

Paradiso 37 - Taste of the Americas: A Dining Review

by Cheryl Pendry, *PassPorter Featured Columnist*

I think it's important to lay my cards on the table at an early stage here. When I heard that the latest addition to the dining options at Pleasure Island, Paradiso 37, was going to be based on the diverse food of North, Central, and South America, I wasn't sure whether it was somewhere for me or not. The style of cooking isn't something that does much for me, but life's about trying new things out, so in that spirit, I made a reservation for the place.

The first thing to know is that you can't make a reservation through Disney itself. Paradiso 37 isn't on the Advanced Dining Reservation scheme, but you can reserve it through [Open Table](#), which is exactly what I did. Our booking was for lunch and when we walked in, I was immediately taken by the atmosphere of this place. It's exceptionally light, which is surprisingly, because all the furniture inside is very dark, but the light still streams in through the huge glass windows that they have here. The colour scheme is a very odd one, with accents of purple, green and yellow. Certainly not colours I'd naturally put together, but it does work.

The first thing we considered were drinks and although none of us went for any alcoholic offerings, you can get a mangled margarita, made up of frozen Sauza margarita and frozen red sangria. In case you're wondering where Paradiso 37 got its name from, perhaps the clue is that they have a specially selected list of 37 tequilas that are on display in a stunning tequila bar. Something that all beer lovers will love to hear, especially in the hot summer months that Florida is famed for, is that this restaurant claims to serve the world's coldest draft beer. They believe, at just 29 degrees Fahrenheit, it's too cold even to hold!

We set about our appetisers and these, we really couldn't fault. There's a good selection, including North American corn dogs, mac and cheese bites, and shrimp cocktail, presumably for the less adventurous eaters in your party. I opted for the salsa trio, as I was desperate to try the pineapple salsa, and it was beautiful. The tomatillo salsa verde wasn't bad, but the fire roasted salsa diablo, as the name suggests, was too hot for my tastes.

I was also able to sample the Caribbean crab and fish fritters, and they were excellent, too. Other options included a Mexican dipping trio consisting of guacamole, chili con carne, and spinach queso dip, Central American crazy corn, basically fire-roasted corn-on-the-cob with a

spicy yellow pepper sauce and cheeses, and chorizo and beef skewers.

The menu pleasantly surprised me at first glance, as it had a lot for a non-meat eater. It's set out in a really clever way, showing you where the various dishes come from, with speciality offerings including quesadillas from Argentina, the Paradiso 37 queso from Mexico, and the skewered shrimp and jicama orange salad from Venezuela.

My eye was immediately caught by one of those speciality offerings, this one from South America, which was the southern fish fry -- scallops, shrimps and the catch of the day with a seasoned meal coating. When they said it was piled high with fries, they weren't kidding. I was bowled over by the size of the portion that arrived in front of me and knew instantly that there was no way that I could ever finish it. Sadly, what they failed to mention on the menu was that it had a tang to it and that made it too hot for me to eat, which was a great shame.

Other options include the Columbian-style whole crispy hen, which was a tiny bird and looked very funny when it arrived. Sadly it didn't seem to live up to its appearance from the comments I heard about it. For those, who like me, are less sure about this style of cuisine, there are various salads to choose from and also burgers, burritos, and tacos.

It does look like there's a nice selection of desserts as well, including a chocolate stack, made up of chocolate cake and chocolate mousse, and a churros and sopapillos combo, dusted with cinnamon sugar. Perhaps the one that sounded the weirdest to me was the tres leches, white cake soaked in sweet milk and layered with fresh strawberry mousse, topped with meringue, and served with fresh fruit.

I would've loved to have sampled at least one of these great sounding items, but sadly, our meal didn't work out that way. I'm not quite sure what happened, but we saw less and less of our server as the meal wore on and we were never actually offered dessert, which was a shame. In the end, we had waited so long, fortunately chatting with our friends all the while, so we didn't notice too much, that we gave up and asked for the bill.

All in all, I felt that this place has potential. It delivered on the atmosphere and the appetisers we sampled, but the entrees were somewhat disappointing and the service was seriously lacking. It's a good start and it's nice to see a restaurant at Disney with some distinctly different offerings, a very pleasant change from recent years, but there's still some work to be done there.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to

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travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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