



Annette Kratka and Chef Frederick Muller

EL MEZE

Breathtaking scenery, rich ambiance, a historic hacienda and, of course, exquisite food make an evening at Taos' El Meze (ME-ze) which translates to *table* in Arabic a culinary delight.

Chef Frederick Muller and his partner, Annette Kratka, combine their respective talents in the kitchen and the dining room. Muller, who sealed his reputation with his previous restaurant, Fred's Place, and his book, *La Comida, The Foods, Cooking and Traditions of The Upper Rio Grande* (Pruett Publishing, 1995), has taken his love for cooking, culture, and history and created dinners with a global texture, drawing from Old Spain, North Africa, and northern New Mexico. Explains Muller, "New Mexico cuisine has many roots in Moorish traditions, which the Spanish brought here in the 1500s, due to their country being occupied by the Moors for 800 years." Many of the Old World spices Muller uses — such as cumin, cilantro, lavender and mint — will be familiar yet fresh to New Mexico palates.

History aside, the diners who return night after night to El Meze know that Muller's menu offers delicious fare found no where else, even in culinary rich Taos. From starter plates of Fried Green Olives stuffed with Spanish blue cheese to a Buffalo Tamale with chile verde, or a salad of Roasted Beets, Oranges, Garbanzos with toasted cumin to entrées like a Ribeye with Moroccan

Butter and herb frites, — El Meze's unique menu offers meals long remembered.

And thanks to Kratka's artistic eye, sumptuous courses are enjoyed in intimate dining rooms awash in rich reds, greens, and coppers accented by local contemporary art from J Fine Art Gallery, Thom Wheeler and Bill Rane. A kiva fireplace adds romance as only found in New Mexico. During warmer months, the flagstone patio opens to an unspoiled vista of Taos Mountain and its unforgettable sunsets.

Wherever you enjoy your visit, leave room for one of Kratka's delectable desserts, paired with coffee, tea, or dessert wine. Offering a selective wine and beer list, El Meze is open Monday-Saturday, 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. ■

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MENU HIGHLIGHTS

JAMON SERRANO

Spanish cured ham with seasonal fruit and Manchego cheese

TUNA CARPACCIO

With fresh grated horseradish, capers, lemon, Spanish olive oil

GAZPACHO

Topped with orange granita and served with a roasted garlic aioli crouton

FLASH FRIED CALAMARI

Spanish paprika, garlic, fresh sage and a splash of hot pepper vinegar

WATERMELON & FETA SALAD

With preserved lemon and pomegranate syrup

GRILLED DOUBLE CUT LAMB CHOPS

Cracked black pepper and lavender with vegetable jus, and fried garlic chips

PHEASANT BREAST

Swiss chard, balsamic syrup, vegetable jus and fresh strawberries

LEMON MOUSSE AND RASPBERRY NAPOLEON

MINI CARDAMOM DOUGHNUTS

Cooked to order and served with caramel chocolate sauce

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