



AN HERB FOR ALL SEASONS: YERBA BUENA

Yerba Buena, or “good herb,” is an intimate dining destination that seats up to 50 people at its charming location at 23 Avenue A. The restaurant’s namesake is a sprawling and aromatic mint-like herb and also served as the original name of the city of San Francisco. The cuisine, a reinterpreted Cocina Latina by Julian Medina of Toloache, features exciting Latin dishes that are competing for attention with cocktails created by mixologist Artemio Vasquez.

MENU

Medina’s fascinating Latin fare spans the cuisines of Peru, Cuba, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Spain. The menu is broken down into thematic sections such as Para Picar (“for nibbles”), which offers a flavorful Picada comprised of yucca, tostones, chorizo, chicharron (fried pork skin) and spicy rocoto salsa. The Chicharron de Calamar delights with blue cornmeal crusted calamari, sweet plantains, tomato salad and a tamarind vinaigrette served as a Botana (“snack”). A playful take on a Cuban sandwich, the Pizza Cubana is made up of Berkshire ham, pulled suckling pig, swiss cheese and pickles. Salads and Ceviches with crisp acidity complement and contrast some of the heavier dishes. For the second course (“Para La Mesa”), the menu offers a variety of meat, poultry and fish, such as the Ribeye (Ribeye aji panka glazed, yucca fries and avocado salad) or the Pescado “a lo Macho” (grouper, prawns, cockles, calamari and choclo aji amarillo salsa). The selection of vegetable sides includes Palmitos Fries (heart of palm fries and spicy rocoto dipping sauce) and an earthy wild mushroom dish. The dinner is rounded out by a Pastel de Chocolate, a Mexican chocolate cake with tequila blueberry sauce, and a Yerba Buena chocolate chip ice cream made with yerba buena leaves.

DRINKS

Mixologist Artemio Vasquez combines both classics and carefully crafted signatures into a well-rounded cocktail list well worth a visit by itself. Old time favorites such as the Dark n’ Stormy, Hemingway and Pisco Sour are joined by the floral Desert Rose (a rose-infused Plymouth Gin doused with prickly pear purée), the spicy Poquito Picante (made with Tanqueray Gin, jalapeno and cilantro) and the refreshing Boludo (yerba mate infused pisco with grapefruit and lime cordials). A primarily Latin wine list chosen by Sommelier Giovanny Campos combines carefully selected wines from California with many bottles from Argentina, Spain, Chile and Uruguay. After dinner drinks are entirely Latin in origin, with a sizeable selection of Tequilas, Piscos and Mezcal to round out the evening.

DESIGN

Yerba Buena transports visitors from the Lower East Side to an exclusive secret joint in Havana. Designer Welly Lai has adorned the restaurant in rich dark wood paneling, a bar with turquoise blue and lime green accents, and a refreshing floral wall décor. Yerba Buena has everything one could desire, from sexy lighting to a breezy color scheme, making it ideal for many a lively yet intimate evening.



YERBA BUENA

COCINA LATINA

FACT SHEET

CHEF PARTNER	Julian Medina
OPERATING PARTNER	Giovanny Campos
MIXOLOGIST	Artemio Vasquez
DESIGNER	Welly Lai
LOCATION	23 Avenue A New York, NY 10009
TELEPHONE	212.529.2919
WEBSITE	www.ybnyc.com
ESTABLISHED	June 2008
CUISINE/CONCEPT	Cocina Latina
BEVERAGE PROGRAM	PDT alum. The wine list is comprised of a well-priced variety of sparkling roses and wines that hail from Spain, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and California
HOURS	DINNER: Monday-Sunday 5pm-12am BRUNCH: Saturday-Sunday 11:30am-3pm
METRO	F train to 2nd Avenue between 1st and 2nd Street
CAPACITY	50 Total
PRICE RANGE	Appetizers \$9-\$13, Entrees \$20-\$26, Desserts \$8
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CREDIT CARDS	American Express Only
WHEELCHAIR ACCESS	Yes
RESERVATIONS	Reccomended



YERBA BUENA

COCINA LATINA



JULIAN MEDINA, CHEF PARTNER

Julian Medina, chef-owner of Toloache, is a native of Mexico City who began his career at Hacienda de los Morales and later worked with Richard Sandoval in the mid 1990's. He earned his culinary stripes and awards at New York City's prestigious French Culinary Institute. Lead positions at Sushi Samba in New York and Miami followed.

Julian continued his culinary journey as executive chef at Zocalo, providing him with unprecedented opportunity for creativity. He turned Zocalo into a chef-driven restaurant with the motivation to prove that Mexican cuisine in New York City can be inventive and innovative.

When he opened Toloache in August 2007, it was the culmination of more than a decade of work in restaurants throughout Mexico City and New York. Julian truly came into his own at Toloache where his Bistro Mexicano forges a meeting between authentic dishes and contemporary discourse. It has quickly become a Theater District favorite amongst locals and tourists alike.

On the eve of Toloache's first anniversary, Julian plans to continue his success with the June 2008 opening of Yerba Buena in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Julian's menu traverses Peru, Cuba, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Spain, showcasing the chef's well-traveled and seasoned career.

