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## Top-notch tapas and charcuterie take the Tetons

Larry Olmsted, Special for USA TODAY 8:09 a.m. EDT June 19, 2014

**The scene:** Jackson is a rarity among ski towns – even though it is home to *SKI Magazine's* No. 1-ranked resort in the country, Jackson Hole, it is actually far busier in summer than winter. That's because Jackson is both a charming town in its own



right, where modern amenities meet Old West flair, and the prime gateway to both Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. And while Jackson is known for rich and famous residents such as Dick Cheney and Harrison Ford, as a leisure destination it offers lodging at every price point, from a five-star Four Seasons to hotels, motels, cabins, dude ranches and campgrounds. Summer or winter, there are a lot of fun dining options here.

The town radiates out from a main square framed by arches made of elk antlers, and Bin 22 is located just two blocks away on West Broadway. It is about a year old and the most popular new restaurant to open in Jackson in quite some time, already a local favorite. It combines a tapas-style small-plate dining concept with an actual wine store and gourmet market. You walk through the shop first, past rows of wine racks – any of which are available to enjoy with your meal at regular retail price with no mark-up, a restaurant rarity. In the dining room and bar area, there are also plenty of well-priced (\$3-\$7) wines by the glass.

Most seating is at long high communal tables running perpendicular to the bar, which also has some stools for eating. The space is all worn wood surfaces and floors, very homey and appropriately Western for Jackson. The menu, a mix of standards and ever-changing specials, is hand-written in chalk on floor-to-ceiling blackboards, and one wall has a large cut-out so diners can see into the kitchen. All in all it has a cozy, wine-cellar atmosphere, very welcoming, but it also gets very busy.

**Reason to visit:** House-pulled mozzarella, salumi and cheese boards, dates, Spanish salad and the amazing "chocolate salami."

**The food:** The menu combines small plates from different cultures with a heavy Mediterranean influence, including plenty of Italian charcuterie and cheeses alongside

traditional Spanish tapas such as patatas bravas (fried potatoes topped with a spicy orange sauce), charred baby octopus and delicious dates stuffed with chorizo and wrapped in crispy pancetta. These are joined by some less easily pigeonholed dishes such as English peas with mint and pancetta and a French-style duck rillettes, a coarse version of pate, served in a jar alongside toasted baguette slices with cornichons, cherry mostarda and whole-grain mustard. The "entrees," including the rillettes, dates and octopus, are really more like larger small plates, and everything is very reasonably priced, with most dishes running \$8-\$10.

There is a limited array of true appetizers such as mixed olives and Marcona almonds, along with a larger slate of create-your-own salumi and cheese boards with quality choices like imported Prosciutto di San Daniele, a world-class two-year-old aged ham that is slightly sweeter than its better-known relative, Prosciutto di Parma. But the signature is the hand-pulled mozzarella, made here daily and served in different ways which change often, such as cut into logs and wrapped in speck, a bacon-like cured meat, or covered with a mushroom spread. Everything was quite good, especially the rillettes, the decadently meaty and rich dates and the octopus, which was crispy and slightly charred outside but still tender inside. The biggest surprise was the unique and flavorful "Spanish Salad," a creative arugula-based salad topped with Granny Smith apples, fennel, manchego cheese, almonds and a honey-sherry vinaigrette that just really works in terms of both flavor and texture, with lots of crunchy goodness.

But if there is one must-have course at Bin 22, it's dessert, for two reasons. First, try the delicious mini-ice cream cookie sandwiches, a changing selection with both cookies and ice cream made from scratch. The piece de resistance here is the chocolate salami, a dessert made to look like salami, served with sweet fig jam and crunchy flatbread. The presentation is perfect, with the exterior made of powdered sugar and the interior the coarse consistency of salami, studded with pistachios instead of fat, one of the most eye-catching desserts I have ever seen – and pretty tasty too.

What makes Bin 22 such a great choice for visitors to Jackson is its total versatility: It can be a romantic night out for a couple, a group stop for a drink, a place for dessert only, a glass of wine and snack stop midday, or anything along this spectrum, all at surprisingly reasonable prices.

**What regulars say:** "I come here a lot because I can just pop in and have a plate of something and a glass of wine, it's easy and it's good," said Dr. Kathryn Noyes, a local physician.