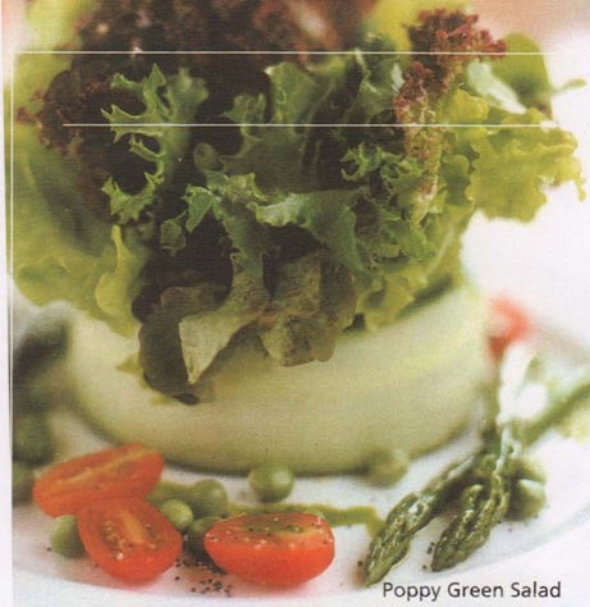
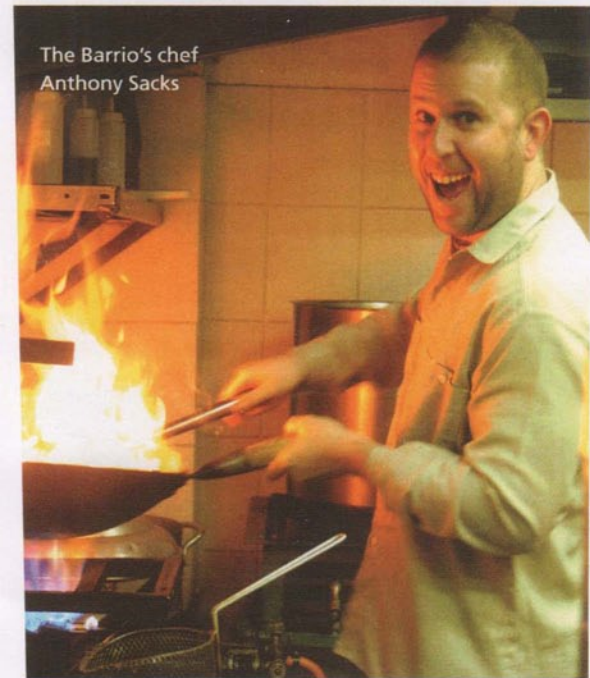


You don't have to be Jewish to eat at
THE BARRIO

BY BRIDGET BENSIMON



Poppy Green Salad



The Barrio's chef
 Anthony Sacks

THE BARRIO Restaurant grew from an idea of Barry Bloch's, where friends could get together, eat kosher food and enjoy each other's company with a convivial glass of wine. He and the restaurant's chef, Anthony Sacks, grew up together. Barry

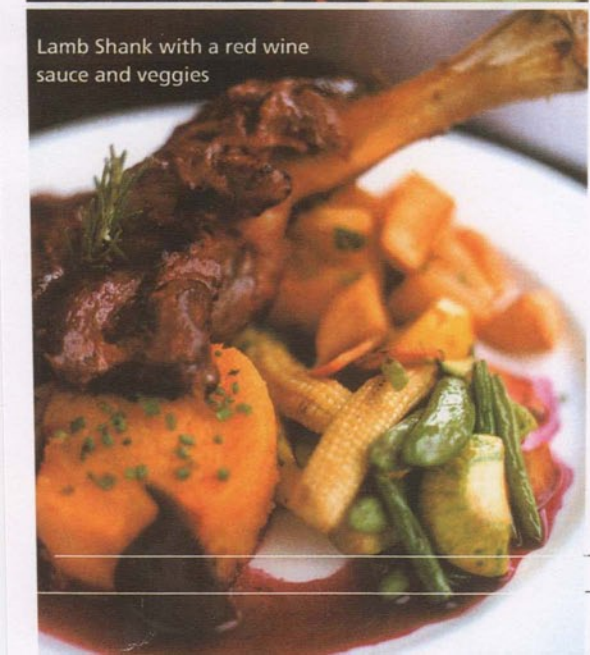
became an accountant (there was already a doctor and a lawyer in the family) while Anthony went to Israel to study Jewish religion.

