

Little Mexican big on authenticity

madam
lush

JANE CORNES

I gave up eating at Mexican restaurants for the sake of my thighs.

All that chile con queso dip, sour cream and melted cheese wasn't the place a gal with size 12 aspirations needed to be.

Enter B1 and B2, a couple of fellow food obsessives, who tell me about That Little Mexican Place (TLMP) in North Perth.

The Bs say TLMP serves real Mexican food and even offer to bring the wine. The thighs wobble their tacit approval. I book.

Most of the stuff we think of as Mexican is more properly called Tex-Mex, a gringo-fuelled bastardisation of Mexico's cultural heritage.

Dining at TLMP joyfully recalibrates this expectation. Apart from a couple of dips, the menu is full of stuff I've never seen.

Owner-chef Gavin Bower travelled extensively



■ A steamed cornmeal tamale is stuffed with chicken and served with a dark sauce of dried chillies and chocolate.

throughout Mexico before opening TLMP and goes to admirable lengths to offer authentic fare.

Typical of his efforts are a couple of traditional Mexican drinks. Horchata (\$4) is made from rice and almond milk,

while atole (\$3.50) is a hot, sweet corn gruel that tastes like a cross between Horlicks and polenta. Stop grimacing. It's delicious.

Most of what's on offer is fairly rustic, yet B2's starter of scallop and tuna ceviche

(\$15.50) reeks of fine diner finesse.

Lightly-marinated scallop flesh and thin slivers of fish shimmy on the tongue with hints of lemon, red onion and small drizzles of chile sauce.

More substantial is the tamale de pollo (\$8.50), a steamed cornmeal tamale stuffed with a little chicken. With it comes mole negro; a smooth, sinfully dark sauce of dried chillies and chocolate.

The mains are equally *fascinante*. All are served with corn tortillas, rice and refried beans, so you don't need to spend extra dosh on sides.

I particularly like mine, a roasted poblano pepper stuffed with shredded pork served with toasted walnuts and sour cream (\$18).

B1's slow-braised lamb wrapped in a flour tortilla is hearty, well-cooked and generous.

TLMP also offers a ripper non-alcoholic margherita (\$6), served in a vast, chunky fishpond of a martini glass rimmed with salt.

Stir in some BYO tequila and you'll be cactus in no time.

at a GLANCE





■ **That Little Mexican Place**

382 Fitzgerald Street, North Perth.
Phone: 9227 5755

■ **opening times**

noon to 10pm Mon-Thurs, noon-midnight
Fri-Sat, 9am-10pm Sun.

■ **rating**

food 
service 
ambience 
value for money 

■ **style** - Mexican

■ **wine** - BYO

■ **owner** - Gavin Bower

■ **chef** - Gavin Bower

■ **feel** - feel

■ **wheelchair access** - access to the loos is fine but there's a step up at the entrance.

■ **cost** - Entree \$8.50-\$15.50

Main \$21-\$29
Desserts \$12

■ **all in all** - Authentic Mexican BYO offering full-flavoured fare and good value for money.

The TIMEOUT food reviewer visits restaurants unannounced and pays for meals and drinks.