

Taping into the delights of tapas

Restaurant offers tasty Spanish fare — and some raucous fun

By SHI YINGYING
CHINA DAILY

This summer the spirit of Spanish tapas extends all the way to the Expo 2010 Shanghai.

A taste of Spain's most authentic dishes is available at the Madrid Case Pavilion's Taska Tapas & Paellas Restaurant, where visitors can dine in a less formal and less expensive way.

"With wine or beer, you can eat tapas for breakfast, lunch, dinner or just for fun," said Jamie Jaudenes, general manager of the restaurant. "In Spain, rather than being referred as certain type of food, people understand it as a variety of appetizers or snacks. We even say 'let's go get tapas' at 2 am."

A tapas and wine venue is always an appealing concept. This meal of snacks and a variety of wines eliminates the need to commit to a large plate or one bottle of wine.

Dinners can be adventurous and fickle without overspending, often adding a lively atmosphere of anticipation.

Taska has that air of excitement. It's become popular and is bustling throughout the day. Be prepared, however, as it can be a little bit loud, especially with the music during the pavilion's bull fighting performance at 2 pm every day. Despite the noise, it adds to the typical Spanish experience offered to Expo visitors. Be quick to get the seats on the balcony as they are popular — it's the best place to watch the bullfight downstairs.

With the menu written on a chalkboard, diners will feel as if they're in a street café in Spain. The restaurant also offers small menus in the shape of an orange fan that can be used to cool overheated visitors.

With white walls and bright orange tableware, the atmosphere is as unique as the food.

The gazpacho helps keep temperatures down during the hot, stuffy Shanghai summer. Despite the unfamiliar concept of a cold tomato soup, don't jump to conclusions without trying it first. The soup combines



The classic Spanish potato omelet is a favorite.

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the thirst-quenching virtues of a cold drink with the nourishment of a salad.

Taska's chefs create a host of imaginative tapas. Eggs and chorizo picadillo over French fries is just one of them. "In Spain, we call it broken eggs," Jaudenes said. And even though the dish looks like broken eggs, it tastes like heaven and is a reminder of mum's home cooking.

"It is not a fine dining venue. All we have is what normal Spanish people would eat on a daily basis," said Jaudenes.

For seafood lovers, the prawns in garlic and chili pepper is another delight. Reaching beyond Spanish spices, chefs use a little bit of ginger to add an alluring accent to the shrimp, making the garlicky oil they are cooked and served in that much better for dipping bread.

Ibérico ham with tomato bread is one of the restaurant's best-kept secrets. But thanks to Jaudenes for suggesting it, we were lucky enough to taste the famous Spanish ham. Sliced into slivers, curled between small loaves of dry, crusty bread and coated with fresh tomato, the first

IF YOU GO

Taska Tapas & Paellas

3F Madrid's UBPA Case in Zone E (on the Puxi side)

Price range:

Under 100 yuan per person exclusive to drinks (wines are also available by the glass)

Opening hours:

9:30 am to 9:30 pm daily

taste of Ibérico ham is salty, sweet and nutty.

Hams and bread are best with some wine. According to Jaudenes, moments of fun for Spanish people are defined as "tapas-grazing, ham-snacking and wine-drinking". With all of the restaurant's wines supplied by the 175-year-old Spanish family winery, Gonzales Byass, the relatively new red Finca Constancia is recommended.

Paired with cured ham, Finca Constancia is well structured with a blend of six different types of grapes. Tio Pepe sherry is another good choice, complimenting oysters, anchovies or tuna capriccio.

briefly

French food festival

The 2nd Sud de France Food Festival is being held in Shanghai until June 20. More than 150 chateaux, from the Languedoc Roussillon region of France, join with nearly 200 restaurants, supermarkets and wine stores in Shanghai to bring the best wines from southern France to local consumers' tables. During the food festival, a series of activities, including wine tasting and sales promotions, will be held.

Taste of Norway

The Norway Seafood Restaurant in the Norway Pavilion at Expo 2010 Shanghai celebrated its official opening on May 27, the eve of Norway Pavilion Day. Chefs showcased innovative and mouthwatering recipes using fresh Norwegian seafood, which is air transported into Shanghai twice a week. Executive chef and owner of the restaurant, Bjorn-Tore Furset, said the eatery wants to give guests a taste of Norway, but it will also provide food for Chinese diners in a way they are used to. The opening also marked the start of a five-month campaign by the Norwegian Seafood Export Council to promote Norwegian seafood.

French treat

With its two restaurants nestled on the tree-lined Wulumuqi Road and in the Gubei area, Café Montmartre offers a variety of authentic French cuisine. Its focus on rich and classic dishes ranges from the simple cream of mushroom soup to the robust balance of grilled lamb chops, with business lunch set as a steal. The restaurants are open for lunch and dinner with a weekend brunch at the Hongmei Road location.

Gubei branch: 3911 Hongmei Road, 021-6261-8089

Changle branch: 66-68 Wulumuqi Road M, 021-5158-9377

information

Expanded premises

As the leading serviced office and virtual office provider in Asia, The Executive Centre has now expanded to 30 office centers in 16 Chinese cities. In Shanghai there are four centers located in popular areas in the city:

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CITIC Square, 1168 Nanjing Road W

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Central location

A stone's throw from the nightlife precinct of Xintiandi, the Ascott Huaihai Road Shanghai offers a premier urban lifestyle with its prestigious central location. Close to many restaurants, cafés, bars and boutiques, it is also in a business area for added convenience.

282 Huaihai Road M, 021- 2329-8888

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