

ISSUE 30 | DECEMBER 2020 / JANUARY 2021  
SHARING THE DIRECTION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND COMMUNITIES



# COMPASS

**FEATURE ARTIST**

**FRANCIS DICK**

*THE SOULFUL WOLF OF KAWADILIKALA*



**WE ARE ART**  
A GIFT GUIDE  
TO LOCAL ART

**EAT LOCAL**  
AN ODE TO OUR  
COMMUNITIES

**WELLNESS ARTIST**  
LOU-ANN IKA'WEGA NEEL  
ARTIST + CURATOR

**A PIECE OF THE PIE**  
ON THE FLY CAFÉ  
AT YQQ



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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

KEALY DONALDSON



# A PIECE OF THE PIE

ON THE FLY CAFÉ AT YQQ

***It's no secret... small and medium sized businesses*** have been hit quite hard through this time of Covid Pandemic. Some have closed to either re-open later or possibly never at all, and some through perseverance, tears and bit of magic have been able to pull through. With a flair for more than just on the go foods, On The Fly Café, in YQQ Comox Airport, has been able to do a full turnaround from their business model of just a few months ago.

"Adapt and change," laughs Andrea Wagemaker, Co-owner of On The Fly. "We were able to recreate the café's product lines and services through supporting other incredible local Food and Beverage vendors." So much so that this directional change has On The Fly nominated for Comox Valley Chamber's COVID Business Resiliency Award, sponsored by the BDC. Now you ask, how'd they do it? On The Fly went from having multiple flights of foot traffic built into their daily routine to a minimal amount of flights and needed to find the next level and layer of business to keep their business alive.

As Spring 2020 coasted by with most of us tucked away at home, Summer time emerged and that's when Wagemaker developed a brilliant idea. "We were already working with the YQQ Management Team on incorporating more local vendors into our product lines under the 'Island Good' program," she says "so it made sense to find a product that everyone loves and would come

to us, as a destination for pick up. It was late spring and I thought that everyone loves an incredible pie. So that was it, the Café started marketing fruit pies and a new clientele appeared. It is truly heart warming to see the incredible progress made in only a few months, and the support from the locals is overwhelmingly generous."

Erin Neely, Market Development Manager at YQQ, filled us in on the changes at the airport and how quickly On The Fly Café adapted to their new Pie model. "YQQ had restricted access as soon as the pandemic hit. The airport's policy was strict, no mask=no entry, and if you were not a passenger, no entry. It was devastating to both the café and gift shop on site. We lost flights and foot traffic, and our amazing team of volunteer ambassadors were no longer accessing services on site," she says. "So when On The Fly presented their re-launch using Andrea's Pie Model, we were on board with helping them get back on track. We had already been working towards Island Good which focused on locally grown or produced products. The airport was happy to arrange the take out window to better facilitate physical distancing, and to provide access to those currently restricted from entering."

On The Fly started with fruit pies and literally got off the ground during the summer season and the pies started to fly! "We can't thank our customers enough for believing in our products and services. You are the reason we are still open. Once we saw that the Pie Model was working and revenues were climbing, I knew we



needed to plan for the next level. The café was able to partner with local beverage producers and we added a line of hearty dinner pies to complement the concept. Pairing Beaufort Vineyard and Gladstone Brewing products with our dinner and dessert pies was going to help us continue to build our menu and serve our clients' needs in a different capacity than we had before," Wagemaker explained.

On The Fly now is not only serving incredible apple, peach, and berry dessert pies, but dinner pie classics like Roasted Chicken pot pie, Traditional Tourtière and Pulled Pork n Mushroom now adorn the new menu and have all been well received. The Café is licensed, so customers have the opportunity to pair a pie, pick up and go, with a beautiful bottle of Beaufort's Ca Beautage, which is blend of 100% Beaufort grapes, Raven Moon Cider or Gladstone's local epic brews—it doesn't get much better than this.

Beaufort Vineyards was also adapting their business model with the changing times, and they were the first Tasting Room to reopen, by appointment, on Vancouver Island. As the Beaufort team focused on the positives in their own transition, they found success in creating "the full experience," socially distanced, for inbound guests and wine connoisseurs. Much like On The Fly, Beaufort's high-season foot traffic changed from over 200 visitors per day to 36 based on their return-to-work Covid Safety Plan. Beaufort pushed their online sales, created a greater platform for their Wine Club and got back to doing what they do best: growing-fermenting-bottling some of the most amazing wine right from the Comox Valley's rich soil.

"I'm particularly passionate about raising the awareness of this region for wine on Vancouver Island and in BC," says Katie Phelan, Beaufort's Sales and Marketing

guru. "One of our favourite new concepts is our Private Virtual Tastings. Our Vineyard rep visits your group via Zoom, along with a minimum purchase of six bottles to share and enjoy. The feedback has been universally positive and we are grateful." Beaufort's onsite wine store will be open the first three weekends in December, 10am to 3pm, for purchases and pickups.

Gladstone Brewery has taken leaps and bounds to get themselves behind the bar again and their business has changed throughout the past few months. Now boasting a killer Burger menu for takeout, Gladstone is gearing up to release two seasonal selections this winter. Plan to see these in cans, versus kegs, but get ready for their Imperial Dessert Stout featuring flavours of Victoria's Fernwood Coffee, nuts and coconut along with their famous Anniversary Beer for their 6th birthday! Sarah Nolette, Gladstone's Sales and Events Manager is happy to see local vendors like On the Fly include their products. "Grab your 4-pack of Gladstone with your pie order! It's a perfect pairing."

It's taken a lot of ingenuity for these businesses to remain open and create a special product and experience for their customers. Many have moved to a different business model to pick up their missing revenues and make it work in this critical time of change. So: support, recommend and purchase as local as you can! Your purchases keep the economic impact of the local dollar alive. A big 'hats off' to all the businesses that have been able to adapt and survive and a special congratulations to On The Fly Café and the owners Andrea and Jackie! Keep going ladies!

