

CHEFS TO THE RESCUE



Chef Eduardo Osuna, founder of Chefs al Rescate



Carrot cake by Alejandro Martínez from Brásica

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS/NICHOLAS GILMAN

Mexico's best cooks whipped up a storm in support of indigenous weavers of Guerrero

BY NICHOLAS GILMAN
Special to The News

From Aztec sushi to tortilla Jell-O, it was a gastronomic blast at the *Salón de Eventos de Ambrosia*, the city's best culinary academy, this past Sunday afternoon. Guests wandered from table to table like they were all at a wedding, laboring over where to spend the five meal tickets allotted them.

Would it be Mikel Alonso's wonderfully odd "sopa de frijol con ceviche de camarón" poured over a "gelatina de tortilla"? Or Daniel Ovadia's savory osso buco of lamb with the creamiest mashed potatoes I've had in a long time? Perhaps Casa Mexico's fish tamal with "recado negro," served over couscous with "espuma de mar" (what is in the foam, I asked. — "The sea" was chef Margarita Salinas' reply).

For a third year, Chefs al Rescate, a select group of Mexico's best cooks have whipped up a mouthwatering dinner to benefit building projects in the poorest areas of Mexico — this time in support of indigenous weavers of Guerrero.

Star chef and TV personality Eduardo Osuna of Solea coordinated the project, which has continued to expand each year.

It started in 2006, when a small group of like-minded volunteers raised 76,000 pesos to help a community on Baja California Sur that had been devastated by Hurricane John. Osuna explained that "what began as an effort to aid the Mule-

gé community, today has become a commitment by some of the best chefs in the country to work to support the most needy people in our nation."

Proceeds from this year's event will go toward building the Taller Textil Indígena MAS PRODUCE (Mas Produce Indigenous Textile Workshop) in the mountainous region of Tlapa de Comonfort, Guerrero, one of Mexico's poorest communities. Women there produce some of the most extraordinary hand-woven and embroidered "huipiles" (traditional dresses) in the country and this building will provide a place for them to work, teach and sell their wares.

Over 500 people and their families will benefit from this project. Organizers hope to surpass last year's success-

ful event, held at the Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, which brought in over 200,000 pesos to build kitchens and housing for migrant workers near the border.

Charitable events of this kind, so common in the United States, are still a novelty in Mexico. This one, at 500 pesos per person (which included drinks and more than enough food), was generous and accessible to many.

In addition to the above mentioned chefs, others who contributed their food, time and services were Mónica Patiño (Naos), Alejandro Kuri (La Casa de las Enchiladas), Daniel Ovadia (Paxia), Alejandro Martínez (Brásica), Cristian Bravo (Hacienda Temozón) and José Ramón Castillo (of Qué Bo!, whose mole and tamarind filled chocolates surprised us all).

The event was generously supported again this year by Philadelphia, the cream cheese folks, who provided samples to take home. Unfortunately, there were no bagels in sight.

For more information about Chefs al Rescate, go to www.mas.org.mx. There is a link to their page in English.

Nicholas Gilman is author of "Good Food in Mexico City: A Guide to Food Stalls, Fondas and Fine Dining."



Chocolate altar from Qué Bo!

MORE INFO

It's not too late to sample the chefs' fare!

Solea (Hotel W)

Campos Eliseos 252, Polanco
Tel. 9138-1818

Naos

Palmas 425, Colonia Lomas de Chapultepec
Tel. 5520-5702

Biko

Presidente Masaryk 402, Polanco
Tel. 5282-2064

La Casa de las Enchiladas

Newton 105, Polanco
Lago Alberto 416, Anáhuac
Liverpool 169, Zona Rosa
Río Lerma 257, Cuauhtémoc

Paxia

Avenida de la Paz 47, San Ángel
Tel. 5550-8355

Brásica

Av. Vasco de Quiroga 3900-1, Santa Fe
Tel. 1084-8750

Casa México

(opening in December)
Génova 70, Zona Rosa
Tel. 5525-1196

Hacienda Temozón

Carretera Mérida-Uxmal, Yucatán
see: www.haciendasmexico.com

Qué Bo! Chocolates

Julia Verne 104-B, Polanco
Explanada 737, Lomas