

Capitola Coffee Shop Has National Aspirations

by Elizabeth Giuffre

Zizzo's Coffee in Capitola has the kind of handle on their regulars that makes one hum that jingle from the TV show "Cheers." You know that place where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came.

The two-year-old coffee shop in the Brown's Ranch Marketplace near Trader Joes and Jamba Juice takes pride in remembering that personal attention is something people are craving as much as a Grande Mocha Chai. At Zizzo's the regulars are welcomed by their first names, and their favorite drink is as memorable as their face. At Zizzo's they say you are an extension of the family. They want their neighbors to leave satisfied and come back again.

Husband and wife owners Joe and Joanne Masarweh feel that their shop is chosen over the many others because people like to be recognized and acknowledged. In fact, friendly service is the prime reason Joe and Joanne Masarweh decided to open a coffee shop in the first place.

Joe had witnessed some particularly bad customer service while waiting in line at a coffee shop for a mocha one day. Knowing he and his wife could do better, a new passion began.

Hands-On Operators

Joe and Joanne began the business with one Zizzo's coffee shop in Tracy in 2001.

Joanne, a Santa Clara native and operating room nurse of 25 years, became the manager and customer service personality of the coffee shop. Joanne is a third-generation Italian who genuinely loves people.

The name "Zizzo's" came from Joanne's Italian maiden name. Her papa was from Palermo and her nonni from a town near Milan.

A San Francisco native, Joe comes from a long line of entrepreneurs. He developed a strong work ethic from his father, who raised eight children while running a market in San Francisco.

While there seems to be no shortage of coffee houses in Capitola, Zizzo's Coffee has worked very hard to offer a distinct presence. The service is fast and personable. The cappuccino is served in a great big white cup with a hard sugar stir stick on the saucer. Employees place

a "Z" sticker over the sip opening of the to-go cup to prevent spilling. It's the little things that make the Zizzo difference.

"Certain parameters must be in place to set you apart. That's where we come in with our attention to detail, quality product and customer service. We are a customer driven organization

from day one, but the family had health concerns to consider.

Joe and his son and daughter (the children now attend Soquel High School) all suffered bad allergies from living in the San Joaquin Valley. The family had always vacationed in Santa Cruz County, and loved the ocean, so

they would like to open shops in Tracy and Watsonville.

A Great Place to Be

A couple of local teens smiled and waved to Joe as they exited the shop with coffee cups in hand. Presently, Joe said, about 85 percent of the customers are regulars. Joe and Joanne love working at Zizzo's, and believe the owners should be there to keep things running smoothly.

The atmosphere is sophisticated and inviting, with a cozy fireplace and warm mahogany furnishings. Zizzo's has a New York or San Francisco quality, with industrial open ceilings and round café tables dotted with fresh flowers in vases. The staff moves about energetically, keeping the place immaculate, stocking the sugar bar and keeping the pastries fresh from morning to evening.

The espresso, a blend of five different beans from Central and South America, is roasted in San Francisco.

Joanne calls her husband Joe a "visionary." He takes care of the business side of things. He designed everything with great care and insight. He does his research.

Joe said owning and working at Zizzo's has been the most fun he has ever had at a job.

Joe attends coffee conventions twice a year. He said many of his ideas simply come from listening to people. He takes note when someone makes a mistake, especially himself.

"I learn to go forward," he said.

Joe said he became inspired by something he read in a magazine.

"When you feel like quitting you are that much closer to achieving your goal," he said.

Now that Zizzo's has been around for a couple of years, Joe and Joanne said they feel well established in the Capitola community. They contribute to local establishments like the Soquel High School JV Soccer Team and the fire department. They offer medical benefits to their full-time employees.

Zizzo's also offers gift baskets and gift cards, Zizzo's logo gear, mugs and Zizzo's own chocolates.

Zizzo's is in the Brown Ranch Marketplace at 3555 Clares St., Suite PP in Capitola. Hours are Monday to Saturday from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 831-477-0680. For information on owning a franchise, visit www.zizzoscoffee.com. ■



and our customers have our commitment to stay on top with new and innovative products," Joe said.

Zizzo's Coffee motto is "Where Good Friends Meet for Great Coffee." The staff will serve any drink on the menu hot, iced or blended, sweetened or non-sweetened, extra foam or dry.

"People are blown away by that," said Joanne.

"Our belief here is if you pay \$4 for a drink you should leave with the drink you asked for," said Joe.

Zizzo's maintains a steady flow of every kind of demographic — young and not so young. Zizzo's offers ample outdoor seating, and free Internet use with a \$3 purchase.

Expanding the Magic

The Zizzo's in Tracy was successful

they made the decision to move to a place where the air is clear.

Joe and Joanna have also always been interested in expansion on a national level. They are licensed and ready to franchise in California and have been working with a franchise consultant company and law firms to help pull it all together.

However, while change is in place, the logo will always be a surfer on a surfboard and the sophisticated Modern European décor will be something of a trademark. Zizzo's has opened a corporate office on 41st Avenue and Joe plans to teach his business successes to those interested in becoming owners of a franchise.

They are offering opportunities for single unit and multi-unit franchises and master franchises. Joe said next