



## Business focus: Cody's Cafe, Aurora

by: YourHub.com

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**Address:** 10253 E. Iliff Ave.  
**Hours:** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday-Friday; 5 to 9 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 5 to 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays  
**Founded:** 2011  
**Contact:** 303-750-1580  
**Employees:** 6



A pizza comes out of the oven on April 22 at Cody's Cafe in Aurora.

Provided by: Joe Nguyen, YourHub.com

*Interview with Sue Smith, owner and chef*

### Q: How did you get involved in this business?

A: I have been involved in the restaurant business for over 25 years, owning four restaurants and a microbrewery. Toward the end of last year, I decided to remodel the space that formerly housed Viaggio, (my old Italian restaurant), re-open the restaurant under the name Cody's with a new homemade Italian-American food menu accompanied by excellent local microbrews, fine wines and great drinks.

Cody's was named after our family's beloved terrier dog. Cody was stricken by cancer and passed away a couple of months before the restaurant was opened. I decided to name my restaurant after Cody, in life celebration of a wonderful pet that was so much part of my family for over 10 years.

### Q: What distinguishes you from other businesses in your category?

A: Cody's is a personal statement, reflecting my Asian roots and my long experience with global cuisine. My approach is to bring love and passion to what I offer in the hopes that it will please my good friends.

I would like people to think of Cody's as a casual, comfortable place where friends and families gather for a small bite, a good drink or to share a fun dining experience. It's an affordable place where tasty food is made with fresh, high quality ingredients. I love to grow my own vegetables and herbs in the summer for the restaurants and use fresh organic produce whenever possible.

I would hope that people think of Cody's as a low profile kind of café full of pleasant discoveries. These surprises might include wonderful dishes such as homemade lemongrass sausage pizza or fettuccini with braised lamb shank and mushrooms wine sauce, angus burger with ground chuck, caramelized onions and bacon compote, or homemade dessert like chocolate banana wontons.

I believe that people will discover that Cody's offers big innovative flavors at a small price. A good time can be had without an "ouch" in your pocket.

### Q: What do you like best about your line of work?

A: Cody's gives me the opportunity to meet new and interesting people and cultivate friendships. Some of my fondest times are at Cody's or the New Orient Restaurant (my first restaurant, four doors down from Cody's) when I can laugh and crack jokes with my customers. I get important feedback from people that visit my restaurants and I benefit greatly from their input.

I love being able to express myself through the food that I create. My personal style of cooking is improvisational. I don't really stick to recipes but prefer to create as I go. Cooking to me is very much a creative art, much like writing, painting or making music.

### Q: What is your business' biggest challenge?

A: I take my role as a "financial captain" of my "ship" as seriously as my role in the kitchen as a chef.

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The hardest part of my job as a business owner is to maintain the best quality food while trying to keep overall costs under control.

As food costs and operating costs escalate, maintaining consistency in the quality of the food and customer service has been perhaps my biggest challenge.

Another big challenge for me is getting the word out about Cody's. The prominence of the internet has taken advertising and marketing to a different level. I find myself struggling to learn the new rules about how to effectively compete in the online world with big chain restaurants that can employ savvy marketers who use blogging, Facebook, tweeting and online forums to reach their targeted customers.

**Q: Something people might be surprised to learn about you or your business:**

A: I also am the owner and founder of New Orient Restaurant - a Vietnamese seafood restaurant, and Ink It Over, Colorado's first retail ink recycler.

In college I studied business not food - but I discovered my passion for creating with food and I have now made that my business for over 25 years. I am currently holding a fundraising campaign for Japan Earthquake Relief. We are contributing proceeds from my various businesses to this effort. On the evening of April 30, Cody's is holding a special event displaying and auctioning the art work of the late Denny Dent and featuring a dinner special for this fund raising. 100 percent of the proceeds from this evening will go to Japan Earthquake Relief.

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