

# Coffee is one of Lake Oswego's perks

I'm a Starbucks fan myself. But when it comes to gourmet coffee there are enough different tastes and drinking habits in Lake Oswego to fuel a booming number of specialty coffee bars all across town.

If you haven't smelled the coffee brewing then maybe you need a double espresso to wake yourself up. Just in the one mile stretch along Boones Ferry Road from Bryant to Kruseway there are ten places you can stop for a shot of your favorite java from the bakery counter at Wizer's to the deli at Mercantile Plaza. Whether it's a dry cappuccino or a tall skinny vanilla latte you prefer chances are there's a convenient location coming to you. That's good news for coffee snobs like myself who spent my first year in Oregon importing my beans from my California supplier — Peets. And according to the growing number of entrepreneurs, it's good for business too.

Several owners pointed to the saturation along Northwest 23rd in Portland as proof that there is enough demand out there to let everyone's cup runneth over. National statistics support that claim.

"We are seeing a big increase in consumption of specialty coffee," explains Ted Lingle, executive director of the Specialty Coffee Association.

By the end of 1989 there were an estimated 200 coffee cafes, including espresso bars and carts in the U.S. within 10 years that number is expected to reach 10,000 with a total retail sales volume of \$1.5 billion. Lake Oswego is part of a national trend.

"It's a legal addiction," explains Tim Lafferty, co-owner of Later for the Trolley, an espresso bar at the trolley stop on State Street. "Coffee



**HOME WITH A VIEW**  
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is an accompaniment for people taking time to relax and then it gives them the energy to make up for the time they just lost."

After talking to both owners as well as customers it becomes quite clear that what coffee stores are selling and consumers are buying is more than just something to drink.

Joannie Johnson is one of what she jokingly refers to as "the Cheers group" of regulars at Coffee Nook, showing up once a day for the last four to five years for a double or triple Americano.

"It's like the old stash and rug — you can talk about anything and always run into someone you know," she explains.

Susan Vaday has a twice a day habit that she has been satisfying at Coffee Nook for about four years. "When I pull in they're already making my coffee drink," she explains. Like the Cheers refrain she lives it that "they all know me by name."

For Stewart Jones, co-owner of

Indigo Gallery, the coffee at Lake for the Trolley is only one-third of his coffee experience. The other parts include walking to his destination and then visiting with owner Tim Lafferty while he's there. While he owns a grinder and can brew a cup for himself at home he admits enjoying the "socialization that occurs with a cup of coffee."

At the Ironmonger located in Aldergrove Hardware, serving coffee alongside nails is a way for owner Mike Nichols to dazzle his customers and get them to relax. "Many times people come in here because they have a problem — the toilet is stuck or the lawn needs mowed. We wanted to create a sense of leisure and make the trip pleasurable." Nichols also wanted to satisfy his own cravings as well as his employees. "We're addicted to espresso," he admits.

The product itself also keeps drinkers coming back. Owners and regulars attest to their own preferences using words like "smooth" and "full-bodied" to describe their favorite beans whether they're from Boyd's, Vienna, Longbottoms, Torrefazione, Starbucks or Coffee Bean International.

"Specialty coffee offers a quality that transcends the average coffee you get at a coffee shop that's weak and has been sitting on the burner too long," explains one Timothy's coffee follower who honks in her

order from the street, flashing three fingers for a triple tall latte. "It's like fine wine. We've gotten used to a superior product and now the public demands it."

To date all of Lake Oswego's specialty coffee purveyors are home-grown operations — the kind of small business we are known for. But Starbucks, the prolific coffee chain, plans to open a store in Lake Oswego as soon as the right location can be found. That would make me happy although I have been fueling up at the The Coffee Spot lately. One of the new kids on the block, it's less than half a mile from my home, the owners are friendly, my double decaf latte is smooth yet flavorful and there is a tot-size table and chairs and toy box to entertain my kids so I can have my coffee and drink it too.

In the midst of all this plenty, I'm almost embarrassed to ask for one more convenience to cater to my coffee drinking lifestyle. Blame it on too much caffeine (yes, even decaf still delivers some of the jolt) but I'd love a good humor coffee van bringing espresso drinks to my door while tunes of Kenny G fill the streets. At the rate the coffee business is brewing in Lake Oswego this may not be as far fetched as it seems.

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