

Outword's Appetizer Crawl

photos by
Charles Peer

Sometimes, when you are out with friends after work, you need a little something to nibble on while you delicately sip on a cool beverage. So, the *Outword* staff thought it might be fun to bring you a quick run-down of a couple of places where we have sampled their selection of appetizers. Not only was it fun, but we came across some really great food. Here are some notes on what we found.

Zocalo

Zocalo is known throughout Sacramento for its amazing atmosphere and its delicious and unique Mexican food. There always seems to be lots of people there - all being very festive.

Guacamole - (Avocados, tomatoes, jalapenos, cilantro and lime juice. \$6.50) Some of the best in town, fresh & chunky, generous portion, love the cucumber chips stuck in it

Tropical Ensaladas - (Fresh strawberries, jicama, pineapple on a bed of baby spinach and orange vinaigrette dressing topped with crispy corn tortilla strips. \$8) Very fresh mix of fruit - a great burst of flavor. This would be a great start to any meal!

Queso Fundido - (Melted cheese with white wine, chorizo and Jalapeno, carrots and potatoes baked casserole style and served with mini-corn tortillas. \$9) This dish comes to your table piping hot, with the cheese all melted. Swirl the chorizo in right away, it brightens the flavor of this cheese and vegetable mix. Dig into this one fast, while it is still hot

Empanadas - Masa pies stuffed with chorizo, potato, black beans and vegetables served with a spicy avocado cream and aioli sauce. \$8) The crust and filling were very tasty and the aioli sauce was wonderful, with a nice smooth flavor

Arrachero Nachos - (Arrachero steak, compound cheese sauce, guacamole and diced avocado served over homemade tortilla chips. \$8.50) Light years above the typical "yellow cheese" nachos, this is a great combination of ingredients that let's each shine through

Zocalo is located at 1801 Capitol Ave., they can be reached at 916-441-0303

L Wine Lounge & Urban Kitchen

New to the Midtown area, the L Wine Lounge looks like someplace that only New Yorkers would be able to enjoy. The modern design, however, is just the beginning of the sensory titillation in store for you.

Three Cheese Plate - (Chef's selection of three cheeses, ours were Pyranese Vache, a Roaring 40s Blue Cheese and Triple Cream Cow's Cheese, served with an apricot and fig compote, honeycomb, olives, melon, roasted almonds and thinly sliced baguette, \$15) Spectacular, a feast for the eyes as well as the palate, a wonderful mixture of flavors and textures



Zocalo



L Wine Lounge

Gnudi - (Ricotta cheese dumplings, with sautéed veggies, mushrooms and garlic. \$9) Delicately sautéed and refreshingly light and a great mix of melt-in-your-mouth flavors

L Wine Lounge And Urban Kitchen is located at 1801 L St., they can be reached at 916-443-6970 or Lwinelounge.com

Look for a full dinner review in an upcoming issue!

Pronto

Just what Midtown needed. An inexpensive Italian restaurant that doesn't have seating for 400. Its well-rounded menu is sure to please just about everyone, and the prices will put a smile on your face.

Fagioli - (Tuscan white bean soup with bacon, \$5.75/\$2.95) white bean soup, lots of ingredients, could use a bit more flavor

Zucchini Fritti - (Lightly breaded and fried zucchini strips served with sun dried tomato aioli, \$4.25) Thin strips. Not greasy. Fresh zucchinis, Aioli was zesty, not heavy

Tomato Gorgonzola Soup - (Hearty vine ripe tomato bread soup, \$5.75/\$2.95) Thick, hearty and zesty, lots of flavor

Grilled Cheese Soup Dippers - (Fontina, cheddar and smoked mozzarella, \$2.95) Three cheeses and grilled bread, what's not to love?

Polenta Fries - (Served with a balsamic ketchup, \$4.25) The Balsamic ketchup is a bit spicy, has a very sweet flavor. We felt these polenta fries were made to be dipped in the Tomato Gorgonzola soup

Farmer's Market Salad - Rotisserie chicken with mixed greens, arugula, sweet corn, avocado, tomato, dates, almonds and goat cheese tossed with a citrus tarragon dressing, \$8.75) Great summer lunch, fresh, light and very tasty.

Pronto is located at 16th & O Sts., they can be reached at 916-444-5850 or ProntoGo.com



Pronto

Dragonfly

Dragonfly has long been one of our favorites, so we thought we would include it here, but order things off the menu we don't normally get. With a little help from the chef, I think we found some new faves.

BBQ Albacore

(Grilled tuna in a miso garlic aioli, ponzu and sweet onions. \$13.50) This is Dragonfly's best selling appetizer, and despite our many trips to the restaurant, this is the first time we have tried it - it is our new favorite! It is rich and flavorful and the caramelized onions are a perfect compliment

Crab Cakes - (Real snow crab with ponzu and garlic miso on a bed of arugula. \$9.95) Delightful, with a light flaky crust, and you will never ask "Where's the crab?" with these delights that went perfectly with the ponzu

Vietnamese Spring Rolls - (Shrimp, pork, rice noodles, vegetables and mint with a sweet chili dipping sauce. \$7.50) Cool, crisp and refreshing with a good mixture of flavors and a chili sauce that is wonderfully spicy but not too hot.

Edamame - (Soy beans lightly salted. \$5) A generous portion of an old standby served nice and warm with just a healthy hint of salt.



Dragonfly

Chicken Lettuce Wrap - (Chicken, onions, water chestnuts, mushrooms and rice sticks. \$7.95) The fresh chicken filling and large chunks of veggies were masterfully blended with a light sauce. The plum sauce that was served with them was quite flavorful and a nice addition

Dragonfly is located at 1809 Capitol Ave., they can be reached at 916-498-9200 or www.DragonFlySac.com