

MOM'S PIES

The real Mom's Pies, at the mall BY CAITLIN MCKIMMY

Many Eugeneans nostalgically recall stopping at Mom's Pies to warm up after a day in the mountains — the family-run restaurant on Highway 126 in Vida served fresh, hot pie to travelers and locals for many years.

Now, after an almost 10-year hiatus, Mom's Pie's is once more concocting pies according to its time-honored recipe. Instead of making their way up the McKenzie, however, pie-seekers need not search beyond the food court at Valley River Center.



BERTHA NYSETH

PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

The owner of Mom's Pies, Lou Sangermano, says he is excited to get his family business up and running again. "We began selling pies in the 1940s," he says. "I bought the restaurant from my dad in 1999."

According to Sangermano, Mom's Pies closed its Vida location in 2003 because business was too seasonal. "It was always in the back of my mind that I wanted to re-open at some point," he says, "and now seems like the right time."

Valley River Center might seem like a counterintuitive location for a homegrown family business, but Sangermano thought the mall would be a good place for Mom's Pies to "get a lot of exposure with all sorts of people." He has been passing out free samples to shoppers, and says he hopes to re-establish the business as a local staple. "People are so surprised — they've been asking me if we're the *real* Mom's Pies," Sangermano says. "I tell them yes and have them taste for themselves."

Indeed, Mom's Pies continues to use the exact same recipe that was served on the side of the highway in the '40s. The restaurant offers a panoply of pies, from strawberry rhubarb to apple and berry medley. "I try to keep everything fresh and simple," Sangermano says. "One of the great things about having a pie business in the Willamette Valley is that we can use awesome local ingredients."

Bertha Nyseth used to bake for Mom's Pies at the old location, and she continues to produce traditional, artful pies in the mall. All of the pies are vegan, and Sangermano hopes to soon offer a gluten-free option.

Beyond fresh pie, Mom's Pies offers soups, sandwiches and coffee so that customers can enjoy a wholesome, all-American meal after a hard day of shopping. Frozen pies are also available for purchase to be baked at home. And, of course, customers can choose to eat their piping hot pies *à la mode*.

It's surprising, but true: Now you can rekindle fond memories of the McKenzie River Highway at a place wedged between Arby's and Panda Express. Mom's Pies' traditional sensibilities may seem out of place among chain restaurants in the Valley River food court, but a warm slice of pie just might be the perfect antidote to the mall's bright lights and sterile consumerism. ■

Mom's Pies is located at Valley River Center, 868-0904.

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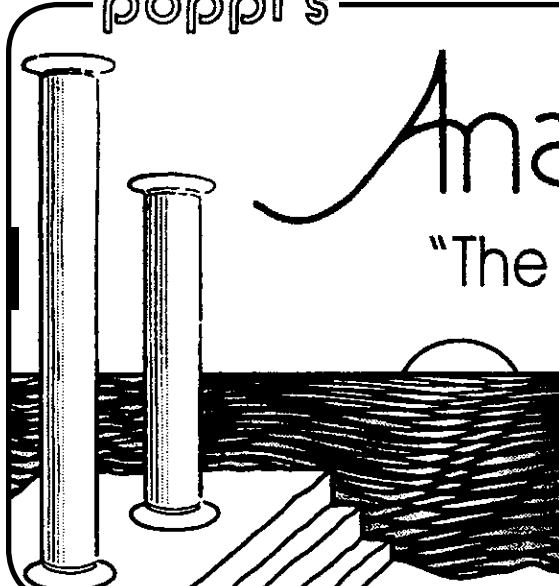


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