

LITERARY ASPIRATIONS: RESTAURANTE C25

This Condesa fusion eatery with a relaxed atmosphere helps support Casa Refugio, a home for exiled writers and journalists

BY NICHOLAS GILMAN
Special to The News

Located just off of the circuit of Avenida Amsterdam by the Citlaltépetl fountain, Restaurante C25 is a laid back, grown-up kind of place, set in a lush garden patio – just what the Condesa needs.

It's part of Casa Refugio, a privately maintained refuge for exiled writers and journalists. Profits from the restaurant help maintain this worthy venture. (For more information see their bilingual Web site www.casarefugio.com).

The open patio area, one of the few in the neighborhood not disturbed by passing traffic, is graced by a sleek fountain and verdant foliage. The setting is both urban and urbane, tranquil yet conducive to long conversations – the background music is restrained and appropriate.

The contemporary fusion menu, which includes Mexican and French dishes, with a bow toward the Orient, is not overly long. There are 7 "entradas" (appetizers), 4 soups, 3 pastas and 7 main dishes, all concocted by the young husband-and-wife chef team of Nasheli Martínez and Abel Hernández.

Martínez runs the kitchen. She's inspired by the variety and quality of produce and meats available in Mexico, her favorite being duck.

"Duck goes so well with many different sauces, from Thai to Mexican," she said. "As a raw material, it gives me a



The open patio of Restaurante C25 is one of the few in Colonia Condesa removed from passing traffic.

chance to be creative."

The "house special appetizer" is a "gordita de chicharrón de pato," sort of a deconstructed version of this most typical "antojito." The masa shell wears a frizzy toupee of shredded roast duck "chicharrón" and is served with pineapple salsa and a touch of Asian soy/sesame marinade. A double order could pass for lunch with no complaints.

My favorite soup is the "sopa de tortilla azul," a new take on the classic tortilla soup, this time with a seafood base and shredded crabmeat.

Several standard salads – including a nicely done Greek – are on the menu. An interesting pasta option is the spaghetti with "chorizo de camarón." The house-made shrimp sausage is a novelty that works nicely under its blanket of fresh, basily tomato sauce.

Two dishes with duck

breast in a starring role grace the eclectic entrée menu. The classic French "pato a la lenteja," juicy duck breast over a bed of lentils, seasoned with smoky bacon and fragrant with thyme, would please any grand-mère.

The "pato 25" presents succulent slices of magret, with a sauce of "chabacano" (apricot) and three chilies, served with a timbale of mashed potatoes and sautéed snow peas.

For those in a nautical mood, I recommend the "robalo azafranado." The filet is coated in a "powder" of Iberian ham and gently bathed in a light saffron cream sauce.

The revolving dessert menu might include the "buñuelo de láminas de wonton" filled with pastry cream and orange liquor or a homey "apple surprise."

The wine list, with several good Mexican selections, is well chosen, and there is

MORE INFO

There is something for every budget at Restaurante C25.

Restaurante C25
Citlaltépetl 25, Condesa
Tel: 5211-4514
Open: Monday - Saturday, 1:30 - 11:30 p.m.
All major credit cards accepted

SLOW FOOD

Don't miss this evening of jazz and botanas.

- Slow Food Condesa / Roma, Mujam (Músicos de Jazz de México) and C25 will present a special event: Slow Food / Slow Jazz – an evening of jazz and botanas. Tuesday, Nov. 11 at 8 p.m.
- Cost of 250 pesos (200 for Slow Food members) includes the concert, 2 glasses of wine and 10 appetizers.
- See www.slowfood-condesaroma.com for details or call the restaurant for reservations.

something for every budget. Dinner for two should run \$200-300 pesos per person, while an ample "menu de degustación" (sampling menu) can be enjoyed for 400 pesos.

Nicholas Gilman is author of "Good Food in Mexico City: A Guide to Food Stalls, Fondas and Fine Dining."