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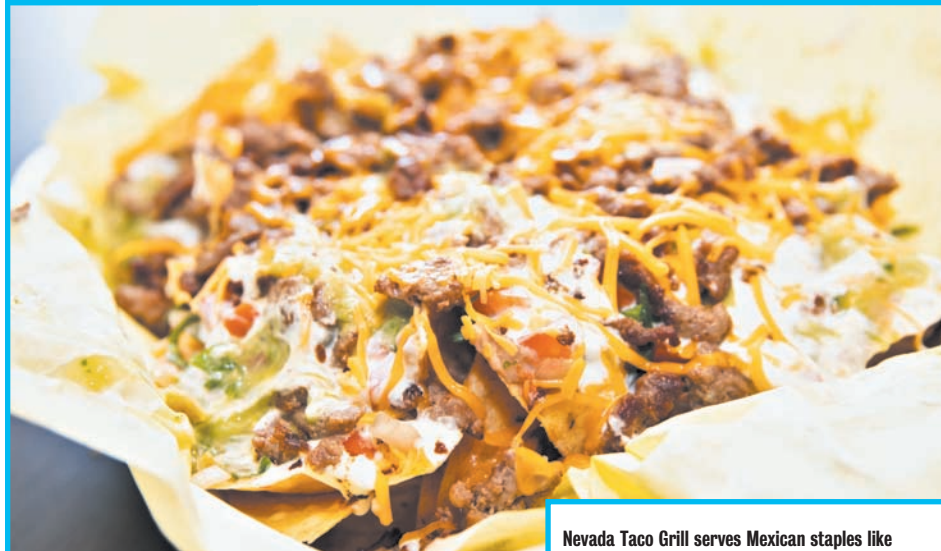
**FRIDAY OCT 18**

100% of our tips and proceeds will be donated to The Community Health Alliance here in Reno to help local woman fighting breast cancer pay for their medical bills.

Get your morning coffee from either location this Friday October 18th  
**3915 S. McCarran Blvd • 8050 S. Virginia St.**

## FOOD

BY TODD SOUTH



Nevada Taco Grill serves Mexican staples like loaded nachos from their small restaurant space.  
PHOTO/ALLISON YOUNG

## Bite-sized

### I love finding random, unexpected eater-

ies. While running family errands, we stopped at a gas station and convenience store in Sparks. Tucked in the back corner is a small kitchen, complete with a flat-top grill and deep fryer. I've heard the place previously served pizza—before that, burgers with a drive-thru window. It's now home to Nevada Taco Grill, a no-frills taqueria serving up the goods in a tiny space with seating for perhaps 10, assuming they're well-acquainted. My trio ordered a few items and found a spot to sit and dine amid folks waiting on take-out.

The two-person operation was cranking out food in short order, and we soon settled into our unplanned feast. Somewhat ironically, the tacos were actually the least successful items. Curious about the difference between the "street" (\$1.99 each) versus "regular" tacos (\$2.99 each), we tried a couple of each. The choice of meats included shredded chicken or beef, grilled chicken, *carne asada*, *carnitas* and *adobada*, and they also have specials during the week that include hard-shell, house-fried tortillas.

The street variety were the typical pair of three-inch corn tortillas—topped with meat, diced onion and fresh cilantro—while the regulars were six-inch, single tortillas with the same ingredients, plus fresh pico de gallo. The pork *carnitas* and *adobada* were a bit on the crunchy side from being tossed on the grill, but they still tasted good. Beef *asada* was better, though a tad chewy. They were also a little light on the meat compared to other tacos around town.

A combo plate of three shredded beef rolled tacos (\$7.25) was served with melted cheese and guacamole on top and sides of rice and beans. The taquitos were crunchy with good *masa* flavor—filled with plenty

of seasoned meat—and much better than their unfried cousins. The rice was fair, the *frijoles refritos* quite good, but the guacamole was a blended, runny sauce—not bad, just not the chunky stuff I prefer.

Given a choice between shredded or grilled chicken on my mother's *torta* (\$5.75), we went grilled. The small chunks of meat were actually tender and reasonably moist, accompanied by bell pepper, onion, tomato and lettuce on a soft, perfectly lovely Mexican roll. It was the kind of soft that almost falls apart when you bite in. We all agreed, it was a damn fine sandwich.

Always on the hunt for a decent *chile relleno*—yet always with low expectations—I went ahead and got the relleno and cheese enchilada combo plate (\$8.75). The enchilada was average, but the stuffed pepper was easily my favorite item of the meal. The large poblano pepper was meaty—not overcooked—and had a nice bit of kick. Stuffed with a ton of melty cheese and topped with a fresh and flavorful, just-shy-of-chunky red enchilada sauce, every bite made me sad to see it disappear. Surprisingly, this gas station *chile relleno* is among my top five from the past few years.

My wife just can't not order nachos (\$9.50), and I'm glad she can't resist. Topped with a ton of *carne asada*, refried beans, pico de gallo, sour cream, guacamole and both melted and shredded cheese sprinkles, the thin, crispy chips did a respectable job with their burden. The chips themselves were excellent, and the bounty of well-seasoned meat and beans more-or-less made the cheese irrelevant. They were even good as leftovers the next day. □

## Nevada Taco Grill

2995 Vista Blvd., Sparks, 376-1844  
Nevada Taco Grill is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.