

Walla Walla Lifestyles

The Valley's People, Wine & Food

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FOOD edition

Supplement of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin
October 2024 • union-bulletin.com/lifestyles



Explore healthy,
flavorful fare with a
dash of friendship | 16
**Through
the
window**

Food



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The Friendship Garden



Island Ainsworth and Luke Moore pause to take a break in between customers. The Garden Window is in the former space of The Wiener and Bun, facing into Walawala Plaza.

The 22nd Annual Kitchen Tour

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New walk up spot, The Garden Window, offers healthy, flavorful fare — and a picture of an enduring friendship

When Luke Moore opened his first health food eatery, The Garden Vegan Café, in 2011, a seed was planted: Island Ainsworth, co-owner of Saffron Mediterranean Kitchen, became one of his first customers. A friendship quickly bloomed as the two bonded over a shared love of food, wine, a sense of humor, dogs, and more.

The Garden Vegan Café closed in May 2014, but their friendship continued to grow.

Moore became a regular at Saffron, visiting so frequently he earned a standing table. Ainsworth jokingly calls it the “hamster table.”

“It’s called the ‘hamster table’ because when we were originally designing the restaurant, we called it the ‘gangster table,’ but autocorrect kept changing ‘gangster’ to ‘hamster,’ so the name just stuck,” Ainsworth says.

Over the years, the friendship deepened. The duo became walking buddies, Ainsworth

*Story and photos by
Gwendolyn Elliott*

sometimes bringing her pups — she breeds Rhodesian Ridgebacks — and “bouncing ideas off each other,” Moore says. “One of the reasons we’re friends is we constantly have projects and things that are changing.”

“There’s always some brewing,” Ainsworth says.

During one of their walks, an idea surfaced to resurrect a version of Moore’s old café, which was dedicated to healthy salads, bowls, sandwiches, fresh juices, and smoothies. The café’s menu was plant-based, with many raw, gluten-free, and soy-free options.

In addition to overseeing the day to day at Saffron, Ainsworth had been running a hot dog window, The Wiener and Bun, in Walawala Plaza, and was considering a new concept for the space, which she had tailor-made. Moore had been out of the restaurant scene for a while managing some

personal real estate and was ready to return. “We need something like this downtown,” Ainsworth says. “I knew that smoothies would be good.”

“We both loved the idea at the same time,” Moore says.

With a new lease, the two friends, now business partners, opened The Garden Window, an homage to Moore’s original café, in June. The window serves a handful of light salads and sandwiches, but it has quickly become renowned for its smoothies.

Open 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Ainsworth and Moore are the Window’s sole employees. Ainsworth occasionally schedules staff from Saffron to help on busy days.

Smoothies are “100% organic when possible,” Moore says, with frozen ingredients sourced from Azure Standard, a family-owned, regional and organic produce supplier.

Moore, who developed all the recipes,



Above: Prepared smoothies wait in the freezer to be blended to-order. Every smoothie is blended with no ice — only produce, apple or grape juice, lemonade or oat milk.

Left: Island Ainsworth hands a smoothie off to customer Cassidy Brewin at The Garden Window. The smoothies are blended with organic produce from a regional and family-owned supplier.

such as the popular “Island Time,” a blend of pineapple, mango, peach, strawberry, greens, mint, and apple juice, notes that no ice is used in the smoothies—adding ice creates a watery separation of ingredients that also lowers the drink’s nutritional punch.

Each smoothie is pre-assembled with frozen ingredients in its own compostable cup; then, upon order, the contents are put into a blender with apple or grape juice, lemonade, or oat milk, depending on the recipe, and processed until creamy and smooth. Salads such as “The Aniston,” a grain salad featuring quinoa, cucumber, feta, lemon, and pistachios, are pre-packed in compostable clamshell containers; sandwiches are pre-made and wrapped in craft paper. Customers can call ahead and pre-order, or order at the window.

“We are built for speed,” says Ainsworth, who, with her husband Chris, has been running Saffron for 17 years and knows how to organize an efficient kitchen. Ainsworth says Chris has been receiving congratulations for her new smoothie window with Moore.

Business was brisk the day I visited, as a steady stream of familiar faces, all regulars or people Ainsworth or Moore know from their various ventures, popped by to say hi and grab a smoothie.

“We have a range of associations that compliment each other’s strengths and connections,” Ainsworth says.

The Garden Window even has a not-so-secret purpose: It’s an excuse for the busy Ainsworth and Moore to reliably meet and spend time together as friends. Meanwhile, it meets a need in the community, where foods such as pizza, pasta, steak, and burgers are easy to find.

“We wanted to offer something different for our community,” Ainsworth says. “We want everyone to know we’re here, and that everyone is welcome here.”

Moore emphasizes the point.

“One of my regulars at the old restaurant first told me he wouldn’t like anything from a vegan café. He became one of my best customers, and he was a cowboy.”

If you go.....

The Garden Window, 2 South 1st Avenue STE 100, thegardenwindowwww.com
8 a.m.–3 p.m. Monday through Friday,
9 a.m.–3 p.m. Saturday, closed Sundays.

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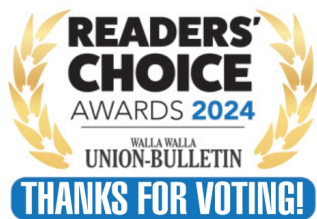
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