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Marriage and Family Therapy grad students Shera Davis and Stephanie Belcher eat lunch at the Flying Dog Café and Deli.
 Mark McCambridge
 Emerald

Flying Dogs Cafe appeals to late-night customers

New cafe and deli near campus features both upscale and low-budget meals, as well as student-friendly dining hours

Jennifer Bear
 Campus/City Culture Reporter

Since its opening Sept. 12, the Flying Dogs Cafe and Deli has given students another option for food and fun in off-campus dining. Owners Gary and Suzanne Smith, formerly of Cleveland, Ohio, say their restaurant can appeal to a wide variety of customers, including students and professors, vegetarians and meat-eaters.

Located at 1249 Alder Street, Flying Dogs offers its customers an assortment of specialty salads, hot dogs, hamburgers, appetizers, sandwiches, wraps, desserts and upscale meals, such as grilled salmon and chicken parmesan. Students can eat at Flying Dogs and pay as little as \$1.85 for a hot dog, or shell out \$13.95 for the most expensive item on the menu: Andon's Marinated Rib-Eye.

"One big way to describe our menu is options," Gary Smith said. Smith says that the restaurant is very distinctive. A few things he says set Flying Dogs apart from the competition are the variety of food options available, such as sweet potato french fries and vegetarian hot dogs. He also says Flying Dogs will appeal

to students because it's open much later than most restaurants. Flying Dogs closes at midnight Sunday through Thursday, and is open until 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Another thing that differentiates Flying Dogs from other restaurants is the gargoyle theme seen throughout. The restaurant's logo is a friendly-looking gargoyle dog wearing aviation goggles — there are also several photographs of gargoyles adorning the walls of the restaurant.

Flying Dogs is located next to Ben and Jerry's on Alder, where the restaurant Yelo used to be. Smith says getting the restaurant ready for business was quite a challenge because it had to be done so fast. Some of the changes made to the space included upgrading the equipment, laying down carpet, installing two television sets, repainting and redecorating to incorporate the "friendly" gargoyle theme and restaurant logo.

Irvin Hubler, University senior and Flying Dogs cook, said the restaurant has already served a wide variety of customers such as hospital workers, families, students and late-nighters. Hubler was also a cook at Yelo and says his experience there was different from working at Flying Dogs. According to Hubler, Flying Dogs is organized and has an exciting menu. He also says he likes working at the new restaurant because the cooking staff receives a lot of respect from the management.

Smith says Flying Dogs has been doing very well since its opening, thanks to customer loyalty. He adds that the restaurant has had many customers come back four or five times. "Repeat business has been awesome," Smith said.

Smith is new to the area. He has only been living in Eugene since Aug. 9, while his wife and three daughters are still in Ohio trying to sell their house. He says he and his wife chose to move their family to Eugene to open their restaurant because they love the laid-back, friendly people. In addition, Smith says he wanted the restaurant to be located near the college campus because it provides an atmosphere of culture and vibrancy.

Smith has owned several successful businesses, but Flying Dogs is his first restaurant venture. Owning a restaurant, however, has been a very important dream for him he says. His father owned a restaurant, he loves to cook and his wife worked 10 years as a server. Smith says he and his wife were very successful and financially secure in Cleveland but weren't happy, which prompted their move and the opening of the restaurant.

"My wife and I left 'Corporate America' wanting to do something different," Smith said.

Contact the reporter at jenniferbear@dailyemerald.com.

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