

CHICAGO **AVENUE**

DOWN!
O BEARS
RBACK
AY
TLER

**FASHION MEETS
ART AT THE
MODERN WING**

STYLE INSIDERS
SHARE THEIR
SECRETS

PLUS, CONTRIBUTORS

IN GOOD TASTE

Callo ceviche with bay scallops, watermelon, key lime-habanero broth and epazote



MEXED OUT

Make a break for the border with New York import Mercadito.

STILL DON'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE between Tex-Mex and the real thing? Your list of excuses has just gotten shorter with the arrival of Mercadito. The creation of Alfredo, Patricio and Felipe Sandoval (the brothers of acclaimed chef Richard Sandoval), the new Kinzie Street restaurant is a cousin of their three New York eateries of the same name, all of which played a role in helping the Big Apple understand that there's more to Mexican food than refried rice and beans.

Centered around three different guacamoles (including mango with jicama and chipotle), a dozen types of tacos and five ceviches, Mercadito's menu takes its inspiration from the food stalls of Mexican markets (*mercadito* is Spanish for "little market"). "These are all things I grew up eating," says the Acapulco-born Patricio. "But I give them a little twist. When I'm preparing meat, I marinate it in herbs, garlic, lemon and olive oil. Most

places don't do that. And I try to incorporate some fruit juice into my ceviches, like pineapple and strawberry." Taking cues from the traditions of Veracruz and the culinary customs of Oaxaca, Mercadito's wide-ranging offerings also include whole adobo-marinated chicken, green-rice casserole with cheese and Mexican-style corn on the cob.

For all the homeyness of the menu, the décor at Mercadito is a far cry from the stucco-and-tile style of so many Mexican restaurants. Conceived by Seed Design Studio of New York, the distinctly contemporary space features a bar wrapped in rich, chocolate leather with a continuous white quartzite top, pierced metal pyramids that act as light sculptures and dynamic visual touches by veteran graffiti artist Erni Vales. Bring on the tacos and tequila! 108 W. Kinzie St.; 312-329-9555; mercaditorestaurants.com—THOMAS CONNORS