

LocalBozo.com Restaurant Review: El Parador Cafe

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El Parador Cafe

325 East 34th Street, between 1st & 2nd Avenue, Murray Hill, (212) 679-6812

Getting There: 6 to 33rd Street

www.elparadorcafe.com

Murray Hill is not an area that is distinguished for its extraordinary restaurants. In fact the neighborhood is recognized more as a youthful area, with a college crowd, more likely to opt for a slice of pizza at 3am than a pleasant dining experience. Tucked just behind a side ramp for the Queens-Midtown tunnel however, is a satisfying change of pace. Veiled by its unassuming red awning, El Parador Café is a long-established eatery that caters to an older audience for the area. Once inside, the room is filled with a boisterous energy, as the servers hustle in between the cramped tables with hefty plates of customary Mexican fare. The dimly lit bar scene offers a traditional, old fashioned vibe- not surprising considering the restaurant actually opened in 1959- serving many variations of Mexican favorites- tequilas, margaritas, delicious sangrias, and strictly Mexican beers.



The restaurant, while showing off its penchant for Mexican staples, takes necessary risks in offering up some subtle enhancements to modernize itself. For example, the “Jalapenos Rellenos” (\$8) can be served with cheese, or chunky peanut butter, and the “Chorizos” (\$10) are offered pan fried or sautéed with caramelized onions and doused in a sweet sherry. Both relatively unorthodox pairings. Both supremely savory. Other starters include a wider array of old world cuisine including quesadillas, tacos, ceviche, & enchiladas, all of which are reasonably priced first courses.

Main course offerings like the “Pollo Parador” (\$23), which is marinated in a secret recipe blend for 24 hours and needs a full 30 minutes to bake, and the “Bouillabaisse Veracruzana” (\$27), a spicy broth filled with fresh lobster, shrimp, scallops, clams, and mussels, are two of the standouts. We also like the “Baja California Fish Tacos,” (\$18) crispy to perfection and topped with chunky helpings of avocado and a tangy cilantro salsa. Additionally, our table was fortunate enough to try a delectable daily special: a flawlessly cooked, roasted duck breast, which was tender and topped with a fiery grilled pepper, served with sticky white rice and light field greens, with accompanying raw onion & grape tomatoes.

In an area where you are more likely to see a next day “walk of shame” than you are to find a Five Star restaurant, El Parador Café is a neighborhood gem that serves to combine the flare and liveliness of old world Mexico, with the vigorous contemporary lifestyle of the area.



Chas
June 30th, 2010

Seems like a great find and an interesting place to have a delicious diner. Nice commnetary and its another restaurant I will put on my list to visit. Thanks guys