



From the Floor Up

Eugene's restaurant entrepreneurs do it all

BY MECCA RAY-ROUSE & JULIE WINSEL
PHOTOS BY DOMINICK BARBERO

EUGENE IS A CULINARY DESTINATION, paired beautifully with our beer, wine, and burgeoning cider and distillery scenes. We have a reputation of serving food that is sourced locally, dietary restriction friendly, and celebrates all cultures. The Eugene food scene is diverse, with thousands of voices contributing to how we fill our bellies.

There are many restaurant entrepreneurs who have found great success in Eugene and become influencers in their own right, setting the bar high for anyone wishing to break into the scene. We talked to six local entrepreneurs to gain their insight and inspiration: Steve Mertz (Laughing Planet, Tacovore, The Wheel Apizza Pub), Arna “B” Khongkhaning (Ta Ra Rin, Blu Mist), Tim Murff and Mon Sutthiwari (Sabai, Novo), Stephanie Pearl Kimmel (Excelsior Café, King Estate, Marché), and Mark Beauchamp (Café Yumm!).

There were many common threads among these entrepreneurs when it came to secrets of their success. Among them: taking it slow and expecting success to take time, a deep attention to detail, listening to customers and adjusting when things aren't quite right, and appreciating your staff. You also have to be willing and able to fully commit yourself to your restaurant, making it your true passion and accepting, rolling with, and adapting to any issues that arise.

All six of these owners have more than a decade of experience (a few have much more), but all started small, working from the ground up to build their businesses, help others with theirs, and take on new challenges as expansions occur and new locations open.

The love for Eugene is another common thread. While owning a business forces you to grow roots, that love has extended beyond simply needing to be close to their restaurant.

“The quality of life,” Kimmel says, “it's just the mountains, the ocean, the beautiful valley, the beautiful, productive valley. We're so lucky to live here.”

To read more even about these restaurant entrepreneurs, visit www.eugenemagazine.com.





MARK BEAUCHAMP

Mark and Mary Anne Beauchamp, founders of Café Yumm!, have always had the goal to feed people food that is “simple, nourishing, and beautiful.” They’ve kept this belief system from the very beginning, when they opened Wild Rose Café and Deli in the Friendly Market in 1991.

At Wild Rose, Mary Ann would cook and serve everything, including casseroles, soups, deli foods, and rice bowls, incorporating her love for food and diverse taste memory from a childhood that involved multiple international moves. The rice bowls started gaining a following. Mary Ann would make herself one for lunch every day, topping it with a special sauce brought from home. Curious patrons would ask her what she was eating and she would fix them some of it.

Their response: “Yumm!”

In 1997, through many trials, tribulations, location moves, and refining the now-famous Yumm! sauce, their first official Café Yumm! location opened in the Fifth Street Public Market, with the rice bowl as the main focus.

As they continue to grow, Mark says that it’s been important for them to evolve their strategies to meet new layers of challenges. But, they’ve always maintained the goal of feeding people with nourishing food, with a compassion that shines throughout their business.

They’ve held true to their core values—integrity, enthusiasm, gratitude, and respect—since the first Café Yumm! location—the secret to their success as a company. 🍴

Clockwise from top left: Café Yumm! president and co-founder Mark Beauchamp at one of the first locations at the Meridian. The Yumm! Bowl, paired with a bottle of local cider, keeping those Northwest flavors strong. Mark Beauchamp is heavily involved with all elements of the business, always understanding where the responsibility needs to be. The Meridian location opened in 1999.

Here Comes the Yumm!



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