

A short history of the Moxie vision...

ARE YOU CRAZY?

Some have asked me, “What’s a microbiologist like you doing in the restaurant business; are you crazy?” I will attempt to explain...

I have had the honor and privilege of leading Hardy Diagnostics, a biomedical manufacturing company, for 35 years. Our company is headquartered in Santa Maria, where it has been for over 24 years, and is located across the street from the Moxie Café on McCoy Lane.

Ever since moving to Santa Maria, I noticed there was a tragic lack of high quality and healthy places to eat. I have an extreme sensitivity to MSG that has landed me in the Emergency Room twice. Consequently, I felt some frustration over the deficiency of healthful restaurant options.

I have always wanted to find a restaurant where I could eat with confidence knowing that whoever was making the food was as committed to healthy food as I was. I was very disappointed to learn that restaurants I thought were “safe” and that claimed to be “natural” were cutting corners and using MSG in their spices. I was also concerned about the lack of local organic farm-to-table food options and the use of artery-clogging trans-fats and cheaper oils that most restaurants routinely use. My search for a healthy place to eat in the Santa Maria area



Jay Hardy, part-owner and founder of the Moxie Café

came up short for a place I could completely trust. I kept telling my wife Anne, “We shouldn’t have to drive to Santa Barbara or San Luis Obispo to find a place to eat!”

That’s when I decided to quit complaining and do something about it!

First, I talked to a well-respected chef on the Central Coast named Ryan Gromfin. Ryan completely understood my vision for a healthy place to eat. As you probably know, combining healthy eating and good taste don’t always go together. However, Ryan put together an amazing menu with exciting recipes that were both healthy and actually tasted good. Delicious healthy food was no longer an oxymoron!



Our goal was to create a selection of fresh, wholesome foods you could eat day-after-

day, feel satisfied afterwards (not bloated and sluggish), and not gain weight. We wanted to source our food locally and go organic whenever possible. We wanted to completely ban trans-fats, fried foods, and MSG from the premises. We wanted to create a place where our guests would not be tempted to eat things that are not good for them and their children.

We also committed to keeping sugar, especially high fructose corn syrup, to a minimum by not offering the usual soda fountain options. *What?! That's heresy in the restaurant business! Everyone knows that's where the biggest profits are.* While true, I never want to serve anything to my guests that I would not serve to my own family. Yes, sodas are banned from the Hardy household. My two sons sometimes wish they had been adopted by someone else!

Next, I found an architect with whom I immediately clicked. Bryce Engstrom proved to have a very creative eye for fashioning a space that was warm, inviting, comfortable, and fun to be in. I hope you agree with the results!

Finally, I hired a man of many talents, Ron Lovell, to be our General Manager. Ron has been a successful leader in the restaurant business for 25 years, and he jumped at the chance to manage an establishment that was both unique and innovative. Ron was thrilled at the possibility of working in an atmosphere of creativity and independence, rather than just marching to the tune of the distant corporate franchise headquarters.

So there you have it. That's the history and vision of the Moxie Café. I hope you have captured the same enthusiasm for healthy eating and wholesome food as we have. All of us at the Moxie are committed to our mission, which is to *"Promote healthy living and make lots of friends."*

Come join us and give us a chance to fulfill that mission!



Serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner.