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RESTAURANT UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2011

JEANNINE'S BISTRO

106 Westheimer Houston 77006 713.874.0220

Mmmmmmmmmmm! The rich flavors of Belgian cooking, accompanied by the spicy (and very strong) Trappist beers which are so famous, make for a very happy tummy. This very busy little restaurant on Lower Westheimer is a "descendant" of Café Montrose, and many of the menu items are similar. The main crowd pleaser here is Moules Frites, steamed mussels with a cone of French fries, although the proud Belgians, who sell frites from roadside stands, will argue that *theirs* are better than those from the larger country just to their south. As an appetizer preceding your Moules Frites, try Onion soup; Scampi with garlic butter; Salade compose; or Salade d'endive. In the sandwich realm, Croque Monsieur and Croque Madame (toasted ham with cheese, with optional two eggs sunny side up) are tasty treats. If you are not a Moules person, Jeannine's Bistro offers Filet mignon with Bearnaise, poivre, mushrooms, or Roquefort topping; Entrecote (ribeye), with same sauces; Carbonade Flamande, Flemish beef stew prepared with Chimay beer, onions, and carrots; Waterzooi de poulet, Flemish style creamy chicken stew with carrots and celery; Lapin aux pruneaux, rabbit let and thigh with prunes, raisins, onions, and carrots; Medaillon of porc a la Bruxelloise, breaded pork loin with Brussels sprouts; Chicken a la reine, puff pastry filled with chicken and mushrooms in a creamy sauce. As I said: Mmmmmmmmmmm! As for Mussels: steamed with butter, celery, onion, and white wine; in a spicy tomato/coconut sauce; in garlic butter; au gratin with Parmesan cheese; in a creamy sauce; in a creamy blue cheese sauce; in a mild curry sauce. Fish lovers can sample Saumon grille Bearnaise; Bouchee Ostendaise, puff pastry filled with seafood and mushrooms in a cream sauce. Also available: Crepes; Omelets (with salad); and Desserts such as Crème brulee, Dame blanche, and Mousse au chocolat. You will make Jeannine's one of your regular spots.

Xuco Xicana (formerly El Patio Midtown)

2416 Brazos Houston 77006 713.523.8181

A radical departure from the Tex-Mex comfort food so many of us native Houstonians have loved over the years from El Patio, but a delicious and creative departure! Tons of new items to explore, some with names never before heard in Houston. Hankamer loves to discover the unexpected! Molletes, slow dough artisan bolillo, black beans, queso quesadilla, pico de gallo, choice of chorizo, fajita, or chicken; 3rd Coast ceviche; chef's selection of Gulf seafood, citrus, onions, chiles, herbs, marinated a la estilo Peruana. Palate teasers: Sopa de tortilla; Pozole, pork stew guajillo chile broth, hominy, limon, onion, chile pequin, radish, cabbage, Mexican oregano, tostadas. For your main course, jump into a Carne desebrada, pulled stewed beef shoulder; Pollo asado Yucateco, achiote and orange marinated grilled chicken; Puerco adobado, grilled pork in an adobo or rub of pasilla chile and clove; Barbacoa de Cabeza de Vaca, steamed cows cheek and tongue. Further platos nuevos: Fish tacos Tikin Tix; Camarones Enchilotlados, sautéed with roasted tomato chipotle sauce, cilantro, arroz, corn tortillas, salad of jicama; and Pollo asado Yucateco, char grilled half chicken marinated in orange and achiote recado, corn tortillas, rajitas de poblano, avocado, escabeche, pico de gallo, lime and chile toreado, arroz & frijoles. Hungry yet??

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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.

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