



SPECIAL

Cocina Superior, opening next month at Colonial Brookwood Village, will feature unusual design elements and a Tex-Mex menu prepared by cooks who worked in New Orleans before being displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

# Cocina Superior coming to Brookwood Village

New restaurant to offer modern Tex-Mex cuisine

By MICHAEL TOMBERLIN  
News staff writer

The owners of Superior Grill are bringing a new restaurant concept to Colonial Brookwood Village with some help from dislocated New Orleans cooks.

Cocina Superior is set to open in late January featuring what owners call modern Tex-Mex cuisine and atmosphere.

One thing distinguishing it from a typical Mexican restaurant will be the open kitchen, which will allow customers to watch the kitchen staff work. (Cocina means kitchen or cuisine in Spanish.)

In the case of Cocina Superior, the kitchen staff will be made up largely of dislocated New Orleans cooks, including chef Jess Bourgeois, who formerly worked at the



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The interior of Cocina Superior will include palm trees growing in the middle of the restaurant.

well-regarded Commander's Palace.

"When opening a new restaurant, usually the biggest challenge is finding a kitchen staff," said Gabe

Garza, partner in Cocina Superior. "We feel really fortunate to be able to open with a kitchen staff that is

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## COCINA: Not traditional Mexican fare

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already well-skilled."

While open kitchens are common in other cuisines, the messiness of guacamole and salsa preparation, coupled with some pre-prepared elements, makes an open kitchen less desirable for operators of Mexican restaurants.

That's part of the reason Garza said he wanted to have an open kitchen in Cocina Superior — to show it is not the traditional Mexican restaurant and let diners see how the dishes are prepared freshly.

"This is really away from that missionary style of your typical

Mexican restaurant," Garza said. "We're going for a different feel."

### Will seat 286

The restaurant will have seating for up to 286 counting the bar area. There will be no sombreros hanging from the walls and no mariachi music over the sound system.

But the colored tiles and large hanging lamps will help provide a festive element, as will the bar with colorful bottles on display. There will be an outside patio. Inside, a booth island in the middle of the restaurant will have room for palm trees.

"We're in the entertainment business as much as we are in the food business," Garza said.

Stone Building Co. is renovating the former East City Grill location to create the space for

Cocina Superior. East City Grill closed when its parent company in South Florida went bankrupt in part due to hurricane damage.

Cocina's owners also have Superior Grill restaurants on U.S. 280 and in Shreveport, Baton Rouge and New Orleans. They also have a steakhouse restaurant in Shreveport.

Richard Yeilding, senior vice president with Colonial Properties Trust, the mall's owner and developer, said having Cocina Superior is a boost.

"Colonial is very happy to have somebody with the track record in the restaurant business that the Superior people have," Yeilding said. "Their new, updated, leading-edge modern TexMex restaurant will be a very exciting addition to the restaurant mix at Brookwood Village."

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