



April 17, 2012

HOLA, amigos! We're excited about our event at Cantina Laredo in Midtown Crossing!

The invitation to the "Cinco de Mayo" event on May 18 is out -- and we hope you plan to attend. Following is some more information on the handcrafted cuisine and the carefully selected wines for the fiesta! If you haven't already, make your reservations soon!

In our private party room, we will start with **Guacamole**. This house specialty will be prepared for us "tableside" and served with fresh warm corn chips and **Fire Roasted Salsas**, while we sip our **Cinco Rita**: Giro Silver Tequila by Sauza, Hornitos, Herradura and Cazadores Silver Tequilas with Cointreau, fresh lime juice and agave nectar. These are "top-shelf" tequilas paired with fresh ingredients for a premium cocktail to kick off the evening.

At about 7:00, we will all sit down to the festive table to enjoy our **Ensalada de Mango**: Fresh Mango with jicama, seasoned pumpkin seeds, grapes, mint and queso fresco with a honey vinaigrette. **Jicama** is a crispy, sweet edible root, actually a legume. **Queso Fresco** translates to "fresh cheese," and is a Mexican cheese with great flavor. Slightly salty, with a mild, tangy taste similar to farmer's cheese. Like other fresh cheeses, queso fresco is lower in fat and sodium (despite its salty flavor) than aged cheeses. The wine, **Hendry Albariño 2010**, is a departure from the usual Sauvignon Blanc-salad pairing. Albariño is an underappreciated food-friendly varietal that originated in Spain. Like its stylistic cousin Sauvignon Blanc, it is best enjoyed young.

Our succulent entrée will be **Carnitas**, braised pork shanks topped with chipotle-wine sauce. Cantina Laredo's carnitas are praised for their tenderness (not to mention the healthy portion size). We will pair it with **Small Vines Pinot Noir 2008**. Steven Tanzer rates this wine a 90, but we chose it for its "texture" to hold up to the chipotle wine sauce and smoothness for drinkability.

We know many will look forward to the warm **Mexican Brownie** with pecans and walnuts served with Vanilla ice cream. While this brownie will be a special treat, the wine pairing is truly saving the best for last. The **Ca' Togni 2005** RP 94 is not only rated, but rare. Annual production rarely exceeds a single barrel of 500 half bottles. Each bottle is numbered. Said Robert Parker of this wine: "A wonderful curiosity, the 2005 Ca Togni must be tasted to be believed. The explosive aromatics and sweet but never cloying flavors are quite special as well as unusual. I've never met anyone who didn't love this cuvee and I'm glad that Philip Togni continues to produce it, even if there are only tiny quantities available." Ca' Togni is inspired by Constantia, the great South African wine of the 19th century. It is made from Togni's planting of the rare table grape Black Hamburgh, the only one to their knowledge in Napa County.

Hope to see you there! Olé!

-Sandy Lemke and Mary Kay Young