

# MR. TEMPO

B I O 2 0 2 3

Jorge Cueva fully represents the American Dream. Three times he has gotten up to ascend to the heights.

Cueva's history goes back to 1991 when he had to abandon the comfort of his life in Mexico, where the young man, born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, was studying and starting a promising career as a soccer player. The future businessman arrived with his family to the United States like a lot of his compatriots, without documents. He crossed through Tijuana unsure if he was going to go back home. He settled in California first where his family bought a gardener business; everyday Jorge and his dad would drive all day to mow the lawn of dozens of houses. Since that business wasn't delivering great income for his family, they decided to move to Tacoma, Washington. Jorge was forced to quit school in order to help support his entire family financially since they were living with their only savings left. He took night shifts at malls to clean the floors, he was a maintenance employee, shoveled the snow from parking structures, and worked in an industrial laundry. He had to carry bundles of bed linen from hospitals and throw them into the washer. Sometimes garments would fall to the floor and Cueva had to pick it up; garments stained with blood and bodily fluids. He would have two to three jobs at one time in order to bring food to his family of seven members and pay the bills.

As Jorge would keep looking for more job opportunities, he applied for a dishwasher position in a Mexican restaurant. When he was back in the kitchen washing dishes, he would notice the fun ambience from the front of the restaurant with the customers. In that moment, Jorge's pride of wanting to be the best, of knowing that he could do better than washing dishes and wanting to succeed in life, he decided to be the best dishwasher to have the manager notice him and promote him to another position. Not surprisingly, within weeks Jorge moved to Cook Prep, then to Cook. His desire to be in the front with the customers and prove himself to be the best no matter what the job was, would make other co-workers jealous. Jorge started to suffer from bullying. He remembers that sometimes his coworkers, just to make fun of him, would heat a frying pan and leave it there so that Cueva could burn his hands. Many times, he had altercations with other employees.



However, none of those situations stopped Jorge from moving forward; He asked for an opportunity to be a busser and help the servers with their work. He did it without receiving extra pay. This is how he began to build this service attitude that distinguishes his restaurants. Cueva would make sure that the customers never had an empty glass and that they didn't have dirty dishes ("dead", as they are called in the restaurant slang) on the table. The servers, stubborn in making his life impossible, would only give him tables with Latino customers because they had the reputation of not leaving good tips. But, curious reverse of destiny, it was them who ended up asking to be served by the "Mexican server", since his conversation, good humor and willingness to make them have a nice evening, would gain them. He was climbing steps until with a lot of effort and dedication, not only he learned North America's language, but also went through all of the restaurant positions: learned to cook, mastered the mixology's art and above all he learned how to manage a business of his own.

Like samurais, patience and dedication are his biggest virtues.

After going through management at 23, a position where he earned less than a server, but began to have authority. Cueva managed to open his first restaurant in the United States "Mucho Loco", a phrase that would characterize his irreverent, free and innovative style of work; crazy and fun like the socks he likes to wear. However, success came without the wisdom to face it.

He was evicted from his apartment, betrayed by his own partner who took away everything, his savings and all he had. Cueva had to move back to California and start once again from the bottom. After having been owner, he began working in a hamburgers chain, then a couple months after working there, he was offered a job at Daphne's Greek Café. It was a trajectory of five years where Jorge was able to make it a successful company with more than 100 locations open all around the United States. However, Jorge's work wasn't much rewarded or appreciated. After several years of passion, dedication and being assiduous, he decided to quit a successful company and move on to create his own empire.

After several punches and learnings in life he managed to achieve that success, we know him for.



Even though a lot of people think Cueva had luck, in reality success came to him at the cost of sweat, tears and many sacrifices. Thanks to those wishes of getting ahead, he has opened more than 160 restaurants. Part of that empire is the “King and Queen Cantina” “Mr.Tempo” and “Tempo Cantina” chain, one of the most popular in Southern California. And, even though the pandemic and the consequent quarantine were about to knock him down, Mr. Tempo (the nickname Jorge Cueva adopted and now is his own registered brand) knew how to get up for the third time. He changed his selling strategy and as the great leader that he is, he inspired his team to keep calm and work hard day by day during the pandemic. His idea was to sell low priced margaritas (he is also known as “The Margaritas’ king”) until that and other strategies saved the company.

It’s worth noting that the nickname “Mr. Tempo” comes from the days Cueva opened a restaurant he baptized as “Tempo Cantina”. Many of the clients knew he was the owner, but didn’t know his name so they yelled at him “Hey, Tempo!”. Named by Forbes magazine as “The Michael Jordan of restaurants”, Cueva is at the head of an empire that congregates more than 100 products with his brand “Mr.Tempo”. He has appeared in outstanding publications such as Forbes, GQ and Playboy, in addition to becoming a social media star with more than 3 million followers with whom usually shares motivational quotes, business advice, and lifestyle. But not only is his success story interesting, Mr. Tempo usually surprises us with his madness and extravagances. Jorge owns exotic cars that his artist has painted in a very unique way that attracts the attention of everyone. People might call him crazy, but his way of doing things is one of the many reasons for his success- “It’s all about marketing, make people see you and recognize you” Jorge states.



Cueva is also known for his humanitarian work. He helps children in need, offering them special events in his restaurants, fundraising and collecting toys for them. Recently, he rescued “Big Boy” the elephant, who spent many years chained, but the charismatic businessman paid a large amount of money to be able to free him and take him to a sanctuary. His secret? Work without a break. But, most importantly, the madness of not knowing limits and being ready to change the rules. “Mr. Tempo” is the face of the American Dream”.