



PHOTO BY ERIKA-LEIGH GOODWIN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Equinox employee Felicia Sledge serves wine at the restaurant's bar, located in the Mississippi neighborhood.

Neighborhood Attracts Proprietors

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planets realign themselves every trimester. Equinox mixes up the menu and brings in a variety of the finest seasonal fruits, vegetables and spices reflecting the season.

A third partner in the restaurant is executive chef Desmond Luesley.

"He's a nice guy and he offered to help us come up with some ideas and fell in love with the concept," Stulz said.

Luesley was on a hiatus from the culinary world after 15 years in the business at the time.

He had worked at the world renown Maxine's in Paris and spent three years working as Hugh Heffner's private travel chef.

Luesley originally committed to be Equinox's chef for six months, but worked so well with George and Stulz he became a partner shortly thereafter.

Equinox goes above and beyond by providing full health benefits for its employees, a rare find in the food service industry, which explains the restaurant's low turnover rate.

"Part of it is to offer affordable high-quality food and

a welcoming space, we also have worked in the service industry in our lives and none of us have really liked what we saw with regards to administration and ownership," said Stulz. "And so part of our mission is not just business, but to be a place where our staff feels at home, feels invested and a sense of ownership-sweat equity. I think the general satisfaction is obvious to our customers."

Stulz describes the menu as "a coming together of worldly flavors that meet on the same plate—eclectic, international, and equatorial".

Equinox uses only fresh squeezed organic juices in its cocktails and prepares its entrees with hormone free locally raised meat. If one orders a seafood dish, it is safe to assume the fish is wild.

Despite spending more to provide its customers with the freshest and finest ingredients, Equinox manages to offer reasonable prices for its exotic cuisine with entrees that range from \$8-17 on the regular menu and nightly specials range to stay within the \$17-22 range.

The NoPo hot spot will be

featured in November's Sunset Magazine and has recently been contacted by Gourmet Magazine who will be taking a closer look at the restaurant's popular wild mushroom wontons.

Equinox also brings its equatorial flair to special events and private parties.

The new fall menu, cocktail menu and wine list were unveiled at Equinox's two-year anniversary celebration last Saturday, during the autumnal equinox, of course.

For reservations, phone 503-460-3333. For special events planning, contact Stulz at 503-680-1165.

Minority Business Growth Stands Out

New ownerships exceed average

Minority groups and women are increasing their business ownership at a much higher rate than the national average, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

While the number of businesses overall increased by 10 percent between 1997 and 2002, the growth for minority- and women-owned businesses was far higher., ranging from 45 percent for black-owned business to 20 percent for firms owned by women.

There were 1.2 million businesses owned by African Americans in 2002, generating receipts of more than \$92 billion. Thirty-eight percent of black-owned firms operated in the health care and other service industries.

Hispanic-owned businesses totaled 1.6 million firms in 2002, up 31 percent from 1997 and with receipts of \$226 billion. About 40 percent of Hispanic-owned firms were in administrative and support services and waste management; health care; and other service industries. Another 13 percent were in construction.

There were 1.1 million Asian-owned businesses in 2002, up 24 percent from 1997

and with receipts of \$343 billion. About 28 percent of Asian-owned firms were in health care and other services, with another 14 percent each in professional services and retail trade.

Women-owned businesses totaled 6.5 million firms in 2002, up 20 percent from 1997 and with receipts totaling \$950 billion. Over half of women-owned firms were in service-related industries, including health care and professional services.

Loans to minorities have increased by 27 percent, compared to the same period in 2004, and loans to women have shown an increase of almost 50 percent, followed closely by loans to African-American business owners, which are up 46 percent.

Small Business Administration loans to start-up companies have increased by 76 percent over last year.

"Minority and women entrepreneurs are leading the way in business growth and are making important contributions to our nation's economic strength," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto.

A FLORIST'S STORY.

~OR~

HOW TO NIP POWER LEAKS IN THE BUD.

When Lake Oswego florist Stephanie Knoph called PGE about unusually high bills, business services rep Jan Bliss popped up at "Beautiful Blossoms" faster than a tulip in April. After a quick walk-through, Jan suggested replacing halogen bulbs with energy efficient models, cutting the breaker to a storage area, and adjusting her thermostat so the heater and cooler don't conflict. Suddenly, Stephanie's profits bloomed along with a long and fruitful relationship with Jan. If your small business would like to cultivate something similar, call us at 1-800-542-8818.

Jan Bliss
PGE Business Services Representative

State Opens Business Advocacy Office

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restore state support for the advocacy commissions so they can continue to carry out their missions and provide a unified voice for minority and women Oregonians in state government.

Senate Bill 316 requires all state agencies to report their contract awards to the Governor's Advocate for Minority and Women Businesses, which will enable the state for the first time to track where state contracts are being awarded and how often they are awarded to Minority, Women and Emerging Small Businesses. This information will improve the state's targeting efforts to assist minority, women and emerging small businesses in contracting.

Senate Bill 173 will expand Oregon's Emerging Small Business Program (the state's race and gender neutral certification program). With this expansion, ODOT will now be able to increase the number of projects that they can set aside for participation by certified emerging small businesses. The expansion also nearly doubles the number of years that a business can now participate in the program as a certified business from 7 to 12 years and increases the gross receipt limit of businesses that can participate in the program.

For more information on eligibility criteria for certification as a minority, woman or emerging small business, visit: gov.oregon.gov/DCBS/OMWESB/ or call 503 947-7976.



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