

With a touch of culture added

By **Dereck Foster**

FOR THE HERALD

It is not frequent — at least in Buenos Aires, and most cities I have visited — to visit a museum with gastronomic or culinary intentions. I have, it is true, visited a couple of art exhibitions on occasion — one was in Sydney, Australia, I recall — but my meal was strictly visual. Museums do, with certain frequency, incorporate cafes within their premises, but these cater to a very basic and simple need and escape the basic appellation of restaurant (and even that of bistro or brasserie, as they are understood and we

Platter chatter

analysed last Sunday).

Buenos Aires is full of museums, some of them so esoteric and/or out of the way that they are probably only known to their employees. Others are slightly less reclusive but still almost anonymous save, as I have discovered lately, to foreign visitors who seem to have a better knowledge of our cultural life than we do ourselves.

One such place, only three years old, but still old enough to have established itself locally, is the Museo Evita which occupies a most interesting old house on the corner of J.M. Gutierrez and Lafinur. Once a family mansion built somewhere between 1900 and 1903, it was bought (not expropriated) by the Peronist government of the day and turned into a way-house for needy children. With the fall of Peron it became municipal property and was left abandoned for many years. Three years ago it was re-opened as a museum devoted to Eva Peron and her times. As such — and leaving aside one's personal political likes or dislikes — the museum offers a fascinating and detailed view not only of the woman who inspired one of the most successful modern musical shows on record, but of an epoch that is quickly fading from memory.

part of the gastronomic side of the picture. The **Restaurante del Museo Evita (J.M. Gutierrez 3926, M/ex 44800-1599)** is not run by the museum, but is rented from it. Barely four months old, it is still settling in, but its attraction spreads beyond its kitchen. The patio and the inner architecture is part of its charm. It has its own entry to the museum — which is open daily in the afternoons save for Monday — and your hostess Claudia, (a partner) is ready to guide you both historically and gastronomically, should you need such assistance.

The restaurant, both indoors and outdoors (the patio is a great attraction, especially in the evenings) is simple in its concept: paper covering at midday, tablecloths in the evenings, and a daily menu (which includes a glass of wine or soft drink, dessert or coffee!) allowing one to eat for as little as 20 pesos. Teas are served in the afternoons.

Chef **Mauro Massimino** offers a reduced but varied menu divided into a curious, but effective, selection. Thus the menu offers starters, regional specialties, porteño food, Italian specialties, fish and more. With my friend Ricardo we investigated the sauteed mushrooms with cubed feta cheese, (delicious! 13 pesos); braised codling (good, 18); risotto with osobuco (truly natural and



The Museo Evita restaurant.

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flavoured cake with a mousse of capuchino coffee; the second was a superb lemon parfait with fruit and the third a most original and recommendable budin de pan (bread pudding), at 11 and 10 pesos respectively (the bread pudding was off the menu that day and unpriced).

Restaurant grading

Up to \$15	Economical (e/E)
\$16 to \$25	Moderate (m/M)
\$26 to \$45	Expensive (ex/EX)
\$45 and up	Luxury (l/L)

* Three-course meal for one, without