

BIZLIFE

This section focuses on the executive lifestyle in Washtenaw and Livingston Counties. Our next Blz Life section will appear Feb. 15.

Corporate yoga for flexible workplace wellness

BY CARRIE OLSON
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Stress, mental fatigue and declining morale are the nemesis of a high performance company.

And as health care costs rise exponentially, many managers are looking for employee wellness programs that increase productivity without breaking the bank.

Yoga in the Workplace wellness programs could be the answer for business owners who desire an affordable and flexible wellness option for employees.

Ema Stefanova, owner Ann Arbor Yoga and Meditation, has been a local yoga mainstay for almost two decades and believes yoga's value to corporate America has been vastly underestimated.

"A2 Yoga and Meditation specially designs and teaches yoga and meditation wellness programs for specific corporate and workplace environments. We offer ongoing classes, workshops, retreats and yoga and meditation vacations in the U.S. and Europe," Stefanova said.

"We work on relaxation, mental focus, creativity and physical well being... putting the emphasis on what is needed most and taking in account people's health condition and such. All of this is good for people in the workplace. There



Ema Stefanova, right, helps two of her students, Jennifer Hendershot and Dave Rein.

ROBERT RAMEY

is no such thing as one yoga fits all."

Yoga Nidra, a deep relaxation technique Stefanova teaches, renews mental energy, alleviates stress and boosts creativity, all

helping to improve effectiveness at work.

There also are practical benefits to doing holistic yoga and meditation practices in the office.

"There is no sweating so there

is no need for a shower if the class is done during the lunch hour or before work, and workers will feel more energetic during the after-

See **YOGA**, page 10



WINES
Mary Campbell

In 2007, resolve to slow down, enjoy wine

BY MARY CAMPBELL
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Wow. 2007. It is quite amazing how quickly time passes. I'm determined to slow down and enjoy life a bit more this year. One trick that always works for me is to find good new wines to enjoy and share with others. So, with hopes of slowing the pace of everyday life in 2007, I start the year with some memorable wines.

Whites

Quinta da Alorna Arintho 2005 (Portugal, Ribatejo, \$10.99)

What a lovely introduction to the Arintho grape indigenous to Portugal and can be found in the Ribatejo and Nucleas regions. Quinta da Alorna is a family-owned estate just northeast of Lisbon that has turned its attention to wine in recent years and is producing some great values. This unoaked white delivers fresh peach on the nose followed by peach, clementines and a juicy citrus finish.

Domaine Roux Pere & Fils Saint Veran 2005 (France, Saint Veran, \$19.99)

This is a lovely Chardonnay, especially for the price. Saint Veran has been known to produce bargain Burgundys and Domaine Roux Pere & Fils upholds the tradition well. A pretty nose of pineapple, minerals, and butter is followed by apples, pears and a smooth finish balanced by just the right touch of acidity.

Reds

Quinta da Alorna (Portugal, Ribatejo, \$10.99)

Here we have a red wine bargain from the family estate of Quinta da Alorna. A blend of Tinta Roriz (a.k.a. Tempranillo in Spain), Castelão, Syrah and

See **WINE**, page 10

Company sees clothing potential in bamboo

BY SONJA BRODIE
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A former automotive buyer has turned entrepreneur after a vacation in Costa Rica sparked an unusual business idea.



Greg Napolitan and his wife, Kate, an environmental engineer, came across some bed sheets made from bamboo fabric while in Central America

and loved the feel of it. "It was super soft," said Napolitan. "Why didn't they make clothes from this?"

On his return, he set out to create a brand of bamboo clothing and launched Bamboo Styles in June 2006. "I'm still in the start-up phase," said Ypsilanti-based Napolitan, who aims to break even this year.



Bamboo T-shirts.

At the moment, garments are available online, at www.bamboostylesonline.com, and at two shops, one in Ohio and one in Arizona. "Eventually my goal is to be in the stores," said Napolitan, who works full-time for the business.

But he added that the bamboo fiber "is expensive to make and still turn a profit."

Business mainly comes through word of mouth, with traffic to the Web site increasing by 10 percent each month, Napolitan said. He has not done any advertising yet, but plans to relaunch his Web site in spring and concentrate more on promotional activities and sales. Last year, he had a stall at the Burning River Fest, an annual environmental festival held in Cleveland, Ohio, and he is looking for other events to sell at.

The bamboo fiber comes from China, where it is patented by a couple of companies.

To make it, bamboo shoots are smashed to a pulp, from which small strands are extracted to make thread, Napolitan explained. Some chemicals are used in the process and this is why the bam-

boo fabric is not classed as organic but as a natural fiber.

Napolitan contracts out the manufacture of the clothing, mainly to union facilities in the U.S. The overseas facility he uses works in accordance with Social Accountability International 8000 standards. Clothes made from bamboo fiber can be machine-washed in cold water and tumble dried on low.

Bamboo can be grown without pesticides and is one of the world's fastest-growing plants – some species grow several feet a day. The fact that bamboo was a renewable and sustainable resource was a bonus for Napolitan.

"I wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been environmentally friendly," he said.

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