

AMIGOS CANTINA

Guest Experience



By KELLY DE LA ROCHA
Contributing Writer

"I don't even like Mexican food," my dad announced, as he enthusiastically polished off his entree at Schuylerville's Amigos Cantina, an eatery with a decidedly Mexican flair.

He and I stopped in for dinner on a recent Tuesday and the place was hopping. It didn't take us long to figure out why.

The restaurant's interior is warm and welcoming. There's a vibrant hue everywhere you look: purple ceiling, a sage green wall, another wall divided into burnt orange and autumn gold sections by a teal shelf holding Latin American folk art. Multicolored chili pepper lights are strung here and there. On one wall hangs a collection of sombreros. The vibe is casual, festive and fun.

We were seated at a corner table topped with a bright, rustic, painting of a barnyard scene. Our silverware was wrapped in soft, faded denim napkins. Round, knit mats were placed in front of us, to protect the table from soon-to-arrive piping hot dishes.

We had a view of one of the restaurant's two busy bars. We decided to skip the alcoholic beverages but took note of the extensive selection of tequila. More than 80 varieties are listed on the menu, along with beer, wine, margaritas and a variety of other specialty drinks.

Our prompt, efficient server brought us complimentary house-made corn tortilla chips and fresh, chunky salsa with a just a hint of spice. We made short work of it while we studied the menu.

It didn't take me long to decide I couldn't live without the large guacamole (\$8.95) appetizer. Tomato-topped, chunky and infused with nice cilantro and lime flavor, it came surrounded by an enormous serving of corn tortilla chips. There was plenty to share, but Dad was too smitten with his Amigos Crab Cakes (\$9.95) appetizer to pay much attention to mine. He was nice enough to share one of his two large crab cakes with me. They were served on a bed of greens, with a side of smoky, spicy chipotle remoulade. The nicely browned cakes were heavy on crab meat and light on other fillers. The remoulade was a delicious accompaniment.



42 Ferry Street • Schuylerville, NY
518-695-9595

at Amigos Cantina

For my entree, I chose the carne asada (\$19.95). The dish featured grilled angus flat iron steak situated on a bed of sauteed bell peppers, onions and portobellos, and topped with smoked poblano chimichurri and pico de gallo. The plate was rounded out with a serving of Spanish rice and well-seasoned black beans. The steak arrived nicely charred on the outside and a perfect pink in the middle. The chimichurri sauce added the perfect tang to the tender meat, and the subtle flavors of the sauteed vegetables enhanced every bite.

Dad ordered the arroz con camarones (\$19.95) – sauteed shrimp served over Spanish rice and topped with cheese. The combination of garlicky shrimp, tomato-infused rice and gooey melted cheese proved to be an excellent flavor and texture combination. The small side salad served in a taco-shell bowl and topped with a sweet vinaigrette was also very good.

There are plenty of other interesting entree options on Amigos Cantina's menu, including the burrito especial (\$15.95). We spied that dish at a neighboring table and it looked like enough for two. The large flour tortilla is stuffed with a choice of chicken or beef, and refried or black beans, along with Spanish rice, onions and cheese. The monstrous masterpiece is topped with a red or green sauce and a citrus crema drizzle, and is served with salad.

Also on the menu are seafood specialties including shrimp enchiladas (\$19.95) and shrimp quesadillas (\$19.95). Vegetarian options include veggie fajitas (\$15.95), spinach enchiladas (\$15.95) and several others.

The eatery also offers soups, salads and tacos.

Planning ahead, I set aside most of the rice and beans on my dinner plate so I would have room for dessert. The Crema Catalana (\$5.95) was calling my name. The chocolate expresso crème brulee did not disappoint. Whipped-cream-topped and dusted with chocolate shavings, it was served cold, with a slight crust and a creamy interior.



Dad's Key lime pie (\$5.95) turned out to be our favorite though, with its custard-like texture, sweet-tart flavor and delicious graham cracker crust.

We left happy and very full. And since Dad's now a Mexican food fan, I'm sure we'll be back for dinner at Amigos Cantina again soon.



Hours: Open Tuesday - Sunday at 4:30pm

www.amigoscantina.net