

New bistro offers an array of food

by Damian Boudrau

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NOW OPEN. William Mueller owns and operates Babblin' Babs Bistro in Tacoma's Proctor District. (PHOTO BY HARALD HOHENDORF)

Promising a world of flavor in every bite, Babblin' Babs Bistro combines a fun, urban atmosphere and memorable food with owners who want to treat eaters to a unique experience.

Babblin' Babs opened Aug. 5 in Tacoma's Proctor District. William Mueller, along with his wife Shannon, own and operate the bistro, which features an interesting take on a number of foods from around the world.

"Babblin' Bab's is a culinary passport to taste the world," William Mueller said. The bistro, named after Mueller's mother, even has an underlying fictionalized story behind it – Babs, who loved to travel the world, brought back big and bold herb blends from the places she visited. In turn, those blends were integrated and infused into the food served at the bistro. All the natural herb blends are MSG, nitrate and anti-caking chemical free. The result: unique, flavorful dishes, heavy on taste and free of additives.

Unique is an understatement. How about a lavender-flavored latte?

At Babs, you can get one made with completely organic ingredients, including privately hand-blended coffee from Tacoma-based Valhalla coffee company (8-ounce, \$2.50; 16-ounce, \$3.00). Most of the items served at Babblin' Babs are organic and contain local ingredients.

From chocolate-dipped cheesecake-on-a-stick (\$5), to a breakfast sandwich made with French Jambon ham, New York white cheddar cheese and egg, served on freshly-baked organic bread (\$7.95), eaters can find just about anything to satisfy even the biggest craving for a fine-quality, delicious meal.

"I love to play with texture," Mueller said, "to create innovative, incredible food."

The look at the bistro is innovative as well. With furniture and interior design from Proctor-based home furnishing and design company Panache, Babblin' Bab's theme is apparent: Travel. Even a few of the chairs have an interesting history – two were rescued from a chicken eatery that once existed at Knotsberry Farm in Los Angeles.

Once the food arrives, however, another underlying theme becomes clear – the celebration of food, using spices and ingredients to satisfy and sometimes even surprise visitors with a melding of flavors.

"I love to watch the look of shock on somebody's face when they experience a new taste," said Mueller, who is the chef at Babblin' Babs. He writes his own recipes and personally prepares every dish, including a number of sides like French potato salad, Moroccan Couscous, and Orzo with cucumber and bell pepper (free side with sandwich purchase, or \$2.95 without). Customers can also pair up their meals with a large selection of sodas from around the world. The bistro also serves the original versions of many old-time favorite American sodas.

Before opening the bistro, the Mueller's ran Dinner Solutions in the same space. The idea for Dinner Solutions was to allow people to prepare meals to take home and cook. The Mueller's realized that people were often too busy to prepare the meals, so they decided to discontinue the self-preparation aspect. Though, a portion of the idea behind Dinner Solutions still exists. William Mueller prepares ready-to-cook entrees for customers (costs vary, visit www.dinnersolutions.net for more information). The bistro also provides a number of party platters (costs vary).

Babblin' Babs Bistro, "A Unique Urban Eatery," is located at 2724

N. Proctor St. in Tacoma. The bistro is open from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. For more information call (253) 761-9099.