

EL SEGUNDO

23 Gore Creek Drive | Vail | 970.763.5470 | elsegundovail.com



by **LAURA LIEFF**
photos by **DOMINIQUE TAYLOR**

El Segundo is all about the party. Established in 2019, the thesis of the taco and tequila spot is inviting locals and visitors to be part of the Vail Village scene while indulging in house-made food and libations. Partners Cameron Douglas (Owner/Operator) and Dimitri Souvorin (Executive Chef), who also own sister restaurant Montauk in Lionshead, brought in a management team from the longtime seafood staple to ensure the same level of trust and service.

In fact, Souvorin credits his local staff – especially General Manager

Chelsea LoConte, Assistant General Manager Ricardo Gonzales, Chef Fani Florentin, and Sous Chef Melani Torres – for being the backbone of the restaurant. “We have a strong management team and a great culture at both restaurants,” says Souvorin. “Many of our employees split their time between Montauk and El Segundo and they bring that high level of service people expect to both places.”

In addition to the topnotch customer service, Souvorin emphasizes that El Segundo is not a Mexican restaurant – it’s an eclectic taco and tequila joint that serves unexpected twists on Mexican classics that are all house-made. “We serve fresh, wonderful bites of food that include a variety of delicious tacos

and fantastic ceviches, as well as salsas, rice and beans, that are made from scratch daily,” he says.

Drawing inspiration from Asian fusion, Americana and Mexican street food, Souvorin says three popular dishes that exemplify El Segundo’s assortment of flavors are the Hot Korean (Korean BBQ wagyu beef accented by bright, crisp tastes), the Philly Cheese (their take on a classic Philly cheesesteak that

“celebrates one of the great American street foods”) and the 24 Hour Carnitas (12-hour citrus brined and 12-hour slow-cooked pork shoulder).

El Segundo is all about the happy hour/après atmosphere. “Any time the sun is shining in Vail, there is a party at El Segundo as our guests can be found enjoying pitchers of margaritas and delectable tacos while overlooking the Gore Creek,” he adds. “It’s a party that people want to be part of and we love that.”

While the appetizing dishes satisfy patrons’ hunger, the choice of 100 tequilas is another aspect that sets the establishment apart. “We really love tequila and it’s absolutely one of the pillars of what we do,” says Souvorin. “The phrase ‘tacos and tequila’ really sums up El Segundo. We love watching people learning and trying new tequilas and mezcal, which is why we offer tasting flights. It’s a fantastic spirit that can be used in so many ways.”

Bar Manager John “JP” Luikert ensures that only high-end spirits and fresh products are used to make all of their cocktails which means that El Segundo’s drinks are created from scratch as well. Although the House Margarita is their best seller, two other favorite cocktails include the Almost Famous (a spinoff of the traditional Naked and Famous with a mountain twist) and the Friend of the Devil (their version of a spicy margarita). “JP is all about creating variations on classic

PRICE

\$5-\$42

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AMBIANCE

Casual social spot offering creative tacos and 100 tequilas

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SIGNATURE DISH

24 Hour Carnitas

cocktails and ensuring the list changes seasonally,” Souvorin adds.

El Segundo is open year-round and, throughout the summer, people can be seen enjoying the deck as the view and location within the village are enticing for all ages. Souvorin says he often sees parents enjoying margaritas while kids play in the creek as the Vail Promenade has become “the best front yard in town.” •

TOP LEFT Street tacos and cocktails on the deck overlooking Gore Creek.

TOP RIGHT Sesame Sticky Bowls, toasted sesame sticky rice, tamari garlic slaw, red radish, kimchi, pickled red onion, cucumber, toasted peanut, ahi poke

LEFT Ceviche – mexican bay scallops, white shrimp, mahi-mahi, cucumber, avocado, tomato, red onion, lime, cilantro, crispy corn tortilla chips. Housemade Chips & Salsa, add homestyle guacamole.

