



ANCIENT CITY APPETITE

BY JOSHUA BAER

ARROYO VINO

218 Camino La Tierra, Santa Fe
Tuesdays through Saturdays, 5:30 to 9:00 PM
arroyovino.com
505 983-2100

From the parking lot, the door to Arroyo Vino, the wine shop, is on your left, at the east side of the portal. The door to Arroyo Vino, the restaurant and wine bar, is on your right. If you go in through the door on your left, you'll walk through the wine shop, which doubles as Arroyo Vino's cellar, on the way to your table. There's something about walking by boxes and racks of good wine that liberates the appetite.

In the dining room, check the blackboards for specials, then take a look at the menu. These are the items you don't want to miss.

Confit Duck Larb (with Bibb lettuce, cilantro, and red onions); \$14. At first, the flavors and textures argue. Then they reach an agreement. I've never tasted anything like this. The Vilmart Champagne Cuvée Rubis Brut Rosé (\$108, from the wine shop) works well with all the appetizers, especially the larb.

Tempura Battered Shitake Mushrooms (with Ponzu dipping sauce); \$12. We ordered this twice, first as an appetizer and later as an entrée. It might be the best thing on the menu.

Cacio e Pepe (homemade tagliatelle with Pecorino Romano and black pepper); \$18, as a first course, \$24, as an entrée. "Cheese and pepper" in Italian. Delicious simplicity. Colin Shane, the chef at Arroyo Vino, knows how to innovate, but his strength is the way he balances innovation with tradition.

Prosciutto Wrapped Norwegian Cod (with baby turnips, scallion potato cake, capers, and *beurre blanc*); \$32. Chef Shane likes a good Riesling. The 2011 Bründlmayer Riesling "Heiligenstein Alte Reben" (\$92) complements his superb Norwegian cod.

Shoyu Marinated Hanger Steak (with crispy charred spring onion, forbidden rice, edamame, and wasabi peanuts); \$34. The best hanger steak I've tasted, ever. To make it last, order the Fingerling Potato Confit (with tarragon aioli and lardons), \$8, as a side dish, and a glass of the 2013 Ca' Rugate Valpolicella, \$13 a glass or \$36 a bottle.

For dessert, I recommend a glass of the 2011 Roûmieu-Lacoste Sauternes, \$15; and no less than four orders of the Exploding Liquid Truffle, \$3 a truffle. The Roûmieu-Lacoste is one of the wine world's best-kept secrets. It's not just a dessert wine. You can drink it with anything. The Exploding Liquid Truffle blurs the line between sustenance and decadence. If you have a sense of adventure, an addictive personality, or both, keep ordering truffles and glasses of the Roûmieu-Lacoste until somebody tells you to stop.

Photograph by Douglas Merriam, courtesy of Arroyo Vino. Ancient City Appetite recommends places to eat, in and out of Santa Fe. Send favorites to places@ancientcityappetite.com.