

# Long Island Press

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## EATER'S DIGEST

# Mexi-Can Do

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### HUNTINGTON'S BESITO BREAKS THE MOLD



*To use a little slang, Huntington's Besito is Spanish fly.*

Impatient hopefuls dropping into Besito in Huntington without reservations are first greeted with "Hola" (from a non-Spanish-speaking hostess), then, after being informed of an hour wait, are directed down the street to Blue Honu. I wondered if Blue Honu is filled, do they suggest the American Burger Company?

All three are part of John Tunney's success story on New York Avenue, which was a culinary dead zone for the most part

In the meantime, you can swill cold fruit-filled glasses of sangria or go for high-end tequila. On the flip side of the food menu is a list dividing drinks into shooters (with a \$1 Sangrita chaser), sippers (aged up to a year) and savours (aged in oak barrels for a year and more). Sure there's Patrón, but there's also Grand Patrón Platinum for \$35 a shot and a savour of Don Julio Real for \$45.

The interior, dimly lit with electric candles on tables and masklike sconces,

until Honu exploded on the scene. Tunney has the brash vision to introduce upscale Mexican dining—something without precedent on Long Island—on the same road with the most authentic Mexican food on LI, including Oaxaca and the grocery/café Fonda Coyoacan. There's even the 'rita and fajita joint, Pancho Villa's, two blocks down.

With doors open to the street and a lively bar upfront, this is a great summer gathering place, rain or shine. But summer heat notwithstanding, do not miss the Sopa de Tortilla (\$8). This chicken stew that masquerades as a soup is loaded with shredded poultry, chunks of avocado, mild chili, bits of tortilla chips and is sprinkled with something called Chihuahua cheese. It announces that this menu has something different.

Ensalada de Casa (\$6), with mango and jicama on baby field greens in a citrus vinaigrette, is a lighter and cooler alternative. Many tables opt for the show-stopping Guacamole en Molcajete (\$10), made table-side with much flourish. A plate of Tacos Asado de Pescado (\$20), featuring grilled mahi mahi filets, is a do-it-yourself project for the diner but worth the extra work. Assemble your meal from lettuce, tomato and hot soft tortillas.

reveals stone walls and a wooden-stick ceiling. The room is divided by that busy bar and has large booths (à la Honu) and two levels. A conscious decision has been made to set Besito apart by not having taco chips on the table. But they came with the guacamole and the Ceviche (\$12) we ordered on a subsequent night.

Camarones Ajillo con Platanos (\$24) and Pescado Enchipotado (\$22) were both more tropical or Central American than Mexican. The shrimp were perfectly grilled, surrounded by pureed plantains, and the grouper with avocado salsa and roasted corn was another good option. These portions, though, were a bit daintier than the traditional Mexican tacos and enchiladas, even with the white rice and refried beans. The verbal dessert menu mostly revolves around good flan with berries and chocolate cake, but if you're lucky your waiter may bring you a couple of complimentary churros in a bag. Tunney knows how to keep people happy, and he makes sure his very professional waitstaff does, too. 🍷

#### **Besito**

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