

## It's a Pita Jungle out there and it's good - SCENE, PAGE 6

As a former professional baseball player, Coopers-town eligible in 2002, Matt may have been prepared for the outpouring of adulation that accompanied our last review. I was not.

But succumbing to the desires of our fans, we set off to review another of the East Valley's dining establishments.

I selected Pita Jungle. We jumped into Matt's trusty Sunbird and I threw the first barb of the day by cracking on the car's Top Gunesque parking brake, "I'll throw on the air brakes and they'll fly right by."

MATT: Bryan can disparage my weeklong baseball career and quote Maverick, but he sure can't navigate like Goose. His directions to Pita Jungle were so bad we almost had to review frozen sandwiches and fountain drinks from the Exxon station.

BRYAN: All right, I deserved that one. But we still have a job to do. We walked in and seated ourselves at a table against the store's glass front (details to follow). Our server, Sunny, greeted us and went to get our tropical ice teas and we began reviewing the menu — a mixed fare of post-vegetarianism.

MATT: My name's Matt and I'm a vegetarian.

BRYAN: HI MATT!

MATT: As a recovering vegetarian in a 12-step program to rehab spinach-eating ways, I was accustomed to the type of fare Pita Jungle offers. Its menu includes appetizers such as humus and garlic dip, a variety of salads and vegetarian burgers. Wood-fired pizzas and pita wraps round out the menu. Because my Greek is a little rusty, though, I avoided translating baba ganoosh by telling Sunny, "I'll have what he's having," and pointing at the next table.

BRYAN: We started with a small order of roasted bell pepper humus for an appetizer (\$2.75). Ah, the glory of the crushed chick pea! It was delivered with two fresh pitas for dipping and it was just the right degree of spicy.

MATT: The mystery entree turned out to be chicken pasta salad (\$7.25). The price seemed a little high for such a simple dish, but the lemon dressing made up for it in taste.

BRYAN: I had the pesto lavosh turkey melt (\$6.25), described as "turkey, pesto, melted Swiss cheese with grilled tomatoes and onions, wrapped in lavosh bread and wood-fired." It came with a Greek salad that used a lemon garlic dressing, which I preferred over the traditional, heavier oil dressing. The sandwich was also excellent.

MATT: Time for dessert. While waiting for our slices of mid-afternoon decadence, Bryan and I discussed our peculiar seating arrangements. Our table was against the store's glass front and we were only separated by ¼-inch of glass from a table of three people on the restaurant's patio.

BRYAN: The restaurant attracts a diverse crowd. To the right were three auto mechanics, on the left three members of the tragically hip Generation X. Matt and I were in the middle with our standard work-a-day look. Good food tends to be inclusive not exclusive, and Pita Jungle is no exception.

The likewise eclectic art is

### TWIN FORKS

BRYAN BENNETT & MATT KISH  
ARIZONA REPUBLIC

#### Pita Jungle

WHERE: 1250 E. Apache Blvd, Tempe, (480) 944-0234.

HOURS: 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Sunday.

WHAT: Pita Jungle advertises itself as natural, healthful and vegetarian cuisine. It serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and offers a variety of appetizers, salads, vegetarian burgers, pizzas and pitas. Entrees range from \$3.95 to \$7.25. Takeout is available. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover and Diners Club accepted, but no checks.

available for sale. I loved the pegboard painting that was just over Matt's shoulder, depicting a series of people. Matt liked the take on Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* (although he gloatingly demonstrated his ignorance when he described it as a da Vinci knock-off).

MATT: For dessert I chose apple pie. It reminded me of the dangers of selecting food that isn't the house specialty. I know when a dessert has been thawed in a hurry. This was definitely the case with the apple pie. The

the center was ice cold. You can't thaw dessert in a hurry.

BRYAN: This marks the second time Matt has made a dessert error, but at least this time he had room to eat it. I went with the mango-raspberry cheesecake. It was both thawed and excellent tasting. The piece was large enough that there was some left to take home for my wife who agreed with my review. The dog didn't get any. Sorry, Art.

MATT: Unfortunately, after Bryan's Clark Griswold directions, "Look kids, Big Ben, Parliament," we didn't have time to visit the tattoo and piercing studio next to the restaurant. Don't worry, Mom, you'll be immortalized on my bicep in due time.

Nevertheless, another great meal courtesy of the company credit card. I give it four out of five forks based on Sunny's excellent service, good food and an excellent atmosphere, probably five if the dessert had been properly prepared (Bryan gives it five). Just don't tell my sponsor it left me considering leaving vegetarians anonymous!

Bryan Bennett and Matt Kish, like all authors of Twin Forks, are not certified as Actual Gourmet Food Folks. Four out of five experts recommend caution when basing important lunch decisions on the above opinions. The insightful commentary runs in *The Scene* every