

Coffee, cappuccino, espresso: you choose

by Gilbert A. Bouchard and Tanya Morrison

Though no statistical data exists to support this theory, many modern thinkers are convinced that cappuccino (cafe au lait and espresso as well) is highly addictive. And the road to addiction is smooth and plainly marked. Most addicts enter this cappuccino subculture quite innocently, a cup of cafe au lait after a movie at the cineplex, a cup of espresso with the apple strudel at the Bistro after a play, or even an espresso at a poetry reading at Dante's. Next thing you know the poor sucker's hooked and spends his evenings at the 9th street cafe reading Oscar Wilde and pondering the philosophies of Sartre.

Since the both of us are already hopelessly hooked, we've decided to share this modest list of a few of these notorious "cappuccino dens" in our fair River City.

The establishments we'll describe were chosen because they:

- 1) Serve cappuccino and other gourmet coffees.
- 2) Have a reasonably comfortable atmosphere, which means: pleasant decor, civilized music, reasonable service (prompt and efficient staff, no paper plates, no styrofoam glasses, clean washrooms etc.), management doesn't mind university students, or mind people lingering over a meal or even simply having a conversation over a coffee.
- 3) Be a reasonable distance from the university (All places listed are south-side or downtown core).

So, for all of you who enjoy a good cup of coffee and a pleasant environment to drink it in, here are our suggestions:

I) 9th Street Cafe: 86 Ave. and 109 Street.

The old stand-by, a reasonable walk from campus with a fabulous ambience (enhanced by stained glass windows, heavy wood tables, and an overall warm cozy feeling to the place), but, be warned, expect a wait at the door for a table. A bit on the pricey side, the service is a tad slow, but it is licensed for beer, wine and liquor to complement a nice, varied menu (nice

As for atmosphere and decor, I won't even try to describe it.

cheese and veggie plates). The crowd tends to be student-oriented; you won't look out of place reading *Pride and Prejudice* while waiting for your espresso.

As For The Cappuccino: The quality tends to depend on who makes it, but it's generally good.

II) Appleby's Diner: 10024 - 102 St.

A great downtown location with super hours. It has a large, varied menu; portions are large; food is fresh, wholesome, and homecooked. Reasonable prices with generally good service. As for atmosphere and decor, I won't even try to describe it. Let's just say it's unique, and very personal.

Very informal, very young. The staff cares and it shows. The clientele tends to be as original as the decor, a bit on the fringe side. But I must warn you that Appleby's is not licensed to serve alcohol.

As For The Cappuccino: Reliable. In other words, consistently good.

III) Strawberry Cafe: 10405 Jasper Ave. (Gilbert's Favorite)

One of the three best cappuccino



Photo Ray Giguere

Dante's apparently makes the best cappuccino

places in town. Expensive, but great quality, it does have a rather limited menu but does have interesting daily specials with some very excellent desserts. Nestled beside an art gallery and a classical music store, the cafe is itself loaded with prints, and has its own plexiglass d.j.'s booth which allows the cafe to play a nice blend of jazz, folk and European music. The bright art deco cafe with its bright red furniture is almost deserted in the evenings, making it a perfect after-movie stop, situated only a block from the Cineplex 9 cinema. The cafe also seems to attract a higher class of fringe than most other cappuccino hangouts. It serves beer and wine too.

As For The Cappuccino: Like I said before, one of the top three.

IV) Bistro Praha Gourmet Snack Bar: 10168 - 100A St.

(Tanya's favorite)

Another of the top three cappuccino joints. The perennial after-theatre/after-anything drop in place. If you don't mind a wait in line for a table, or the sometimes strange theatre crowd that hangs out there, you're all set for a treat. Very consistent food and drink, with reasonable prices for the portions and quality (the sandwiches are a good deal. We recommend the apple strudel with all our hearts. Classical music, floor lamps, and antique furniture along with the prompt, courteous service add up to a super environment. It's also licensed for beer and wine.

