

Coffee Culture

Coffee has become more than just a beverage as new shops in the area attract eclectic customers, art and entertainment

Coffeehouses have become the newest rage in the area, in part because of the quality entertainment and food offered by the four coffeehouses reviewed below.

The Horse's Mouth Coffeehouse

By GRAY CRAWFORD
PERSPECTIVES EDITOR

The Horse's Mouth Coffeehouse, located on the corner of Spruce and Fourth Streets, boasts a colorful atmosphere, live music and a diverse and healthy menu which changes daily. With a name taken from the phrase "Straight from the horse's mouth," it has become a popular downtown hangout for music and conversation.

The brother-sister team of Monica and Wade Mills opened The Horse's Mouth on Sept. 22, 1994. Local favorite The Face of Change will play a free show at The Horse's Mouth on Sept. 22 to celebrate its first year anniversary.

Before coming to Winston-Salem, the Mills siblings lived in Boston and Chicago, working in such places as bookstores and restaurants. They decided that they wanted



Wendy Coulson

The Horse's Mouth offers not only a variety of food and drinks but colorful wall decorations as well.

a coffeehouse of their own.

"When we first started talking about it, we found that there wasn't anything like it here," Monica said. "We wanted a fun place that wasn't a bar so people could hang out and listen to music."

A variety of beers and wines are served, but there aren't any drink specials or bargain beer prices. This helps to draw more of a coffee and tea crowd than a bar crowd, and keeps the atmosphere more conducive to conversation and good music.

Unlike the stereotypical coffeehouse atmosphere of neutral browns and grays, The Horse's Mouth is painted in bright colors. Hot pink covers the walls, which contain murals of palm trees and birds. Tables and chairs are also painted in a variety of colors. A friend of the Mills' painted the decorative artwork.

"Most of the other places in town are pretty straightforward," Monica said. "We wanted a bright and cheerful place so people can get a nice contrast to the office."

"I like the painted chairs and walls," said senior Jill Moran, a customer at the Horse's Mouth. "If someone's not into bright colors, though, I could see them finding the pink walls and palm trees a strange mix with coffee."

According to Monica, business has been great, with the bulk of daytime business coming from downtown workers. During winter Monica said they draw big business from the nearby Stevens Center, which hosts events such as symphonies and operas.

"We try to go for a good variety of people," Monica said. "A lot of people come in and write letters, read and work on laptops in the afternoon when it's quieter."

Customers agree. "The downtown crowds The Horse's Mouth gets are more interesting than some of the other local coffeehouse crowds," Moran said.

The menu at The Horse's Mouth also entices people. One of the regular coffee blends of The Horse's Mouth is a house blend from the coffeehouse Cup A Joe in Greensboro. The Horse's Mouth serves other blends which vary daily, such as Kenyan coffee. What sets The Horse's Mouth apart, though, is the food.

"We have a different menu each day and try to serve a variety of items since a lot of people come in two or three times a week,"

"The food is great, plus the service is friendly. They have a nice variety of meals, including vegetarian food that actually tastes good."

Senior Jill Moran
Customer at the Horse's Mouth

Monica said. "We always have a smoked turkey sandwich, a grilled vegetable sandwich, a garden salad, two soups and usually a chicken salad. The rest changes from day to day."

"The food is great, plus the service is friendly," Moran said. "They have a nice variety of meals, including vegetarian food that actually tastes good."

Mills said they have different themes on Wednesdays. The last one was Indian food. Coming theme days are "Bounty from the Sea" on Wednesday, "First Day of Fall Feast" on Sept. 20 and "Food from the French Riviera: Nice" on Sept. 27.

Another big draw at The Horse's Mouth is the music. Bands play for no cover and set up in the back of the restaurant; there's also space for music next door at the Fiddle & Bow Society which one can see through glass doors. However, Fiddle & Bow concerts have a cover.

"We get pretty much anyone good who will play," Monica said. "Most of the music is semi-acoustic, but it's a big variety from bluegrass to folk. The people who play here are similar to the ones who play at Morning Dew, Penny Universitie and Rainbow News & Cafe — it's almost like a circuit."

Penny Universitie

By DANIELLE DEEVER
PERSPECTIVES EDITOR

Are you in the mood to challenge your friends to a good game of chess and can't find those pesky pawns? Head out to Penny Universitie Coffeehouse and Deli, located on Brookstown Road, where you'll find a large selection of not only games, but beverages and pastry-type foods as well. For entertainment, local bands play every weekend.

The coffeehouse has achieved a certain amount of popularity among students and locals. Senior Stacey Leaman has been to Penny Universitie several times. She said, "I think it's a really great place for students to hang out, especially when there's a band there. I wish we had something similar on campus."

