



Sitting around the fire pits on the outdoor patio of Richard Sandoval's Venga Venga is a wintertime tradition, whether you're fresh off the mountain or back in from town.

VIVA LA VENGA

RICHARD SANDOVAL'S SNOWMASS STANDOUT PERFECTS THE TASTES OF MEXICO WITH NEW SEASONAL DISHES INSPIRED BY GUADALAJARA.

If you've ever visited Manhattan, Denver, Mexico City, Dubai, Santa Monica, Miami, Belgrade... and so forth and so on... chances are you've eaten at one of Richard Sandoval's 37 highly regarded modern Mexican or Latin-Asian restaurants. If you've been to Snowmass Village in the past few years, there's even a better chance you've pulled up a stool or gathered around a fire pit at Sandoval's **Venga Venga Cantina & Tequila Bar**. (No? Well, "*venga, venga!*" "Let's go! Let's Go!")

Regaled for some of the most authentic Mexican food around, the slopeside restaurant at the edge of the Village Mall specializes in traditional cantina-style Mexican dishes with big flavors. "When you taste a dish and it hits your palate, there's a party of flavors and crunch going on," says Sandoval, who shows up in Snowmass on occasion in season. "It's comfort food, market food, finger food, that goes with tequila, beer, and margaritas."

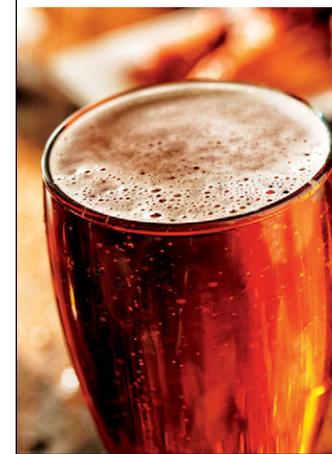
Must-have classics include guacamole prepared table-side in a stone *molcajete* (a stone mortar and pestle) and queso fundido made with Oaxaca and Chihuahua cheeses. Green chile and slow-roasted pork soup with chipotle-chicken broth is a warming follow-up. If you're a taco fan, it's tough to beat the soft corn tortilla versions filled with adobo-marinated pork or shredded tinga chicken. (Pair any food choices with a Latin brew, a spicy orange-chile Serrano margarita, or any of the more than 100 fine tequilas, served by the glass, bottle, or flight.) In addition, this season, the chef is augmenting the menu with bold, original flavors direct from Guadalajara. The new menu items, products of a research trip to the Jalisco capital, will debut when the restaurant opens for the winter season in late November, further upping the ante of authentic Mexican fare in Aspen. *105 Daly Lane, Snowmass, 970-923-7777; richardsandoval.com/vengavenga* —LINDA HAYES **AP**

—happy hour—

BUCKUP!

Aspen Dollar Bar brings back a bit of retro-fab Aspen flavor.

Depending on your tenure in Aspen, you might know the downstairs space in the Katie Reed Building, on Restaurant Row, as the Double Dog Pub, the Pitkin County Tavern, or The Steak Pit. Well, those places are history now. But thanks to Mark Reece and Vlada Djordjevic's new Aspen Dollar Bar, their come-in-and-hang-out attitude lives on. "We're bringing back the old-school feel of Aspen, where people can stop by for a beer without breaking the bank," says Reece, who also owns Slopeside Lanes in Snowmass. Named after a similar spot in Verbier, Switzerland, and also known as "The Buck," the polished wood and stacked stone-walled Dollar Bar features a dozen beers on tap, classic and house cocktails, and an ample selection of wines. Pair them with jalapeño poppers with a crushed Ruffles crust, pot pies, beer brats, chicken Phillies, or prime rib sammies. *301 E. Hopkins Ave., 970-429-4218; aspendollarbar.com*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEREMY SWANSON (VENGA VENGA); SHUTTERSTOCK (BEER)