



# Sippin'

Warm mugs, conversations typify Coffee Gallery

Newspaper-laden retirees, bearded sages of the Sixties, students, businesspeople, shoppers. They sit in twos and threes, two mostly, hands cupped around mugs of steaming coffee, talking.

Some come to the High Street Coffee Gallery for the coffee and pastries, others for the comfortable atmosphere and still others for stimulating conversation. Most come for all three.

This new establishment, which opened last month, is a combination coffeehouse/art gallery. The old English style sign in front of the business at 1243 High is a clue to what's inside. Proprietors Ann Blandin and Josephine Cole wanted to set up a European style coffeehouse where people could sit, drink coffee and exchange

ideas (emphasis on ideas).

The door closes with a friendly rattle typical of older homes such as this one. Sometimes a bare floorboard creaks as a patron gets up for more coffee. Large windows let in sunshine (whenever possible) and a fireplace staves off the chill in the high-ceilinged rooms.

Artwork by Randy Williams is tastefully and unobtrusively hung on the white walls. The current exhibit will run to Dec. 17, when the works of John Bauguess take over.

Coffee and pastry are the Coffee Gallery's specialties. Patrons get their coffee made to order — "with chocolate, no whipped cream," vice versa, straight, light, medium or strong, with orange

peel or lemon rind, none or all of the above.

The selection of sweets in the pastry case will either make you break out or gain a few pounds. But don't let that stop you — they're delicious. There's Paris brest, fat frosted brownies, sour cream apple pie, apricot filled jealousies, apple dumplings, nut breads, pound cake and cheesecake.

The cheesecakes deserve a paragraph all their own. There's the chocolate rum and egg nog varieties, both creations of chef Lenny Nathan, as well as plain and fruited cheesecake.

Nathan is just as talented and innovative in the soup category as he is in the cheesecake realm. The coffeehouse offers a different homemade soup daily with french bread and a limited variety of salads.

Blandin says the food menu may be expanded slightly in the future, but that the emphasis will remain on a coffeehouse setting.

"We don't ever want to turn into a restaurant," she says. Restaurants need to have a turnover on their tables and Blandin says this runs counter to hers and Cole's philosophy for their business.

"We want to maintain a coffeehouse atmosphere where people can relax and stay," she adds.



Photos by Steve Dykes

But the Coffee Gallery isn't the coffeehouse of the Fifties. "It's not a beat," explains Blandin, saying the focus is not on politics, but on getting a variety of people to-

gether in one place as is characteristic of European coffeehouses.

Sometimes in the evening, music is provided, but it's background music. Coffee and conversation still have center stage.

Coffeehouse hours are 7 a.m.-midnight on weekdays, 9 a.m.-1 a.m. Saturday and 11 a.m.-2 p.m. for brunch on Sunday. Omelets are served on Saturday morning, crepes on Sunday. Homemade cinnamon rolls are every morning's fare.

A middle-aged couple comes to the door and the lock sticks slightly as they open it. The chef gives them a hand getting in, then works with the lock, making sure the door opens freely for all who want to come in. **By Judy Emerson**

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