

**Business
of the Week**

Cravings Eats & Treats

BRIARCLIFF MANOR

By Martin Wilbur

For years, Erica Cohen's dream was to own a family business. She just didn't know what opportunity would come along for her to try.

Although she worked in retail clothing since she was 19 years old, in the back of her mind she was attracted to the food business--perhaps a bed and breakfast, a bagel store, an appetizing store.

Last month, her dream was finally realized. Cohen, partners with her husband and parents, opened Cravings Eats & Treats on North State Road in Briarcliff in early September, where they serve fresh salads, sandwiches and paninis but where you can also get your morning cup of brew and a pastry or two. With its spotless wood floors, yellow interior paint and a couple tables of odd and ends where she sells products like hand lotions, towels or chesse dishes, think of Cravings as Soho meeting the country.

"The concept came because there was nothing like this around town or in the vicinity," Cohen said. "My husband is in finance, my parents are in real estate and we said what could we do that would add a plus to the community and hopefully make money with it."

Open every day except Sunday for now, Cohen's busiest time of day is for the lunch crowd where in a little more than a month her salads have become a big hit. Patrons can build their own by choosing romaine, spinach or mixed greens and then selecting from more than two dozen other ingredients--Cohen calls them toss-ins--with various cheeses, vegetables and raisins, nuts and sunflower seeds. Then it

gets topped off with dressing. There are conventional dressings like French, Blue Cheese or oil and vinegar, but there are plenty of specialty flavors such as sesame ginger, parmesan pepper, herb bacon or lemon pear. Specialty toss-ins include grilled chicken or egg, chicken and tuna salad and spa tuna.

A special treat not often seen outside of Manhattan is having at least two flavors available each day from Hale and Hearty Soup, the popular midtown chain. Before winter Cohen plans to increase to three offerings. Last Wednesday she had tomato cheddar and black bean soup available for her customers.

Cohen sought to bring a little bit of what you would find in Manhattan to Briarcliff. She also demands quality selections that are healthy and fresh. Each day the salads and the baked goods are made fresh, eliminating the chance of having something served in the store left over from the day before.

"My biggest thing is being fresh," Cohen said. "I don't want to serve anything where you come in here and say, 'It's a day old.' We prepare the tuna salad, chicken salad, egg salad daily, and grilled chicken daily for the salads."

The baked goods are so important to Cohen that she hired a full-time baker. All of the items--the regular and low fat muffins, scones, brownies, cookies, cupcakes and breakfast breads--are baked on the premises. There is regular, decaffeinated and hazelnut coffee and a line of specialty sodas to wet your whistle.

Perhaps one of the biggest treats is car-



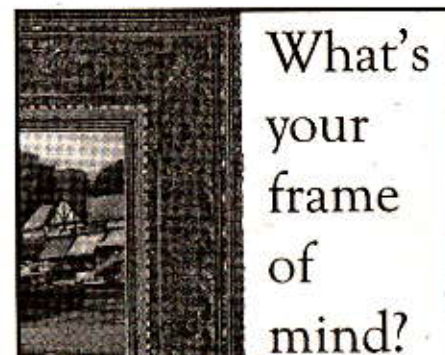
The interior of Cravings Eats & Treats, where you can relax with a delicious soup, salad or sandwich for lunch in a country atmosphere.

rying up to six flavors of Bloomingdale's yogurt, one of the delicious staples found at the New York City upscale department store.

While the selections at Cravings is varied, Cohen said she is still tinkering and adding to the menu. In the coming months she would like to capture more of the breakfast crowd and is also preparing side dishes for people to take home to supplement their dinner. Most of all, she wants people to look forward to coming into her store and have a delicious soup, salad and sandwich.

"I want it to be a very homey feeling, warm, welcoming, that you could come in her and say wow," Cohen said.

Cravings Eats & Treats, located at 549 North State Road, is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cohen is considering opening on Sundays next spring. They may be reached at 914-944-4622.



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