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Gluten free menu has earned Hackettstown's Mama's Restaurant plenty of praise

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HACKETTSTOWN — When customers began asking for gluten-free foods, Tom Schiano of Mama's Restaurant/Café Baci, started educating himself about Celiac Disease, which affects one in 133 people. He soon revamped his restaurant's kitchen and created a gluten-free menu, free of the protein (gluten) found in wheat, barley and rye. He even sent staff members to classes to learn to prepare glutenfree dishes safely. Word has spread among those with the disease and a Google search of gluten-free foods in NJ brings up rave reviews and often touching expressions of gratitude from those restricted to a gluten-free diet. But catering to niche groups is nothing new at Mama's/Café Baci. They also offer a Smart Eating menu designed to take the guesswork out of healthy eating while dining out and veganfriendly cheeses. "All of these menu choices can also be ordered for offpremises catering and for events at Bello Giorno, our Belvidere catering facility for large parties like weddings," he said. "And, of course, we've never strayed from our heritage of creating



Tom Schiano, co-owner of Mamaâs Restaurant/Café Baci, prides himself on the excellent service provided by his staff, many of whom have worked at Mamaâs for years. He is pictured with Samantha Tillou, left, and Sarah Yurinich.

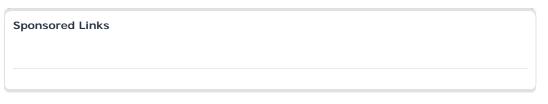


the finest, authentic Italian cuisine around." First Hope Bank's Hackettstown office is currently highlighting Mama's Restaurant and Café Baci as part of the bank's program of featuring the products and services of its business customers. Mama's began in 1970 as a small pizza shop at the Hackettstown Mall. In 1985, the pizzeria moved to the plaza it now inhabits as one of four stores. Over time, Mama's began to acquire more and more space and eventually bought the plaza which now houses Mama's, Café Baci and the Rainbow Room. Available for parties such as wedding showers and christenings, Café Baci holds up to 50 guests and the Rainbow Room accommodates 30. Schiano notes that the Rainbow Room will undergo renovation this July to enlarge it to a 45-quest capacity. If one could define the Mama's business philosophy in two words, they would be "family" and "service." Schiano and his brother, Luigi, are co-owners and both employ their 23-year-old sons at Mama's, while family members and staff are involved with the operations of Bello Giorno. Staff members who are not blood relatives are still considered family by the Schianos, who pride themselves on their long-term employees and extremely low turnover. "In business today, you have to know who you are," Schiano says. "We can't be all things to all people, but we can stay true to our Italian heritage while extending our brand into endeavors that make sense. But it all must be delivered with unbelievable customer service." Visit mamascafebaci.com and bellogiornocatering.com for more information. First Hope Bank is a



full-service financial institution with locations in Andover, Blairstown, Great Meadows, Hackettstown, Hope and Sparta. Visit FirstHope.com for more information.

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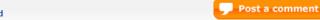
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wantfrieswiththat

July 13, 2010 at 6:22AM



I was skeptical about this gluten-free stuff, but after doing some research it actually makes a lot of sense. You do have to be careful though, to supplement your diet with extra fruits and vegetables, as well as fish oil to avoid nutrition deficiencies.





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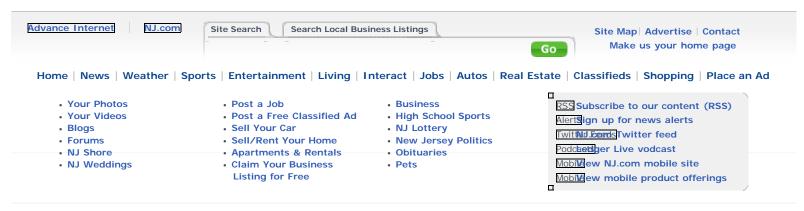
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