

God Will Make A Way

Claudia was managing another local restaurant when God began to tug at the Rothmans' hearts. They would be led to exchange one of their properties at Dancing Leaf Mountain for the building which now is The Tropical Grill. "The Lord directed our steps at every turn," Claudia said. The series of events leading up to their choice to open the restaurant again affirmed God's plan. "I have no idea where we're going from here," Sam said. But, for now, the couple is enjoying a blessed launch of their successful business.

The menu at The Tropical Grill is extensive, boasting traditional South American dishes, unlike any found in this mountain village. But they also offer traditional American favorites like Philly-Cheese steak and hearty cheeseburgers. "People are surprised that we have so many

choices," Claudia exclaimed. A full breakfast menu, both tropical and traditional in nature, is offered all day. "This is a popular option with many people," Sam said. It's a unique dining experience heightened by the sacred music from Billy Graham's 106.9 "The Light" radio station.

Various Mayan products are displayed throughout the small dining room as well as on the outside patio. There are vibrant photographs of village

markets, colorful accessories, and some of the Mayan people crafting their special wares. Inside and out is a treat for the eye with a kaleidoscope of brilliant color. And somewhat subtly, their sign proclaims.... "Dancing Leaf Mountain

Imports presents The Tropical Grill" – Get it? A ministry presents the restaurant©!



Sam and daughter Natasha inspect products at Guatemalan market



Sam & Claudia Rothman with missionaries Cindy and Dennis McCutcheon



Philly cheese steak is a favorite at Tropical Grill

"By purchasing our products people support the Guatemalan people in many ways. Putting money into the local economy helps entire villages; and a little goes a long way! Secondly, proceeds go back to the McCutcheons' mission in Guatemala so they can provide vital medical services to the local people. But, most important it helps us reach Guatemalans with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," said Rothman.

"We negotiate the best prices we can for the beautiful Mayan pieces. We then explain our intent to export and resell the products in America, using the profits to provide support for the McCutcheon's ministry. It's a win all the way around, for local crafts persons and artisans, for American consumers, for Dennis and Cindy McCutcheon, and for Vine International which now can take funds originally needed for maintenance in Guatemala and use them elsewhere.

Meanwhile, back at The Tropical Grill...

Cooking for Christ

Claudia lovingly prepares every dish on the unique, extensive menu. And her 'presentation' enhances the gastronomic delight regardless of food choice. It is no accident that Christian music wafts softly from behind the curtain which conceals her tiny kitchen. Her enthusiasm for the Holy Spirit's leading and presence at Tropical Grill is palpable. Claudia loves the Lord Jesus Christ and is known to sing along with the sacred tunes -- even dance to the glory of God -- as she works.

Asked about her involvement with the ministry in Guatemala, Claudia quietly explains, "I stay here, cook and run the restaurant, and make the money needed for us to keep the ministry alive." The Rothman's day begins early and ends late – food preparation and meal planning consume early mornings and she'll cook until the last customer is served. "I am doing what I love," she says.

"The restaurant business and serving others are God's gifting for me so I am always happy to be here." Her life Scripture, Colossians 3:23-24, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of

the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." In addition to serving her guests, Claudia considers working with young people another of her ministries. "I love being with the young people who work here. I am able to share the Lord with our staff and help them realize that God loves them," she said. "We are like a small family here."



Hummus pita helps fund mission in Guatemala

Sam, her life and business partner, can be found out front heartily welcoming new guests and returning friends. With slight encouragement, this architect – turned missionary– now maitre 'd, will share his and Claudia's "calling" to minister to the Mayan people in Guatemala. Frequently he is summoned to the tiny kitchen to help Claudia serve customers. "She's pretty tough on me," Sam laughs. "And she makes me wear an apron, no exceptions!"

Selfless Offerings

Days from going to press, this reporter sat inside The Tropical Grill and observed Sam Rothman helping a lady who had called in a food order. She told him how much she enjoys Claudia's cooking and the varied menu offered at the restaurant. "This is one of my favorite places, anywhere," she exclaimed. "And I love what you're doing, supporting missions in South America. I've been there and the people are wonderful." Sam smiled, thanked her for the compliments on the food and immediately suggested she should go to Guatemala to see what God is doing there. He passed her a brochure on Dancing Leaf Mountain Imports and suggested she check out the website. "We are committed to making a difference for these people," Sam said. "God is doing amazing things here and we are blessed beyond our wildest dreams. One thing I've learned is that there are no 'accidents' with God, He knows exactly what He is doing and we are privileged to be a small part of it."

The lady thanked Sam, again, and went on her way. I looked at him and he smiled, "So many come here to find Jesus," he said gladly. And I must agree. After all, it's a ministry first ... but mercy sakes they make great food!

For further information please visit [www.thetropicalgrill.com](http://www.thetropicalgrill.com), [www.dancingleafmountain.com](http://www.dancingleafmountain.com), or call 765-0909. Better yet, pay Sam and Claudia a visit...you will be blessed.

Weekend Festival

Saturdays are a treat at this mountain diner. Rothman assembles an elaborate collage of imported treasures for residents and visitors to Spruce Pine. In fact, he recently received approval from the City of Spruce Pine to begin "The Upper Street Sidewalk Festival" each Saturday, beginning at 10:00am, for artists and vendors wanting to display and merchandise their work. Rothman proclaims success for the event, saying, "I am very pleased and the other merchants appear likewise. It's just another jewel in the crown of our 'gem city'." To be sure, Rothman's products are beautiful, the prices reasonable and the profits help build the Kingdom of God...and don't forget, the food at Tropical Grill is marvelous.



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