

Dining

Cozy up to College Hill Coffee

Restaurant review

BY PAMA MITCHELL | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

The College Hill Coffee Company has been a neighborhood hangout for more than a decade, but January marked its second anniversary under new owner Tina Stoeberl. The buzz is that she had transformed the once cavernous space into something cozy and inviting, while also vastly improving the food offerings.

THE UPSIDE

The rumors are true. Stoeberl has divided the big, high-ceilinged room into several nooks - either areas of tables, easy chairs and sofas, or sectioned off for shelves of retail items that range from tableware and pottery to gourmet foods and coffees.

But what you notice upon entering is the large counter in the middle of the room displaying piles of delicious-looking baked goods. Behind the counter, servers work busily to fill patrons' orders, which come from the large chalk boards announcing daily specials and from a menu of breakfast items (served until noon, or all day on Sunday), salads, soups, sandwiches and quiches.

THE DOWNSIDE

We thought that the unflavored brew of coffee was only so-so, a little thin and watery, not especially flavorful, considering this is an establishment with coffee in its name.

OUR MEAL

We arrived just after noon in the middle of the week, and the joint was jumping. Once seated, we pondered the tempting choices, including a half-price special salad called The Hollywood (\$8.95), loaded with walnuts, mandarin oranges, cranberries and a bunch of other goodies. But the day was cold, so we opted for warmer fare.

I had the homemade five-bean chili with corn (\$4.95), a medium sized bowl that came with sides of shredded cheese and sour cream and a thick slice of French bread. My friend had one of the daily quiches (\$7.50), broccoli and cheddar, served with a mini-muffin and a side of fruit salad.

We both tried a cup of coffee, hazelnut for her and brew of the day for me (\$1.95 each), and I could not resist having our server box a hefty slice of the cranberry-apple pie (\$3.95) to share with my husband later.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The highlights of College Hill Coffee include the baked goods, such as pies and quiches, and the comfortable feel of the dark-paneled seating areas.

On weekend evenings, appearances by local musicians add to the café's appeal, and it's a great choice for Sunday brunch.



Ellen Poppleton (left) chats with customer Leigh Jones of Clifton, who had called in a carryout order.

If you go

The bill: \$21.37 plus tip

Where: 6128 Hamilton Ave., College Hill

When: 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday, 8:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday

Paying for it: American Express, MasterCard, Visa

Information: 513-542-2739