



Green Giant

Story | JEAN CIAMPI Photography | MORRIS MALAKOFF

Born with a natural curiosity and an alchemist's heart for wanting to turn trash into gold, Federico Marques built a successful career at Bayer Chemicals, working his way up from summer intern to the head of quality control in North America, where he was responsible for recycling waste material into sellable products. It wasn't until he became plagued with allergies in the late 1980s, though, that he really became serious about going green.

"I started reading lots of NASA research and talking to their engineers about indoor allergies and air quality," says Marques, who soon moved into a new apartment without many of the synthetic materials that off-gas harmful chemicals, developed an air purifier that currently has a patent pending, and began giving presentations to green builders on cleaner construction trends.

In 2007, having left Bayer to become the president and CEO of Swedish software company IC Potential, Marques picked up a

side interest and opened Ruggles Green in January. Houston's only Certified Green Restaurant™, Marques worked with the Green Restaurant Association to insure the location was responsibly constructed for sustainability and had a minimal environmental footprint. Ruggles Green now implements a full recycling program including their cooking oil, serves an organic and all-natural menu, and puts their servers in T-shirts made from bamboo.

Marques sees the restaurant as his laboratory, a place for continually finding ways to improve efficiency, reduce waste and be a better environmental citizen. Each change and improvement is methodically documented.

An owner and director of Green Café Management—and currently on the board of directors for the Baytown Wetlands Center—Marques envisions a cleaner future. He believes "the wave of environmental activism is coming," and he intends to stay on the cutting edge of it. ♣