

At the LC: Let's Eat

By Wes Guidry

The question I am asked most is: "Hey Wes, where's a good place to eat?" That's easy to answer. Just outside the Hyatt Regency's back door is a smorgasbord of restaurants known as Main Street. No less than seventy restaurants and bars are within walking distance of the hotel. The restaurants' styles and prices run the gamut, from plain to fancy, cheap to cher. I offer the following suggestions from locations I have given a taste drive.

Jersey Mike's Subs - is directly across the street from the hotel. It offers a great choice of hot and cold subs and salads, and it's also a good place for breakfast. Show your VVA registration badge and get 10 percent off your breakfast order. Breakfast sandwiches are made to order, and they open at 7 a.m. to accommodate VVA.

Coffee Underground - is a coffee haven located down a stairway just off Main Street. The place also opens at 7 a.m. and features freshly roasted coffees, lattes, hot teas, frappes, milk shakes, and fruit smoothies to wash down assorted muffins, omelets in a mug, and build-your-own breakfast sandwiches. It is not wheelchair accessible.

Atlanta Bread Company - is another place for a quick breakfast. The menu includes specialty coffees and a bakery offering muffins, breads, croissants, and Danish baked fresh daily. Also available are hot breakfast sandwiches on bagels or croissants.

The Blue Ridge Brewing Company - just across the street from the hotel, has a large selection of their own handcrafted brews, including ales and a stout. Happy hour is from 4-7 o'clock. Half-gallon Growler bottles are available to take your beer back to the hotel. The Growler bottle is \$4.50, and they will refill it for \$8.50 as often as you like. They have a great, low-cost lunch special every day: your choice of chicken, meat loaf, or country fried steak with two vegetables for \$6.45.

Sticky Fingers - is unique and highly recommended. It's open from 11 a.m. until 10:15 p.m., and barbeque is the specialty, slow cooked on the smoker. The ribs (pork only) fall apart in your hands. The best way to eat and enjoy their prime ribs is to just dig in. Hence the name. The staff is ready for the mess. Your silverware comes wrapped in a hand towel. The ribs come to your table smoked and coated with a dry rub. At your table are five sauces: Memphis style wet, Memphis style dry, Tennessee whiskey, Habanero hot, and Carolina sweet. Their chicken wings are not deep fried, but slow-smoked to a crispy perfection. The portions are large and the prices are moderate.

The Paris Café - is the perfect place for a quick lunch of sandwiches and decadent desserts. Order at the counter, then take a table, and a server brings your food. The Cuban, a sandwich toasted crisp in a press with roasted pork, ham, and mozzarella, is a great choice. I also recommend the Croque-Monsieur, a Parisian specialty of shaved ham, tomatoes, Swiss cheese, and béchamel sauce topped with a well-cooked, sunny-side-up egg. I very seldom eat dessert but couldn't pass up their offerings: the pecan walnut tartlet, the strawberry and cream shortcake, and the irresistible Normandy tartlet of diced apples with pecan and creamy honey sauce. Sound good? They're beautiful, too.

Tsunami Steaks-Seafood-Sushi - ranks high among my restaurant picks. There are several sushi restaurants in Greenville. Even if you aren't into sushi, you should give this one a try. The atmosphere is great and the service is fast. Three sushi chefs keep up with incoming orders. I recommend the "rocken roll," a combination of tuna, salmon, yellow tail, seaweed, crab cake, and avocado. They have specials on different days with some of the rolls going for \$2 each. Check for specials.

Barley's Taproom & Pizzeria - is a pizza and beer place. It's nice looking with very high ceilings and wooden floors. When they say beer, they mean beer! There are more than seventy beers on tap and 110 beers in bottles. But you won't find the major brands: There's no Bud or Miller. They specialize in micro beers from around the world. If you want to taste the full flavor of beer, go there. The pizza is hand-tossed, and they offer nearly forty toppings. You can order the pizza by the slice, and the slices are huge. They have a game room upstairs with pool tables, foosball, and other games. There's no elevator, however, so upstairs isn't wheelchair accessible.

Trio--A Brick Oven Café - is a very popular place on Main Street. The wood-fired oven is the centerpiece of this establishment. The kitchen is open, so you can watch the chefs churn out the dishes, all in conjunction with a hard-working wait staff. The pasta dishes, wood-fired pizza, calzones, sandwiches, soups, and salad are all excellent. When you sit down, your server brings a large slice of foccacia bread and a plate of grated parmesan cheese. Pour some olive oil over the cheese, then dip the bread into the wonderful mixture. The line spills out the door; that's an indication of how good this place is.