

# Cafe Brasil

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She moved to San Francisco, taught and toured from there, then moved down here, but still toured.

"In concerts I was the one who always pushed the leading edge forward. It was great fun."

Are you still pushing the edge?

"It's all I know how to do," Nita said.

Sara Wilbourne came to Santa Cruz to dance with Tandy Beal, which she did for 15 years while also teaching at Cabrillo College.

"I never wanted to live in a big city," Sara said. "I get stressed easily. I don't want to be around a lot of concrete. I toured all over the world without having to live in New York City to do it."

Amy Sugar worked as a show girl in a Reno casino. She also toured with a multi-national circus.

"In Japan we were jinxed because we had four poles holding up our tent," she said, "and that's bad luck there."

"I don't know why I'm in Santa Cruz," Amy added. "I'm still trying to figure it out."

The food came on huge platters, and that music kept the entire room dining to a happy beat.

Odd things I learned about dancers:

■ "I first learned how to appear to fall without falling," Nita said. "Then in contact improvisation, you couldn't appear to fall. You fell. I spent the first year bruised from head to toe."

■ "One person told me, 'I love your back,'" Amy recalled laughing. Dancers often hear odd compliments, especially from teachers. "What a neck on that girl," Amy mimicked.

■ "I dance because if I wasn't dancing, I'd go stark raving mad," Sara said. "I know you guys know what I'm talking about."

■ "I love sports," Amy said. "But people in sports have their seasons and coaches, and they're primed for exactly the right moment. As dancers, we're constantly in training and we're alone."

■ "Dancers are trained in the mirror," Nita said. "But there's a big difference between that kind of dancing outside yourself and inside your body, when you're in the experience of it."

"To get into the spirit of the dance, it has to be an inside job."

Can you say the same about food?

**Nita had the fish muquecas**

Nita: "I had no idea what I was eating, but I ate all the fish but not all the surroundings."

"But the surroundings made the fish very tasty, although there was too much tomato for me."

**Sara had fried eggs over steak topped with tomatoes and mozzarella.**

Sara: "I didn't know I wanted it till I got here, but it was the perfect lunch for me — a huge amount of protein, which was exactly right because I was sleep-deprived."

**Amy had vegetables sautéed on a bed of spinach and creamed corn.**

Amy: "Mine was good because it was spicy, and I don't ever use spice in my own cooking, not even salt or pepper. But it was too much food (she took the rest home)."

"The salad was not too exciting. I didn't understand it: canned peas and a canned olive on the lettuce with a slice of tomato."

"Maybe it's because Americans make crazy salads; we do a lot with them."

**Bob had steak sautéed with onions, green onions and tomatoes, served with black beans, rice and faroça (a grain that none of us could quite figure out).**

Bob: "It wasn't as good as I thought it was going to be because it looked so great coming out of the kitchen. The steak was a little tough, the rice was plain, even the black beans ordinary."

"I'll try something completely different next time."

**Would we go back?**

Everyone said yes immediately.

Nita: "I love this place. I love food that's unexpected. I'm curious to try more."

Sara: "And it was very reasonable."

(She's right, \$6 to \$8 a lunch for big plates of food.)

Amy: "I really like the atmosphere of this place."

Bob: "I really enjoyed it here too, the place more than the food. But maybe I just have to find the right dish for me."