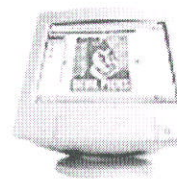


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Local anti-Atkins crowd flocks to noodle houses

By ADRIENNE FRANK
Get Out

Not everyone has gone Atkins crazy.

Exhibit A: Noodle houses are popping up all over the Valley, from south Chandler to Desert Ridge Marketplace and all corners in between. And the places are packed, with diners like Susan Pierce of Mesa who "could care less about counting carbs."

That's not news to folks like Aaron Yaun, district manager at Noodles Etc., which debuted its first location in Gilbert about two months ago. Yaun says he and his business partners weren't concerned by the segment of the market following the Atkins Diet, which calls for lots of meat and cheese and very little bread and pasta. (In other words, no noodles.)

Despite the restaurant's menu, which features about 20 noodle offerings — from pad Thai to linguine, priced at \$5.25 and up — Yaun was certain Noodles Etc. could flourish.

"Only about 20 percent of people are counting carbs. The other 80 percent like the pasta. The younger generation, especially — the kids — they like the pasta."

And apparently, they like it a lot, as Yaun currently has another three locations in the works.

Up north at Desert Ridge Marketplace, business is just as good for World Noodles, which offers about 30 gourmet noodle dishes priced around \$6. Though assistant manager Ethan Rode admits the Atkins craze has presented "a challenge."

"But," he says, "it's one that we overcame. We can always substitute rice and we have a lot of vegetable-based dishes. "But, to be honest with you, most of our clients just don't count carbs. They're health conscious, but not necessarily following the Atkins diet."

One such pro-pasta diner is Quincy Wade of Chandler.

"In the media, I think they play it up like everyone is on Atkins," says Wade between bites of udon noodles at Chandler's Nothing But Noodles. "But I don't think that's the truth.

"As for me, I've never done the Atkins thing. I'm blessed with a great metabolism."

