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A flavor for la Fiesta

La Bodega adds a unique twist to dining with salsa dancing and Michael Tillman's flamenco-style guitar music



By JENNIFER CROSS
THE BATTALION

In a town known for its Texas bars and dance halls, there is a place where students can slip a little variety into their club-hopping diet. From dancing to dining, whether the salsa is on the floor or on the chips, La Bodega is a place to go for Latin flair.

Students seeking something unique will find the cuisine at La Bodega is anything but typical Tex-Mex fare.

"One of our most unique dishes is our grilled fish taco," said Damen Warrell, general manager of La Bodega. "It's Mahi Mahi with a cilantro lime sauce. The tacos are done Baja style, which means the corn tortillas are steamed and not fried. We get our fish from Houston twice a week. It's cleaned in house, which makes it really fresh."

Other favorites include the shrimp quesadilla, which is made with shrimp, cheese and Bodega salsa wrapped in a spinach tortilla, and the burritos that are available in

shrimp, chicken, beef or pork.

Saturday night from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m., La Bodega opens its doors for salsa night, and suddenly, the food is not the only hot thing in this restaurant turned dance club. Often packed wall to wall, people come to La Bodega salsa night looking for a break from the country and western dance scene.

"We get a lot of people who come out, and they really dance," said Susan Andershock, a waitress at La Bodega and a senior microbiology major. "We also have other people who come out and show other people how to dance."

On Monday and Wednesday nights, La Bodega features Bryan-College Station guitarist Michael Tillman. Tillman has been playing professionally for three years and at La Bodega since Feb. 2001.

"[I play] a combination of Latin, classical and flamenco," Tillman said.

Many visitors to La Bodega specifically come to listen to Tillman's music. Tyne Evans, an A&M graduate, and Clayton Evans, a student at Blinn College, said they visit La Bodega frequently for the music.

"Often, we do come specifically to see Michael (Tillman) ... [his] music enhances the atmosphere of this place," Tyne Evans said.

Tillman said he enjoys the crowd and its loyalty.

"About once a week, there's someone who comes

by and listens for three hours, which is really good," Tillman said. "It happens regularly."

Tillman usually plays at La Bodega 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays and at Christopher's World Grill from 9:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

La Bodega is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday, Friday a.m. to 11 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

"We get a lot of late-night tables [coming in] early in the evening is better. It's more relaxed," Warrell said.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

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Shots will be given Tuesday - Friday, 8:00am to 11:00am and 2:00pm to 4:00pm.

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