



## The Insider

# Besito: Refined Mexican dining at Suburban Square

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Besito, Suburban Square, Ardmore. (MICHAEL KLEIN / PHILLY.COM)

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It's the little things that make the meal, [serial restaurateur John Tunney III](#) says.

When a family with small children walks into [Besito](#) - the refined Mexican mini-chain he founded almost a decade ago - staff springs into action with high chairs and a "rapid snack" of sliced bananas and avocados.

"We're heavy observers of people," said Tunney, who is based on Long Island. "A woman touches her shoulders, almost self-consciously. That means she might be getting cold." Staff then will proffer a sarape.

On sunny days on the patio, packets of sunglass wipes will be on the table, "because that's the first thing you do when you sit down," he said recently at the opening of Besito's seventh location, in Ardmore's Suburban Square. He has a guy walking from outside table to table to freshen up ice.

At the end of the meal, you leave with warm churros and a tiny "worry doll" as a souvenir - as he said, the little things. "I'm a detail guy."



Besito (105 Coulter Ave., Ardmore, 484-417-6825) - translated as "little kiss" - replaces Suburban Square's long-running Plate, which has been transformed entirely. On the regional Latin food chain, Besito's prices and date-night atmosphere make it comparable to Distrito.

The rustic interior's showpiece is a wall of candles set into niches and reminiscent of the old Tangerine in Old City. But while Stephen Starr's staff lit the hundreds of candles each night, a Besito manager simply switches on the candles. Tunney says he himself developed the electrical conversion of those battery-powered candles as well as collected the originals of the artifacts displayed in the dining room.

There's a private dining room, a full bar stocked with beer, sangria, and cocktails (and about 70 tequilas), plus an outdoor patio with a fireplace.

And tableside guacamole.

Main plates start at \$16.95 for vegetable tacos and head into the mid-\$20s for such items as filet mignon (\$27.95) marinated in Negra Modelo, chipotle quemado salsa, queso Chihuahua, nopales, plantains and queso fresca; or shrimp (\$24.95), with crimini and button mushrooms cooked in a garlic chile salsa, mashed boniato and pico de gallo; and roasted salmon (\$21.95), with plantains, pineapple pico de gallo, and mole manchamanteles.

Menu is [here](#).

It's open for dinner daily. Lunch starts Nov. 23.