

COVERING GREATER VANCOUVER
& THE FRASER VALLEYSUBSCRIBE
NOW

B.C. Poised for Growth

BiV Datebook

 Business events
around the Lower Mainland

[HOME](#) [THIS WEEK](#) [COMING UP](#) [DATEBOOK](#) [SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS](#) [ADVERTISE](#) [ABOUT US](#) [CONTACT US](#)

Business in Vancouver September 27-October 3, 2005; issue 831

Grocers jockey for position in organic food fight

[Current issue](#)
[Last three months](#)
[Entire archive](#)

Three major grocery retailers roll out ambitious Lower Mainland expansion campaigns

Andrew Petrozzi

BIV BUSINESS WEB

LINKS

Grocers flogging organics and natural food options are rolling out the heavy artillery in an increasingly buoyant Lower Mainland marketplace.

NEWS

[This Week's Stories](#)
[Upcoming Features](#)
[Reprints](#)
[Sections:](#)
[40 Under 40](#)
[BC's Biggest Deals](#)
[Colour Series](#)
[Commercial Real Estate](#)
[Fastest-Growing](#)
[Companies](#)
[Hospitality & Tourism](#)
[Human Resources](#)
[Influential Women in](#)
[Business](#)
[Legal Matters](#)
[Mergers and](#)
[Acquisitions](#)
[Small Business](#)
[Tech Report](#)
[Top 100 Private](#)
[Companies](#)
[Top 100 Public](#)
[Companies](#)
[Top Paid Executives](#)

A spike in consumer awareness and demand is not only fuelling market expansion in the specialized grocery niche, it's also convincing major food companies to build bigger stores that offer more products and services.

Capers Community Markets, Choices Markets and Whole Foods Market are all expanding or planning to expand over the next three years.

Aron Bjornson, marketing manager for Capers Community Markets, estimates that the organic food industry has grown 20 per cent in Canada in the last year.

Capers' three outlets will be joined by a fourth next April. The 20,000-square-foot store at Cambie Street and West 16th Avenue will be the chain's largest. Its stores currently range from 8,500 square feet in West Vancouver to roughly 12,000 square feet at its Robson and West Fourth Avenue locations, according to Bjornson.

He added that over the next three to five years, Capers, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, is looking to add up to three new stores in the Vancouver market. He added that the company is also planning to open locations in Calgary.

Whole Foods, which entered the Lower Mainland market in September 2004 with its store in the Park Royal Village, plans to open a large new outlet at Cambie and West Eighth Avenue in mid- to late 2008.

But Bjornson expressed little concern about the expansion plans of the Capers competitor.

"We have found because there is such tremendous growth and awareness from consumers in natural and organic [foods] that increased competition doesn't equate to cannibalization," said Bjornson. "It equates to more awareness, growth and excitement."

But he conceded that Capers' West Vancouver store has suffered a drop in its sales since the opening of the Park Royal Whole Foods Market.

Sales at its Robson Street and Kitsilano locations, he said, remain strong.

Casey Morton, team leader for Whole Foods' West Vancouver outlet, said store sales continue to exceed company expectations and that the competition is driving increased business and food awareness. Morton said Whole Foods is building larger stores. Its new Cambie Street location will be around 50,000 square feet; the Park Royal store is around 38,000 square feet.

OTHER

PUBLICATIONS

[BIV Magazine](#)
[Visitor's Choice](#)

EVENTS

[Datebook](#)
[Submit Your Event](#)
[Influential Women in](#)
[Business](#)

LEADS/RESOURCES

[Business Links](#)
[Book of lists on disk](#)
[Databases for sale](#)
[Business advice](#)

CONTACT US

READER SERVICES

- Subscribe
- Editorial calendar
- Newsstand locations
- Business Links

Locally owned Choices Markets, meanwhile, has also determined that bigger is better in the 21st-century grocery game.

ADVERTISE

- Business in Vancouver
- Guides and directories
- AD Pages
- The BC Advantage
- Better Business Bureau Pages
- Biotechnology in BC
- The Book of Lists
- Green Space
- Hightech
- Home Makeover
- How-To Book
- Meeting Places
- Office Space
- Property Manager's Sourcebook
- The Right Course
- The Vancouver Board of Trade Roster and Purchasers' Guide
- Commercial real estate
- Recruitment Advertising

Its 20,000-square-foot South Surrey/White Rock location, which opened earlier this month, is the largest of the company's six Lower Mainland stores. Choices CEO **Mark Vickars** said annual sales from the chain's stores continue to grow and Choices remains on the lookout for expansion opportunities.

"We still think there's lots of growth in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland," he said. "And obviously Capers and Whole Foods feel the same."

Capers is owned by Boulder, Colorado-based **Wild Oats Markets, Inc. (OATS: NASDAQ)**; **Whole Foods Market, Inc. (WFMI: NASDAQ)** is based in Austin, Texas.

Retail analyst **James Smerdon** of **Hudema Consulting Group Ltd.** said the increasing market demand for specialized grocery stores is the next phase of supermarket retailing development.

apetrozzi@biv.com

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

CAREERS

- Listings
- Find an employee

Current issue	Last three months	Entire archive
---------------	-------------------	----------------

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

ABOUT US