



TIM FULLER

Going Deutsch

Located on historic ranch property in Tubac, Stables Ranch Grille specializes in *German*, not Spanish, cuisine. It's a little surprising for a menu in a border-town restaurant, but the chefs in the kitchen are wholehearted about their sausages, sauerkraut and pan-fried potatoes.

By KATHY MONTGOMERY

I'M SURPRISED BY THE crowd in the dining room at Stables Ranch Grille at Tubac Golf Resort. It's Monday night and pouring rain. Drenched from an unexpected summer downpour, I'm grateful for having made an early reservation when the hostess leads my husband and me past full tables to seats by a window where we watch the storm play over a picturesque field with a pond bordered by fat, leafy cottonwoods and a cow grazing leisurely along a split-rail fence.

My next surprise is the soft, chewy pretzels tucked between more traditional offerings in our breadbasket.

"For German night," our server explains, pointing to a menu insert listing a host of German specialties.

It's the last thing I expect to find here, in a border-town resort, surrounded by beauti-

ful old buildings that would not look out of place in Mexico. But who am I to judge? One look around tells me it's working.

Set against the backdrop of the Santa Rita Mountains, Tubac Golf Resort was once part of a 400-acre ranch established in 1789 by Spanish cattleman Don Toribio de Otero. The resort dates to 1959 and an investment group that is rumored to have included Bing Crosby. Movie buffs know it as the setting for the 1996 film *Tin Cup*, which starred Kevin Costner.

To its credit, the resort has made good use of the ranch's historic structures. Stables is named for the building in which it was built. The restaurant's front room, with its stone floors and tables separated by the remnants of stalls, feels Old World and intimate. The back room, added later, feels open and spacious, thanks to three floor-to-ceiling arched windows.

With menu items like garlic sautéed shrimp with Serrano ham, sherry and Spanish olive oil, Stables feels surprisingly upscale and urban given its rural setting. Perhaps that's thanks to a partnership that includes Eric Flatt and John Malcom, who own both Tonto Bar & Grill and Cartwright's in Cave Creek. But the heart and soul of the place (and its German menu, it turns out) are thanks to managing partner Ernie Andreas, whose bona fides include a stint at The Lodge at Pebble Beach, as well as gigs all over Europe, Asia and Africa.

Andreas, who grew up near Frankfurt, developed the German menu once he realized that Southern Arizona is home to a surprisingly large number of German Americans. He based his seasonal menu on the foods he grew up with, like German sausages in onion beer sauce with sauerkraut and potato salad, and sour braised beef with fresh kohlrabi and pan-fried potatoes. There's also a sampling of German beers to wash it all down. The idea has been a runaway hit, filling tables Sunday through Tuesday nights during the normally slow summer months.

I'm completely won over. If there's any better surprise on a summer evening, I don't know what it is.

Except, maybe, getting caught in an unexpected storm.

Stables Ranch Grille is located at One Otero Road in Tubac. For more information, call 520-398-2678 or visit www.stablesranchgrille.com.