As For The Cappuccino: Need I say more?

V) Beans and Barley Lounge: 10309 - 81 Ave.

For those of you who really don't want to pig out at any restaurant, but just curl up before a roaring fire in a over-stuffed chair sipping on a cafe au lait, then this lounge is for you. A small snack menu (mainly desserts which will satisfy the diehard nibbler, is served, in addition to the usual lounge fare. This place is just perfect for that nightcap after a show, located just a block from the Princess theatre. You'll get good service with typical lounge prices (it is a lounge, so you might have to order a drink). It does cater to the business set, so you might be a little out of place in leather, carrying a whip.

As For The Cappuccino: Decent.

VI) Dante's: 8230 - 103rd St.

VIII) Incredible Edibles: (HUB)

Self-service, incredibly busy (avoid between 11 and 1, when all the arts students swoop down to eat). The cappuccino and the espresso can be a little slow in coming, and their regular coffee is every bit as good as Java Jive's with half the wait. Great food, good variation, and scrumptious desserts. Again no place to sit down and HUB malts a zoo at the best of times. Clientele: your guess is as good as mine.

As For The Cappuccino: Consistent and good, worth the wait.

IX) High Level Diner: (Down the street from the Garneau Cinema)

The new kid on the block, just opened before Christmas and already has line-ups (fast moving though). Bamboo blinds.

Swift professional service tops off an excellent evening.

Marco claims the best cappuccino in town, and Marco lives up to that reputation. Undoubtedly, the best coffee in town. Dante's is not a restaurant or lounge, it is in fact a gift shop/gallery/coffee bar, with no food and limited hours (in the summer months the shop hosts special activities such as poetry readings, etc., and expands its hours). You can have a cup of cappuccino or tea while perusing the merchandise, art displays, and Italian design magazines scattered about the place. Self-serve and very friendly. Clientele: fringy, fashion crowd.

As For The Cappuccino: The best.

VII) L'Express: (SUB)

changing art displays, jazz music and prints in the washrooms make for a pleasant decor. Swift professional service tops off an excellent evening. A limited menu but surprisingly inexpensive (dinner for two, cocktails, appetizers, main course, dessert and cappuccino will set you back about 30 clams). The food is both wholesome and fresh; they could use some expansion or a daily special.

As For The Cappuccino: Very good, was a little iffy to start.

X) Hanratty's Tea and Pastry Shop: 10341 - 82 Ave.

Okay, so this place doesn't serve gourmet coffee, but it more than meets all



Photo Ray Giguere

The High Level Diner is the new kid on the block.

Self-serve and oftimes very noisy. Closes early which is a shame since it would be a great place to stop in after SUB theatre events. Interesting food, but served on paper plates and is continuously mobbed, so don't expect to sit down. The tables are rarely cleaned and wobble, so beware. Clientele: bored; guard tables with lives if necessary.

As For The Cappuccino: Depends on who makes it.

the other requirements, an overall super place to have lunch. It deserves a special mention. For a nice light lunch (with really great desserts) in a nice esthetically pleasing location (outdoor eating in the summer), clean, usually prompt service (though a bit harried when it gets busy) Hanratty is the place to go. A pleasing selection of teas served in fair sized pots with knitted cozies caps the best of meals. No cappuccino but everything else.

CABARETS

CJSR
presents

THE Fat Band
ROSS CAMPBELL

with guests: ROUTE 66

Friday, January 28; 8 PM

U of A Hospital, School of Nursing
presents

DARKROOM
with guests: SILENT MOVIES

Saturday, January 29; 8 PM

U of A Medical Students
present

INSTRUCTIONS

Saturday,
February 5;
9 pm.

Tickets are available from the SUB Box Office (2nd Floor SUB) and various club members.

NOTE: These events are open only to U of A students, staff, and guests. Absolutely no minors admitted!