

# Jaspers Peak Bistro Spices Up Neighborhood

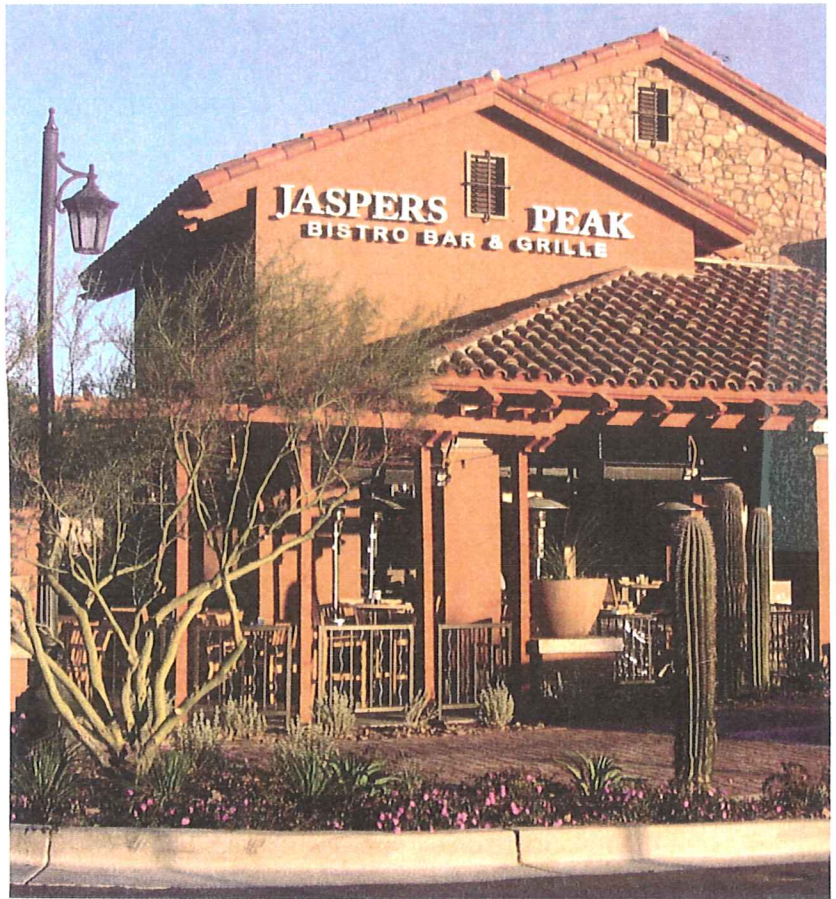
**I**t's intimate, but worldly; it's of 10 spicy, but sometimes not; and it ought to be on your new year's resolution list as a "let's eat out here next" item.

"It" is Jaspers Peak Bistro, a cozy spot at the north end of Hayden Peak Crossing, located on the southeast corner of Hayden and Thompson Peak in the Grayhawk community. Opened Nov. 13 by seasoned restaurateur Jack Jasper, it features Louisiana cuisine from the kitchen of Scottsdale Culinary Institute graduate Andrew Lucychen.

"We're an owner operated, chef-driven, upscale casual restaurant, focusing on people who enjoy good food in an intimate atmosphere," Jack Jasper, owner of three JACKshrimp restaurants in Orange County, Calif., says. "We feature authentic Louisiana cuisine, but also offer non-spicy items. We're not a stereotypical Cajun restaurant."

Jasper, who is quick to point out that his restaurateur sister Rickie (Killer Shrimp in Marina Del Rey) is also involved in the new bistro (hence the plural "Jaspers"), says he'd been looking for a Scottsdale location for over two years, and had narrowed his search to northern Scottsdale. "I wanted an up-and-coming residential area where casual dinners would appeal. Hayden Peak Crossing was my first choice, and I was one of the first tenants to lease space there."

Dinner is the primary focus at Jaspers, although the bistro is also open for lunch on Fridays. This month they will also start a weekly Sunday brunch, available 10 a.m. to 2



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p.m. Jaspers also offers a happy hour from 4 – 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Borrowing a page from his successful JACKshrimp restaurants in Southern California, but giving Chef Andrew the reins of the kitchen, Jasper points to several menu items that have become quite popular with Scottsdale diners. "Our Jambalaya, Grilled Salmon over Vegetables and the Cajun Burger are the most popular so far." He's also eager for diners to leave room for dessert, since they are all homemade.

As a warm-up to dinner, or to make a meal of themselves, soups and appetizers include gumbo, chili Orleans, Cajun dipper with French bread, hot gulf crab dip, deviled eggs that include crab and Creole mustard, steamed California artichoke, crab martini and beignets with savory fillings.

Starter salads include Caesar, southern house that includes raisins and sunflower seeds and an Anjou pear salad with a bacon-bleu cheese-caramelized pecans mix. Entrée salads featured on the menu are chicken, salmon fillet, spinach, spiced shrimp, shrimp cobb and crab and avocado.

Specialties of the house include entrees such as jackshrimp (shell-on gulf shrimp in Jack's savory spicy sauce with French bread for dipping), jambalaya (andouille sausage, chicken, onions and green pepper over rice), shrimp jardin, grilled salmon and blackened prime rib. Entrée pastas are Mardi Gras pasta (vegetarian), shrimp feta penne,

sweet thing (shrimp and chicken in a basil, garlic and white wine sauce with vermicelli and parmesan cheese), voodoo chicken and spicy Creole pasta.

A la carte side dishes to accompany meals are coleslaw, macque choux (a Cajun vegetable mixture), dirty rice and red beans and rice.

Featured sandwiches are the Cajun char-burger that mixes ground chuck with andouille sausage, and the Louisiana po'boy – chicken, andouille sausage, bell peppers, onions and Creole spices on a fresh baguette, served with red beans and rice.

Desserts tempt even the most calorie-watching diner: strawberry rhubarb cobbler, banana raspberry crème brûlée, chocolate bread pudding with brandy sauce and seasonal cheesecake.

“We serve our own sangria,” Jasper says, when describing the J-shaped granite bar. “We’re also introducing a key lime martini, complete with graham cracker crumbs around the rim of the glass, along with other martinis.” Patrons can also select from a beer and wine list.

Although much of Jaspers charm is dining in its warm, inviting interior or al fresco on its scenic patio, the new bistro also offers carryout and catering. Since they are only open on Fridays for lunch, Jaspers can hold private luncheons other days of the week. The bistro, open nightly from 4 – 10 p.m., seats about 100.

Jasper says that in addition to adding Sunday brunch, the restaurant will also begin offering a Chef’s Nightly Special, featuring “whatever his creative juices produce, what’s fresh, what’s seasonal and what our customers want.” He cites filet mignon, halibut and Cajun meatloaf as examples of what might be on the horizon.

Jasper, an avid golfer, looks forward to getting back to his game, a definite perk for locating his newest venture in golf-rich Scottsdale.

— *Joan Fudala*