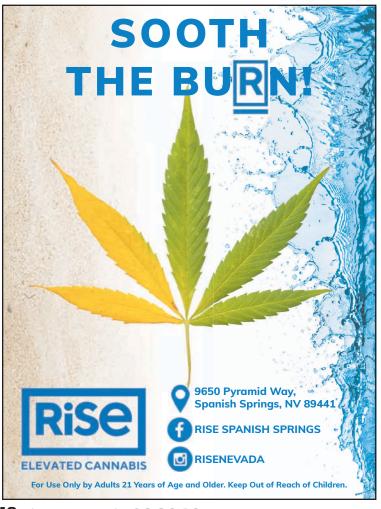




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F'OOD BY TODD SOUTH



Sunday service

Some of the best food and service in Reno can be

found tucked away in humble environs at recently opened Señor Tequila's. Taking over from a previous restaurant in an industrial neighborhood, they've done a nice job refurbishing the place. It was perfect for a Sunday family dinner after high exertion at a trampoline fun house.

To start things off, complimentary tortilla chips and pico de gallo were accompanied by warm *chicharones*—just the things to accompany a rocks margarita (\$7) garnished with blood orange and fresh mint. We also ordered a *cazuela* (\$12), an earthenware crock filled with tequila, grapefruit soda and fresh slices of grapefruit, lime, and orange; and a La Llorona (\$10), named after the tale of "the weeping woman" of Latin American folklore. Usually a take on a pisco sour, this expression involved tequila, mango, jalapeño and chile/lime/salt on the rim. All were quite good, but the citrus/tequila loaded, clay booze bowl should be shared with a friend or two.

Queso fundido (\$7) was next, with plenty of spicy chorizo atop a sea of stretchy, melted cheese. Great on both chips and fried pork skin. A dozen ostiones (oysters) (\$16) served with plenty of lemon and medium hot sauce were large, fresh and briny. Further, a couple of orders of ceviche (\$7 each) featured a pair of heavily laden tostadas on each plate, accompanied by half of a sliced avocado. The citrus-cured fish version was good, but on request my pulpo-loving grandson received a great mix of octopus, shrimp, and fish at no extra charge.

Camarones al gusto (\$15), i.e. "shrimp to the taste" was ordered diabla style, served with a ton of rice and salad. The rice was fine, and the prawns were good in a thick, medium hot sauce. But the salad had—unexpectedly—been dressed in the house habanero sauce—a delicious-yet-devilish pile of lettuce, tomato, cucumber and onion.

I love Mexican vegetable and meatball soup, but sopa de albondigas o pescado (\$13) was new to me. The large balls of minced whitefish in a savory, spicy broth were quite tasty, and the side bowl of onion, cilantro, lemon and dried chiles to punch it up were a nice touch. My 12 year-old nephew played it safe with the kid's meal of tiras de pollo con papas (\$5), two chicken planks with fries and ketchup. He said they were "fine" and made a brave face as we slurped down raw oysters. I have previously seen him eat Caesar salad, so there's hope.

spicy, or a la diabla. PHOTO/ALLISON YOUNG

I went with *chuleta de res* (\$15), a thin, bone-in, marinated beef chop topped with grilled Cambray onion and jalapeño and sides of salad, rice, *frijoles* and an exemplary guacamole. The meat was akin to *carne asada*, the veg charred and tender, and the beans had plenty of flavor.

My son chose the *molcajete el santi playero* (\$25), translated as a big lava rock bowl filled with delicacies you might enjoy on a particularly attractive beach. It was served hot and bubbling, the spicy mix of red sauce and melted cheese supporting a complement of head-on shrimp, mussels, clams, scallops, fish and crab legs. I've had good and not-so-good seafood *molcajete*, but this was among the top contenders. He declared it to be one of the best meals he's ever had.

Despite being pleasantly stuffed, we shared a couple of orders of fresh, warm *churros* dusted in cinnamon sugar (\$4 each), with caramel and dark chocolate dipping sauces—a sweet end to our Sunday fun day.

Señor Tequila's Mexican Kitchen & Cantina

1490 E. Fourth St., 384-2933

Señor Tequila's Mexican Kitchen & Gantina is open Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Happy hour is from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.