

THE VANCOUVER SUN

Cupcake war brewing in Victoria

BY CARLA WILSON, POSTMEDIA NEWS APRIL 28, 2011 BE THE FIRST TO POST A COMMENT

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Kelsi and Ryan Stolz, owners of Cupcakes at Uptown, the newest entry into the Victoria market, offers treats with such enticing names as Lemon Drop, Koo Koo and Obsession.

Photograph by: LYLE STAFFORD, Timescolonist.com

VICTORIA — Sure, cupcakes are cute.

But underneath all that pretty pastel frosting, there's a battle brewing in Victoria as more cupcake entrepreneurs enter the fray to win sweet teeth.

Greater Victoria is setting itself up for its own version of Cupcake Wars with at least five businesses dedicated to the tasty treats, not to mention the dozens of bakeries who make them as sidelines. Today's cupcake craze is fuelled by three reality television shows, including the made-in-B.C. [Cupcake Girls](#).

In the contest to tickle taste buds, cupcakes come big or small, vegan-style, gluten- and dairy-free and some come injected with pudding and jellies. You can pick them out in a store or online — even have them delivered. Cupcakes are even catching election fever. A Toronto bakery is selling cupcake toppers with pictures of the national leaders.

A Google search on cupcakes returns a staggering 38.8 million results.

The newest entry to the Victoria market is the franchise Cupcakes at Uptown in nearby Saanich, B.C.

"We have sold out almost every day of all of our flavours," says Kelsi Stolz, who opened the store April 11 with husband Ryan.

The Uptown Cupcakes location is the seventh to open in the province. The Vancouver-based chain was started in 2002 by former Victoria residents Heather White and Lori Joyce, stars of the Gemini Award-winning program [Cupcake Girls](#), who will film from the new store during a grand opening on April 30.

A sweet smell greets a steady flow of customers buying cupcakes with fanciful names such as Mint Condition, Lemon Drop, Koo Koo and Obsession.

"I'm definitely attracted to the pastel-perfect icing and the cute factor," Stolz says.

Mini-cupcakes are \$1.25 each and \$13 per dozen. Regular-sized cupcakes are \$3.25 and \$29.95 per dozen. Profits from sales of the Sweet 16 cupcake go to help raise \$10,000 for the Children's Wish Foundation.

View Royal's Theresa Baeza started up Cupcake Heaven six months ago, with help from her mother and sister. Coming from a family of artists, Baeza considers cupcakes her creative outlet.

She doesn't have a storefront but takes orders for the filled cupcakes at least 24 hours in advance. Delivery is free for orders of more than \$25.

Along with cupcakes made with wheat flour, Baeza bakes gluten-free, dairy free and vegan cupcakes, as well as cakes, at a kitchen in nearby Sidney, B.C.

Flavours include Chai spice, butter pecan, Mexican chocolate, plus several kinds of frostings, as well as fillings such as hazelnut truffle, raspberry mousse and caramel.

Why are cupcakes so popular these days? "I think it is the serving size and the convenience of not having to cut a cake up," she said.

Since opening Pink Sugar Cupcakery in the summer of 2008, Adrienne Jopp moved to a downtown location the following year from a tiny space. "We have seen a lot of growth," she said.

Featuring dairy and egg-free cupcakes, Jopp figures cupcakes are popular because "there's a bit of whimsy and a nostalgia aspect to it."

Pink Sugar's cupcakes include chocolate-orange, peanut butter, red velvet, and special "man cakes." The Mackenator — maple and bacon cake topped with maple frosting and bacon bits — is especially popular for birthdays, Jopp said.

Other bakeries specializing in cupcakes include Crumbsby's Cupcake Cafe, popular with young parents because it features a play area for children.

And Ooh la la Cupcakes has grown to three stores. The original location was joined by a retail store and baking operation in Sidney. This year, founder Sherryl Andrews opened her third retail outlet in nearby Langford, B.C., and she's aiming for a downtown location this fall.