

LA + CI = LACI's

By Kathy Poliquin

Laura Serway and Cindy Seymour opened Laci's, a tapas bar and restaurant, about six months ago in the Hawley Avenue building that once housed the original Pascale Restaurant. As the name implies, the restaurant specializes in tapas (pronounced *tæpəs*), which are snacks, canapés or finger food that originated in Spain. Laci's motto is "Eat small. Live large."

While the restaurant's success has thus far exceeded the partners' expectations, Laci's suffers from a bit of mistaken identity. Unfortunately, when people say "tapas bar," it sometimes sounds like "topless bar," which Laci's definitely is not. Laura and Cindy want you to know that everyone is fully clothed at Laci's.

The name "Laci" is a hybrid of Laura's and Cindy's (La + Ci = Laci) first names. This is the third establishment managed and/or owned by the duo and dubbed with the moniker. The first was Laci's Coffee Café at the Regional Market, followed by Laci's Café at the Palace Theatre, then Laci's Burger Joint at the corner of Hillsdale and James in Eastwood.

While Cindy, the restaurant's chef, always yearned to own a coffee shop or café, she tabled that dream, joined the Air Force and got a degree in electrical engineering. Then she embarked on a 15-year career in law enforcement in South Florida. Cindy's dream resurfaced when her mother became terminally ill. At Laura's urging, Cindy left law enforcement and bought a little coffee shop that she and her mom could run together. "I always cooked with her; I was self-taught. I spent nine months with her, the best of my life. We became really good friends," says Cindy.

Laura says she learned about systems and procedures from the food-cost perspective during her 15 years working for a national fast-food chain.

The partners give much credit to their manager, Christa Maier, and their staff for the restaurant's growing popularity, and recently showed their appreciation by taking staffers on a day trip to New York City. "We just have fun. Really, we're like family," says Cindy. **\$**

