

The goji's way: 'keeping it real'

If you're up for a little 15-minute vacation, frozen yogurt franchise is the place to go

BY RON BARRY

Janette Zacharias has a treat for everyone under the sun – a vacation.

A partner in the goji's Frozen Yogurt ownership family, Zacharias is thrilled that a franchise has opened its doors at East Point Shopping, bringing an ever-popular product to an ever-growing centre.

"East Point is a vibrant, beautiful, growth-oriented development that holds the same high standards in their development as goji's has for its stores," said Zacharias. "East Point has been wonderful to work with and goji's is excited to be part of their retail centre."

And, she's serious about that vacation promise – to wit: "goji's has achieved a warm, boutique-like atmosphere and ambiance that gives our customers a feel-good '15-minute vacation' from their everyday lives. Our upbeat customer service is also a key part of the goji's

experience."

The family chain opened its first store two years ago in Dieppe. The name came courtesy of Quinn Zacharias, one of the owners' daughters, who was 16 at the time. Quinn also designed the original logo, which has since been tweaked by the pros, but is still true to her vision.

The chain offers an exclusive line of yogurts, gelatos, sorbets and Almond milk yogurt. goji's yogurt has six strains of live and active culture, the highest in the industry. Probiotics are so important to people's health and well-being with each strain providing a specific health benefit. goji's creamy gelato is a low-fat, healthier option to premium ice cream. Sorbets are dairy free as is our exclusive Almond Milk Yogurt; both are very attractive options for vegan and lactose intolerant consumers.

The owner of the East Point franchise, Barbara Sellars, is particularly excited about the new Almond Milk Yogurt.

"We're exclusive in Canada – goji's is the only place that offers this product," said Sellars. "Almond milk is a big buzz word for health benefits, for low sugars, not to mention that vegans and dairy-free are two of the other options. It's fun to see people come in and enjoy a texture



goji's Frozen Yogurt at East Point.

PHOTO: KEITH HAWKINS

that comes closer to an ice cream or a frozen yogurt who couldn't enjoy it before. We're trying to have something for everyone."

Sellars' landing at East Point was the fruition of her journey with the goji's clan. She had been involved in organizing grand openings for four of their stores in the Moncton-Shediac-Riverview-Dieppe area and saw it as a positive experience.

"I thought it would be a good fit," said Sellars. "The product itself and the aesthetics of the East Point site were certainly appealing, but I was also confident with the integrity of the company"

The family-owned business got off the ground with the assistance of Tom Ostoich, a primary consultant during the development of the four corporate stores.

In May 2013, Ostoich and the family partnered to create goji's Franchising Corp., which now has eight franchise locations across Canada. The closeness of family is important, says Zacharias.

"The goji's family has the opportunity to not only work together, but to use their experience to assist others to realize their goal of opening and growing their own successful business," she said. "Because goji's is family-run, every one of us is committed to making goji's a success – not just for ourselves as individuals, but because it benefits all of us. We are grateful for this opportunity; we experience the work and the reward together and we grow stronger because we are not only tied by this business, but are tied by our relationships for life."


The franchise's tag line is a 21st century catch-phrase: "keeping it real". As Zacharias states: "Those are not just words to us...we want what we serve to include premium, healthy options. We believe in using real ingredients to flavour our yogurt. When goji's was in its development phase in 2012, we were determined to present high-quality yogurt, or we wouldn't proceed with the concept"

Count Sellars as a convert.

"I think that people are becoming more health conscious," said Sellars. "Everyone still wants to have a treat, and if you can have one that has all kinds of health benefits, then it's going to be a much more attractive option. I also think people still want to take their families out, but sometimes it might end up being too expensive at times. This is an opportunity where you can spend time with your family and afford to go out. And, it can be healthy."

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