

Bud & Alley's Taco Bar

BY SUSAN BENTON

Nestled along the beautiful beaches of South Walton on 30-A lies the town of Seaside and some of the region's most delectable eateries. In the heart of them all is Bud & Alley's Taco Bar, owned by Dave Rauschkolb, a forward-thinking restaurateur.

After the long term success of his primary restaurant Bud & Alley's, and a strong desire for more casual dining options in Seaside, Rauschkolb set out to fulfill his passion for bringing authentic Mexican fare to 30-A as, he remembers, in 2007 "It was non-existent." He did not have to look far for a location. He found it literally at his back door as the space north of Bud & Alley's became available to lease, and as luck would have it, the space was attached to the primary restaurant's auxiliary kitchen.

Rauschkolb turned to friend and Seaside architect Leo Casas, a native of San Diego, for help with the restaurant design, and opinions on creating the most authentic Mexican taqueria menu. The pair planned a trip south of the border to the Casas family home in California, and made sure to stop at all of Casas family's favorite haunts, hang-outs, and dives. Together the dynamic duo researched and taste-tested the best tacos and Mexican fare at over thirty-five different taquerias, developing the layout and plan for Bud & Alley's Taco Bar.

The hard work paid off, and upon return, with a swift knock of a wall, proper permitting, and an incredible authentic menu in place, Rauschkolb says, "The spot worked. It took eight days to open, and it was success immediately!"

The design of Bud & Alley's Taco Bar is ultra-casual, colorful, and playful. The menu is true Mexican comfort food, with all items fresh, never frozen, and made in-house from scratch daily. Rauschkolb says, "The chips in many Mexican restaurants are not made fresh daily, and they are commercial grade chips from places like Cisco. We make everything fresh every day."

A few of Rauschkolb's favorite menu items include the Baja inspired fish tacos made with seasonal local fish, the house-made chorizo sausage tacos, the satisfyingly delicious breakfast burrito, and the tortilla soup, which he says, "Is simply awesome!" Patrons of Bud & Alley's Taco Bar are offered a complimentary salsa bar with the freshest of ingredients to customize their order, such as cilan-



Knock the sand off your feet and enjoy a Baja-style fish taco or home-made guacamole with an ice-cold cerveza either inside the cozy bar or at festive outdoor tables.



tro and wedges of lime. Rauschkolb says, "We actually have three types of salsa. The first salsa comes with our chips. The complimentary selections on the salsa bar are the tomatillo salsa and the Roja, or hot, selection. If you run out of salsa you can always get a free refill."

My daughter and I enjoyed the satisfying quesadilla of the day, the local shrimp tacos, and the house-made guacamole on a recent dining experience. An enormous hit with many patrons is the thirst-quenching sangria, the signature margaritas, and the impressive line-up of over fifty tequila varieties to savor. A Kids Menu is available and all food items at Bud & Alley's Taco Bar cost fewer than ten dollars, which

is fantastic for those families that don't want to break the bank while on vacation, and for those that just want to kick off their sandy shoes and wash down a spicy taco with a cold cerveza.

Rauschkolb says, "This has been a long-time dream of mine, and it would not have happened without the help of a bunch of amazing friends, and of course the alignment of the planets."

Bud & Alley's Taco Bar is located directly north of Bud & Alley's restaurant at 2236 East County Road 30-A in Seaside, Florida. You can reach them by phone at (850) 231-4781, and by email at info@budandalleys.com. Hours of operation are Monday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.