

Sweet and Spicy

Cafe McMillans is 'culinary oasis'

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

If Latin American cuisine is your flavor, then look no further than Cafe McMillans. Located inside the historic Stevens Center on Fourth Street, this restaurant offers sidewalk dining for brunch, lunch and dinner.

Visitors may recall that Cafe McMillans was previously Cafe Piaf. The cafe reopened in February this year under a new name and with a new menu. Owner and Chef Don McMillan describes the new lineup as "a culinary oasis in the heart of the city of the arts."

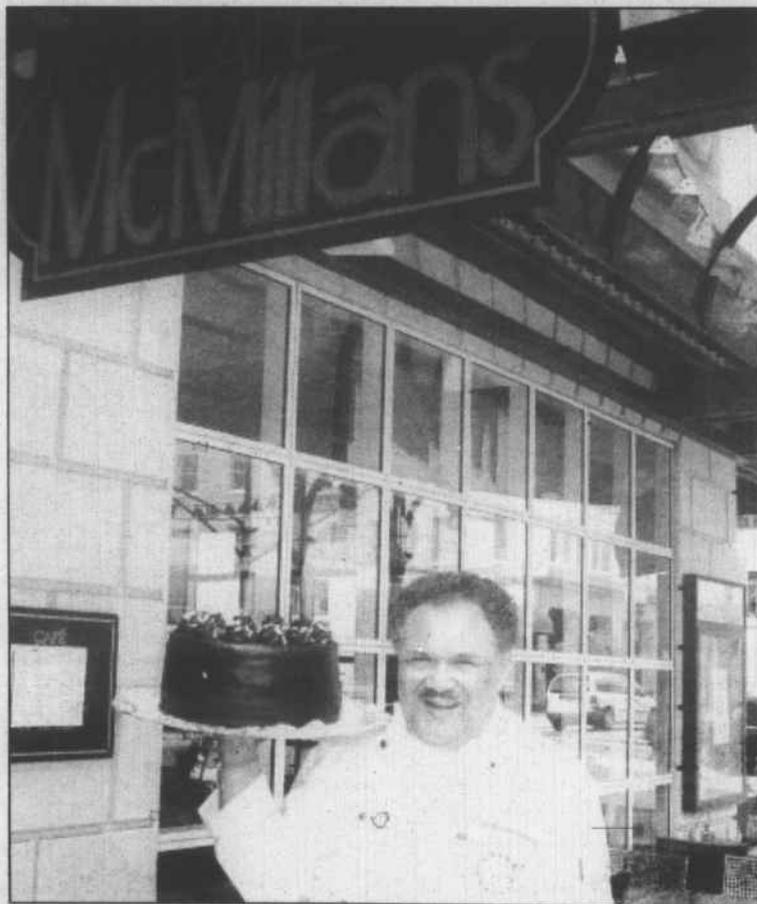
"We know that people are being familiarized not only with the (Latin) language but with the culture, and a big part of the culture is the food, and that is something that a lot of people are willing to try," McMillan said.

McMillan is joined in the kitchen by a native Colombian chef who received his culinary education there. His familiarity with the cuisine in that part of the world, said McMillan, allows them to prepare different variations of food many may not have tried before.

"We want to be as authentic as possible with the ingredients that are available locally. But we also want to present a unique flavor to people...The types of foods that we offer are foods that people have had in one shape or another, but we present it in an interesting way," McMillan said.

Sandwiches and burgers come in a variety of ways such as the Cuban roast pork, beef churrasco, shrimp ceviche, Caribbean seafood burger, Dutch West Indies burgers and the burger Espana. The cafe also prepares wraps in large flour tortillas filled with rice, beans, cheese and cilantro.

Main courses do vary on a daily basis, but customers can expect entrees such as grilled chicken breast in citrus sauce, grilled vegetables in balsamic vinaigrette and the traditional Spanish rice and black beans combo. While soup is not a pop-



Chef Don McMillan holds a delicious treat in front of his Fourth Street restaurant.

Photo by Courtney Gaillard

Location: 401 W. Fourth Street
Hours: Mondays through Fridays 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Thursdays through Saturdays 5-11 p.m.; and Sundays 11 a.m.-3 p.m. (Hours will be extended during festival.)
Price range: Items from \$4.50
Phone number: 750-0955.

ular menu item, it is free on rainy days.

Appetizers such as empanadas, Brazilian fries, Spanish style hot wings, conch fritters and plantain chips are favorites of locals. The crab-and-shrimp cakes are the number one selling items on the menu, McMillan said.

All sauces are made on the premises; none come from a bottle, McMillan said. The menu boasts a line of signature sauces such as chimichurri sauces, mango salsa and a homemade Caesar dressing.

Sunday brunch offers sweet potato pancakes, Belgian waffles, Cuban bread, toast, three-egg omelettes and more. Children under 6 eat free on Sundays.

The menu doesn't advise customers to "Save Room for Dessert" for nothing, with custom bakery items such as coconut pudding, Haitian rum cake, flan and the infamous two-pound Mile High Cake at \$9 a slice. McMillan said the price is based on an extra-large slice, which is more than enough for one to eat.

"We find that people come back different nights to try different desserts," McMillan said. "People challenge me, and say, 'If I can eat this whole piece of cake, will you give it to me for free?' And I tell them if they can finish it by themselves I'll take it off the bill, and no one has done it yet."

Cafe McMillans is open for all major performances at the Stevens Center. Hours will be extended during the National Black Theatre Festival until 2 a.m. every day. Attendees can expect old favorites such as fried catfish, "mean greens" and a sweet potato casserole to return to the menu that week.

Theater company uses work of Langston Hughes to explore his life

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The Providence Black Repertory Company's "A Tribute to Langston Hughes" brings to life one of the most integral voices of the Harlem Renaissance. Developed and produced by PBRC members with artistic director Donald King, this piece combines the powerful words and images of Langston Hughes with music and movements that pay homage to one of America's premier poets and playwrights.



Langston Hughes

King explained: "Langston Hughes is an American poet. The Providence Black Repertory Company is an American theater company. The audience will experience a company of actors and designers' interpretation of one of the great Amer-

ican poets of the Harlem Renaissance. We have deliberately taken liberties to honor the writer's ultimate inten-

tions while interpreting them through a contemporary lens."

The Providence Black Repertory Company first performed "A Tribute to Langston Hughes" a year ago, when Rhode Island's Langston Hughes Centennial Committee asked the company to create a production in honor of the writer's 100th birthday. The production has matured to include more poetry, prose, and music from the Harlem Renaissance.

James Langston Hughes was born in February of 1902 in Joplin, Mo. He began writing poetry as a teenager and following high school spent a year in Mexico and a year at Columbia University. Hughes' first book of poetry, "The Weary Blues," was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1926.

Hughes finished his college education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania three years later. His first novel, "Not Without Laughter," won the Harmon gold medal for literature in 1930.

He wrote novels, short stories and plays, as well as poetry, and is also known for his engagement with the world of jazz and the influence it had on his writing, as in "Montage of a Dream Deferred."

Venue:
Adam's Mark, Mark Ballroom 2

Schedule:
Aug. 7 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Aug. 8 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Aug. 9 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Price:
\$35 (Price includes performance of "Runt")