

RESTAURANT UPDATE

HUGO'S

1600 Westheimer Houston 77006 713.524.7744

After coming to Texas from Mexico and working his way up as busboy, dishwasher, and as a nighttime office building cleaner, now-Chef / Owner Hugo Ortega took care to learn the business side of the business and to become fluent in English. Now he owns three well-established and successful restaurants: Backstreet Café, Prego, and Hugo's. Hugo's, on lower Westheimer, features authentic dishes from Mexico, not the hybrid Tex-Mex dishes which prevail in most of Houston's "Mexican" restaurants. Seafood cocktails at Hugo's include Tuna ceviche with avocado and mango; Octopus, avocado, tomato, and cilantro; and Lime cured red snapper. In the Soups & Salads department the happy diner will find Meatball soup, rich spicy broth with vegetables and small beef and pork meatballs; Pureed butternut squash soup with chile de arbol, pumpkin seeds, and pear; and House salad, watercress, endive, arugula, mache, beet, xoconostle, mint, cilantro, orange and lime zest, shaved fennel, chayote, pomegranate seeds, and toasted almonds. The Appetizer list features Small duck carnitas tacos with tomatillo sauce; Plantain turnovers stuffed with refried beans; Chapulines, pan sautéed grasshoppers served with guacamole, tortillas, and chipotle tomatillo salsa (!). Main courses-divided into seafood, poultry, and meats- include Rich seafood soup; Sea bass crusted in pecans, camote morado, chard, orange butter sauce with minced root vegetables; Smoky grilled chicken with ancho chile sauce, avocado relish, potatoes and tortillas; Two grilled semi-boneless quail, with Mexican rice, beans, tomatillo salsa, and tortillas; Poblano peppers stuffed with shredded pork, fruit and nuts, topped with walnut sauce and pomegranate seeds, served with white rice; Braised oxtail, quinoa, and mole of Oaxacan Tabasco peppers; and Cabrito, roasted goat meat pulled from the bone, served with nopales asados, guacamole, and salsa de habanero; and Tenderloin of beef stuffed with squash, mushrooms, huitlacoche, and Chihuahua cheese, topped with tomatillo salsa. Saturday and Sunday brunch is served.

THE QUEEN VIC PUB & KITCHEN

2712 Richmond (just west of Kirby) Houston 77098 713.522.0022

Affiliated with Oporto Wine and Tapas Bar in the Greenway Plaza area, Queen Vic Pub is altogether different in ambiance and menu, but with the same careful attention to delivering an unusual and unexpected combination of flavors and dishes which are guaranteed to excite the palate into returning again and again. Various "designer" beers are available on tap and in the bottle, as are creative cocktails. Terrace seating is available, and the overall feel is very upscale "Commonwealth pub." Under Bar Bites, the following offerings: Vegetable samosas with roasted tomato chutney; Short rib samosas, beer braised with tamarind-sweet and sour chutney; Lamb Keema croquettes, enveloped with whipped Yukon potatoes, with a green pea chutney; Paneer and wild mushroom pizza, topped with Serrano chili, cilantro chutney, paneer, and herbed lemon-scented goat cheese and mozzarella; Goan shrimp and crispy okra curry, simmered in coconut milk curry with crispy okra; Lamb vindaloo, braised leg, spicy masala, served with basmati rice. Under Supper on the menu, the hungry diner will find English burger, special blend grass fed beef, homemade B&B pickles, English cheddar, Coleman mustard, red onion, tomato and butter lettuce; Royal fish and Chips, halibut dipped in a coriander ale batter and fried golden with fresh cut fries; Madeiran meat on a spit, 16 ounces of beef tenderloin kabobs, dry spice rubbed and grilled, based with ghee and dusted with Himalayan sea salt (?), Malabar peppercorns and lavender, served on a table-side skewer. Sides include Braised greens with lemon and garlic; Chutney of cilantro, roasted tomato-sweet neem, tamarind sweet & sour, green pea-mint, or spicy pili-pili; House cut "chips"; Naan; Cauliflower gratin; and Queens side salad.

Hankamer Food for Thought: Spend \$5 four times per week for (unnecessary?) valet parking at restaurants and you have spent \$1,040 for the year. Hmmm.....

For more information on Hankamer & Associates or any of our current listings, please visit our websites at www.hankamer.com,

Note: By way of qualifications for reviewing restaurants, Hankamer has owned and operated numerous restaurants, coffee shops, hotels, discotheques and banquet halls over the last forty years; he has travelled to over 70 countries and has studied and lived in Europe for over three years; he was co-owner of a home delivery wine of the month club and imported his own wine labels for years. Copyright 2009 Ray Hankamer, Hankamer Commercial/Hankamer & Associates.