



Food: October 19, 2007

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Food-o-File

By Virginia B. Wood

Rarely does a month go by that I don't hear from some caterer or aspiring artisan food manufacturer looking for commercial kitchen space to rent. The good news is that savvy, young entrepreneurial couple **Soraiya** and **Azim Nagree** have developed a solution to this problem. The Nagrees are owners of the **Kitchen Space** (1204 Cedar, 535-5137, www.thekitchenspace.com) in Central East Austin. The 2,100-square-foot building is divided into three kitchen spaces: one set up for cooking demonstrations, another complete catering kitchen, and a third specifically for baking and pastries. The new facility also has a conference room, a walk-in refrigerator and freezer, a scullery, dry storage, and a convenient loading dock. All three kitchens are available to rent by the hour. The Nagrees are offering guided tours of the new facility next week and plan to be open by Nov. 1... Kids of all ages (including a couple who contribute to this food section) had their noses pressed against the window of a SoCo shop for months in anticipation of the recent opening of the **Big Top Candy Shop** (1706 S. Congress, 462-2220), the newest venture from **Brandon Hodge**. The cool new sweets emporium offers a coma-inducing array of current and classic retro candies plus a working soda fountain that dispenses real sodas and egg creams as well as scoops of Blue Bell. We predict great success... **Austin Slow Burn** co-owner **Jill Lewis** e-mailed with the news that three of their signature products – Jamaican Jerk Marinade (first in marinades), Chile con Queso (second in dips), and Salsa Verde (second in green sauce) – took honors at the recent Houston Hot Sauce Festival, where the voting is done strictly by those who purchase tickets to the event. Congratulations, Ms. Lucci; we always knew you were a winner!... Local chef **John Zachary** of the **Renaissance Austin** recently joined 23 finalists from **Holiday Retirement** properties across North America in an *Iron Chef*-style competition at the company's corporate headquarters. Zachary is a 1999 Texas Culinary Academy graduate who was executive chef at the El Cielo Lodge and Resort on the Gulf Coast before returning to Austin... It's no secret that Texas is famous for chili and that chili cook-offs were born in the Lone Star State. What you might not know is that the most famous chili cook-off of them all was founded more than 40 years ago by two legendary newspaper journalists. One of those men was former Austinite **Wick Fowler**, who challenged a New Yorker in that first chili throw-down and went on to create the popular Wick Fowler-brand chili-seasoning mixes with his secret blend of winning spices. The **Original Terlingua International Frank X. Tolbert-Wick Fowler Memorial Championship Chili Cook-Off** takes place Nov. 3 in South Texas. For the first time this year, the competition features a journalist-only category, and proceeds from the \$50 entry fees will benefit the University of Texas School of Journalism. Journalists and media personalities interested in entering or covering the competition should contact **Allison Gouaux** at 504/524-3342 or agouaux@ontargetwithbmf.com for entry forms and more information.

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