



A TOUCH TEXAS

The very busy Mansour Gorji serves up Mediterranean cuisine with a Texas twist at his cozy Addison bistro, where he still finds the time to greet every guest.

BY SARAH RUTGA



Butter-seared lamb brain with red onion, green garbanzo beans and tomato.



Gorji in herb garden at restaurant.

If the doors are open at Gorji New Mediterranean Cuisine restaurant and steakhouse in North Dallas, then chef-owner Gorji is in the house.

“I believe in that,” says Gorji. “I can’t be at anybody’s mercy. At the end of the day, I’m the one responsible. If I’m taking credit, it’s me; blame, it’s me. It’s a very traditional idea.”

Known for his effusive presence in the dining room, Gorji makes sure to say hello to all his guests at least once, in addition to shaking their hands as they walk out the

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door. “Unless we’re serving cod in the kitchen that night,” Gorji says. “Then I just wave.”

It’s this traditional approach

that makes Gorji an iconoclastic culinary figure in Dallas. Born in Iran, Gorji spent 14 years as an engineer in Edinburgh, Scotland, before following his wife to Texas 25 years ago.

New Mediterranean Cuisine

The marriage didn’t stick, but Gorji’s love for the state did. Now he’s using flavors and techniques from his Mediterranean roots and melding them with a bit of Texas twang and global influence picked up in his years of travel.

“I just had to start cooking, which I had done from childhood,” said Gorji. “I learned more, polished techniques, merged ideas of countries in the Mediterranean basin and of course, put my own twist on everything.”

Though varied influences led to an eclectic but tightly edited menu at Gorji featuring dishes like escarrot in pomodoro, Gorgonzola and

mushrooms; braised baby octopus with squid ink; a traditional mezze platter; and prime beef tenderloin in a pomegranate cream, a flavor that Gorji helped popularize in Dallas.

Texas Steak Cookoff Champion

Famous for his ribeye, Gorji never had a steak on the menu until he won the Texas Steak Cook-off Championship in Hico, Texas, two years in a row.

“I was lucky enough to win it, and people told me I need to put it on the menu,” says Gorji. “I use my olive oil dipping marinade—really, there is no secret. The secret is if you are claiming it’s a prime piece of meat, it better be prime and don’t shy away from the price. I don’t even put any sauce on it. The pomegranate cream sauce is on the side; keep what you are cooking as the focus.”

Gorji Gourmet Foods

The spotlight of his back-to-back



Top: Braised baby octopus with garlic and squid ink. Bottom: Butterfly dessert with housemade kefir cheese, Jordan Valley Medjool dates, wafers and pomegranate puree.



Seared Alaskan cod with Texas Rio Grande grapefruit and horseradish root over snow peas and red cabbage.

wins propelled Gorji to cooking in a chef demonstration at a Whole Foods Market in 2006. It proved so successful that within four weeks he was jarring his signature sauces — the same puttanesca sauce, pomodoro sauce, pomegranate vinaigrette and dipping oil he serves fresh at Gorji — and selling his line of Gorji Gourmet Foods at the store.

“I didn’t have to modify a thing. “I try to make products for home cooking so it looks like you’ve spent hours making it, but really you just need to open the jar and heat it.”

After 10 years at the restaurant, can still be found working in the kitchen and dining room of the restaurant five nights a week, a familiar figure to his devoted circle of regulars.

“As you grow more and more, you get more clarity of what you actually want to do. Gradually, the picture, it becomes something that you have aimed for,” says Gorji. “People ask me “Why are you so happy?” but how many times in one life do you get the chance to have something in a

store and have people tell you they love it? How many people have had the chance to be so lucky? Dallas has been very good to me.”

Cookbook, Innovative Policies and no-tipping

Since this article Gorji’s cookbook, Zing! By Gorji has been published with rave reviews from customers and critics alike. It won five regional and international cookbook awards.

Gorji has continued to refine his concepts and has reduced the number of tables to seven, does not double seat (your table is yours for the evening) does not accommodate young children and has no TV. His Gorji Gourmet products have won 30 awards to date.

In 2016 Gorji New Mediterranean Cuisine became the first no-tipping restaurant in Texas.

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Chef Gorji shares his love for food through his line of gourmet sauces, marinades and dressing available in DFW Whole Foods, select grocery stores and online.