

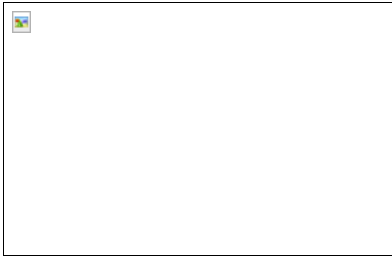


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CVEP Facilitates Opening of Palm Desert Restaurant

All-New Cucina Pasta Highlights Organization's Business-Nurturing Efforts

By Dean Lamanna
 Palm Desert, CA – With an assist from the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP), a 21-year-old local restaurant has completed an extensive remodeling under new proprietorship and has reintroduced itself to both the business community and the valley's culinary scene. Cucina Pasta, 73540 Highway 111 at San Pablo Avenue, Palm Desert, has revamped its interior and menu from top to bottom to create an entirely new dining experience.

Cucina Pasta restaurateurs Alice and Bruno Kukec weighed several factors in opting to leave Las Vegas – their home for two decades – to start a new life and business in the Coachella Valley.

"Palm Desert has a friendly, upscale atmosphere that's ideal for a new business," said Alice Kukec, whose husband Bruno established himself in the food service industry working for famed Los Angeles Italian restaurants like Dan Tana's, La Scala and Carmine's, as well as running his own eatery. "We love this area and have many friends who have moved here. With Cucina Pasta, we are bringing fine food and hospitality to the Coachella Valley at reasonable prices."

Kukec said that CVEP has been "extremely helpful" – and credits the organization with providing business data and linking the restaurateurs with a local contractor. Kukec praised CVEP's referral, Palm Desert-based Sunterra Builders, as a "lifesaver" that helped the proprietors realize their commitment to Cucina Pasta and maximize their \$150,000 initial investment in the eatery.

"We supplied architectural drawings, addressed code issues, fast-tracked the renovations and streamlined the city approvals," said Darrin Coffin, President of Sunterra Builders (760.702.5772 / www.sunterrabuilders.com). "The local subcontractors we brought in stepped up to the plate."

"Connecting local businesses in ways that are mutually beneficial while strengthening the valley's economic health is a key objective of CVEP," said CVEP Chief Operating Officer Wesley Ahlgren. "The Kukecs and their new Cucina Pasta are assets to our community, and we welcome them."

Featuring a tantalizing menu developed by proprietor Bruno Kukec, the new Cucina Pasta opened October 13. Cucina Pasta Manager Mike Miljkovic previously managed Dan Tana's in Los Angeles for more than 20 years. For restaurant reservations and hours, call 760.346.9712.

For more information on CVEP, call 760.340.1575 or visit www.cvep.org.

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