

PRESS RELEASE

AMARANTA COCINA MEXICANA: AUTHENTIC MEXICAN CUISINE - Restaurant Opens in Westfield Topanga -

CANOGA PARK, Calif., April 19, 2007 – When it opens its doors in Westfield Topanga on May 18, it will be as if **Amaranta Cocina Mexicana** invites guests into an authentic Mexican kitchen. Like the colorful, versatile and historical *amaranth* plant for which it is named, Amaranta Cocina Mexicana serves flavorful, diverse dishes that showcase the traditional Mexican way of cooking.

“Many Americans think ‘Tex-Mex’ is real Mexican food,” says Resmex group co- founder Sylvia Rallo. “We want people to experience what is true Mexican cuisine. Amaranta Cocina Mexicana does not try to invent or modernize Mexican cuisine, but rather to celebrate, respect and preserve its originality.”

The menu, conceived by Sylvia Rallo, emphasizes traditional dishes and rich flavors that are as diverse as the many regions of Mexico. They combine ingredients, textures, aromas and colors that emanate from a traditional Mexican kitchen with preparations that are sometimes simple, and other times more involved. Regardless, the results, are extraordinary and “worthy subjects of the conversations remembering great occasions.”

Such effort and thoughtfulness is readily apparent in Amaranta’s menu: Starters include the mouthwatering *Guacamole*, made fresh at the table with jalapeno, white onion, tomato, cilantro and lime juice, served with hand-made corn tortillas, or the exceptional *Tamales*, made with chicken and traditional *tomatillo* and *mole poblano* sauces, served with refried black beans. Main dishes continue this culinary adventure of true Mexican cuisine, with selections like the *Tacos de Pescado al Pastor*, “al pastor” adobe-marinated grilled white fish and pineapple, served with habanero salsa, white onion, fresh cilantro and hand-made corn tortillas, or the more traditional *Enchiladas Amaranta*, tender shredded pork, flour tortillas, *molcajete* salsa, sour cream, fresh Mexican cheese, and cilantro, served with Mexican rice and refried black beans. Familiar foods of everyday Mexico share the menu with more elaborate ones; diners can choose from selections like *tostadas* and *flautas* or ones like the *tamales* or *pozole*. Dinner prices range from \$3-\$10 for appetizers and \$11-\$18 for entrees.

Complementing this deceptively simple menu are over 400 selections of tequila, all of which are prominently displayed in the restaurant’s bar. Right alongside this lengthy list is an array of specialty cocktails, including hand-shaken margaritas made with fresh fruit and Amaranta’s very own refreshing *mojito*.

Simple Richness

Like its menu, at first glance, the interior of Amaranta Cocina Mexicana seems simple, minimal. A second look begins to reveal a serenity and spaciousness that comes from richness and complexity of color and texture as the source of its

intimate setting. The first collaboration between Greg Roth of Los Angeles' Gregory Roth Design and Chuck Thompson of Larkspur, Calif.'s Thompson Planning & Design, Amaranta is at once a refined and elegant expression of "Mexico" and a lively, comfortable place. Attention to details, like hand-blown silvered-glass fixtures and the inlaid pebble floors, combines with the grandness of expansive planes of vibrant colors and rustic furnishings to create an inviting yet sophisticated ambiance. Shared with the warm hospitality of Amaranta's staff, the restaurant succeeds in its promise to "rekindle the memory, the heritage and the traditions of our beloved Mexico."

Amaranta To-Go

In addition to the restaurant and private dining room, Amaranta features a separate to-go store, allowing diners to order the same great menu items or pre-packaged foods for take-out. Ranging from chips and salsas to meal-sized portions of favorites like *Mole Poblano* and *Chili Relleno*, the to-go menu makes an excellent alternative for those who don't feel like cooking at home but want something fast, fresh and truly authentic. Amaranta's take-out store also offers Mexican candies, sodas and fresh aqua frescas, along with retail items like candleholders, traditional stone *molcajetes*, table ware and an evolving selection of regional Mexican cookbooks. For parties and events, with at least 24-hour notice, Amaranta can create a wonderful selection of party platters for customers to pick up and take to their next social or business event.

Amaranth

Amaranta's name comes from the highly nutritious grain, *amaranth*, once a staple in the diet of the ancient Aztecs, who called it "huautli." Used in indigenous religious ceremonies, the sacred amaranth was banned by the conquering Spaniards, resulting in near disappearance from Mexico. A small number of communities continued to grow this beautifully colorful plant. Today, among its many uses, amaranth grains are toasted, much like popcorn, and then mixed with honey, molasses, chocolate or puffed rice to make the Mexican confection, *alegria*, which translates literally to "joy" or "happiness."

Amaranta Cocina Mexicana is the first southern California venture for Eduardo and Sylvia Rallo's **Resmex**, the owner-operators of San Francisco's successful Colibrí Mexican Bistro and the popular Consuelo and Thea Mediterranean restaurants in San Jose's Santana Row. Located in the recently renovated Topanga Westfield Shopping Centre at 6600 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Suite 1029 in Canoga Park, Calif., 93103, Amaranta is open every day from 11:30 a.m. The restaurant closes at 9 p.m. on Sunday and Monday, 10 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday, 11 p.m. on Thursday, and 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday. For more information and to make reservations, please call **Amaranta Cocina Mexicana** at 818.610.3599 or visit our website at AmarantaRestaurant.com. To contact Amaranta's To-Go Store, please call 818.992.7512.