

A Family Ad Venture

By Sophie Braccini



Rosylyn Stenzel (right) shows a merino wool shirt to a customer at Venture.

Photo Sophie Braccini

The first impression when entering Venture Men's Goods on Mount Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette is olfactory; it smells of wood and leather, definitely a male store. The visual input corroborates the initial feeling: the tones are subdued in the browns, beiges, blacks and greens. The softness of the colors and materials, and the quiet neatness are inviting, yet this is not a frivolous store. This is a store for men, where women are welcome.

Venture is the new quality casual

men's apparel store that Rosylyn and Tom Stenzel opened at the beginning of the month. Tom Stenzel has spent all his life in the garment industry, first at Levi Strauss, then at a start-up in the Bay Area. Unfortunately, the latter business lost its funding and Tom lost his job. He and his wife decided to take a big plunge and start their own business in the area Stenzel knows best, the clothing industry. "We opened a store where men would find the quality design and great craftsmanship for casual clothes they

couldn't find on this side of the tunnel," he says.

The couple's choice of brands has not been haphazard. "As I started researching the quality and style I wanted, I noticed that I gravitated toward a look of ruggedness and refinement, with attention to detail that is mostly designed and manufactured in California," says Stenzel. "The garment industry in California is still vibrant and is even going through resurgence," he adds.

For example, Venture carries Tel-

lason jeans that are cut and sewn in San Francisco with fabric from Cone Mills' White Oak plant in Greensboro, North Carolina. "You can't find better anywhere," says Stenzel. "When you come to our store we will fit you and send the jeans to the factory for hemming in the original stitch, for no additional cost."

Taylor Stitch shirts found at Venture are also San Francisco made. This is a very young company that recently attracted national attention manufacturing for Banana Republic. Horny Toad and SeaVees shoes are out of Santa Barbara; Marmot, which makes merino wool shirts (unbelievably soft), is from Santa Rosa. "This is the lifestyle that's good for our community, made by local guys for local guys," says Stenzel. The Stenzels even carry ties created by a Lafayette mom, Summer Albin. Some of the manufacturers are actively supporting the Lafayette couple. "Taylor Stitch felt so strongly about their new style of shirt that they told us to take some of the models on consignment; they want us to be their



Tom and Rosylyn Stenzel with their sons Aaron (left) and Colin in front of the new store. Photo provided

test store," Stenzel says. "This is our adventure, we want to be part of the spirit that drives all these local creators."

The store is not only inviting to women, who often shop for men, it is also an easy shopping spot for the whole family. "We have games for little kids, water and treats," says Rosylyn.

So far, they have been pleased with the community's response. "The sales are on target," Stenzel says.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs



Andrea Quinn at Cake in Lafayette

Photo Sophie Braccini

A Sweet-Lovers' Paradise at Cake
35 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette
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You no longer need to make a special trip to Kaua'i to get Andrea Quinn's unique macaroons and pastries. She and her hus-

band Patrick have returned to the Bay Area where they were raised. This young business woman, who decided to become a pastry chef during an internship at Chez Panisse, opened Cake in Lafayette a few days ago in La Fiesta Square. Quinn was raised around good food and has always gravitated toward the delicious world of sweets. She spent her childhood at her family's almond orchard in Brentwood where she cooked with her mother using fresh produce from their garden and neighboring farms. After graduating from the Athenian School, where she met her husband, Patrick, she took the next logical step and enrolled in the California Culinary Academy,

graduating in 1994. Since her Chez Panisse internship, she's worked as a pastry chef at The Lodge at Lahontan, the Santa Fe Bar and Grill, and Bay Wolf, among others, before opening the award-winning Icing on the Cake on Kaua'i with her husband. Now with kids in tow, they are back in the East Bay to live closer to family. Their new sweet stop is located in the space formerly occupied by Tea Cake next to Open Sesame. "We are baking all sorts of cakes, pies and cookies and also offer special occasion cakes, using 90 percent organic ingredients," says Quinn. The shop is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Quinn says once the word gets out they may expand hours for breakfast, because Quinn also loves to experiment with drinks, too. For example she uses Sightglass Coffee's Owl's Howl espresso to make her cold brew concentrate, which she chills, adds organic milk and a hint of organic sugar and serves over ice. Quinn's macaroons that Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk describes as "Perfect" – with their moist center and chewy caramelized crust – are also available at Diablo Foods.

been named the Moraga Employee of the Month. Rosales is known for her friendly approach and cheerful attitude. "Linda has a tremendous following of our customers who always want to be seated in her station," said Amoroma's owner Hafiz Haidari. "She always has such a positive attitude and a smile on her face and she has a knack of making friends with the customers. They just seem to love her." The Rotary Club of Moraga and the Chamber of Commerce will present Rosales with a \$50 gift card to Safeway as well as a \$50 gift certificate to CVS in Moraga at the Moraga Rotary luncheon on Tuesday, October 2.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Monthly mixer at Citibank from 5:30 to 7 p.m. October 10, 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

Ribbon Cutting for the new business The Bloom Space from 5 to 5:30 p.m. October 11, 3391 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

Moraga

Chamber regular members meeting Friday, September 28 at the Hacienda de las Flores starting at 7:30 a.m. with coffee and muffins, and followed by a discussion from 8 to 9 a.m. about the issues that will be on the November ballot and might impact business owners.

Orinda

The Fifth Annual Orinda Restaurant Tour held September 18 at Theatre Square was a huge success. Nearly 350 "foodies" – an increase of nearly 120 participants from last year – enjoyed appetizers and wine pairings from local restaurants, as well as live music from two bands, creating a "street party" atmosphere. Proceeds benefited the Educational Foundation of Orinda and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce.



Employee of the Month, Linda Rosales
Photo provided
Popular food server at Ristorante Amoroma, Linda Rosales, has

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