

EAGA Business Builder

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Today's speaker was Jarrod Taylor—Jinja Bar & Bistro



Mr. Taylor was born in Hautojärvi, Finland. (Our resident expert on Finland was in the audience and he noted that the town name means “graveyard place”). In 1981, the Taylor family moved from that relatively cold part of the world to Hot Springs, Arkansas. Jarrod liked living in Arkansas. The friendly people, good family values and generally positive attitude toward how one should live made growing up there a very good thing. But, Jarrod’s father worked for Texas Instruments and after a few years, his job required the family move to Dallas. It was during the time that Jarrod lived in Dallas that he began to make some questionable decisions. He started rooting for the Dallas Mavericks and the Dallas Cowboys. Even though Dad’s work brought the family to Rio Rancho in 1994 (over 30 years ago), Jarrod’s loyalty to the Dallas sports teams hasn’t diminished and he still maintains the positive attitude of “we’ll get ‘em next year”. The move to New Mexico has brought a lot of positive to Mr. Taylor’s life though. It was here that he met his wife Jessica. And their family has grown to include two great daughters. Jennifer is the eldest. She is now 20 years old and attending CSU in Ft. Collins, CO. Jennifer is studying biology, on her way to becoming a doctor. Youngest daughter, Jayla, is a Junior in high school, maintaining great grades and beginning to plan her own path to a future career. Jarrod and Jessica raised their daughters with the same ‘old school’ values that Jarrod experienced during his younger days in Arkansas and Mom and Dad are rightfully very proud of their two girls. Jarrod has also been able to find employment at a place that operates with a good family oriented culture. He has been with Jinja Bar & Bistro for 13 years now. That restaurant chain actually began in Santa Fe in 2002. It was a bumpy start with a loss after the first year of operation. But the attitude of ‘fix it, don’t abandon it’ led them to revise the menu and remodel the facilities. The changes brought about an almost immediate turnaround. Sales quadruples and they were off and running. In 2005 Jinja opened a location in Albuquerque’s North East Heights. Then a couple of years later they opened another restaurant on the Westside. They operate all of their restaurants with the same attitude of great food that is consistent across all three locations. The ‘vibes’ are great. Pay is good. And that family oriented culture rules their operation. Ownership/Management want to make sure that customers and staff all know that Jinja genuinely cares about them. There are now 171 employees for the three locations and they must feel the care and commitment demonstrated by management. The bartender at the Heights location has been there since they opened and some of the Westside staff have been with the company for 15 years. Jarrod has been with Jinja for 13 years and he doesn’t plan on leaving any time soon. The company’s mission statement is to make Jinja a neighborhood restaurant. They want to transport guests to another world - for a little while, by serving old fashioned Asian-Polynesian food and tropical drinks from the 1930s and 1940s. Ambiance plays a big part in the experience. Jinja’s saying is “Welcome to Paradise. No passport required”. There are vintage Tropical Asian posters and music from ‘back in those days’ by artists like The Rat Pack. And to make it even more interesting and special, each restaurant has a mural, plus original artwork, created by Gene Hackman (Yes. That Gene Hackman). All the food is made in-house; hospitality is key; and the guest is boss (even if they aren’t right all the time). Jinja has also become quite adept at catering and managing large parties (at your place or theirs). The Albuquerque location even has a 75 seat banquet room with audio/visual equipment for presentations, if needed. Jinja also shares their success with others by being supporters of various community organizations and events. If you want a very enjoyable meal, in a pleasantly unique atmosphere, where you are treated as a special guest, go to Jinja. You will find it interestingly different and fun. If you go to the NE Heights location, don’t be surprised if you discover that by chance your waiter is actually Jarrod Taylor, the Manager. In keeping with their family oriented culture, Jarrod helps out wherever is needed. And even if you think that he might already be the highest paid waiter in the place, you should still leave the appropriate tip. He won’t keep it. He’ll pass it on to some other employee that is doing exceptional work at the time.

◆ **First announcement of a new member application:**

Althera Alternative Care

Representative: Todd LeCesne

Category: Longevity & Regenerative Medicine

Sponsor: John Jain

First announcement of a new member application:

Lifetime Green Coatings

Representative: Rick Schubert

Category: Concrete Floor Coatings

Sponsor: Rich Ringrose

If you have an objection to either of these companies becoming a member, or if you have information that you feel should be considered during the review process, please contact Membership Committee Chairman John Menicucci (phone: 505-379-7083 or email: jam@bergerbriggs.com) as soon as possible.

Badge Board Greeters

Feb 11th John Woods—PHOCUS Real Estate

Feb 18th Michael Kocurek—Atmosphere Commercial Interiors

Feb 25th Kevin Lorenzen—Aflac

Mar 04th Frank McCallister—Color New Mexico

Mar 11th Josh Schriber—Schriber Designs

Mar 18th John Jain—High Desert Doppler

Mar 25th Nestor Romero—The Payroll Company

Apr 01st

Scheduled Speakers

Feb 11th Paul Jew—Moji Cinema

Feb 18th Mike Krepfl—AAA Pumping

Feb 25th Larry Sonntag—New Mexico Business Coalition

Mar 04th John Jain—High Desert Doppler

Mar 11th Walter Bracken—BMC Tactical

Mar 18th Jack Thompson—Guild Mortgage

Mar 25th

Apr 01st John Mead—John Thomas Jewelers

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