



Holy molé

Looking for an authentic slice of Mexico? *Mei Leng* finds it at That Little Mexican Place – cactus, churros, chilli chocolate and all.



AS MANY PERTH LOCALS will attest, finding genuine Mexican food is a challenge in this city. Sure, there are burritos and more tacos than you can poke a sombrero at, but what about the real stuff? The dishes that are shared amongst families in homes right across Mexico?

Thankfully, flying the flag for authentic Mexican is Gavin Town, owner of That Little Mexican Place.

"Mexican food is awesome, it's the best in the world," begins Gavin, who lived in the US for three years and fell in love with the cuisine. "There I discovered really good Mexican food. When I came back to Perth I wanted to learn more but Mexican food here is very different from what you get in the States and in Mexico."

Gavin travelled back to America to learn the art of cooking regional specialities and nine years ago, opened the first That Little Mexican Place in North Perth unleashing novel prickly pear cactus, beef tongue and churros on curious diners. Two years ago he opened his third restaurant on South Terrace and hasn't looked back.

"The South Free restaurant is my favourite. The original concept was to have it feel like a restaurant in Mexico City – no sombreros, no blankets on the walls, just Mexico without the tackiness," smiles Gavin, who freighted the restaurant's gorgeous star lights directly from Mexico. With ample parking and a frequently changing menu that caters for both grazing and individual main meals, this is a great spot for trying something a little different. Even Sunday breakfast gets jacked up, with bacon and eggs taking on a Mexican form and served in a toasted tortilla (quesadilla desayuno) and burrito desayuno on the menu.

Dinner sees the open kitchen serve up the more familiar staples of fajitas and quesadillas, along with favourites like sautéed nopal cactus, stuffed chesse jalapenos and chicken molé. A culinary symbol of Mexico's mixed heritage, molé meaning concoction – is a complex sauce of chilli peppers, nuts and spices.

"You have to taste it to understand it. There's even chocolate in it, which is added not for sweetness but for richness," says Gavin. Chocholates should not miss the buca negra 'black mouth' pudding. Served warm, it's a rich, citrus chocolate pudding drizzled with orange meringue.

With the waves crashing in the distance, live Mariachi (check dates on Facebook or the website) and a glass of bottomless Jamaica hibiscus agua fresca in hand, That Little Mexican Place is a slice of Mexico minus the airfare.

Fact file

WHO THAT LITTLE MEXICAN PLACE
WHERE 406 SOUTH TERRACE, SOUTH FREMANTLE
WHEN TUESDAY TO SATURDAY FROM 5.30PM-9PM AND SUNDAY FROM 8.30AM-8PM
PRICE BREAKFAST \$10-\$36, APPETISERS \$12.50-\$20, MAINS \$20-\$32, DESSERTS \$8-\$14
GET IN TOUCH (08) 9433 2247, TLMP.COM.AU, OR FOLLOW THEM AT FACEBOOK.COM/THATLITTLEMEXICANPLACE