

BY **THÉRÈSE MARGOLIS**
The News

**Eclectic
Epicure**

J&G Grill doesn't make your average pizza. Instead of stretchy mozzarella cheese and oregano-packed tomato paste, the new casual, contemporary American-Asian fusion restaurant inside the premises of the St. Regis Hotel building in Colonia Cuauhtémoc layers its stone-baked crispy pizza crusts with paper-thin slices of avocado and extra virgin olive oil infused with slivers of jalapeño, fresh-cut cilantro and lime juice.

Or you can try the carpaccio pizza, with super-thin slices of uncooked Angus beef generously laden with arugula and parmesan cheese in a sumptuous vinaigrette of olive oil and lemon juice.

"We try to serve creative, sophisticated dishes which are enticing but not too over-the-top," explained J&G's head chef Maycoll Calderón.

"And our ingredients are always fresh, never frozen, never reheated and, as much as possible, locally sourced."

The new Mexico City restaurant is the first overseas J&G subsidiary of the world-renowned, Michelin-starred chef and restaurateur Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Culinary Concepts Hospitality Group's collection (think Vong restaurant in New York City, Market in Boston, Spice Market in Atlanta and Doha, Fern in Puerto Rico and, of course, J&G, with branches in Washington, DC, Scottsdale, Arizona, and Bal Harbour, Florida).

The unique culinary concept of J&G is to offer guests an informal and comfortable yet still elegant dining experience with the highest quality meats and freshest seafood personally prepared to order with bold condiments and unexpected seasonings.

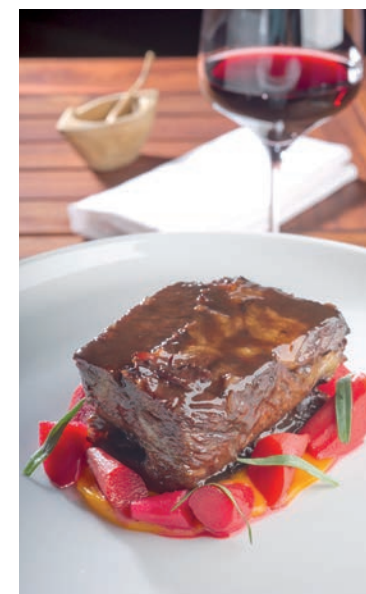
"We always try to incorporate local ingredients and flavors," said Calderón.

"We want to be local in content and global in appeal."

The J&G menu reflects that ambition with unanticipated offerings such as raw tuna strips marinated in chopped radish and fresh ginger, a definite eye-opening, mouth-shocking delight of spicy passion and bitter,



The J&G lobby has a fantastic view of the Diana Fountain.



Glazed beef ribs

PHOTOS COURTESY OF J&G

MORE

J&G Grill

INFO

- The new J&G Grill is located on the first floor of the St. Regis Hotel building at Paseo de la Reforma 439, across from the Diana Fountain, in Colonia Cuauhtémoc (tel. 5228-1800).
- The restaurant is open year-round, every day from 1 p.m. to 11 p.m.
- Valet parking is available in the hotel.

SURPRISING combinations, unanticipated DELIGHTS

savory tang.

J&G's not-so-traditional fried calamari are enlivened with a blend of basil salt and lime emulsion, and the whole shrimp appetizers are swathed in a succulently surprising bacon, avocado and papaya mustard wrap.

Even the pate de foie gras is magically transformed into a tantalizing frothy brulé crowned with roasted strawberries and balsamic vinaigrette.

The main course dishes are no less astonishing, and include a to-die-for

warm shrimp salad with avocado and enoki mushrooms drenched in a luxurious champagne dressing.

There is also a pork chop with light chilies and mint confetti and salmon in Japanese pea gravy with truffles.

Don't expect the J&G hamburger to be a ho-hum slab of grilled beef with cheddar and mustard.

Chef Calderón prefers to jazz up this American classic with French brie cheese and black truffle mayonnaise.

The grilled meat and seafood

options run the gamut from Baja California grouper and red snapper to bone-in prime New York strip, with a choice of seven assertive sauces such as miso and mustard, sweet-and-sour chillie, champagne butter and the J&G's signature steak sauce, made from 32 ingredients including molasses, tomato paste, tamarind concentrate, thyme leaves, anise, ground cloves, orange zest and chipotle peppers.

If you still want dessert (and believe

me, at J&G you will want to leave room for that sinful little delight), try the warm, melt-in-your-mouth chocolate cake or the caramel ice cream sundae with Cracker Jack-style caramel corn sprinkled on top.

The restaurant's décor is equally beguiling, with giant, carved wooden doors, airy spacing, checkered Brazilian wood tables and plush leather seats surrounded by a high ceilings and a luminous view of Avenida Reforma.

J&G has an impressive selection of national and international wines and a gifted wine steward who will recommend some extraordinarily tasty vinos that are sure to be as surprising and pleasing to the palate as the items on the restaurant's bill of fare.



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