



New Eats in Old Sac

The family behind The Firehouse creates a family-friendly restaurant

By Greg Sabin

More than six months ago, I sat in a nicely appointed loft in Old Sacramento and took part in a lovely dinner party/focus group for a soon-to-be-opened restaurant called Ten 22. Our group was asked for its input on everything from silverware and bread plates to bar stools and beer. Our host—the restaurant's owner, Terry Harvego—told us he wanted unvarnished critique and unadulterated frankness. My small group was only one of a dozen or so of these groups that Harvego put together in the months preceding Ten 22's opening. From all appearances, it seems that he got good advice from all involved.

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Ten 22 features an open kitchen so you can watch the action as you're waiting for your food

As owners of The Firehouse Restaurant, a venerable Sacramento institution, Harvego and his family are no strangers to the benefits and great challenges of running a restaurant in Old Sac. Their experience has been put to good use in creating an inviting, modern restaurant. Unlike The Firehouse, however, this new undertaking is a casual, family-friendly place with an approachable menu suited for a couple on a date or a family of four tucked out from a day spent at the nearby train museum.

Ten 22's interior is striking: massive and bright, much larger and more modern than the plain street-front view implies. The front dining space features epic vaulted ceilings and earth-toned booths that envelop diners as if they were small children. The bar is casual, offering an impressive lineup of beers, including some great microbrews from Northern California and beyond.

The open kitchen gives a glimpse of the prep work going on to almost every diner in the room. And the massive back patio will most definitely

be a destination once the gloomy days of winter are over.

The menu is a mix of American favorites and creative combinations of familiar flavors. Basics like the pulled-pork sandwich (\$9.95) are handled with confidence; the barbecue sauce gives the meat a dazzlingly sweet and smoky punch. The Dijon-dill salmon (\$18.95), while similar to many other salmon dishes around town, still impresses with its confident preparation and lovely side of fingerling potatoes. Similarly, the herb-roasted half chicken (\$17.95) is



Spinach salad with fresh apples, blue cheese and candied pecans

an expertly prepared dish without too much invention, but with an obvious amount of care.

A number of thin-crust, wood-fired pizzas are also done well. My favorite was the black bean pizza (\$11.95), which featured a comfortingly Californian combination of black beans, white cheddar, roasted green chilies, tomatoes, red onion and cilantro.

Some of the more creative dishes really shine. The pork tenderloin and pineapple stack (\$17.95) is a brilliant combination of pork, pineapple, dried cherries and orange on a hearty pile of divine garlic mashed potatoes. The corn and shrimp cakes (\$7.95) are simply gorgeous, crispy treats reminiscent of everything great about Southern-style shrimp and

grits. The butternut squash bisque (\$5.95), topped with cilantro and pumpkinseed oil, is probably the best squash soup I've had all winter.

The Dungeness crab "tater tots" (\$11.95) are ridiculously delicious tiny morsels, crispy and stuffed with juicy crab, each topped with a delicate lotus chip. The one critique might be that three of the tiny little things might not be enough to justify the price tag.

There are dishes for children as well, such as mini corndogs, ravioli, mini pizzas and mac and cheese.

The modest wine list features mostly local wines, including two ultra-local offerings by Sacramento-based winemaker Jon Affonso. His Rail Bridge Cellars wines are stunning and reasonably priced.

The service is warm and friendly, with the khaki-clad servers happy to chat about the menu, the new digs or a great beer. In my few visits, the servers never seemed rushed or hurried, yet the food always arrived with perfect pacing.

Having seen a little bit of what goes into putting together a new restaurant, I'm impressed that Ten 22 already seems to be running like a well-oiled machine. Those focus-group dinners last summer must have really helped focus what Terry Harvego and his family were trying to offer. It's refreshing to know that a successful restaurateur is willing to reach out to the community to find out what the dining public really wants. I'm glad he reached out for my opinion and that of many others, and, if all continues to go well at Ten 22, all those dinners were time well spent.

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Artist continued from page 73

really well that I loved. So I decided to apply to Davis' art department—and lo and behold, I was accepted."

Gordon couldn't have enrolled at a better time. During the 1970s—Gordon graduated in 1977—the list of UC Davis faculty read like a roster of California's most prominent painters: Wayne Thiebaud, Roland Petersen, Ralph Johnson and Manuel Neri, among others.

"I made the most of my education because I was aware of the stars I was working with," Gordon says. "I took color theory with Thiebaud—he was very personable—and painting with Roland Petersen. I would go into a workshop with him and slop paint for four or five hours. And then there were all those great Bay Area figurative painters, like Diebenkorn, working at that time. My style is an amalgam of all those people—I call it 'urban realism.'"

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With his vibrant, energetic style, it's no wonder Gordon has found such success.

"I've shown all over: Universal City, San Francisco, Monterey, Pacific Grove," Gordon says. "When I gained notoriety down there, I decided to redirect it here."

His popularity has certainly continued. The John Natsoulas Art Gallery in Davis regularly exhibits Gordon's work, as has the Pamela Skinner Gallery, the (now-closed) Exploding Head Gallery and the brand-new Park Gallery at 21st Street and Second Avenue.

"I'm really lucky that I've had so much support," Gordon says. "Being an artist is an emotional roller coaster, which is why I wanted to wait 'til my kids left home. When they did, my wife just said, 'Go for it.' There's a lot of effort in painting, but I love what I do—life is about seeing art, making art and having fun."

Go to budgordon.com to check out Gordon's latest goods and gallery showings. ●