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Rosa Mexicano

Article

Comments



Rosa Mexicano, a national chain serving upscale Mexican food, is trying to stake its claim in one of the country's meccas of Mexican food.

Last month, the restaurant opened its first San Francisco outpost, with a vast and lavishly decorated dining room and outdoor patio that can fit 211 diners altogether. It's a far cry from the cozy taquerías and food carts of the Mission District—but with a Financial District location, the restaurant's owners hope to fill a gap in high-



Enlarge Image
Craig Lee for The Wall Street Journal
Colin Pappas and Karen Becker have lunch at Rosa Mexicano restaurant in San Francisco.

sandwich with pickled jalapeños. The \$12 "Lunch Crunch" meal—"my Mexican version of a Bento box," Mr. Greenstone says—features chips, guacamole, a tortilla soup, a fish taco and a flan.

"The menu is definitely more creative than your traditional run-of-the-mill Mexican restaurant, and the tastes are also unique," says Danielle Toyozumi, 35 years old, who works for a high-tech company in San Francisco and recently visited Rosa Mexicano with clients. But she has a gripe: It took more than an hour for the meal to reach their table.



Enlarge Image
Craig Lee for The Wall Street Journal
Guacamole at Rosa Mexicano.

end Mexican restaurants in the city.

"We don't pretend to suggest that we can compete with your taquerías—we can't," says Howard Greenstone, chief executive of parent company Rosa Mexicano Brands Inc., based in New York. "That's a different type of food."

Instead, Mr. Greenstone hopes to attract the upscale business lunch crowd with dishes like a \$12.75 pulled beef short rib

Mr. Greenstone acknowledges that service has sometimes been slow in the restaurant's early days, but says his goal is to get lunch diners in and out of the restaurant within 45 minutes. A tip from him: If everyone at table orders the "Lunch Crunch" meal, they should be able to finish the meal, including the time it takes for the food to arrive, within 20 minutes.

Rosa Mexicano is located at 30 Mission St. in San Francisco. It is open for lunch daily from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

—Vauhini Vara