Laughing Planet Café

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OPEN 11:00AM – 10:00PM EVERYDAY
760 BLAIR BLVD, EUGENE 541.868.0668 www.laughingplanetcafe.com

Terry and Cherylee Dawson

Doughburg

If you're looking for gourmet pizza with imagination, Coburg may be your next destination. The Coburg Pizza Company, opened in 2006 by Terry and Cherylee Dawson, is a family-run, community-oriented small business with heart, featuring fresh, fun, unique pizza recipes created by Terry that stem from his Italian family tradition.

With two dozen gourmet pizzas on the menu and 10 additional classics —everything from your standard Hawaiian and Meat Eaters pizzas to your weirder, more creative Idaho Baked Potato, Philly Cheesesteak, Buffalo Wing, Bangkok Thai Chicken with peanut sauce or Singapore Sweet-Chili Chicken — this little pizzeria has something on the menu for just about every taste.

"We go by the motto that if it tastes good, it'll work on pizza," says Terry Dawson. "On Easter Sunday, I was eating jalapeno poppers and I turned to my wife and said 'You know, this would be really good on a pizza.' And two tries later, we had it."

Dawson learned to make pizza as a child with his Italian grandfather, but the idea for the restaurant sprouted a few years ago when a family friend convinced the Dawsons take their recipes to the public. Now Cherylee is head chef, their four children work at the restaurant and Terry is the brains behind the strange and oftentimes wonderful concoctions. But the reason for opening had less to do with pizza and more to do with community.

"Our reason for existing is unique because it's not really to be in business," Dawson says. "We want to be friends with our neighbors. We want to contribute to the community, we want to know the people that we live near, we want to live life together with our neighborhood. Although we're certainly key on outstanding pizza, we're more interested in being hospitable."

It's the same reason they don't deliver.

"When we're able to get people to come here, it's as if we're inviting them into our home," Dawson says. "The goal is to develop relationships. It's exceptionally rewarding. We really don't want to walk up to somebody's doorstep and drop their food off and leave. I probably know half the people in town on a first name basis now."

The business has been huge on community outreach, participating in programs with Coburg Elementary, the PTA and summer reading, the Golden Years festival and the Coburg Quilt show. (We at the *Weekly* follow the biz on Twitter at twitter.com/coburgpizza as well.)

And it says a lot that only half the pizzeria's clientele is from Coburg. Regular customers drive from Eugene, Springfield, Veneta, Cottage Grove and Oakridge — and "one gal from San Francisco."

"It's cool to watch community happen right in front of you," Dawson says. He reminds Eugeneans that Coburg is a beautiful drive not that far up the road, and the pizzas are "outstanding, and worth the drive from anywhere." — *Katie Kalk*

Coburg Pizza Company, 90999 S. Willamette St., Coburg. 484-6600. www.coburgpizza.com

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