

# Eugene's coffee scene lacks personality, style

Going out on the town must include coffee. And not just any cup of joe. My coffee must have its own personality. It should be served to me in a high-quality mug. And I should be allowed to enjoy it until the wee hours of the morning.

Unfortunately, Eugene has not provided me with this coffee experience. This town has a serious lack of independently owned cute coffeehouses where I can soak in a unique atmosphere, relax with friends and enjoy one-of-a-kind delicacies. Most Eugene coffeehouses have bland walls and lighting, menus posted on the wall above the counter, beverages that come in paper cups and/or a 9 p.m. closing time. No wonder students spend weekend nights getting wasted at house parties.

There is one coffeehouse in Portland that should be the model for all

java dens, and that is The Pied Cow Coffeehouse. Pied Cow (as regulars call it) has class that can smack any chain coffee company in the face.

The first winning aspect of Pied Cow



**Natasha Chilingirian**  
Nat goes to town

is the dream-like ambiance. You walk into the antique house to see two dimly lit adjunct rooms with a candle on each table and a ceiling made of billowing fabric. The coffeehouse has abstract paintings and wallpaper, stained-glass windows and a decorative staircase full of plants and Buddha statues. When you're in a place that looks fun, you'll have fun.

Pied Cow's menu goes cleverly beyond coffee. You can always get a double shot of espresso with a scoop of whipped cream, served in a ceramic cup and saucer, but you can also get a dense layered dessert of peanut butter and chocolate fudge

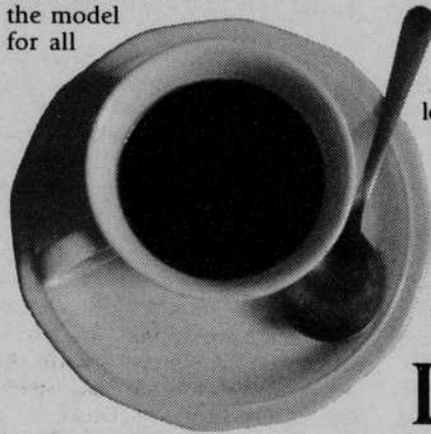
served in a teacup.

The food's purpose is to enrich social gatherings. The appetizers, such as bread and cheese plates, beg to be shared. Crepes come to the table literally flaming, which is quite a spectacle. And once you discover a fabulous dish only offered at Pied Cow, you keep coming back for more (mine happens to be a tall glass filled with iced coffee, vanilla ice cream, hot fudge and a mountain of whipped cream).

Pied Cow also wins points for their warm weather specialty — one-night rentals of Arabian water pipes (or "hookahs") to be used for smoking pleasure in the adjoining garden. For the uninitiated, hookahs are tall towers (often constructed of metal or brass) with attached hoses for people to smoke from. The top contains a small chamber that can be filled with flavored tobacco, which is what Pied Cow offers. I'm not a huge smoking advocate in general, but nothing can beat passing the hose around a giggling circle of friends on a hot summer night, especially when the tobacco is a refreshing mint flavor and is followed by a sip of soothing, ginger peach tea.

And the staff of Pied Cow are successful because they appear to be part of the interior design. Waiters and

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## Local coffee shops provide boost students need

**Ryan Nyburg**  
Senior Pulse Reporter

Coffee is quite possibly the most popular legal drug in America. It's easy

### REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

to see why, considering the effects it has on the human mind. Caffeine increases awareness and short-term memory, raises the heart rate and can really give the old ticker a hefty wake-up kick in the morning. This all plays really well into Friedrich Nietzsche's theory about society's concern with the Apollonian side of human nature. According to him, we're apparently too disconnected from our emotions and too concerned with the scientific order. As such, coffee is the most suitable drug for us, as it amplifies both these attributes.

So let us examine how we can best fulfill our thirst for this bitter black fluid on and around campus by surveying a number of local outlets for the purveyance of awareness-enhancing chemicals. In other words, this is a review of local coffee shops.

First is Common Grounds, located in Hamilton Complex. This is essentially an outlet for residence hall denizens and as such probably won't be visited much by the outside world. This is unfortunate, as the place has a few advantages to offer.

To start, it is open until 2 a.m.,

which is about two hours later than most coffee shops in Eugene. The coffee is also inexpensive, but this is not always a good thing. Their regular coffee tastes like brown water, only with a lower caffeine content. The espresso drinks are a bit better. The cafe also offers "organic" coffee, which I suppose distinguishes it from inorganic matter, such as gravel or Folgers.

The atmosphere is comfortable, with a high number of cozy chairs. The food consists of standard coffeehouse offerings translated into residence hall food. Not bad, in any case.

Next up is The Buzz Coffeehouse, located on the EMU ground floor. This Buzz is one outlet for campus performance arts, such as poetry readings, among other assaults on human decency. Other than that, the place serves a rather simple purpose on campus, giving people a place to sit, study and load up on the appropriate amount of energy needed to survive the day intact.

The comfy-chair ratio is average and the music is whatever college radio favorites the employees want to hear. Pricing is standard and the pastries are scrumptious. Nothing particularly special, but nice.

Just off campus, Espresso Roma offers another good place for pure study and caffeine intake. They also have an outdoor seating area for indulging in other vices. The prices are about average, starting at \$1 for an 8 oz. cup of joe. But the biggest appeal of the place is the coffee itself. While not much on flavor,

it makes up for it by pure force of content. This stuff could bring the dead to life if administered correctly. It's inelegant but effective.

Starbucks, the other popular study spot for students near campus, is located just down the street from Espresso Roma. The decor is pretty much like every other Starbucks in America, meant to give off the air of suave hipness. The prices are a bit above average, about five cents more per cup across the board.

I've always found something disturbing about Starbucks. The problem is that they fetishize coffee, making it a lifestyle rather than just a drink. They try to peddle the entire Starbucks way of living with each cup. When you go into the store, you have to walk past all the mugs, bagged coffees, espresso makers and music before you can reach the counter. All I want is a mocha.

Honestly though, the coffee isn't terrible. But it's certainly nothing special and is not worth the trouble you have to go through to get to it.

Contact the senior Pulse reporter at [ryannyburg@dailyemerald.com](mailto:ryannyburg@dailyemerald.com).

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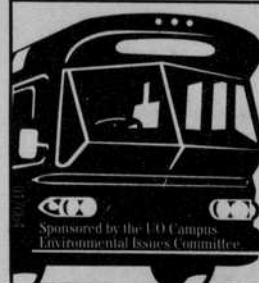
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