Kevin Coon, a Penny Universitie employee, suggested several reasons for the coffeehouse's popularity. He said the coffeehouse employees try to create more of a family atmosphere in the eatery by trying to get to know the customers, especially the regulars. "We try to create a bond," he said.

Coon gave other reasons for Penny Universitie's success: "The atmosphere, word of mouth ... and location (are) really good." He said the Salem Inn is right down the street from Penny Universitie, so



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The Rainbow Cafe's outdoor patio is accessible to patrons during warm weather. The cafe offers patrons a comfortable outdoor place to enjoy the fine selection of salads and beers.

travelers may hear about the coffeehouse from employees of the Inn.

Penny Universitie has, appropriately, a coffeehouse-type atmosphere. Mismatched chairs and spindly tables grace the floor and local artists' works are featured on the walls, which are painted a startling blue and yellow. The artwork rotates on a monthly basis, and all artwork is done by local artists and is for sale.

The music selection offered at Penny Universitie on a regular basis is one of the drawing points of the coffeehouse. Local artists perform, and the only restriction on the music is that it not be offensive or loud. Several campus bands have performed at the coffeehouse.

The reason for this influx of art into Penny Universitie is simple. According to Coon, "It's just to put the art back into the community."

The menu at Penny Universitie consists mostly of beverages and several light dishes. There is the usual offering of coffee selections: lattes, cappuccinos, etc. Alcoholic beverages are also available, including a wide selection of imported beers.

If your desire in going to Penny Universitie is to avoid eating normal Pit fare, you'll have a selection of over a dozen sandwiches and several salads. Muffins, pastries and desserts are also served if you prefer something lighter.

Penny Universitie is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. until 2 a.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. until 2 a.m.

It is located in Brookstown Centre at the corner of Brookstown and Marshall streets.

Morning Dew Herbs & Coffee Co.

By GRAY CRAWFORD
PERSPECTIVES EDITOR

Open since Feb. 24, the Morning Dew Herbs & Coffee Co. is a comfortable coffeehouse for those who enjoy music, discussion, reading, writing, art and most importantly, coffee.

Husband and wife Steve Hunneke and Jenny Gouch Hunneke, '86, started the Morning Dew. "We wanted a place where we could be treated and treat other people the way we wanted, an alternative environment where people could go and talk and be heard," said Jenny.

"We wanted the best coffee we could find and a comfortable environment to enjoy it in," Steve continued. "We also wanted to have a place to provide jobs for artists and musicians, a place where they could be more expressive than they'd otherwise be allowed to be."

Indeed, mainly artists and musicians work at the Morning Dew, and the bathrooms are all done in chalkboard, providing a space for art, inspiring quotations, and an exchange of some "really creative stuff," Jenny said.

Former Wake Forest student and current N.C. School of the Arts student Theander Brannon likes working at the Morning Dew. "I love working here," he said. "I used to hang out here seven nights a week, so eventually they gave me a job."

The hiring of Brannon seems to be typical of the Morning Dew. Because the Hunnekes spend most of their time there, they said they wanted to make it as enjoyable as possible for them and their customers.

"Apart from getting the best coffee, our biggest thing is service," Steve said.

Customers agree. "The atmosphere is really quaint and enjoyable, and the service is very friendly; the people are incredibly nice," Rachel Kuhn, '94, said.

The Morning Dew resembles a stereo-

typical coffeehouse: lots of browns, reading material and art. "I like the coffee bean-bags on the floor," Kuhn said.

"We end up with an interesting mix of people, no one age group, socioeconomic status, race or gender," Jenny said. "People have gotten into the European atmosphere, sitting down and talking to people they don't know. It's nice to see (Wake Forest) university students, art students and Winston-Salem State students getting to know each other."

"Last night there were people playing cards at one table, studying at another, and talking at another," Jenny continued.

"We see a new face almost every day," Steve added.

The Morning Dew basically just does coffee and tea, possessing 62 different types of beans available whole or ground, and 20 different kinds of herbal tea.

"It's an alcohol-free environment, which is the big distinction between us and the other local coffeehouses," said Steve. "We're a coffeehouse in a traditional way; it's what we wanted."

The Morning Dew bakes some items of its own, and serves other baked goodies and breads from Stone Mill Bread, the Fresh Market, and Gevini Goodies. They also serve quiche and have a limited lunch menu.

"We don't want to be a cafe or a restaurant," Steve explained. "Once you do that you have to worry about turnover, and we're not here for that; we're here for people to converse."

The lack of food can be frustrating to customers who come with an appetite. "I wish they had a wider variety of food and more seating; it's pretty much just breads, scones, and danish," Kuhn said.

