

June 24, 2004

A couple's café

California transplants opened a successful new business in Indy.

BY KIMIKO L. MARTINEZ

Everything that could have gone wrong that first week did.

The first day Taste Café and Marketplace opened, the coffee machine wouldn't work.

"We have the name Café in our title, and we had no coffee," said Marc Urwand, 33, who opened the breakfast and lunch restaurant last month with life partner Deidra Henry, 32, and her sister Dana Henry Amos, 35.

Later that week, the freezer broke down.

"Whatever piece of equipment could have broken down broke down," Henry said.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

After months of readying the College Avenue space to house their first restaurant venture, Henry and Urwand awaited opening day nervously.

The pair of chefs had plenty of culinary experience, moving up the restaurant ranks in New York and Los Angeles.

However, returning to Henry's Indianapolis hometown to start a restaurant was a step into the unknown. Money was running out, and their stomachs were in knots.

"We needed income to pay for our investment here," Henry said. "We were just scared that no one would come in."

As it turns out, they were busier than expected. Before moving to Indianapolis last year, Urwand and Henry had been putting in 80- to 90-hour weeks as executive chefs at the restaurants they ran in Hollywood and Malibu, Calif. As the people in charge of making sure the restaurants' kitchens were running, Urwand and Henry were the ones who got called when something went wrong.

"The phone rang in the middle of the night a lot," Henry said. "When the phone would ring at 3:30 in the morning and it's 'the breakfast cook didn't show up,' Marc got up out of bed and went to work. Though both were finding success, that success came at a price.

"We were both spending all that time and energy apart from each other, for other people, making other people a lot of money, because both places were extremely successful," Urwand said.

Finally, the couple hit a point where they wanted a change, and, figuring they had enough experience and knowledge to make money running their own restaurant, they made the leap.

"You either spend your life working for someone or you finally say, 'enough,' " Henry said. "We are taking a huge risk, every day, by doing this."

Although Urwand and Henry say they're working about as many hours as they were in California, they are now able to spend more time together and with family.

"We're both extremely passionate about what we do," Urwand said. "Deidra and I could have very easily done the jobs we did in California by working eight hours a day, five days a week, staying in the office and doing paperwork. But that's not who we are."

"We're hands-on," Henry added. "I love food."

Since opening, the couple already has plans to expand the menu, as well as add products to their marketplace items.

"We're doing a lighter fare here, and not as fussy as what I was doing before," Henry said.



Joint effort: Deidra Henry 32, and Marc Urwand, 33, opened Taste Café & Marketplace on May 18. They serve breakfast, lunch and Sunday brunch. -- Michelle Pemberton / INtake

ABOUT TASTE CAFÉ

Address: 5164 N. College Ave., Broad Ripple

Phone: (317) 925-CAFÉ

Hours: 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Friday; 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; closed Monday.

Signature dishes: iced cinnamon buns, handmade granola, homemade soups, omelets, curried chicken salad, and rotisserie chicken.

Web site:
<http://www.tastecafeandmarketplace.com>