





If any cuisine has been exhaustively explored in the Valley, it's Mexican. Still, there's room for more if somebody puts a novel spin on the fare. Iron Chef Jose Garces raised skeptical eyebrows when he opened his Philadelphia-import, Distrito, at the Saguaro Hotel, but then we tasted his gussied-up Mexico City street food and exclaimed, "¡Bienvenido!" A feast for the eyes, plates are as flashy as the flamboyant dining room, and the payoff is on the palate. Terrific, traditional guacamole sets the tone for a handful of star starters, including a mountain of nachos *encarnacion* with juicy marinated steak and refried beans, capped with a sizzling *chile de arbol* sauce. *Huarache de hongos* - masa flatbread topped with roasted mushrooms, corn, and earthy *huitlacoche* - could be the signature dish. Another winner: a trio of crunchy mahi-mahi tacos crowned with neon pink pickled cabbage. The sugary notes in the *barbacoa* (barbecue) section of the menu fail to make it sing, but we've no complaints about the creative sides, especially velvety corn *esquites*, and smoky pintos with tomato and bacon.

Huarache de hongos



Distrito

4000 N. Drinkwater Blvd., Scottsdale (The Saguaro)
480-970-4444, jdvhoteles.com/dining/arizona/distrito

OPENED: December 2011

CUISINE: Mexican

PRICE: \$\$-\$\$\$

HOURS: Through September 2: dinner 5-10 p.m. Th-Su; brunch 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sa-Su; happy hour 5-7 p.m. Th-Su. From September 3: lunch 11 a.m.-2 p.m. M-F; dinner 5-10 p.m. Su-Th, 5-11 p.m. F-Sa; brunch 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sa-Su; happy hour 5-7 p.m. daily, except Tu (5-10 p.m.)

Take flight: Explore the many tequilas and mezcals through creative flights priced from \$14 to \$37 - all the more fun in the beach-themed bar.

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