

What's Good Here? Yummie Creations



Yummie's Creations | provided

What's good here?

When your nickname in culinary school is “Yummie” chances are you have a pretty good career ahead of you as a chef.

That's been the case for Saluda native Alicia Wharton, chef and owner of Yummie Creations in Lexington. Wharton earned the nickname during her time at Johnson and Wales University in Charleston, where she earned an associate degree in culinary arts and a bachelor of science in food service management.

Since opening in 2003, Yummie has featured a popular weekly lunch menu, including items such as a fried green tomato BLT, a portobello mushroom burger, a California club, a turkey and goat cheese salad, and a much-requested, hand-shredded chunky chicken salad, so named for its

inclusion of grapes, raisins, pecans, celery and, of course, chicken.

The restaurant also features house-made salad dressings such as customer favorite tomato vinaigrette as well as seasonal items such as gazpacho soup and shrimp salad.

While the lunches are popular, Yummie's calling card is perhaps its gourmet-to-go dinners, which are offered Monday through Thursday. The dinner menu changes monthly and includes dishes such as pan-seared crab cakes with lemon basil aioli as well as bacon-wrapped crab-stuffed shrimp. Wharton also features jazzed up Southern dinnertime favorites like meatloaf and mashed potatoes with gravy as well as oven-fried chicken with sweet onion gravy.

"We strive to please everybody's tastes," Wharton said. "You will see repetitions from month to month, but not within the month. About one-third of the business revolves around the take-out dinners. Cooking these meals makes me happy; especially if I can alleviate a need for someone not wanting or having the time to cook or even if you need to carry a meal to a sick friend or someone else in need."

What else?

Yummie Creations also offers a special tailgating to-go menu from August to January to fill the greater demand that restaurant receives for to-go meals during the football and holiday seasons.

How did Yummie Creations get its start?

"I like to joke that I lost my mind, but seriously, I do love what I do," Wharton said. "I've done a little bit of everything in the food service industry."

Wharton has worked as a grill cook, an associate instructor and kitchen manager for California Dreaming in Charleston, where she also worked as a front-of-the-house and a back-of-the-house manager. She also worked as a chef, server and kitchen manager for Happy Cookers Catering in Columbia; as an evening sous chef for the Summit Club in Columbia and as a private chef in Irmo.

"My last job as a private chef before starting the business was ending and I wanted to somewhat maintain the same hours – no late nights or weekends so I developed the business according to that plan," Wharton said. "Initially, (Yummie Creations) started with my focusing more on the take-out dinner menu. It's designed for anyone; those who don't have the time to cook, juggling work, kids, etc., or those who don't cook but want a good meal. Who doesn't want a good, nourishing, homemade meal over fast food? Lunch has also expanded since the beginning including soups, sandwiches, salads – not all of which are your typical fare."

What does the place look like?

Yummie Creations has a light and airy casual diner/café style atmosphere, complete with a black-and-white square-tiled floor and a small patio area with tables and umbrellas out front. The space is small – it includes eight tables inside and four outside – but cozy. Don't be surprised by Wharton's collection of chef figurines. It's an impressive one that has grown over the years thanks to gifts from loyal customers.

Who eats here?

"We serve a wide variety of customers ... from doctors and attorneys to teachers and stay-at-home moms," Wharton said. "We also have some book clubs as well as bridge groups that frequent us. It doesn't matter who you are, if you're hungry, we can fix that."

YUMMIE CREATIONS

Shoppes At Flight Deck, 109 Old Chapin Rd # L, Lexington

PRICES: Prices range from \$3.99 for a bowl of soup to \$14.99 for the most expensive item on the dinner gourmet to-go menu.

HOURS: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday-Friday; 4:30-7 p.m. Monday-Thursday; Close at 5 on Fridays

INFO: (803) 359-4866, www.yummiecreations.com

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