



This article was printed from the Dining section of the *Sacramento News & Review* originally published January 7, 2010.

This article may be read online at:

<http://www.newsreview.com/sacramento/content?oid=1348165>

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Printed on 2010-03-24.

## Old Sac epiphany

Ten 22 ★★★★★

1022 Second Street, (916) 441-2211, [www.ten22oldsac.com](http://www.ten22oldsac.com)

**Poetry and pulled pork rarely find themselves** snuggled in the same sentence, but Ten 22 pulls it off. Like lots of memorable verse, this sandwich is simple but evocative. The sum is greater than its parts. Frequent dining maven, Shelly, is snared at first bite.

The killer combo: one baguette, tender shreds of piggy, arugula, smoke-infused-but-not-cloying barbecue sauce and french-fried onion bits like that ones sprinkled over green-bean casserole during the holidays—except better. Simple, yes, but singular synergy.

Ten 22, the name and also the address of this new building in Old Sacramento, is a cafe-esque creation of the folks at the venerable Firehouse a few blocks away. The spot, formerly the Orleans Hotel, built in 1853, was a vacant lot from 1970 until 2007.

Ten 22 couldn't be more different than The Firehouse. Sleek, modern and Spartan—no chandeliers or statuary need apply. The large, earth-toned space—tan, teak, taupe, rust—features broad, high-backed booths and numerous chocolate-colored tables. Even the plates are ochre.

One problem: Ten 22's exposed pipes and ducts may require relocation to Midtown, Sacramento's ceiling-adverse neighborhood. Given the height and square footage, it's



easy to imagine some hearing impairment during peak capacity.

This isn't a *très romantique* date place, like the late, great Aldo's. It's more of a business-lunch locale. For example, upon the occasion of the pulled-pork epiphany, several firms are enjoying their holiday lunches.

Lest it be thought Ten 22 is some one-trick wonder, the salmon with its dill-icious sauce is dill-ightful. The thick rectangular slab of fish is well-cooked but still moist—not as common as it should be in the world of salmon. Were I back in the kitchen instead of the gifted Andrea Reiter, the bed of fingerling potatoes upon which the salmon perches would be replaced with a mix of Lundberg brown and wild rice, dappled with scallions and, despite the dill-ectable sauce, a mound of festive fruity salsa would dominate one corner of the plate. Still, Reiter's creation is plenty good as is.

Also in the plenty-good pantheon are the braised ribs, recommended by a friend of my friend, Kristin Power, who shows no reticence in articulating likes and dislikes. Kristin says her friend knows ribs—and indeed she does. Two are offered as a “small plate,” but waitress Jennifer suggests the entree, which offers more of the meaty monsters.

Reiter has some barbecue mojo because, like the pork sandwich, the ribs' sauce enhances but doesn't overwhelm. Like the salmon, below are potatoes; in this case, mashed. Can't comment on their quality because, after first tearing into the ribs, which arrive after an inaptly named “small” green salad with cherry tomato halves and balsamic vinaigrette, stomach space is spent. And there was also the quick dispatching of the creative, awash-in-red-vinegar cucumber slaw with bell peppers and black sesame seed that accompanies the ribs.

Kristin praises the crispy sweet-potato fries. Were Popeye there, he would retort: “I yam what I yam.” (Just a touch of yammy humor.) The praiseworthy fries accompany a chicken and brie sandwich, recommended by Jennifer and seconded by Kristin. Readers will have to take Kristin and Jennifer's word for it, since the battered Parthenon of my body is a brie-free zone.

Runny French cheese, get thee hence!

Previously, SN&R has chronicled the search for downtown Sacramento's best mac 'n' cheese (“The great mac 'n' cheese caper”; SN&R Arts&Culture; March 19, 2009). Regrettably, research for that project occurred well before Ten 22's November opening. Here, it is butterful, absolutely butterful, laced with pancetta and sprinkled with—its one modest imperfection—not quite enough bread crumbs. Consumption spawns open weeping.

Ten 22 ain't cheap. The ribs are \$21, the salmon is \$18, the chicken sandwich—even corrupted as it is with the hateful brie—is \$12. But some very impressive cookery is happening here. Pretty darn authoritative.