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Barcelona Owners Gear Up for Bartaco Launch in Stamford

Bartaco's Mexican cuisine will offer affordable quick eats starting this summer.

By Christine Brophy January 1, 2011

Barcelona Restaurant & Wine Bar (<http://stamford.patch.com/listings/barcelona>) co-founder Sasa Mahr-Batuz finds inspiration for new restaurants from the sights, sounds and tastes of countries he has lived or visited outside the United States. And his new restaurant, Bartaco (<http://www.bartaco.com>), which will open next to Barcelona this summer, follows the same pattern.

While Barcelona is styled after the cuisine and culture of Spain and Portugal, Bartaco is a Latin American eatery with an emphasis on Mexican foods and beverages.

Mahr-Batuz told Patch that the idea for the eatery came to him about five years ago while running on the beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The restaurant plans were put in motion after partners Mahr-Batuz, Randy Pike and Andy Pforzheimer shared Mexican fare and caipirinha cocktails along a Mexican waterside. Pike, who spent 20 years in Mexico, wanted the new restaurant to be fashioned after the Mexican street food he enjoyed for its taste, speed of preparation and affordability.

Although the new eatery has some influence from Brazilian culture, Bartaco will have "a soul of a Mexican eatery that has international ingredients," Mahr-Batuz told Patch. He described the menu as "foodie driven" and good for grazing.

The menu features a variety of tacos, salads, beef stew, ceviche (a Latin American seafood dish) rotisserie chicken and desserts. Tacos are made with different types of fish and meats from Baja fish, red snapper and Thai shrimp to pork, beef, veal and chicken. Vegetable tacos are also available. Tacos are made with fresh vegetables, house sauces and relishes.

Caipirinha, the drink Mahr-Batuz and his business partners shared over conversation in Mexico, is on the cocktail menu. It is a Brazilian drink with lime, tequila, sugar and Brazilian rum – shaken and on the rocks. Mahr-Batuz emphasized that cocktails are always made with freshly squeezed juice. Margaritas, mojitos and 25 tequilas will also be on the cocktail menu.

Hand-pressed sodas, made with freshly squeezed juice and a splash of soda, are available, as well as Mexican Coca-Cola, which differs from traditional Coca-Cola since the Mexican version is made with sugar cane instead of high fructose corn syrup.

The Latin American waterfront inspiration will also be experienced with one's senses through the Bartaco atmosphere. The décor is described as minimalistic, light and breezy – think a contemporary beach resort. Blue and white walls contrast wood paneling, wood furnishings and basket-weave fixtures. The music, whether by DJ or live, is planned to be "youthful, energetic and fun," Mahr-Batuz said. He added that the relaxing atmosphere should make patrons feel as if they have been temporarily transported to a vacation.

Those hoping to get a taste of the Mexican cuisine before the restaurant opens in Stamford can head south for the border – the New York border that is – to the Bartaco at 1 Willett Avenue in Port Chester.



PHOTOS (6)



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