

MARIN ADVERTISERS SPEAK UP



Cynthia Farina

San Rafael Joe's, authentic Italian dining, San Rafael

Established in 1947, San Rafael Joe's is a Marin institution. Joe's serves traditional and contemporary cuisine in a sophisticated yet relaxed environment. "We've grown and now can seat 240 for dinner," says co-owner Cynthia Farina, "but we've never changed the heart and soul of our dining room."

Describe your business philosophy.

Flexibility. Over time, we've redecorated, expanded our menu and adapted with our changing clientele, but our joy in living and dining is the same. You know the saying: "Laughter is brightest where the food tastes best."

What is your competitive edge?

Our family. For nearly 60 years, this has been a family establishment—and our customers have responded to that. When you come to Joe's, you'll feel the comfort of being at a friend's house.

What makes your work worthwhile?

The loyalty of our customers! Our family has grown over the years, but so have our customers' families. Many are in their fourth generation. We've become part of their family life—just as they have for ours.

Which dish is your favorite?

We have something for everyone! Chicken piccata, Italian pot roast, hand-rolled gnocchi and several vegetarian dishes. Come in . . . and enjoy!

San Rafael Joe's, 931 4th Street, San Rafael, CA 94901, 415.456.2425, www.srjoes.com



Melanie Victor-Smith and Jeffrey T. Smith

Opes Advisors, mortgages, investment advice, Larkspur Landing

"Opes is Latin for wealth," says Jeff Smith, who manages the Marin office of Opes Advisors. "We help our clients produce financial well-being." Opes Advisors provides advice and services for residential real estate loans, personal finance and investment management.

Describe your business philosophy.

Assist clients in accumulating wealth. This can only be done by taking a holistic, or what we call a balance sheet, approach. A person's home and mortgage are significant items on their balance sheet and must be competently included in all personal financial decisions and strategies.

What is it like working with your spouse?

It's a joy and a privilege for us to work together. After all, we've been married now for over 17 years. We each have strengths and skills that complement one another. For us, it works!

What allows you to excel at what you do?

Access to excellent advice, both within our firm and from a close network of professionals that includes CPAs, realtors, estate planners and tax attorneys.

What makes your work worthwhile?

We love it when our clients are delighted and say that our help is making a significant and positive impact on their bottom line, their financial life.

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Joseph Habis, M.D.

Prima Medical Group, internal and travel medicine, Terra Linda

"In addition to my primary care practice—thanks to my interest in travel—I advise on health risks surrounding travel," says Dr. Joseph Habis of Prima Medical Group. "Not only necessary vaccinations and medications, but ways of preventing illness and injury during travel."

What is your competitive edge?

Two of my passions are medicine and travel. Combining and sharing them with the Marin community inspires me to be the best I can be.

What makes your work worthwhile?

The interesting people I work with. Also, I enjoy promoting cultural exchange and encouraging my patients to expand their horizons.

Five years from now, what changes will your business have experienced?

As the world becomes even "smaller" and Americans travel to more remote and exotic locales, travel medicine will be increasingly applicable and our practice will grow with this increase in demand.

What drives you bonkers?

That some people don't recognize the value of investing in their health before they travel. When they do, it often results in the easily avoidable loss of time and money due to an illness during, or even after, their travels.

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