



VALLEY ISLE BREEZE

Small Business News

1st Edition: July 1, 2025

Business Spotlight: Early Bird Coffee

Bold Brews, Big Dreams, and a Whole Lot of Heart



From Arizona café vibes to the streets of Maui, Early Bird Coffee is making waves—and waking up the island—with their vibrant, Vietnamese-inspired coffee creations. Powered by passion, perseverance, and a little help from Valley Isle Community Federal Credit Union, owners Jyrah and Jules Lalim are building a business that’s as bold as their brews.

From Desert Cafés to Island Mornings

“We fell in love with a couple of cafés when we lived in Arizona,” Jyrah shared. “There was a whole coffee culture—flavors, atmosphere, everything. When we moved back to Maui, we realized there wasn’t anything quite like that here. We wanted to bring something new to the island.”

Surrounded by the desert sun and the cozy hum of bustling cafés, Jyrah and Jules found inspiration in the way coffee could create connection—through bold flavors, inviting spaces, and carefully crafted drinks that were as beautiful as they were energizing. That experience stayed with them. And when they returned home to Maui, it sparked a dream: to recreate that same sense of creativity, comfort, and culture—but with a local twist.

That dream became Early Bird Coffee—a coffee truck blending vibrant Vietnamese-style coffee with the flavors and spirit of the islands. Their menu is both eye-catching and crave-worthy, starting with the ever-popular Ube Vietnamese Coffee, a bold, purple-hued drink that’s become a morning staple (often among the first five orders of the day). Then there’s the Coconut Vietnamese Coffee, their personal favorite—smooth, sweet, and creamy, with a rich coconut flavor that Jules swears tastes “just like haupia pie in a cup.”

Every drink is crafted with intention and served with aloha, capturing the best of two worlds: the bold coffee culture of the mainland and the warmth and soul of Maui.

A Risk Worth Taking

Starting a business is never easy—especially when you’re starting with nothing.

“We spent everything we had just moving back home,” Jyrah said.

“We had no funds left to launch the business. It was a huge leap of faith.”

And yet, they committed fully. “If we’re going to do this, we’re going to come at it 100%,” Jyrah added. “We had to let go of that self-doubt.”



Their first few weeks in business were a whirlwind of learning and adjustment. Every day brought new challenges as Jyrah and Jules worked to find their rhythm in the fast-paced world of mobile coffee. “We were still trying to figure out the best ways to do things,” they shared, reflecting on the early part of their entrepreneurial journey.

The response, however, was far beyond what they had anticipated. “We honestly weren’t expecting a line at all,” Jules laughed. What started as a quiet launch quickly turned into a bustling operation, with a steady stream of customers lining up to try their colorful, Vietnamese-inspired drinks. Behind the scenes, the couple was juggling constant supply runs and long days. “During the first couple of weeks we were making supply runs every day,” Jyrah said. Finding time to rest was nearly impossible. “Finding the right sleep schedule,” Jules added with a smile, was one of the biggest personal adjustments.

Still, the momentum was undeniable. The community was showing up—and Early Bird Coffee was already making its mark.

Finding the Right Partner in VICFCU

Their journey led them to Valley Isle Community FCU after applying at several banks without success.

“We didn’t have steady income on paper,” Jules explained. Most banks turned them down when it came to trying to get them financing for the business. After talking to one of their friends, they were introduced to Valley Isle Community FCU and that’s where they were able to find the financing needed to get their business fully up and running.

“For us, it felt like a message from God,” Jyrah said. “The process was way easier than expected. They were super helpful, always communicating, and made it happen for us.”

The SBA loan from VICFCU allowed Early Bird Coffee to fully equip their truck and create a brand that’s already leaving a lasting mark.

Advice from the Lalims

Now that they’ve found their rhythm, Jyrah and Jules are quick to encourage other aspiring entrepreneurs:

- “Have your business plan and projections ready,” says Jyrah.
- “Don’t give up, even when it feels impossible.”
- “Ask all the questions,” Jules adds.
- And perhaps most importantly: “Be different. Be unique.”

Looking Ahead

The couple hopes to open a second location with it being either another coffee truck or a brick-and-mortar café in the next 1–2 years, ideally in town where they can tap into even more of Maui's local communities.

But for now, you can find them serving up joy (with a side of cold foam) in Kihei almost every day—except Mondays, when they make their supply runs.

Brewing Connection

What's their favorite part of running the coffee truck?

“For me,” Jules said, “it's the company it brings. Not just doing this with Jyrah, but all the people who are so excited to try something new. Some folks tell us, ‘This is exactly what we missed from the mainland.’ That connection means everything.”

Jyrah added, “It's a blessing to work with your significant other and to be someone's good start to the day. It makes me ten times happier knowing people choose us.”

Visit Early Bird Coffee

Find them on Instagram or TikTok @earlybirdcoffee.maui and stop by their truck for a fan-favorite drink. Try a new latte or tea, grab a bite, and don't forget to snap a pic before you mix!

Thinking of Starting a Business?

Early Bird Coffee did it with heart and hustle—and with support from Valley Isle Community FCU. If you're dreaming of launching your own venture, we're here to help with business loans, business accounts, and business guidance by people who care.

Let's build something together!

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