

## *Healthy Eating On the Go*

### **Living Lean Works Out Business Partnerships**

By Sophie Braccini

When Kristin Rasmussen went to order a sandwich at Caffe Teatro in Orinda a few weeks ago, it was not only because she knew it would be delicious, but also because that was just what her nutritionist from Orinda's Living Lean had ordered. "I did get a Living Lean Turkey Sandwich at Caffe Teatro the other day and it was wonderful," she said. "They are always so friendly and helpful there and the veggies they put on the sandwich were very fresh. I think the partnership [between Living Lean and Caffe Teatro] is such a natural and makes it easier for all of Sheena Lakhotia's clients to eat healthier on the go."

Lakhotia, the owner of Living Lean and creator of customized nutrition and exercise programs, is trying to make her clients' lives easier. "I assess my clients' weight profile, including their muscle to fat ratio and design a customized nutrition and exercise program for each of them," she explains. "Many of my clients told me that cooking for breakfast or dinner was quite alright, but that meals on the go were really problematic." That's what sent Lakhotia on the road, looking for partners that would make it convenient for her clients to live lean.

Lakhotia has started working with Rising Loafer, Quenchers, Caffe Teatro and Gepetto. She asks them to create specific products that correspond to the dietary needs of her program. "Everyone needs proteins for muscles, carbs for energy and fat for normal body functioning," explains Lakhotia, "all the food needs to be fresh, as unprocessed as possible and high in fiber." What she aims to achieve are meals that are digested slowly, avoiding cravings while supporting a high level of energy and keeping the number of calories in check. She recommends four smaller size meals that will each include protein.

It took Ahmed of Rising Loafer on Mount Diablo in Lafayette a few iterations to create the perfect "Living Lean" bread. The challenge was simple enough for a professional baker: To create a bread that would be high in fiber, including oats for lower carb content, with bran, quinoa, flax seeds, and no additives. And it had to taste delicious, too! After some tasting with Lakhotia, on February 6th, the first Living Lean breads came out of Rising Loafer's ovens. Customers can order sandwiches using that bread as well.

Quenchers in Orinda was one of the first businesses approached by Lakhotia. "We offer a snack size and a meal size shakes for our "Living Lean" customers," explains Debbie Yang, Quenchers' Principal. "The shakes are made with fresh fruits, nonfat frozen yogurt, plus a vanilla protein powder, called Syntrex." Customers can choose whatever combination of one or two fruits offered in the store. "You need protein all day long," says Lakhotia, "and snacking rarely in-



Sheena holding the first "Living Lean" breads out of Ahmed's oven at Rising Loafer in Lafayette Photo Sophie Braccini corporates it."

Joe, who owns the Caffe Teatro near the library, is quite happy with the partnership, "We offer a living lean sandwich, with unprocessed meat, chicken or turkey and lettuce, tomatoes, onion, avocados, to order. We use the Milton multi-grain bread that Sheena recommended." Since its appearance on the menu, regular customers too have asked for a "Living Lean" sandwich. "We offer fresh leaving lean salads as well," says Joe "and the price is reasonable."

Lakhotia does not take commission on the Living Lean menu items.

Gepetto in Orinda is just starting to offer Living Lean sandwiches and salads as well. Sue, from Gepetto details her menu, "the sandwiches are made with high fiber bread (Milton's), oven roasted turkey breast, mustard, lettuce, tomato, red onion. The salad is composed of Spring mix, chicken breast, tomatoes, mushrooms, red bell peppers, red onion, cucumber. The dressing made of 2 tablespoons of olive oil mixed with balsamic vinegar is on the side, and it is served with Milton's bread."

Diablo Foods in Lafayette is interested in joining this business alliance. The staff will be working on recipes with Lakhotia in the coming weeks. "My next step will be restaurants," says the young businesswoman, "there are many places where you can eat high protein, quality meals in our cities."

Lakhotia's brochures can be found in all the stores of her "partners."