

Aye Caramba! It's a House, It's a Restaurant, It's Mexico Lindo!

by Joel MEGGS with Brad DEIGHAN

Restaurant: Mexico Lindo
Location: 98 University avenue

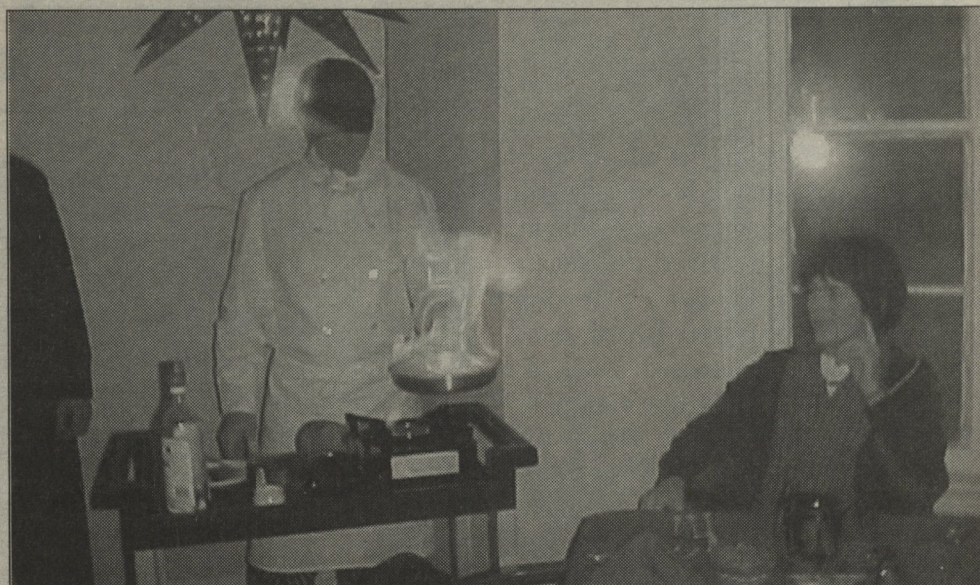
It was not long before someone stepped up and filled the void created by Lone Star's departure. A day after Lone Star closed its doors (soon to be replaced with an East Side Mario's), Mexico Lindo opened. The restaurant is dubbed "The House of Mexican Food," because it is an actual house, or at least it used to be, though I am certain the last time I saw the house it was not sporting its current loud colours.

Mexico Lindo needs those colours; it needs whatever eye-catching gimmicks it can employ, because, buried in a row of non-descript houses, it is hard to find. It does have a sign out front, but if you are not looking for it, you are not likely to see it.

The inside is dimly lit. There is no mistaking that this was once a house, but some creative soul has worked wonders. The interior decoration of this restaurant/house is the biggest selling-

point; the use of colours is much better on the inside than the out. The décor is extremely romantic. Martha Stewart sensibilities. Foam menu covers, walls adorned with appropriate Mexican art, beautiful place settings.

The heavy use of colour continues even as the food comes: complimentary multi-coloured tortilla chips with green salsa. With so much class, you would expect the prices to be far greater than what they are, but prices are extremely reasonable. Some traditional Mexican favourites (burritos, chimichangas, enchiladas) co-exist with some more obscure Mexican dishes. Presentation of the dishes is obviously a point of pride with the chef, and he takes it to heart, even with the Mexican-fried ice cream drizzled in chocolate sauce (a must no matter how filling your entre was!). Also recommended is the "Flaming Banana," which goes by a more subtle Mexican name in the menu. The chef came to the table with a portable stove, made caramel sauce,



Brad Deighan looks on as his banana flames.

then added a banana. Bacardi 151 was added next, and when the dish was reintroduced to the stove, a gush of flames that nearly touched the ceiling was let loose. Voila, a tasty banana goes up in flames.

As awe-inspiring as the aesthetics of Mexico Lindo are, it's the food that will have you coming back. Though it is not authentic Mexican food, it is gourmet inauthentic cuisine, suffused with flavour, and prepared with noticeably fresh ingredients. The chef came out several times to check to see if the food met with our approval, to a resounding chorus of nods and muffled "mm-hmms." He obviously takes Mexican cuisine quite seriously.

Perhaps it was a little unfair of us to review this restaurant when it is still getting its feet wet; they've yet to get their liquor license, for instance. But Mexico Lindo shows so much potential that we did not want to see it fall victim to lack of clientele before it had a chance to carve out a place for itself.

It is a strange and wonderful thing that Charlottetown's most romantic dining experience is a Mexican restaurant. It is bound to catch on as the date restaurant, sitting amidst elegant ambiance, a candle flickering between you and your date, throwing shadows on the walls, as you chow down on some of the best Mexican chow this side of the border. Works for me.



Brad Deighan with the friendly staff at Mexico Lindo.

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARDS

Students, Faculty and Alumni are invited to submit nominations for the UPEI Faculty Association Awards for **Excellence in Teaching**. The awards are open to all University faculty members.

The deadline for nominations is noon, Friday, February 8, 2002. Information about the awards and nomination forms are available at the Faculty Association Office (Main Bldg. Room #214).