



baby love

ORGANIC BABY food is all the rage these days: It seems as though a new brand is born with each issue of *Parenting* magazine. But if you eat locally and seasonally, and would like to feed your baby in a similar fashion, the options narrow considerably. For East Bay residents, new mom, longtime Oliveto Restaurant waiter, and El Cerrito-based food writer Melissa Swanson has what you're after.

After the birth of her first son, Luke, in late 2005, the frequent *Diablo* contributor decided to create a line of seasonal baby food made from produce grown by local farmers. With the help of her mother and sister, Swanson delivered Little Bug Baby Food in June 2006.

"We got inspired to start this because we wanted babies to eat the way we always have: locally and with the seasons," says Swanson. "Feeding babies conventional foods made thousands of miles away doesn't make sense."

Swanson makes all of her baby food from scratch, and she's on a first-name basis with the farmers from whom she buys the produce. You can buy Little Bug Baby Food directly from Swanson at the Saturday Berkeley and Sunday Temescal (Oakland) farmers markets, or order home delivery from Planet Organics. Flavors include Serendipity Farm apple, Solano Avenue Farm sweet potato, and Pomo Tierra Farm Bosc pear.

Little Bug products can be purchased fresh or frozen. Prices range from \$3 to \$5 per six-ounce package. To order, visit www.littlebugbaby.com.

—Laurel Miller

jazz up dinner

MANY DIABLOLAND residents are blessed with state-of-the-art kitchens, great living rooms, vast decks and lawns, beautifully decorated living rooms, and sprawling dens. If you're lucky enough to own such a home, then you might want to take advantage of it by throwing a huge, fun, no-fuss party.

Consider In-Home Supper Club, a new service from JP Jazz Entertainment Group and Ruggiero's Italian Chef for Hire. The two small East Bay businesses, one backed by jazz vocalist Jack Pollard, the other by chef Niel Ruggiero, have joined forces to offer evenings of Italian dining and smooth jazz performance.

"This makes it really easy to have a fantastic party in your house without having to coordinate each element separately," explains Jolie Pollard, Jack's wife and a partner in JP Jazz. "And it leaves you free to enjoy the event."

At a recent supper club gathering in Concord (the service operates throughout Contra Costa and the Tri-Valley), the evening began with guests chatting over glasses of wine before filling their plates from a buffet of hearty Italian fare. The menu included pasta aglio olio with loads of fresh garlic, a classic chicken piccata, Caesar salad with chunky lemon-pepper croutons, and a delicious side dish of roasted vegetables.

After the meal, guests took seats in the living room for the first of two hour-long musical sets. Jack Pollard and two other musicians, Danny Brown on alto and tenor saxophones, and John Seppala on piano, covered familiar tunes such as "My Girl," "Route 66," "Isn't She Lovely," Al Green's "Let's Stay Together," and Stevie Wonder's "You Are the Sunshine of My Life."

The 28 guests seemed to relax a bit more with each tune, aided by Pollard's warm banter between songs. After the first set, everyone grabbed a serving of cool tiramisu and a cup of hot coffee to savor with the second.

Music from \$750; food from \$28 per person. For information, call (925) 798-2241 or visit www.jpjazz.com and www.yourchefforhire.com. —Kathryn Jessup



TOP TO BOTTOM: ROBERT J. PERRY; JOE CIARDIELLO