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“It goes great with the climate here,” Christine Karna said. “It’s something that’s awesome during the cold, chilly winter months, yet it’s not too heavy for the summer either. We’ve been able to stay open year-round.”

Originally, the couple expected they would regularly drive the cart around to various locations. But they haven’t moved since plugging in at the parking lot next to Astoria Eco Wash and the longstanding El Asadero Mexican food truck on Marine Drive.

“It’s worked out in our favor to have more of a pod situation here,” Christine Karna said.

Bucket Bites receives enough foot traffic in its existing location to keep them busy. They reciprocate by focusing on community first.

“We love tourist traffic but the locals are the ones who keep us open year-round,” Christine Karna said.

When they first opened, their daughter Kate helped out occasionally when she was home from Portland State University but she’s since graduated. On a five-day-per-week basis, keeping Bucket Bites up, running and serving delicious pasties is done entirely by the couple.

That setup has been advantageous over the past year in light of the coronavirus pandemic. The couple closed for about a month and a half last spring as they waited to get a better sense of the situation. But since they already live together, there was less stress associated with operating the food cart and working in close quarters once they reopened. They also didn’t have to worry about laying off employees.

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**Christine Karna  
Bucket Bites**

All the food is made fresh, onsite every day at Bucket Bites. The menu changes slightly from day to day, although there are a couple of staples such as the Uncle Ogie, the most traditionally Cornish

option with roast beef, potato, rutabaga and onion; and the Slater, a regionally influenced pasty with ground beef and pork, bacon, diced potatoes, crispy fried onions and cheddar cheese.

There are always a couple of other savory pasties, all of which feature a flaky butter short-crust. They also have sides like soup, green salad, homemade gravy. The couple serves a revolving slate of desserts from Whoopie pies and apple

other relatives to make Finnish delicacies, like cardamom bread and joulutorttu. The menu is posted each day on the Bucket Bites Facebook page.

The couple arrives at the food cart a few hours before opening to prep for the day and then they continually make batches of pasties while open. At Bucket Bites, they are committed to avoiding food waste as much as possible, so “once the (pasties) are gone, they’re gone,” Christine Karna said.

Chris Karna added they track and chart data to try and estimate the exact amount of food to make each day “but it’s chaotic.” There are still days they run out before closing.

That’s just one of the challenges of running a small business, which has been especially complicated in the past year. Having community support makes the process that much more rewarding. Christine Karna said positive feedback is “always a little overwhelming” but winning Best Food Cart for the 2020 Readers’ Choice Awards, and being nominated for Best Dessert and Best Lunch Spot feels extra special under the circumstances.

“Especially during this last year, with everything being so up in the air — it’s a little cooler this year,” she said.

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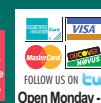


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