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the dish

College grub ain't what it used to be

By [Bill Husted](#)
 Denver Post Columnist



Friday, February 28, 2003 - Ummmmmm. Mystery mound. That's what I ate in college. And look how healthy I am!

But today's students are demanding more, says CEO Lauren Bell of Wild Sage, a fast-casual restaurant-dining room that opened last month on the campus of Colorado College in Colorado Springs.

Wild Sage is at the forefront of a new age in student dining - "natural fare with flair."

The food is a long way from McConaughy Dining Hall at my old school. Eighty percent of all menu items are organic, and icons identify items as dairy-free, lowfat, vegan or vegetarian, along with a complete nutritional analysis. Students at CC can go to Wild Sage as part of their pre-paid meal plan.

Bell says there is an "incredible demand" for this kind of food on campus.

"Students have been complaining about bad college food since the beginning of the last century," she says. "We serve 'clean cuisine,' and today's students are well-versed on wellness, diet and nutrition. Fifteen percent of college students are vegetarians, and they embrace 'veggie' values."

I didn't dare ask.

Finally, these kids can get a good healthy meal before they step outside to smoke their organic American Spirit cigarettes.

Bell hopes to roll out this college dining concept in partnership with Sodexo, a giant multinational food service company that understands "veggie values."

Dig in

Cafe Paradiso is a straight-forward little restaurant in Cherry Creek North with a menu that reflects the intimate setting. And it's open, despite a recent Post story to the contrary. Here's a peek:

Fried calamari, \$7.95; fried artichoke hearts, \$6.95; scallops scampi, \$9.95; Caesar salad for two, \$8.95.

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Cioppino, \$26.95; scallops or shrimp scampi, \$24.95/\$27.95; grilled salmon, \$19.95; Chicken fontina, \$20.95; chicken cacciatore, \$18.95; Italian sausage parmigiana, \$19.95; eggplant parmigiana, \$18.95.

To serve

Former Denver Post restaurant critic Bill St. John is still writing about food. He's a longtime columnist for Wine & Spirits magazine - and this month he salutes Mizuna waiter Paul Attardi.

"He serves the diners under his care with the utmost grace, so much so that they notice little at all," St. John writes.

That's the secret of great service. Be invisible yet always there.

"You're always aware of bad service," says Attardi, "but good service, you should not know it's there."

To make it work, Attardi stays "two or three bites ahead of his tables."

So next time you're in Mizuna and have a perfect meal, and you can't exactly put your finger on what happened, it was probably Attardi.

Just desserts

Try Cava Greens at Republic Plaza food court - serving made-to-order fresh salads. The ingredients are top-notch: Belgium endive, gorgonzola, roasted beets, avocado, Boston bibb lettuce. The \$8-per-pound price reflects it (add a piece of chicken and your salad can easily top \$8). But Cava Greens serves some of the best food on the 16th Street Mall ... Great cooking classes on the schedule at the Seasoned Chef Cooking School, \$45 per class. Monday, Luca d'Italia's Frank Bonnano; Thursday, Painted Bench's Steve Rohs; March 11, Jax Fish House's Sheila Lucero; March 13, Tuscany's Christopher Cina; March 17, Adegas's Bryan Moscatello; March 27, the Fort's David Woolley and Sam Arnold ... Last course: "I love everything that's old: Old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine." Oliver Goldsmith

Bill Husted's Dish column appears Fridays in Weekend Entertainment, and his gossip column runs Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday on page 2 of Scene. Reach him at 303-820-1486 or bhusted@denverpost.com

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