



Canlis is offering a delivery service alongside a burger joint and bagel shop | Photo source Canlis

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## UPSCALE SEATTLE RESTAURANT FINDS NEW BUSINESS MODEL AMIDST COVID-19 CRISIS

 FOOD & DRINK

### Canlis redesigned its business model with pop-up concepts, helping customers and employees during the Coronavirus pandemic

**Spotted:** In the face of the devastation many businesses are fearing the COVID-19 crisis will cause, the restaurant Canlis is thinking strategically and adjusting to the new environment and its demands.

Since Monday, 16 March, the dining room has closed, and the restaurant has transformed into three pop-up restaurants: a drive-through burger joint, a bagel shop, and a “family meal” delivery service.

As one of Seattle’s finest restaurants, Canlis has only closed twice before, in 69 years — once after the assassination of JFK, and another time after a “horrific traffic accident” near the restaurant in 2015. However, in response to the Washington state’s announcement that all bars and restaurants will be temporarily closed from 15 March, Canlis came up with an innovative way to stay open, earn money and employ staff.

The idea originated with the restaurant’s co-owners, Mark and Brian Canlis, who along with their team, started redesigning the restaurant in anticipation of the state’s announcement. Donated fryers have helped to keep up with the daily demand for burgers, and a shipping container was set up in the restaurant garden, where the bagels will be made. Previous servers will act as delivery people, meaning all 115 employees have been kept on (although this isn’t compulsory).

“You have to play as much offense as you do defense . . . So what would we look like from scratch?,” Mark told [Fast Company](#).

The service has seen success quickly. Mark has stated that they are serving up to 1,000 burgers and 400-500 bagels a day, and 200 family dinners a night. Although the prices of these goods are much less than the fine-dining meals the restaurant used to serve, where they would have around 150-200 reservations a day, this has kept their sales up for the moment.

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## **Takeaway:**

Canlis's example has shown that in the face of a major crisis, it is possible for forward-thinking businesses to redesign their model quickly and effectively. In addition, despite the panic being strewn by some in the media with stories of toilet paper and pasta shortages, the Canlis story shows that in times of crisis, it really is possible for communities to come together, with businesses playing a vital role.