

## [Café Yumm! expands "fast-casual"](#)

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BY SUSAN G. HAUSER // PHOTOS BY ADAM BACHER



**Mark and Mary Ann Beauchamp, founders of Café Yumm!, have opened a new location at Portland State University**

was no signage or anything.”

Not an auspicious beginning for a business that according to *Inc.* magazine is now the No. 1 fastest-growing food and beverage company in Oregon and No. 27 in the nation. For the past three years the company has appeared on the magazine’s annual list of the 5,000 fastest-growing private companies in America.



Settling on a name for Mark and Mary Ann Beauchamp’s new enterprise was simple. They just listened to what their customers usually exclaimed — “Yumm!” — whenever they tried the special dish Mary Ann prepared at the couple’s tiny Eugene café. That nutritious but delicious dish, which wasn’t even listed on the menu, would launch their growing restaurant business.

**Café Yumm!**, complete with exclamation mark, was born in downtown Eugene in 1997, taking over the little café’s space. Now there are 10 locations in Oregon. The latest opened in early June at Portland State University’s new recreation center, and future plans call for taking the franchised, health-conscious “fast casual” restaurants to Seattle and eventually to California.

It all started in 1993 at Wild Rose Café & Deli, where Mary Ann was the cook. Mark was a managing broker for a real estate company while his wife, who’d traveled widely as an Army brat, created global cuisine for the café tucked in a basement corner of the Fifth Street Public Market.

“You had to be taken there to find it,” recalls Mark Beauchamp, Café Yumm!’s president and CEO. “There

**Cafe Yumm!**  
[www.cafeyumm.com](http://www.cafeyumm.com)

**Founded:** 1997

**2009 gross revenue:**  
\$8.5 million

**Employees:** 190

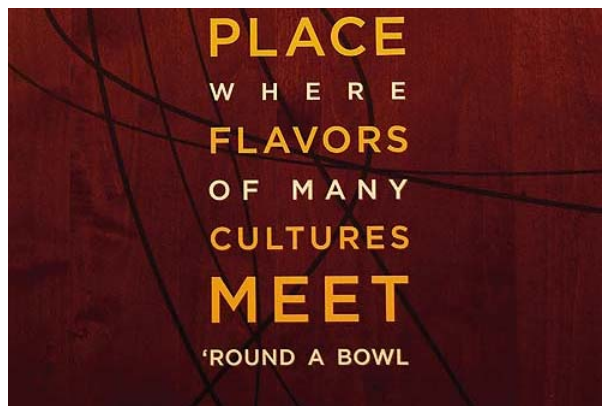
**Headquarters:** Eugene

**Number of locations:**  
10

**Bottles of Yumm!  
Sauce sold:** 1.8 million

Mary Ann’s tasty concoction of organic brown rice, beans, veggie toppings, salsa and a creamy sauce — something she whipped up in her own kitchen from canola oil, nutritional yeast and soy sauce to make her toddler daughter eat her vegetables — wasn’t even on the menu. But those in the know knew to ask for it, and they told their friends.

Faced with rising demand for just one hugely popular dish, the Beauchamps decided to focus on what they called



the Yumm! Bowl, with its layers of ingredients, including Mary Ann's special sauce, now dubbed Yumm! Sauce. Wild Rose Café & Deli was transformed into the first Café Yumm! in 1997, joined in 1999 by a second Eugene location and in 2002 by a third.

Between the openings of the second and third locations, Beauchamp joined his wife full-time in operating and developing the business. After the third location was up and running, they decided to take a serious look at franchising.

"We had been asked about that for many years," Mark Beauchamp says. "But when you have one or two locations and you're struggling just to make ends meet, you can't think about how in the world you're going to train somebody else to do what you do."

The couple created a vision statement when they first launched Café Yumm! and they wanted to make sure they could hold to it. Most important was maintaining a triple bottom line, with equal emphasis on social, environmental and economic goals. They wondered if franchising would be the best way to make their business grow while furthering their values of promoting healthy living by delivering reasonably priced, nutritious and delicious food in a "green" location.

"When I learned more about franchising and the industry, I came to realize that was what we had to do," Beauchamp says. In 2005 they created Beau Delicious! International as their franchising entity. The Beauchamps kept three Eugene restaurants as their own franchises and put one Eugene location under the ownership of Beau Delicious! Being owners and franchisees makes their business stronger, they believe. "I think it's valuable for us to operate restaurants so we know it from the ground level," he says.

Their initial goal of opening 50 locations in five years was thwarted by the recession, but with 10 locations (four in Eugene, two in Springfield, and one each in Corvallis, Bend, Beaverton and Portland) and a growth rate of 279% over the last four years, "I think that bodes well for us as the economy slowly comes back," Beauchamp says.

Mary Ann Beauchamp, first and foremost a cook, recently cut back on her involvement in the business so she could return to the creativity of her own kitchen. But Café Yumm! remains a family operation. That little girl whose finicky eating inspired the creation of the Yumm! Sauce, 30-year-old Jessica Beauchamp, now runs the company's production kitchen. 📺

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