



Bistro 107

by D.B. Larousse | photos courtesy of Bistro 107

Chef Apolonio Mojarro, with a sample of his cuisine.

Behind the brick walls of Bistro 107 is a lovely setting for an evening meal. The almost-capacity crowd on a Friday night was testimony to the popularity of this attractive year-old restaurant in downtown Greer. An entry area separates the curved bar at left from the dining room at right, itself partitioned to create two eating areas so that 100 seats seem less overwhelming. Contrasting the squared brick exterior of this 110-year-old former bank building are softer interior spaces with frosted light fixtures, a rose and a candle lantern at each table, textured terra cotta-colored walls and a handsome wooden ceiling. Brightly patterned ties add a splash of color to professional and knowledgeable black-attired servers. From 6:30 until 10 on Friday and Saturday, music from a baby grand piano adds a light and lively background to this upscale casual atmosphere.

Chef-owner Apolonio (Polo) Mojarro and co-owner Debra Mojarro pride themselves on fresh "from-scratch" preparations, including sauces made the old-fashioned way from house-made stock. Most popular

among their customers are pasta dishes, lamb, veal osso bucco, and fresh fish delivered twice a day. When available, tilapia with lemon caper cream sauce and mushroom risotto is a favorite.

Fine service and artful presentations were highlights of a pleasant Friday night visit. First courses include both standard and more exotic options, some a tasty twist on traditional preparations. A Caesar salad, for example, is described on the menu with familiar romaine, croutons, and Parmesan. The house salad, however, adds zest to its greenery with crumbles of goat cheese, a few candied walnuts, and pieces of pear in a gently fruity raspberry vinaigrette. In contrast to that light touch, steak salad is represented as "grilled steak medallions on top of mixed field greens with mushrooms, bell peppers and thinly sliced red onion with crumbled gorgonzola cheese," perhaps substantial enough for a meal. From non-salad listings we tried spring rolls and peanut dipping sauce to complement a tasty duck confit and cabbage filling, fried a bit oily as well as crispy. More crunch came from accompanying lightly seasoned and especially tasty Asian slaw with its touch of sesame oil. Crabcake here has a tropical flair with a mango sauce and zing from flecks of red pepper, a flavorful version with less lump crab and more creaminess in texture. Foie gras appears so seldom on local menus that we couldn't resist starting with this appropriately small serving of lush goose liver beautifully complemented by a Madeira sauce and a poached pear with goat cheese. Other openers were fried calamari, escar-got, and baked brie.

Main courses included many temptations that dramatize the Mojarros' concept of their bistro as a "playground for food." The two of us opted for a meat and a fish. Most impressive

was the rack of lamb, an assemblage of nine tiny, tender chops with a light herb crust around the edges, perfectly medium rare. These crowned a mound of mashed potatoes and were surrounded by a thin, delicate mint sauce. Our pan-seared wild salmon was a generous and satisfying portion though cooked a bit beyond my preference of medium-rare. Fresh grilled asparagus was a

good accompaniment but the layer of cubed potatoes was unexceptional, and cream sauce was too rich competition for this fish. Dishes that passed us by on the way to other tables looked and smelled inviting, and their menu descriptions were tantalizing as well. Duck breast, chicken piccata, sesame crusted tuna, veal osso bucco, pork chops, and several beef steak cuts



provide variety for return visits. Pastas and pizzas complete the main dish selections, some of them with chicken, steak, or fish and some meatless. Strict vegetarians and vegans will find the kitchen accommodating, and children's portions and preparations are available on request. At lunchtime, you can have a sandwich or pizza or variations of many dinner first and second courses.

We watched sorbet martinis on their way to other tables during the evening and were tempted by the possibility of a trio of fresh fruit sorbets in a decorative glass. However, there was only one flavor by the time we were ready for dessert, so we took our server's advice and sampled crème brulee and chocolate decadence. Crème brulee was fine, its crust of burnt sugar attractive and the custard pudding-like. Chocolate cake with its rich truffle center and caramel sauce was exceptional, the scoop of creamy vanilla bean ice cream on the side pushing this dish over the edge into decadence indeed. A selection of dessert drinks includes flavored martinis and coffees.

Wines come mostly from California plus a selection of Italian and Australian vintages and Malbec from Argentina. House Chardonnay and Merlot from France were good table wines at a good price – \$5 a glass. We enjoyed sampling Ayino Cava, a light sparkling wine from Spain at \$8. The Bistro 107 wine list offers many moderately priced bottles and several dozen wines by the glass.

The Mojarros came to South Carolina from Florida, where Chef Polo won acclaim at several restaurants. In Greer, they have found a welcoming community, and Bistro 107 is a welcome addition to the area's expanding restaurant scene. ☒

BISTRO 107

107 S. Main Street

Greer, SC 29650

864-879-1107

<http://www.bistro107.com>

Mon-Thur Lunch 11:30 am-2:30 pm

Dinner 5:00-9:30 pm

Fri Lunch 11:30 am-2:30 pm

Dinner 5:00-10:00 pm

Sat Dinner 5:00-10:00 pm

Soups and salads \$3-\$13

Main courses \$7-\$29

Desserts \$6-\$8

Wine: Glass \$5-\$10, bottles \$16-\$85

Handicap accessible