



JENNIFER HOLYCHUK/The Oakland Post

**LEFT** Rockin' Cupcakes Owner Jim Ohngren places a batch of cupcakes into the display case. **TOP** A Rockin' Cupcakes sales associate frosts the cupcakes. The shop sells hundreds of the dessert on a daily basis. **BOTTOM** A worker decorates "Kid Rock" cupcakes. Rockin' Cupcakes offers a variety of flavors, all of which have a music-inspired themes.

## These cupcakes rock

*Rochester Hills' music-inspired bakery competes in 'Cupcake Wars'*

**By Jennifer Holychuk**  
Senior Reporter

Rochester Hills is home to Rockin' Cupcakes, a bakery located just north of downtown that serves up more than ten varieties of homemade cupcakes, locally-made ice cream and rock n' roll.

This unique rock 'n' roll music-inspired shop has recently attracted national attention for its participation in The Food Network's "Cupcake Wars."

### Where it started

Jim Ohngren and his wife Mary, who is also the shop's baker, own and operate Rockin' Cupcakes along with several part-time employees.

The two opened Rockin' Cupcakes October 2010 after being inspired by a visit to a cupcake shop in Nashville.

"We came back and thought about it, and we decided we could do it on our own," Jim said.

Jim said his love of rock music set the theme for the red, black and white-colored shop, which is covered wall-

to-wall with vintage albums and rock memorabilia.

Every cupcake has a rock-related title as well, including a 'White Stripes' red velvet cupcake and "Brown-Eyed Girl" vanilla cake with chocolate frosting.

The shop now sells hundreds of cupcakes per day, the couple said.

"Depending on the day of the week, we can sell 200 or up to 400, 500 cupcakes," Jim said.

### Competing cupcakes

Rockin' Cupcakes was featured on the season premiere of "Cupcake Wars," which aired Sunday, March 3.

This reality television program pulls top cupcake bakers from across the country to compete head-to-head in elimination challenges until one winner remains.

The shop's appearance on the show was kept secret until the episode aired, despite being filmed many months earlier in July, Jim said.

"They had us sign a nondisclosure agreement," he said. "No one knew

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OWNER

except our family."

Jim said The Food Network contacted them about an opportunity to compete on the show, and they decided to go for it.

Mary and the couple's daughter Kara were flown to Los Angeles where they competed with a corn-based cupcake with beef bacon, according to Jim.

"On the show they encourage you to be outside of the box," he said.

Some filming was also done in the shop, and according to Mary, the on-camera experience was stressful at times "but not unpleasant."

Unfortunately for Rockin' Cupcakes, their cupcake was knocked out in the first round and the challenge was ultimately won by a San Diego bakery.

The shop's defeated corn and bacon

creation was dubbed "The Beautiful Loser" after a Bob Seger song of the same name.

The Monday after the episode aired, the shop extended its hours and gave free Beautiful Losers with every cupcake purchase.

"A lot of our customers came in and tasted the cupcake and they loved it," he said.

### What's next

Customers have been flocking to the store since the airing of the episode, according to Jim.

"They showed the episode again this Saturday," he said. "We had someone call the shop and say 'I'm watching you guys right now!'"

Although Rockin' Cupcakes was defeated, Jim said the national exposure has been priceless.

"Since Cupcake Wars aired, our business is way up," he said. "That's the victory right there."

For more information about Rockin' Cupcakes, visit [www.rockincupcakesrochester.com](http://www.rockincupcakesrochester.com)