

# TASTE

FOOD & WINE  
DINING OUT  
HEALTHY LIVING



Local bartenders mix new flavors into the classic mojito **Page 5H**



HELEN L. MONTOYA/hmontoya@express-news.net

Paul Wayne Bradley, a senior installer with Plant Interscapes, plants basil in the new rooftop herb garden at the Grand Hyatt. The herbs will be used by the hotel's chefs in some of their signature dishes and drinks.

## Just-picked herbs now on more menus

**Grand Hyatt's new garden  
latest in fresh produce trend.**

BY DEBORA BIASUTTI  
[dbiasutti@express-news.net](mailto:dbiasutti@express-news.net)

Next time chef Jesse McDannell needs fresh rosemary for his signature Pear-Lime Rosemary Tea, he'll only have to take the elevator to the Grand Hyatt's newly installed herb garden on the fifth floor.

The garden will supply the hotel's kitchen staff with 216 new planted herbs, such as sweet basil, mint, spearmint, rosemary, oregano, chives and sage.

According to McDannell, the herb garden is one of the hotel's environmental initiatives to use local products and fresh ingredients.

"You will never find anything fresher than what you grow yourself," says

McDannell, the hotel's chef tournant. "We are really proud as a hotel to have the opportunity of being green."

McDannell says the herbs won't be used only to garnish the almost 1,500 meals served each day at the hotel's two restaurants, Achioté River Café and Bar Rojo, but will be significant ingredients for most of his lunch and dinner dishes.

"All over the hotel we will have the opportunity to utilize the garden," he says. "In our restaurant, we will use the herbs for most of our sauces and to marinate our fish, chicken and beef."

McDannell plans to change the planted herbs seasonally.

"We're doing this for the first time, so we wanted to make sure that we picked herbs that can survive this time of the year," he says. "Maybe in the fall, we'll put vegetables that we can use."

See **HERBS/4H**



The Grand Hyatt's Bistec a la Parilla with chimichurri sauce features an herb marinade of parsley, thyme and oregano.

## HERBS

CONTINUED FROM 1H

There are other hotels and restaurants with herb gardens, such as Green Vegetarian Cuisine and the Westin Riverwalk, which grows herbs along the River Walk and in its rooftop garden.

The recently opened JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa also has a 5,000-square-foot organic garden, which supplies herbs and vegetables mainly to one of the hotel's restaurants, 18 Oaks.

The resort's executive chef, Ryan Littman, highlighted the importance of having an organic garden and says it's good for chefs, cooks and hotel guests to know where the ingredients come from.

"It's important for the chef to see how long it takes for the products to grow and to appreciate it,"

Littman says. "Also, it is better than just shipping from somewhere in the world."

As part of the Grand Hyatt's menu, you'll find a cold black tea with fresh pear and lime, pear syrup and rosemary and an herb-marinated grilled steak with chimichurri sauce on the side, mashed potatoes and locally harvested vegetables.

"Rosemary has a strong flavor, but the black tea holds it," McDannell says. "It's a great choice for a nonalcoholic drink during summer."

McDannell says that using herbs from the garden will make the restaurant's meals much fresher.

"The more you can monitor your food from start to finish, your food is going to be better," he says.

"If you take a really great product, there is not much you have to do to make a great meal."