



'Spa party' concept spices up social gatherings

BY JOHN TOWNES

Energy Rising Massage Therapy of Pittsfield is offering a new alternative for those looking for a unique evening of diversion with an at-home spa party.

Todd Fiorentino, owner of Energy Rising, has teamed up with Shane Adams and David Slick, chefs at Mission Bar & Tapas, and Brenda Garcia, an independent beauty consultant for Mary Kay Cosmetics, to provide a combination of cooking, beauty tips and massage.

Fiorentino opened Energy Rising (www.energyrising.net) last January at 150 North St. in Pittsfield, where he offers deep tissue, therapeutic and wellness massage services.

He explained that the collaboration for the spa parties was prompted by Meagan Harrison, a massage therapist who also works at Mission (a few blocks further up North Street) as a server. "The idea of working together came out of that," he said.

Fiorentino noted that spa parties have become increasingly popular in recent years. "It's a national concept," he said. "However, they are usually tied in with national marketing programs. We decided it would be great to do something locally oriented."

People book the parties and invite their friends to their home for a range of activities that last about two hours.

"It's not like a sit-down dinner with a set schedule," said Fiorentino. "It's very casual and informal. Different activities are offered simultaneously, and guests can participate in what they want at their own pace. They can enjoy a massage while waiting for the food to cook, for example."

The chef shows up first to begin preparing the food. "The process is like a 90-minute cooking lesson, and guests can watch and participate in the preparation if they want to," said Fiorentino. "It includes a Six Bites special menu that includes some Mission favorites along with a few unique creations."

Mission's sommelier, Caitlin Harrison, is also available to consult on choosing wine for the evening.

Meanwhile, Fiorentino and Harrison are on site with massage chairs, and Garcia shares free samples of the Mary Kay product line that includes hand and foot lotions as well as facial cleansers. Fiorentino and

Harrison also offer hand and foot treatments using these products, in addition to the chair massage.

Fiorentino stressed that the spa parties are not intended as promotional or sales events. "There are no overt sales pitches," he said. "It is simply a social occasion."

The spa parties are generally scheduled on Tuesday evenings (a night when all of the participants are available). Other nights are possible by arrangement. There is a required minimum of six people, with no upper limit. "It is suitable for parties of up to 15 or 20 people," said Fiorentino.

The rates are \$60 per person, which can either be covered by the host or shared among the guests. For more information on hosting a spa party, call Fiorentino at 732-595-6064 or email todd@energyrising.net. ♦