

Café Yumm! opens in east Vancouver

Fast-casual restaurant focuses on healthy, organic menu items

By [Gordon Oliver](#), Columbian business editor

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Information

What: Café Yumm!

Where: Mill Plain Crossing, 500 SE 192nd Ave., Vancouver.

Phone: 360-737-9866 (YUMM).

Hours: 10:30am to 10pm Mondays through Fridays; 11am to 9pm Saturdays; 11am to 8pm Sundays.

Web: www.cafeyumm.com

Add another choice to the ever-growing list of locations to buy healthy fast-food meals: [Café Yumm](#), in the Mill Plain Crossing shopping center at 500 S.E. 192nd Ave.

The restaurant, which opened June 18, is the first local franchise of a small Eugene, Ore.-based chain that markets a healthy menu that relies heavily on locally grown organic ingredients while marketing social consciousness almost as much as its menu.

Café Yumm has just 18 locations, including one other Washington location, in Seattle, and six others in the Portland metropolitan area. Its menu features trademarked Yumm! Bowls with names like Hot N' Jazzy and Yumm! Baby. One sandwich is called the Deli Lama and there's a salad named the Secret Asian Man. (Remember that 1960s Johnny Rivers song, "Secret Agent Man"?). Most popular is the simply named Original Yumm! Bowl, offered in three sizes priced from \$5.25 to \$7.25, says Liz Smith, owner of the new Vancouver franchise as well as the Portland restaurant near Portland State University. The company says that more than 50 percent of the food served at Café Yumm is certified organic.



Café Yumm, based in Eugene, Ore., has opened its first location in Clark County at Mill Plain Crossing, Southeast 192nd Avenue and Mill Plain Boulevard. (Natalie Behring/The Columbian)



An interior view of new business Café Yumm in Vancouver. (Natalie Behring/The Columbian)



The new Cafe Yumm in Vancouver has been welcomed "with open arms," says franchise owner Liz Smith. (Natalie Behring/The Columbian)



Dominique Robertson takes a customer's lunch order at fast-casual restaurant Cafe Yumm in east Vancouver. (Natalie Behring/The Columbian)

But the restaurant is also selling high-minded environmental and social values, reflective of its origins in Eugene's liberal social environment. Its website lists the company's core values as "serve humanity," "build relationships" and "improve the world." Its purpose statement is "to nourish humanity and the world." It places high importance on recycling, composting, and donating to local nonprofits in communities where it is located.

Smith says she is working hard to bring those values to fruition at her new east Vancouver location. The Portland resident was the company's fourth franchise owner when she opened her Café Yumm in Portland five years ago. There, she met business customers who were buying food to take to Vancouver, and she worked hard to find a suitable location for a Vancouver site. When another prospective franchisee found the Mill Plain Crossing site and then pulled out, Smith seized the opportunity.

While the so-called fast-casual restaurant niche is growing rapidly, Smith says she welcomes local competition because she thinks customers are drawn to an area with numerous dining choices. She sees the nearby Five Guys hamburger restaurant and Mod Pizza as drawing from the same customer base with very different offerings. So far, she said, Vancouver has embraced Café Yumm.

"We have been welcomed with open arms," Smith said. "We love our guests so far." She is particularly proud of the look and feel of the newly built restaurant.

With 20 employees, Smith acknowledges that her staff is working through a learning curve in these early weeks. She is eager to improve operations and to teach the employees how to increase their recycling and composting to make the restaurant "be the best we can be" on environmental issues.

Café Yumm has its origins in a Eugene restaurant called Wild Rose Café & Deli, launched in 1991 by Mary Ann Beauchamp. In 1997, Beauchamp and her husband, Mark, opened the first Café Yumm. Two others followed in Eugene, and in 1997 the couple turned to franchising to expand their model. The company expects to steadily grow its franchise-owned restaurants and is licensed to operate in Oregon, Washington, and California, Smith said.

Editor's note: This story was changed to correct the number of restaurant locations and the amount of time Liz Smith has owned her Portland franchise.