



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### FRUITS, SHOOTS, BLOSSOMS AND LEAVES: TREE HOUSE'S SUMMER MENU RIPE WITH LOCAL PRODUCE

*Santa Fe, New Mexico*—What could possibly top a farm fresh all-organic salad under the summer sun? To Connie Wind and the others creative chefs at Tree House Pastry Shop & Café, the answer is easy: local, organic flowers!

With the official start of summer just a few days past, Tree House Pastry Shop and Café is abuzz with excitement: whimsical purple sprouts explode atop a dish of cold noodles, bright yellow blossoms peek out from under fresh corn tortillas, and mint confetti embellishes a bowl of ripe watermelon. At Tree House—a cozy, tentable café and pastry shop on the grounds of the *Plants of the Southwest* nursery in southwestern Santa Fe—summer is a time for celebration.



Tree House's menu changes daily with the availability of local foods—most of which are obtained early Saturday morning at the Santa Fe Farmer's Market. With more than 95% of its ingredients originating from local sources, Tree House's all-organic, vegetarian menu is a celebration of the bounty of New Mexico's local farms.

#### AT THE MARKET

Walking among the Santa Fe Farmer's Market stalls and tables, covered this morning with the last of springtime's produce, Tree House owner Maria Elena Bustamante-Bernal greets vendors by name, asking each about their families or about activities on the farm. It's here that the seeds are planted and here that creative process of determining the week's menu begins.

"Sometimes," says Maria, "there are specific things I'm looking for—today it's tarragon. Most of the time, I just get what looks good. I love being at the market—its such a hub of activity—but when I get back to the café, that's when the fun part starts."

The fun part—the act of creating meals and menus from raw ingredients—begins each morning when the café staff arrives at the kitchen. There, after the morning baking's well underway, the lunch chef—Connie with the help of Carole, Corey, Maria or Laureene—assesses what's available and creates the day's delights.

"How about a cream of beet and asparagus soup?" Connie offers, "Maybe with sweet peas." And the conversation begins. Others chime in with ideas—Connie wins out in this case—and the process is very much one of intuition, experimentation, and collaboration.

The end result—which today includes a pecan-tarragon noodle dish; a Tree House salad with aged goat cheese; and a pecan-kale wrap with pea shoots and parsley pesto—is a feast for the senses.

### AND THE FLOWERS

"We love edible flowers," says Maria. "We add them to salads, garnish soups with them, and of course, decorate wedding cakes with them all the time. They're just beautiful and delicious—they have such a range of flavors."

"I grew up eating squash blossoms as a special treat. Whenever I visited my family in Mexico, I ate them whenever I could—at home, from the street vendors—they remind me of that experience, but also they're just unique and memorable. They're one of my favorite things to have on the menu."



Like squash blossoms are to Maria, Tree House's menu is unique and memorable. Surrounded by its gilded frame, the chalkboard menu at the front of the shop characterizes the individual "works of art" leaving the kitchen for those waiting in anticipation. There on the menu, in shades as bright and colorful as the dishes themselves, "Squash Blossom Quesadilla with Chèvre and Side Salad. On White Corn Tortillas" sits just below "Pecan-Tarragon Noodles with Sunflower Sprouts & Zucchini" and "Tree House Salad with Aged Goat Cheese, Strawberries, Asparagus, Sweet Peas, Oyster Mushrooms & Sage Vinaigrette." It's clear that the artists behind the counter take their work seriously.

"I'm so lucky to be in this place," says Maria, reflecting on the resources available in Santa Fe. "Not only do we have one of the best farmer's markets in the country—there aren't many places you can run a restaurant year 'round serving all local food—but I've got a tremendous, inspiring staff who cares about the food and about what we're trying to do here. We're also in a community—Santa Fe—that really recognizes the importance of eating locally. And really supports local agriculture. Over the past couple of years, we've developed a loyal clientele and have made many friends in the process." She pauses, collecting her thoughts. "It's like we say in the title of our newsletter, *Life is Sweet*. We really believe that, and we do our best to help others believe it too."

Tree House Pastry Shop and Café is open Wednesday through Saturday from 8:30am to 3:30pm and Sunday from 10:00 to 3:30. During the week, breakfast pastries are served from 8:30. On weekends a full breakfast is served (8:30-11:30 on Saturdays; 10:00 to 3:30 on Sundays.) Lunch Service begins each day at 11:30. Tree House will be closed Friday, July 4.

Location: Tree House Pastry Shop & Café, 3095 Agua Fria, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Phone: 505-474-5543

### INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

[www.treehousepastry.com](http://www.treehousepastry.com)

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