

A change of greenery

Innovative salads cut across vegetarian and meat-loving lines

By **KIM PIERCE**
Special Contributor

Salads aren't just for rabbits, anymore. At least, not by Greenz's reckoning. This streamlined collection of artful, entree-size creations by consulting chef Jesse Morris gives committed leaf lovers a place to indulge their sproutiest fantasies. But at Greenz, subtitled "salads for Z-adventurous," even dedicated carnivores will find something to sink their incisors into.

Five vegetarian salads range from sophisticated warm pear and goat cheese (\$7.95) to tofu and veggies (\$7.95). The latter is a pyramid of mesclun greens, tomatoes, mung bean and alfalfa sprouts, and slivered red bell pepper, carrots and green onions crowned with squiggly fried glass noodles (a little stale) and a mosaic of carrot and onion. The plate is edged with panko-fried tofu triangles drizzled with the same spicy Asian peanut vinaigrette used for tossing the salad. Panko, you learn from the glossary on the menu, is a kind of Japanese bread crumbs that yield a crispier crust.

Any of the vegetarian salads can be cranked up with grilled chicken or steak. But meat is prominently featured on the carnivore side of the menu in selections ranging from Texas slaw with barbecued pork (\$7.95) to the "wedge" (\$6.95), a classic iceberg wedge with blue cheese and bacon.

The "bar none" (\$8.95), though, is a true he-man salad, made with steak and bar foods like pretzels, beer and mixed nuts. Grilled flank steak was tossed with tomatoes, mesclun greens and assorted nuts in a signature Greenz pretzel bowl, which is just what it sounds like: a crispy bowl



DARNELL RENEER/Special Contributor

Salad selections include chipotle chicken (top) and warm pear and goat cheese.

made from pretzel dough. The salad's wheat-beer vinaigrette works surprisingly well, both with the salad combo and the inexpensive pinot grigio (wines are \$5.50 by the glass).

The salads alone are enough to attract a following. But the soups (\$2.50 cup, \$2.75 bowl) promise warming respite from winter's

coming chill. Creamy asparagus was rich, smooth and nutty with just a smattering of shredded Gouda. Brick-red ancho tortilla soup, its broth reminiscent of The Mansion on Turtle Creek's, smoldered with smoky chile heat. Almost any salad, by the way, can be turned into a wrap.

Greenz owners Jennifer Huval

Greenz

★★★

Food ★★★

Atmosphere ★★★

Price: \$-\$\$ (salads \$6.95 to \$9.95)

Address: 2808 McKinney Ave. (at Worthington)

Phone: 214-720-7788

Web site: greenzsalads.com

Hours: Monday-Saturday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Credit cards: AE, D, MC, V

Wheelchair accessible: Yes

Smoking: No

Alcohol: Beer and wine

and Casie Caldwell are fugitives from the Internet bust with no restaurant experience who gave Mr. Morris a punch list for their concept and menu. He started out in the French Room kitchen and recently did a stint at Roy's Natural Market, which helps explain the wonderful range of options here.

Understatement is also a hallmark of Greenz's success: If a little is good (like the Gouda on the soup), then a little is good. Period. Similarly the small, lean dining area sports seafoam-green molded European-style chairs against bristle-brushed purple walls ... and not much else, besides some witty posters.

Outdoor seating, unfortunately, borders on McKinney. And Greenz is parking-challenged. Seemingly designed for Mini Coopers, there are maybe a dozen public spots in the building's parking garage, which is also crawling with predatory drivers impatient to get past you to their gated spaces.

One solution: Park elsewhere in the neighborhood and ride the trolley. Greenz honors 15 percent-off coupons that are available on any of the streetcars that lumber up and down McKinney.

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