Much later the two met up in Barcelona, Spain, where they so enjoyed themselves meeting and drinking in a restaurant in the local quarter that they knew they had to re-create the same thing back home.

They picked a spot in Grant Avenue

in Norwood, which once housed Moyo and another restaurant alongside, and gutted them both completely.

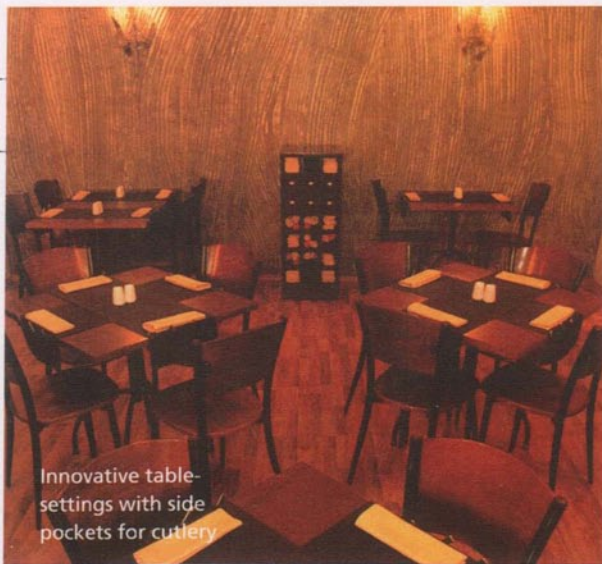
Enter Mariette Tigler-Wybrandi, a graphic designer. Barry was the accountant to a business she had just sold. So when she heard about the idea she decided she simply must join the venture. Her influence is seen in the design, where the Spanish theme is evident in both the Gaudi – one of Mariette's



Lamb Shank with a red wine
 sauce and veggies

Like all babies – Jewish or Christian – it was nine months in the making and, when it was finally completed, the business partners put a notice so-very-Jewish, in the birth column: “Mariette, Anthony and Barry would like to announce the birth of their new restaurant, The Barrio.”

favourite artists – style of the mosaic on the walls and the name, which means ‘district’ in Spanish. Cobblestones on areas of the floor carry the theme through and even the menu reflects Mediterranean cuisine without transgressing the entirely kosher needs. Mariette – she’s not even Jewish – incorporated some orthodox Jewish traditions into the design and made them features by themselves. Like the corner basin where hands must be washed before the breaking of bread: this basin has to be away from the normal ablution area, but here it forms part of the restaurant decor.



Innovative table settings with side pockets for cutlery



Anothony, Barry and Marriette



Inside Barrio, the Gaudi-inspired mural dominates the interior

And that’s another thing of course, the kosher aspect. Kosher restaurants are bound by many restrictions, the biggest of which is that no dairy products may be used where meat is involved. Obvious milk things like cappuccino and milkshakes are not served. But Anthony sees this as a challenge – he wants to offer the kosher-eating population a large range of tasty cuisine, all within the limits of what he can and can’t cook. Meat has to be prepared in a special way. Fish must arrive with its skin on. No shellfish can be served and all leaf vegetables have to be carefully washed and scrutinised for insects, a process which can take a long time.

The *maschgiach* is a specially appointed supervisor, steeped in the Jewish culture and


tradition, and he checks all these elements. For a kosher license you need the *maschgiach* on the premises for the entire day. Only he can turn on the gas in the morning and turn it off again at night. Food put in the fridges overnight must be sealed and then locked up. The key is placed in an envelope that is sealed – with tape authorised by the Beth Din, the body controlling kosher food – and no other hand other than the *maschgiach*’s is permitted to open the envelope the following day.

Shabbat (the Sabbath) also poses problems. The restaurant must close by sunset on Friday and cannot open until sunset on Saturday. As Anthony says, “In mid summer that is 7.50pm and then we have to be able

to feed a full restaurant of 150 people by 8.30pm. It has to be run like a military operation, as you can understand.”

Kosher wine is another stumbling block – there are not many SA producers and most of the wines are imported. “Our cocktails are always popular, although Jews tend not to be big alcohol drinkers,” says Anthony.

For a really different eating experience, and an opportunity to taste foods prepared healthily and differently, why not give The Barrio a try?

You won’t have to wear a *yarmulke* on your head, or dance the *kasatzka*, but after the meal ... who knows? 

For more information call (011) 728 2577.