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Squeeze smoothie bar opens in Rheem Center



Squeeze owner Aiden Ciani

Photo Vera Kochan

and in keeping with the natural theme Ciani made sure all of the lights are LED and the kitchen is an open area where customers can watch their orders being prepared.

While the specialties are smoothies with catchy names such as Kaly Perry, Strawbrah and Pomma Mama, Squeeze also serves a variety of juices, Boba in smoothies or tea, hot coffee, herbal tea, ice cream in a cone, frozen yogurt and baked goods. Whenever possible Squeeze will use honey in place of sugar as a sweetener, although the customer will have the sugar option. The main philosophy at Squeeze is to provide customers what they want. With that in mind, there will most likely be an evolution of flavors to please any palate.

The name Squeeze came about when Ciani asked friends what a good name for his new venture would be. "It's the idea of squeezing fruit," he explained. "I practiced at home with different flavor combinations and I've worked in juice bars before." Prior to opening, Ciani placed a big blackboard outside asking passersby to write suggestions for flavor combinations. He also asked residents for interior design ideas and color schemes. One interior design touch involves blue panels where patrons can use various colored markers to write statements of expression.

"The goal is for this place to be a local hangout," he said.

By Vera Kochan

Bright white walls beckon thirsty customers into Squeeze – Moraga's new smoothie bar located just to the right of CVS Pharmacy at 578 Center St.

Owner and Moraga resident Aiden Ciani got his

inspiration while on vacation: "Visiting Europe, I realized how the people love their food. What we were missing in Moraga was natural juices. When I saw this place (the storefront), it was the perfect size for what I wanted to do." He plans on purchasing fruit from locals,

Squeeze hours of operation are 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. (Monday through Saturday) and 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday.

Orinda agrees to accept donation of \$25K to beautify Miner Road bridge



Photo Sora O'Doherty

By Sora O'Doherty

Although city staff recommended against it, the Orinda City Council unanimously voted to accept a donation of \$25,000 from residents to beautify the bridge on Miner Road that had to be replaced as a result of the 2017 sinkhole. The proposal was brought to the council by Director of Public Works Larry Theis at the request of Orinda Garden Club members Daphne Bertero, Pamela Goode and Cathleen Sodos, immediate past president of the club.

Since the completion of the sinkhole repair on Miner Road in 2017, some Orinda residents have been displeased by the aesthetic quality of the bridge across Lauterwasser Creek. Although the two outward facing surfaces of the bridge have been finished in a stone veneer, the inside walls of the bridge, those visible to motorists traveling on the bridge, are in contrast stark

white concrete.

Rich Bartlett of the Aesthetic Review Committee worked closely with the three proponents, drawing the original designs, and finding the material that matched the outside walls. Sodos said that Bartlett donated a lot of time to the project. Ted Urban and John Wyro, the other members of the Aesthetic Review Committee, also helped with the plan.

The estimate for the project is \$25,000, which will be privately funded by Orinda citizens through the Orinda Garden Club. The executive committee of the Garden Club is fully in support of the proposal, which will be brought to the full Garden Club on Sept. 19. The proponents of the project requested that the city issue an encroachment permit without charge and waive indemnification. In an email to Theis, Sodos said, "We understand that there are risks, but feel those risks are minimal and are outweighed

by the existing unsightly cement structure."

In fact, staff recommended against the project based on long-term financial and liability considerations. At the Aug. 20 city council meeting, Vice Mayor Darlene Gee commended the community for wanting to do the work on the bridge. She judged it a low risk situation. Council Member Nick Kosla had concerns about the maintenance of the bridge, fearing it might be a target for graffiti. However, he supported the proposal cautiously. Council Member Dennis Fay was pleased to hear that city staff would supervise the project, that a plan would have to be submitted and the finished project would be subject to inspection. Council Member Amy Worth said that she appreciated staff's concerns, but felt the project was low risk, and Mayor Inga Miller was grateful for the gift to the community.

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