

# Kosher Connection

*Accents Grill has the right touch; Crafter's Café delights.*

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In deepest, darkest February, it's hard to imagine that anyone might prefer chilly old Baltimore to sunny Southern California. But Larry and Lara Franks did — a fact for which both the Jewish and foodie communities can be thankful.

The Franks were restaurateurs and caterers in Irvine, a community about 45 minutes from Los Angeles. Despite a sophisticated, trend-savvy customer base, Irvine lacked something, according to Mrs. Franks: a nurturing Jewish community.

"There were no kosher restaurants, and only one Orthodox Jewish day school," Mrs. Franks says. "We needed to be in a center where our needs and the children's needs could be taken care of."

Longtime friends Steven and Melanie Fleischer introduced them to the Baltimore area, and in Pikesville they found the family-away-from-family they were seeking — and a terrific location for the kosher restaurant of their dreams. "We wanted to offer something that was unique, not just emulating other business ventures," Mrs. Franks explains.

After gathering feedback from the locals, they developed their concept: Accents Grill on the Atrium, which will be opening soon in Greenspring Shopping Center, 2839 Smith Ave., is a family-friendly restaurant (the Franks have four children), with unusual, upscale items to intrigue adults. In other words, hamburgers and hot dogs, but also ahi tuna steak sandwiches and grilled Thai steak salads. The kitchen is Star K-certified.

There will also be a New York-style deli on site, and a catering component. Larry Franks is in charge of the kitchen, business partner David Lapin (of Max's in Silver Spring) will run the deli and Mrs. Franks will be working with clients and designing menus and events. Also onboard is Joy Lichter, formerly of Shalom Caterers.

The former McDonald's has been transformed into a contemporary bistro with warm colors and woods, plants galore and clean modern lines. "Outdoor" seating in the atrium provides a climate-controlled sidewalk café.

"We put a lot of emphasis on the visual in everything we do," Mrs. Franks says. "People eat with their eyes, as well as their mouths." □



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