Julian and his recipes have received rave reviews from every major publication. He was profiled in The New York Times, New York Magazine, Time Out New York, CBS - The Early Show, Good Morning America, Extra, WNBC, The New York Sun, The New York Post, Nation's Restaurant News, and many others.



YERBA BUENA

COCINA LATINA

GIOVANNY CAMPOS, GM & PARTNER

Giovanni Campos's illustrious restaurant career began practically the moment he set foot in America in 1991, when he came here from Costa Rica. Industrious, and entirely irrepressible, he began studying to become a pilot, but the allure of the restaurant world was overpowering to him. His talents and considerable people skills soon became obvious and in no time he rose from bartender to waiter to captain to assistant manager at The Ryland Inn in the Whitehouse section of Readington, New Jersey. The restaurant garnered an "Extraordinary" rating from critic Fran Schumer in the New York Times in 1995, right in the middle of Giovanni's tenure there (1991-99). Ryland Inn's chef-owner refers to Giovanni as "The Horatio Alger of the Hispanic community," praising his tenacity and self-reliance.

In 1997, after completing the rigorous courses at the Sommelier Society of America, Giovanni was awarded the designation of Sommelier. Then, in 1998, he trained with the legendary Roger Dagorn, Master Sommelier at Manhattan's four-star Chanterelle with Chef Owner David Waltuck. The same year, he honed his vinicultural skills with Michael MacNeill, the threetime national sommelier competition winner.

Giovanni made his fearless leap into Manhattan in 1999, becoming a captain at the exalted Le Cirque 2000. The following year, he was tapped to become the maître d' and wine director of the adjoining restaurants, Chicama and Pipa, in the Flatiron District's glorious ABC Home and Carpet Building. There he was working with chef Douglas Rodriguez, the man credited with starting the Nuevo Latino Cuisine Revolution. Chicama soared, bringing exotic ceviches to the forefront for the first time in America and delighting guests with its highly festive ambience. At the center of the party was Giovanni. Restaurant critic Tom Steele wrote in *Our Town* and *Fodor's Gold Guide to New York City* that "there simply isn't a friendlier, more obliging maître d' in town."

In late 2004 came *Coco Pazzo*, where Giovanni worked with the extraordinary chef and restaurateur Pino Luongo. Then, in 2005, Giovanni managed *Patria*, the first Latin restaurant to achieve three stars by the New York Times, for two years. In the summer of 2007, Giovanni opened *Toloache* with chef-owner Julian Medina, putting it on the map as one of New York's favorite and most festive places to dine. He opened its sister restaurant, *Yerba Buena*, in June 2008.

With Giovanni at the helm, *Yerba Buena* continues to grow, filling this cozy Lower East Side gem with warmth and hospitality.



YERBA BUENA

COCINA LATINA

ARTEMIO VASQUEZ, MIXOLOGIST

Mixologist Artemio Vasquez hails from Oaxaca, Mexico and takes a great deal of pride in the cocktail menu at Yerba Buena. The NY Post wrote, "The restaurant's signature Cuban mojito demonstrates his attention to even the tiniest of details. It is made with Bacardi 8, homemade demarara (sugar cane) syrup, natural lime juice, and fresh mint. Before serving, he strains out the leaves to avoid the spinach-teeth look, and gently plops whole ice cubes instead of crushed ice - into a glass so that his creation doesn't get watered down quickly."

In 2004, Artemio started working under celebrity mixologist Audrey Saunders at the highly regarded Pegu Club. He continued his apprenticeship under another master mixologist, Jim Meehan, owner of PDT.

He has furthered his training through advanced courses, such as "Cocktails in the Country" by writer and author Gary Regan.

At Yerba Buena, the first restaurant where he was entrusted to play the role of the mixologist, he created an innovative cocktail menu that garnered critical acclaim. Citrus-based cocktails grace the menu and truly showcase this essential ingredient in almost every drink. Fresh citrus juices - heralding the comeback of fresh ingredients - are joined by fragrant herbs and flowers such as yerba buena leaves, hibiscus, and cilantro, in creating complex yet refreshing drinks that will leave a memorable impression.

Artemio's favorite bartending tool is the shaker. "I just love myself whenever I shake," he says. "It feels like I am dancing, and it's like a ritual for me. The ice is such an important component, too." Indeed, patrons at the bar are treated to a spectacular display of his quest for perfection every time he prepares a drink.

His menu is comprised of classic and signature cocktails. Classics include the Dark n' Stormy, Hemingway and the Pisco Sour. His favorite cocktail is the Manhattan. His favorite drinks to concoct at Yerba Buena are the Desert Rose, made with prickly pear, gin and a rose petal garnish, as well as the Poquito Picante, made with gin, jalapeno, cucumber and cilantro, a typical Mexican garnish. You won't find many vodkas on the list, instead flavorful gins, rums, whiskeys and tequilas plus their infusions take center stage in his creations.

Artemio has found his home at Yerba Buena, where his cocktails get the evening started and let the dancing begin.

