

dining made SIMPLE

Business helps people in the kitchen

BY MARC DAVID PHOTO BY JENNA BODNAR



MAUREEN YUEH

You're not very handy around the kitchen but you like to eat well at home.

Simply Dinners may be your answer. Foothills entrepreneurs Eddie and Maureen Yueh started the business in February with the idea they would provide the raw ingredients and menus to Tucson area residents who stopped by their store at 7865 East Broadway, Suite 155.

"It was a good fit for me," Maureen Yueh says. "I love to entertain, I love to cook and I like to help people. It's really rewarding helping people who are trying to get dinner on the table."

Like her husband, who owns Mr. Beer, a home-brew kit sold internationally, Maureen Yueh comes from a technical background. She was formerly a project manager for a computer company. She was on the lookout for something to do and found her niche through Simply Dinners.

How it works is, well, simple: place your order, assemble the meals and cook dinner.

"You can make one or two meals, or you can make 12," Yueh says. "We're very flexible. We just recommend that you make reservations on the Web or by calling since we have to order the food."

Becca Kranz is store manager and Karoline Maes is assistant manager. There are also three part-timers and it's not unusual to see the Yueh sons – Chris, 16, and Alex, 11 – working at the store. Simply Dinners is open Wednesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, 10

a.m. to 5 p.m.

OK, so now you've placed your order and you arrive at the store. A meal coordinator greets you, gives you an orientation and directs you to your personal workstation. After that, the only rule is that you make the rules. In other words, if you want your enchiladas with extra chicken, go for it. If you want to go light on the beans for your burritos, no problem. If your kids don't like onions in a certain dish, leave them out.

Either way, you are provided with a recipe with pre-cut ingredients for your meals. During assembly, each completed meal is stowed in a freezer. In two hours or less, the uncooked entrees are assembled. All that's left is to cook the meals at home by following the simple instructions provided by Simply Dinners.

"We send complete instructions so that they are easy for 7-year-olds to assemble," Yueh says. "They're designed to get on the table pretty quickly. Usually, you can cook them in a 10-30 minute range. When you're done now, your countertop is clean because you don't have to open any cans or clean up any waste."

Package prices for meals are as follows: \$190 for 12 dinners (four servings), \$115 for 12 dinners (two servings), \$115 for six dinners (four servings), and \$70 for six dinners (two servings). Figure an extra \$2.50 for pre-assembled meals.

Those interested can call 615-9050 or visit www.simply-dinners.com. ■