

G R E A T C H E F S O F B O S T O N

Casa Romero's Pollo al Cilantro

by **Clint Hamblin**

For 37 years as owner and chef, Leo Romero has been at the helm of Casa Romero, serving outstanding Mexican cuisine right in the Back Bay. Located between Newbury Street and Commonwealth Avenue at 30 Gloucester Street, with an almost secret alley entrance, Casa Romero retains the title of Boston's hidden gem.

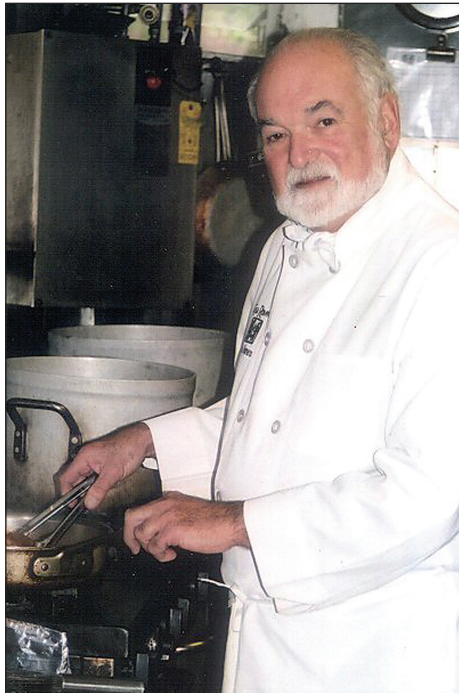
A man of great historic knowledge of Mexican food origins, Romero knows what authentic means. "We're not Tex-Mex," Romero said. "We serve authentic Mexican dishes." The Ministry of Agriculture of Mexico recently agreed and awarded Casa Romero with a Certificate of Authenticity.

From chips to cactus salad, everything is made on-site and served by an attractive and friendly staff, and hold on to your hat: Casa Romero does not have widescreen televisions. If your eye should wander, you will fall in love with the colorful Mexican art and handicrafts that fill every inch of this subterranean eatery. In the warmer months, the outside garden courtyard located within the restaurant is a great place to sip a margarita and hold hands with that special someone.

Every meal starts with warm homemade chips and salsa, but if you prefer to try the guacamole, by all means go for it. A Shrimp and Avocado Cocktail is a great follow-up. The cool shrimp and buttery ripe avocado in a salsa sauce is totally refreshing.

If you order the Chicken Soup with Chili, do yourself a big favor and order everyone a separate bowl. This soup is too good to share. Tender pieces of chicken float in a delicious broth with lime and pepper on top. It is irresistible.

The Ceviche of Fresh Fish is deliciously cool and, according to Romero, "A true test of a good Mexican restaurant." The Chile Relleno served in a tomato and chipotle sauce is an outstanding cheese-stuffed pepper, and although there may be



Chef/owner *Leo Romero*

some resistance, it could be shared by two.

A personal favorite is Huitlacoche, a mushroom or fungus wrapped in a spinach tortilla topped with sour cream and guacamole. After a forkful, you will be hooked forever.

The Mahi Mahi with Tomato Sauce Special was tender and moist. This is a versatile fish that works well with a robust tomato sauce, each complementing the other.

Casa Romero's Coconut Cheese Cake is made with cream of coconut, ricotta cheese and topped with toasted coconut. This is a terrific dessert to end a great dinner.

The Pollo al Cilantro or Chicken Tenderloins Sautéed in Garlic Butter, with Tomatillos and Fresh Cilantro, is one of Casa Romero's most popular dishes. The chicken is tender and the sauce is full of flavor. Easy to make, you will love preparing this great dish, and you will love the compliments even more.



Pollo al Cilantro

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Serves 6

Ingredients

Sauce

1/2 cup onion, finely minced
2 cloves garlic, finely minced
1/2 cup olive oil
2 poblano peppers, roasted, peeled and seeded, coarsely chopped
6 tomatillos, hulled and quartered
1 cup chicken stock
1 tablespoon dry oregano
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 cup chopped cilantro

Chicken

3 chicken breasts, cut into 1/2-inch strips
Flour seasoning with salt and pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons butter

Preparation

Sauce

Sauté the onions and garlic in the oil until clarified. Add the remaining ingredients except for the cilantro, sugar, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil and then simmer over very low heat for 10 minutes. Transfer to a blender or food processor and pulse two or three times to a chunky con-

sistency. Add the sugar, salt and pepper and correct the seasoning. Just before serving, add the chopped cilantro to the warm sauce.

Chicken

Dust the chicken with the seasoned flour and sauté in the oil and butter. When halfway cooked, add the sauce and heat for another two more minutes or so until the chicken is fully cooked. Serve with Mexican rice.

Wine Pairing

Romero highly recommends two Chilean Sauvignon Blancs: Casa Lapostolle, Rapel Valley or Viña Siegel Crucero, Cochagua Valley.

Signature Cocktail

Imagine a frozen concoction of mixed fruit that is sweet, tart and very refreshing. That is Casa Romero's Passion Fruit Margarita.

Ingredients

1 1/2 ounce Tequila
3/4 ounce triple sec
3/4 ounce fresh lime juice
2 ounces passion fruit liquid concentrate
2 ounces simple sugar syrup
3/4 cup crushed ice

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.



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