The Morning Dew does serve a variety of coffee drinks, including Vegan Lattes made from soy bean milk. They work with seven different brewsters, from Greensboro to Hawaii.

"The artists working behind the counter make different designs with the foamed milk," Jenny said. "It's fun because everyone tries to outdo everyone else."

The Morning Dew also has live music four to five nights a week. There's never a cover and the music ranges from alternative to bluegrass, mostly acoustic. There's an open mic night every Monday, and on the first and third Sunday of every month from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. there's an open mic and open jam for customers.

"It gives people who are good experience they might not have, and it allows us to invite them back on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights if they're good," Jenny said.

The Morning Dew also has poetry readings and sells pottery, jewelry and homemade candles. It is located at 1140 Burke St.

Rainbow Cafe

By DANIELLE DEEVER
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Rainbow News, Books and Cafe, known more simply as Rainbow Cafe, is one of the most popular eateries in the Winston-Salem area for students. Located at Brookstown Avenue and Broad Street, Rainbow Cafe's offerings include a varied menu, a large magazine and book selection and an atmosphere most often described as "mellow."

Rainbow Cafe is somewhat representative of the influx of "culture" noticed in Winston-Salem in the past few years for several reasons. It offers a variety for vegetarian dishes, features local bands and, more recently, poetry slams, all of which were events not found in Winston-Salem until recently.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Rainbow Cafe is the eclectic crowd it attracts.

Bill Sizemore, a host at Rainbow Cafe, said of the crowd, "I wouldn't say we have one type of customer ... it's really a cross-section of society."

Joanna Kerowyn, a bookstore employee, said the crowd is generally comprised of many different types of people — executives, students at North Carolina School of the Arts and other schools.

Patrons are attracted to the Rainbow Cafe partly because of this assortment of people. David, a



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The Morning Dew does not serve alcoholic beverages, which the owners feel helps to create more of a coffeehouse-type atmosphere.

customer, said, "All sorts of crowds walk into this place and that's what's nice ... from yuppie to bohemian."

The atmosphere at the Rainbow is one of the other drawing points of the cafe. The atmosphere, which is conducive to long talks and relaxation, is achieved through several means.

Low lighting, mostly with candles, creates an intimate area for talking. The furniture, which is typical coffeehouse simplicity, contributes to the relaxing experience. Wine racks and chalkboard menus add a coffeehouse feeling to the cafe.

The building itself, which has the long halls and winding staircase of an old house makes the customers feel they are entering the house of an old friend instead of a restaurant.

The Rainbow Cafe's menu is also a big attraction. Described as "eclectic" by Sizemore, the menu offers everything from lentil soup and seafood gumbo to garden salad and quiche.

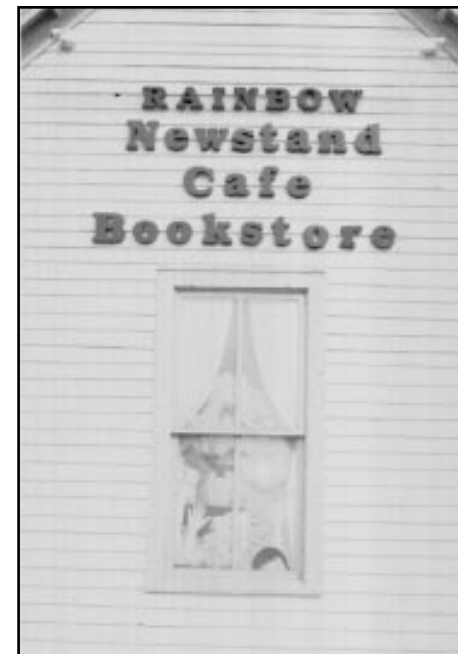
Primarily vegetarian dishes are served, although a variety of well-prepared meat dishes can also be had.

A delectable assortment of desserts are served and the usual coffeehouse beverages can be found. The food is reasonably well-priced, though beverages are a bit expensive.

The bookstore and magazine selection is rather large with a good bit of variety. The magazine selection boasts over 1,000 different titles.

The book selection includes the latest titles, classics, self-help, psychology and mythology.

There are also greeting cards and a gift selection including clothing items such as



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The eye-catching sign on the side of the Rainbow Cafe reflects the coffeehouse type atmosphere.

vests and novelty T-shirts.

The Rainbow Cafe has seen an increase in customers in the past two years, according to Kerowyn.

She attributes this to the increase in popularity of all vegetarian type restaurants. Steph Bostwick, another employee, said the increase is due to a combination of reasonable prices and comfortable atmosphere.