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Table 24 Coming to Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Michael Karp (left) and Victor Ivry (right) Photo provided

The current restaurant buzz in Orinda is the approaching opening of Table 24 at Theater Square. If your kids have neglected to mention it, the restaurant is on Facebook and already boasts more than 200 friends of co-owners Victor Ivry and Michael Karp.

It's not the first time that a restaurant has tried to lay down roots in the spot across from Shelby's. But what got the property owner and the City of Orinda behind the project were the personality and complementary talents of the two partners, coupled

with their vision for the restaurant: great quality family comfort food. Ivry and Karp are both Orinda residents. It was not food that first brought them together, it was swimming. For 28 years now Ivry has been coaching kids at Meadow Swim and Tennis Club. "I have touched many kids' lives over these years and I've kept my relationship with them, their parents and now their children," says Ivry.

He met Karp at a swimming master class and the two got talking. Ivry had spent his life in the commercial real estate industry,

while Karp and his wife Lisa are hospitality professionals. "If Victor had talked to me about opening a restaurant in Walnut Creek I probably would not have been interested," said Karp, "what sold me was to start something right here where we live, in Orinda."

Ivry says his family thinks he was born for this opportunity. "I will be in the restaurant every day," he says, "I will be a goodwill ambassador and will make people feel comfortable when they walk in the door."

Community ties, a feel for what people want, and great atmosphere are certainly components of a successful restaurant, but the partners still had to attract the right Executive Chef. They found her in Mendocino; her name is Kelly Hatcher. "She is someone interested in combinations of flavors," says Karp, "she comes from a market café grocery where she helped design the whole concept, picked the menus and wines. People here will love her food."

"The tough part right now is that we have taste-testing sessions where we have to choose among all these great foods," adds Ivry, who's concerned that he'll have to step up his swim-

ming routine in order to compensate for all the tasting.

The two men confess that working on the menu is one of their favorite activities, like sampling products from local bakers to find that perfect bread for the Clam Chowder in a Bread Bowl, or the optimal slices for the signature Artisan Cage-free Egg Sandwich.

Hatcher is inclined toward local ingredients and to change some of the menu options daily, "Kelly has established relationships with local farmers and she will shop the local farmers' markets too," says Karp, "customers can expect to see soups and pizzas change daily according to what's fresh that day."

Ivry and Karp want to become a part of everyday Orinda life and are planning breakfast menus as well as kids' time after school. "Kids hang out around here after school," noted Ivry, "they can come in, drop their backpacks at the large community table, and have afternoon milk and cookies, shakes, or a Caesar salad. This will be a good, healthy environment; teens and their parents will love it." Table 24 is on the web at www.table24orinda.com.

business briefs

Custom Design and Repair in Lafayette

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When she moved to Lafayette last December, Ruby Chen decided to open a business in town in which she schooled her four children. This September, she opened Aesthetic Jewelry Design on the east end of Mt. Diablo Boulevard (passed Leslie's Pool Supply). "My professional experience has always been in the jewelry industry," explains Chen, "I am a trained gemologist; I worked for Pave Fine Jewelry Design in Oakland, designing and consulting with clients, I worked with Tiffany & Co in Walnut Creek and am still working part time in a jewelry-and-repair store in Alamo." Chen feels that her experience allows her to offer the highest quality repairs with expertise on any jewelry/watch. Right now she shares the retail space on Mt. Diablo Blvd. with The Nails Club and is there from 10 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. and by appointment later. "As a Grand Opening special, I'd like to offer one free stringing repair for seniors, and 50% off all watch battery replacement for everybody for the first six months," says Chen, who can also train interested residents in stringing and creating their own jewelry.

Bonfire Pizzeria Coming to Orinda

A new pizzeria is scheduled to open in Theater Square this fall – Bonfire Pizzeria – more details in our next issue.

Have Fun, Train Hard, then Eat!

From now on when you show your New Rheem Theatre movie ticket stub or your 24 Hour Fitness card in many Moraga restaurants, you get a 10% discount on your dinner bill. This new business partnership was initiated by the Chamber of Commerce. "Edy (Schwartz, the Chamber President) and I thought that we should find a way to entice people, who come to the movies or to train at 24 Hour Fitness in Moraga, to stay and have dinner here," says Mary Coe, Adjunct Professor at Saint Mary's College and volunteer extraordinaire for the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. Schwartz recalls a meeting between 24Hour Fitness manager Ken Helton and neighboring restaurants to talk about parking, at which Helton reportedly said, "We have so many people coming through here daily, we should think of a way to help your marketing." Coe set to work. "I met with all the restaurant owners in Moraga and most of them agreed to join in," she explains. Although the program is brand new, Roos Pal (of Terzetto Cuisine) reports that she has already had customers present the ticket stub or membership card. "This is just a good collaborative partnership," said Schwartz.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

- Lafayette**
- Financial Round Table on Thursday, October 7 at 8:00 a.m. in the Chamber Conference Room
 - Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening Party on Thursday, October 7 for the new location of Douglah Design, 6:00-8:00pm at 3586 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite B5.
 - After Hours Mixer on Wednesday, October 13, 5:30-7:00pm at Fastframe of Lafayette, 1020 Brown Avenue. Hosted by Fastframe, Alternatives for Animals and Creative Alterations.
 - Empowerment of Women Forum on Tuesday, October 19, 5:30-7:00pm at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center Community Hall. The event is organized by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and Mechanics Bank and sponsored by the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation. The forum is designed to appeal to a variety of women. It will feature a panel of local working women, both from the profit and non-profit sectors, who will share their career stories. The forum will offer something to both currently working women and to those looking to get back into the workforce. For more information contact Barbara Gilmore at the Chamber, 284-7404.
- Moraga**
- Moraga Business Seminar: Tuesday October 19, 6:00-8:00pm at the Soda Center Saint Mary's College. The evening program and dinner are sponsored by Mechanics Bank. All Moraga businesses and Moraga Chamber of Commerce members are invited. The panel will discuss current economic conditions in the nation and in Moraga and will discuss options for businesses today.
- Orinda**
- Orinda Gala, Wine, Hors d'oeuvres, Art Exhibition & Sale on Saturday, October 2, 4:00-7:00pm in the Orinda Library Gallery, 26 Orinda Way.
 - Orinda Chamber continues its monthly "Brown Bag" Workshops: On October 12th, 'Avoid Causing Death by PowerPoint', noon-1:00pm in Orinda City Hall, 22 Orinda Way, Community Rooms. Scott Stiefvater will lead an enlightening discussion on how to make PowerPoint presentations snap. The vast majority of business presentations range from not-so-good to deadly. Not only do audiences suffer, but so do presenters' careers. Join the Orinda Chamber for this one-hour mini-seminar and learn how PowerPoint has contributed to a widespread culture of poor presentation practices. More importantly, gain a new understanding of presentation development and slide design along with a variety of practical tips and insights.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com or call the office 925-377-0977

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