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Burrito Taste Test

Seven newshounds take on ten burritos

By Cathy Tyson



With Cinco de Mayo just around the corner, Lamorinda Weekly staffers decided to have an informal burrito taste test to inform local burrito connoisseurs about the best choices around. There are few eateries around here at which, for under \$7, a very filling, reasonably healthy hand-held meal can be found. Who knew that there are ten take-out options in the immediate area?

Devotees may have noticed the disappearance of Una Mas and High Tech Burrito. Balazo took over the former, located next to Peet's coffee; the latter just couldn't sell enough to keep the doors open. Yet another victim of the Theater Square curse.

We tried to judge similar basic chicken burritos that for the

most part came with rice, beans, salsa, chicken and occasionally guacamole. Of course there were variations depending on the shop. For instance Baja Fresh's Ultimo burrito comes with grilled veggies, 360 Gourmet Burrito's Mexican, Signature and their 360 version all come with romaine lettuce, which lends an interesting crunch but is not to everyone's liking. At Numero Uno, their Super Giant Pollo Asado comes with a generous dollop of guacamole.

If a cold cerveza is necessary to celebrate what's affectionately sometimes called "Drinko de Mayo" only at Numero Uno, Maya, Balazo, El Jarro and La Cocina could thirsty patrons purchase a beer.

Lafayette has seven shops, all on Mt. Diablo Boulevard; one was clearly a winner with Acalanes students. Casa Gourmet, across from Ace Hardware and the car wash has a consistent crowd of afternoon snarfers. For \$5.90 you get a good sized burrito with lots of fresh ingredients and cilantro.

Although we are not professional tasters, it was clear that reporters and staff, who shall remain

nameless, definitely had personal preferences. Comments on the Baja Fresh burrito ranged from "good spice" to "bland" to "wanted to finish this one first." Go figure.

Because of the number of samples, hungry employees spread the tastings over the course of two weekly editorial meetings. By the last sample, we were calling it the burrito de muerte – burrito of death. El Jarro and Balazo tied for first, second place was all over the map with no clear winner; a testament to personal preference. The dubious honor of last place surprised no one – Taco Bell.

Lafayette

360 Gourmet Burrito

3655 Mt. Diablo (near Trader Joes)

Baja Fresh

3594 Mt. Diablo (near Panda Express)

Balazo

3518 Mt. Diablo (between Peet's & Jamba Juice)

Casa Gourmet

3322 Mt. Diablo (across from the car wash)

El Jarro

3563 Mt. Diablo

(next to Postino, yellow umbrellas out front)

Numero Uno

3616 Mt. Diablo (across from Diablo foods)

Taco Bell

3510 Mt. Diablo (at First Street)

Orinda

La Cocina

23 Orinda Way (across from the Library)

Maya

74 Moraga Way (next to Orinda Nation's)

Moraga

Mucho Wraps

1375 Moraga Way (adjacent to the Safeway)