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I'm going to miss Café Yumm! when I graduate

In My Opinion: Absolutely Fabulous

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I bid adieu to the University in less than three months. My Eugene lifestyle that I have at last grown accustomed to will soon swing a 180 when I march into the corporate world this June. There are many things I will miss about this small city, but the food offered here is frankly incomparable.

I have traveled a lot in my day but have never witnessed such a fantastic industry on which Eugene thrives: healthy fast food. I had never been exposed to restaurants that supported organic farmers, valued their consumers' health and recognized people's time-pressed lifestyles. From Café Yumm! to Laughing Planet to Holy Cow Café, healthful cafés are the norm in Eugene.

Café Yumm! feels like my second-home. I dine there at least two times a week - the Hot 'n' Jazzy bowl, Ginger-Garlic Veggie Burger and Yumm! Bento top my list - and always have a bottle of the signature Yumm! sauce in my fridge for home-crafted bowls.

This has been going on since I moved here. The minute I first tasted Yumm! sauce I knew we would have a long-lasting relationship. It's easy to maintain one in Eugene; there are five locations throughout Lane County alone, but for those of us outside this Café Yumm! haven, quick, affordable eateries are a rarity.

My California hometown with a population of nearly 50,000 residents doesn't offer a single vegetarian restaurant, let alone a takeout joint committed to providing a guilt-free menu.

Due to American consumers' obsession with "going green," entrepreneurs and established commercial gurus alike are investing in the food industry trend that Café Yumm! represents.

Food industry forecasters predict that casual, healthy dining will be a big trend in 2008, fueled by organic and local products. Eugene has practiced this restaurant protocol for years already, but the rest of the country has been slow to catch on.

Recently, I have been preaching more than the palatable goodness of Yumm! sauce because the café's wildly ambitious franchise plan will soon bring Café Yumm! to the San Francisco Bay Area.

Café Yumm!'s foundation is genius for our generation. Twenty-somethings are on the go 24/7 with stringent time constraints, on the forefront of the eco-friendly wave and surrounded by candid coverage of our country's health epidemics, many caused by unwholesome, trans fat-filled eating habits.

What I most admire about the café is that it doesn't try to market itself as a hippie, alternative restaurant. It doesn't make carnivores feel uncomfortable or ostracized (the menu offers chicken skewers, salmon burgers and turkey sandwiches). It doesn't brag to customers about its sustainability; it just is.

So, if you live in Eugene and have not tried Café Yumm!, do yourself a favor and immediately leave your house. It does a body good.

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