

# Owner grew up in family food business



Rich Miller / The Star

**The Big Weg:** A large sub sandwich is just one of the offerings at J.Weg's Deli, owned by Jim Weghorst, 44. He went to work at age 14 and learned the food business from his uncle Joe O'Malia. The deli's menu includes gourmet lunch and dinner entrees to go.

## Deli serves up wide variety

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Amelia Saenz found the name J.Weg's Deli appealing.

"It sounded to me like it would have quality food to offer," she said.

Saenz was among first patrons of the deli that opened last week in a strip of stores near 96th Street and College Avenue in the unincorporated village of Home Place, a small enclave tucked in the midst of Carmel, with the Marion County line on its south edge.

Deli owner Jim Weghorst, who used part of his name to create the eatery's title, knows the food business.

The name of his uncle, the

### HOME PLACE

late Joe O'Malia, still graces a half-dozen O'Malia Food Markets in the Indianapolis area.

Weghorst, 44, went to work at age 14 in his uncle's first O'Malia's market, which still is operating at 104th Street and College Avenue in Home Place.

"I loved my uncle Joe, so I went to work for him," said Weghorst, whose mother, the late Joan O'Malia Weghorst, was Joe O'Malia's sister.

He's been in the food business ever since, working into management in O'Malia's



**Family influence:** Photos decorate the walls of J.Weg's Deli at 96th Street and College Avenue in Home Place.

See Deli, Page NA2

# Deli

■ Owner left shortly after Marsh bought markets.

## From NA1

markets, with a brief stint at Caito Foods, before returning to the family's business.

He continued with O'Malia's for awhile after Marsh Supermarkets bought the stores, but then moved on.

"I decided to leave and go out and do something on my own," he said.

With the help of a business broker, Weghorst leased the 1,800-square-foot space that had housed a cafeteria.

"I came back here where I spent so many years," he said, recalling the years spent at the O'Malia's market about eight blocks north along College.

"I totally gutted and changed this place," said Weghorst of his deli, which offers submarine, wrap, grilled and specialty Italian sandwiches, along with soups and salads.

Weghorst also offers gourmet lunch and dinner entrees to go, such as chicken cacciatore, lasagna bolognese and salmon with dill sauce, created daily by Tavola di Tosa, an Italian restaurant in Broad Ripple.

Weghorst said he met Anthony Hanslits, owner of Tavola di Tosa, through a mutual friend, and they reached agreement to supply the daily gourmet entrees to the deli.

The wide variety of deli offerings on the shelves and in the meat and cheese section suited Saenz just fine.

She stocked up on an Italian

ham called prosciutto, as well as chips, peach mango salsa and other goodies.

"This is for lunch and snacking," said a delighted Saenz, as she carried a sack filled with goodies back to her office a few blocks away.

"I'll be coming in for lunch," said Saenz, who has periodic business with Press 96 Printing, a commercial copying firm next door to the deli.

Norm Melzer, Press 96 Printing owner, said J.Weg's has the atmosphere and offerings to make it an authentic deli.

"It's real impressive what he did," Melzer said.

He also was impressed that Weghorst's family, neighbors and friends assisted him in the preparations to open.

Among them was Weghorst's brother, Bill Weghorst, 52. Both brothers are married with children and live in Carmel.

They grew up on Indianapolis' Northside; Jim graduated from Cathedral High School, Bill from Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School.

Like his younger brother, Bill Weghorst grew up in the O'Malia's food business, also starting out at the market at 104th and College.

Since the mid-1990s, Bill Weghorst has owned and operated Broccoli Bill's, a market at 15009 Gray Road, between Westfield and Noblesville.

The two brothers simply are following the family tradition of their uncle, who began as a stock boy for Kroger's in 1938, and who created and owned seven O'Malia Food Markets at the time of his death in 1996.

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