

Local Chef Inspired by Vegan Cooking

Encourages local, organic and plant-based meals

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

As menus are prepared for the upcoming holiday season, one renowned Vegan Portland chef encourages residents to consider a plant-based Thanksgiving this year.

For 51-years, restaurant entrepreneur and gourmet chef Bo

Rinaldi has consciously eliminated all animal products from his personal life as vegan. "I was 12-years-old, and I had severe asthma and allergies," he said. "My mother and father didn't know how to help me. I couldn't breathe."

Rinaldi said he remembers when his mom took him to see a Seventh

Day Adventist doctor, who gave him the book *Back to Eden* that told him to rid his diet of wheat, gluten, dairy, eggs and meat.

"I read the book from cover to cover in two weeks time," he said. "And after two weeks, Rinaldi said he was cured."

At 63-years-old, Rinaldi said he has never been sick in his life, which

has inspired his dedication to share his personal plant-based lifestyle with as many people who will listen.

As the founder of the Portland restaurant Blossoming Lotus, which provides a menu made up entirely of local fruits and vegetables, Rinaldi is determined to help members of the community eat local, organic and plant-based meals. "If people eat this way, we can grow our way out of all of our problems," he said.

Veganism means we don't use anything that comes from an animal, he said. "What happens is by using a plant based lifestyle you develop more compassion, health, sensitivity and intuition."

As a resident of southern California in the 60s, Rinaldi, who worked his way through high school and college as a vegan chef, said he was one of the founding members of the organic movement.

"Food does not come out of a supermarket or a package, but it comes out of the ground," he said. "We don't eat processed food, and we don't need drugs."

According to Rinaldi, although the term is fairly new, veganism received somewhat of an unpopular start with a radical group known in the 60s as the Diggers, which emerged in southern California with roots to modern day organizations such as PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals).

The group, which Rinaldi was a part of, gave away food, medical care, transportation and temporary housing; they also organized free music concerts and works of political art in Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco.

"We believed a revolution cannot be run on an empty stomach," he said.

The Diggers envisioned a society free from private property, and took their name from the agrarian based English Diggers, who during the time of Napoleon believed in a bloodless revolution.

"Napoleon said he who feeds the people controls the people, but we say he who feeds the people frees the people," he said.

Although often considered taboo, the act of eliminating animal products from one's diet has been practiced by great minds for hundreds of years.

"It was made popular by Gandhi, Einstein, Di'Vinci, and Pythagoras," he said.

While people are currently taking to the streets, Rinaldi said, "I encourage all the brothers and sisters to feed each other, not just this holiday season, but throughout the year."

Although the peaceful practice of vegan food consumption has been demonized perpetually since the movement began in the 60s, Rinaldi said in the past five years, modern medicine and chefs have

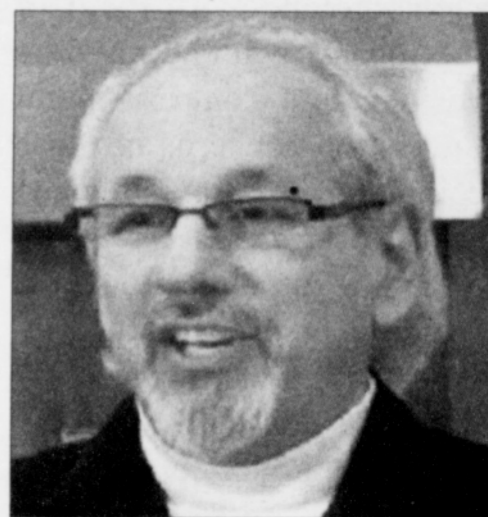
begun to say a vegan lifestyle is not only the healthiest lifestyle, but a way to eat good food at an affordable price.

"I can teach people how to live on a dollar a meal," he said.

In the past two decades, he said, "I put a lot of my energy and resources to give a more positive message for the movement."

Throughout his lifetime, Rinaldi has published multiple Vegan cookbooks, opened several restaurants and traveled around the world providing cooking lessons and educating communities about the benefit and importance of a plant-based lifestyle.

Modern science, he said, has unveiled several dietary cures that come from this lifestyle, which doctors have found can prevent or reverse cancer, diabetes, obesity, or heart disease.



Bo Rinaldi

"I do it as a matter of survival," he said.

All kinds of individuals from throughout the city enjoy healthy plant based meals at the Blossoming Lotus, which supports more than 300 farmers, he said. "By supporting these farmers, it supports about 10,000 jobs."

Although there are a number of reasons residents visit the restaurant, Rinaldi added many of his customers eat at the establishment to become healthier or prevent disease. "Doctors send them to us," he said.

"It wasn't until the 90s that people began to realize processed food and drugs were being produced by large institutions," he said. "And they really didn't care about our human welfare."

However, after individuals began to hear more about research surrounding meat and dairy production, a shift of the middle class occurred.

"After that I no longer served just nature nuts, but also people with cancer, diabetes, and heart disease," he said.

"It gave the movement legitimacy, and we now have hundreds of doctors."

A little over a month ago, Rinaldi said he opened a Vegan restaurant at the Portland Adventist Medical

continued ▼ on page 15

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