

Fast food for the health conscious



MICHAEL KARAS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Godfather features grilled chicken breast, portobello mushrooms, red roasted peppers and reduced-fat mozzarella.

Englewood restaurant offers low-fat fare

By **AMY KUPERINSKY**
SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

Gary Rockman and Karen Merchant frequently saw each other at their gym in Edgewater. They also liked to visit the local Muscle Maker Grill, a fast-casual restaurant that serves protein shakes and low-carb, high-energy foods.

"Both of us had tried it and we thought it was terrific," said Merchant. Rockman decided to buy a Muscle Maker franchise in May and Merchant stepped in as co-owner.

After a renovation, Rockman and Merchant opened the 32-seat eatery on Oct. 18 at the former location of a women's clothing store on East Palisade Avenue in Englewood. The storefront has a red and silver color scheme, with stools and chair backs that sport barbell designs.

Merchant and Rockman are proud to say that they have no deep fryers and their customers include fitness enthusiasts who visit up to three times daily.

The franchise has locations across New Jersey and New York City as well as Florida. Rod Silva opened the first Muscle Maker Grill in 1995 after selling protein shakes in Colonia, Middlesex County.

Muscle Maker's protein shakes, containing whey and soy protein, are served in 32-

MARKETPLACE: MUSCLE MAKER GRILL

Muscle Maker Grill is
at 51 E. Palisade Ave.,
Englewood; 201-568-2110;
musclemakergrill.com

ounce cups in flavors including chocolate peanut butter, "snappy apple" and strawberry banana.

Entrees, centered largely on grilled chicken – with tilapia, shrimp or steak offered as substitutes – include "power pasta," made with Cajun chicken, chicken

with reduced-fat vodka sauce or sesame chicken and teriyaki, available with whole wheat or regular pasta.

"Guiltless entrees" include turkey chili served over brown rice with reduced-fat cheddar cheese and fat-free sour cream. Low-carb options served over broccoli include the "Godfather," made with grilled chicken breast, portobello mushrooms, red roasted peppers and reduced-fat mozzarella with fat-free balsamic vinaigrette.

Wraps include the Rocky Balboa, made with grilled chicken breast and turkey meatballs.

Salads are prepared with zero-carb, low-carb or fat-free dressings. Vegetarian options are a veggie wrap, brown rice and beans and penne with marinara.

Desserts include sugar-free cheesecake and packaged protein cookies. Forthcoming are high-fiber muffins.

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