a recording contract. In two years' time we drove over 300,000 miles playing small clubs and college concerts to promote our first Capitol album, *Jim and Ingrid Croce*.

Disillusioned by the music business and New York City, Jim sold all but one guitar to pay the rent, and we returned to the Pennsylvania countryside. There we rented a three-room farmhouse, which we fondly called, the "Unofficial Croce's Restaurant." We grew our own vegetables, baked bread and served delicious meals to our friends and fellow musicians

who would stop by to jam late into the night. Jimmy Buffet, James Taylor, Arlo Guthrie, Bonnie Raitt and The Manhattan Transfer were among our many guests.

In September of 1971, Adrian James ("A.J.") was born and Jim wrote *Time in a Bottle* for his son. He also wrote *You Don't Mess Around with Jim*, the title song to the first of his four gold albums. Over the next two years, Jim embarked on a demanding promotional tour, performing concerts all over the U.S. and Europe.



In August of 1973, we moved to San Diego. I vividly remember exploring our new home town with Jim, who had just returned after months on the road promoting his music. We stopped on the corner of Fifth and F in Downtown San Diego, looking for a place to eat and a club where we could listen to live music. We were disappointed to find only tattoo parlors, ladies of the night, and people begging for change.



We joked that evening about opening a local restaurant and bar that would offer great food and music like we had done in our own home. But less than a week later, after playing a college concert, Jim's plane crashed in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Years later, with hopes of keeping Jim's music alive and of building a tribute to his life and music, I was called by a friend who told me she knew of an open storefront for rent in the dilapidated Gaslamp district. When I went to look at the space, I realized it was located on the same corner where Jim and I had stopped a dozen years before. It felt like an omen. Building a restaurant and bar there would be the perfect tribute to Jim and a wonderful opportunity to help revitalize downtown San Diego.

It is here at Croce's Restaurant & Jazz Bar that we continue to pay tribute to Jim Croce and his music by serving delicious contemporary American cuisine and offering live music nightly to friends and visitors from around the world. This is my way of sharing the memories of Jim's warmth and hospitality.

Thank you for joining me.  
Ingrid Croce

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