

## LOS DOS : LOCAL RESTAURANT REVIEWS

### LATIN & INTERNATIONAL / CENTRO

NOTE: Our star qualification system is not intended to be referred to across categories. In other words, a three-star *cocina economica* is in no way meant to compare to a three-star formal dining establishment. The stars should be considered only for the sake of comparison to other entries within the same category.

• **Mesón del Segoviano\*\*** *Spanish specialties*. Open Monday – Saturday 7pm – midnight. *Calle 50-A No. 443 between Calle 59 and 57, Plaza de Mejorada. Information: 924 0055.* The Velasco brothers from Segovia have succeeded in creating a completely authentic version of a tiny restaurant in Spain. Even the charming setting on La Mejorada park contributes to the ambience. The soft background music was refreshingly atypical for a Mérida restaurant, and the (silent) soccer game on a flat screen TV added just the right Iberic touch. The service was charming and enthusiastic as the brothers steered us to their specialties. Like in Spain, the food was filling if uninspired. The *Cordero a la Sepulveda* was about as rustic as it gets – a leg beautifully roasted and bobbing about in a lamb-flavored stock. In fact there was no other flavor to this brew but lamb. No garlic. No rosemary. Just lamb juice. Odd. Favorites at the table were the appetizers of *Pulpo a la Gallega* – deliciously garlicky bits of octopus and creamy potatoes with surprising crunches of sea salt – and *Croquetas de Jamón con Chorizo* – freshly fried crispy pastries stuffed with *serrano* and sausage. The owner-recommended innocuous but pleasant red Spanish Ribero del Duero wine complimented the basic, hearty fare. Enjoy a quick trip to Spain just by taking a quick trip to Parque La Mejorada.

• **Villa María Hotel & Restaurant\*\*\*** *International and Yucatecan specialties*. Open daily from 2pm – 11pm. *Calle 59 No. 553 at Calle 68. Information: 923.3357.* When you're burned out on 100 varieties of pork, try a huge, fresh and delicious green salad at Villa María. They have several varieties and all are good. The setting is a spectacular 17th century home featuring rare Islamic arches, and was once the location of the famous Lebanese restaurant Siqueff. When I first heard several years ago that Austrian chef Johann Tiefenthaler was opening a restaurant just up the street from Los Dos, I confess I couldn't imagine *Wiener Schnitzel* in Mérida! Well, not only have I enjoyed it several times at Villa Maria, but also the chef's 100% Yucatecan *Sopa de Lima* is one of the best in town.