

Grill wants to feed King City

Steakhouse serves food, provides jobs

By **DAWN WITHERS**
The Salinas Californian

Mario Diaz wants to feed the people of King City.

Diaz and his partner, Ernesto Diaz — no relation — are trying to change the dining experience in King City with The Grill, which they opened last year.

Mario Diaz said he wanted to open the steakhouse because King City lacks restaurants. His affection for the community, he said, is a critical part of the restaurant's success.

"We love King City. We're local people and we want to help our town," said Diaz, who has lived in King City for 19 years.

The Grill has been embraced by residents since it opened in April 2005, he said. Because many young people leave to start their lives elsewhere, he said, he wants the restaurant to provide jobs for local youths.

"We've been doing good and... everyone is happy we opened," Diaz said.

The restaurant features a 50-foot bar, complete with televisions, and attracts people who come in after work to relax and talk, he said. That alone, he said, makes The Grill unique, because few places in King City offer such amenities.

Diaz said he and his business partner faced many challenges designing, building and opening the restaurant, because King City is short on good roads and the town's economy is small. But he estimates about 70 percent of his clients are local, and said out-of-town clients are often referred by locals.

"We want to be one of the best food services in King City," Diaz said. "My goal is to serve everyone."

The restaurant is meant to have an intimate atmosphere, he said, because he wants everyone who eats there to feel like they are dining in his home. He tries to accommodate his clients' tastes by preparing them meals they request that are not on the menu. If someone isn't satisfied, he said, they don't have to pay.

"My restaurant is basically my house," Diaz said.



SCOTT MACDONALD/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Mario Diaz, one of the owners of The Grill in King City, sits at a table in the restaurant.

Rib-eye steak is the house specialty; Diaz said he tries hard to ensure the freshness and quality of everything he serves. Though the first year of business was difficult, he said, he hopes his focus on quality and excellent service will ensure that The Grill becomes a King City establishment.

THE GRILL

- n **BUSINESS:** Restaurant
- n **ESTABLISHED:** April 2005
- n **EMPLOYEES:** 15

n **ORGANIZATION:** Two private owners.

n **LOCATION:** 200 Broadway St., Suite 34, King City

n **INFORMATION:** 386-9066

"I have a lot of confidence we will stay in business," he said.

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