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## JAVA, JIVE, AND COMPUTERS, TOO; METRO DENVER'S COOLEST COFFEEHOUSES

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Forget analysts' predictions that coffeehouses will be passe in 1996.

Denver-Boulder's neighborhood coffeehouses — those that are as unique as handprints — are thriving.

True, espresso bars and coffeehouses seemed to crop up on every corner in 1995. But the United States is the world's largest coffee consumer. Almost half the population enjoys a good cup of mud.

Ironically, people visit cafes for a caffeine fix when they need to slow down a bit. There they can people-watch, read, do homework, have a conversation, play chess or poker, listen to music, or surf the Internet.

Long before espresso became a household word, cafes and coffeehouses served as centers for business, cultural and political life.

From about 1650 to 1850, coffeehouses flourished in London. City dwellers visited them several times a day for news (reporters found sources at coffeehouses as newspapers developed) and some people kept regular hours so friends and clients knew where to find them.

Denver and Boulder have supported their own unique coffeehouses since the early '60s. Below is a sampling.

Black Pearl Bookstore and Coffee House

1665 Pearl St.

831-0715.

Hours: 6:30 p.m. to midnight — weekends until 2:30 a.m.; lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

The coffeehouse showcases a smattering of rare detective fiction from the '30s through the '50s.

Open poetry readings have operated continuously on Thursday nights since the first month. The crowd is predominantly younger or college age, but some baby boomers make an appearance.

Brillig Works Cafe and Bakery

1322 College Ave., Boulder.

443-7461.

Hours: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday; opens at 8 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

The Brillig is one of the most successful cafes in the Boulder-Denver area.

Owner Howard Caplan sees a return to the original style of the coffeehouse.

"They're less sterile than going into a Starbucks," he says.

Since 1960, the Brillig has offered four stories of atmosphere on "The Hill" in Boulder. Patrons order coffee and food at the counter and pick the floor that suits them. One floor is almost wall-to-wall windows.

Eighty percent of the clientele is students, faculty or staff from the University of Colorado, Caplan says. The other 20% comes out of its way to visit.

It offers a full vegetarian lunch and dinner menu and in-house baked goods.

Caffe Mars 1425 Pearl St., Boulder.

938-1750.

Hours: 7 a.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday; to 1 a.m. Friday; 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday.

Caffe Mars is two levels of antique couches, chairs and lamps. Patrons get coffee and various bakery items at copper counters fashioned by owner Rick Burgeoin, who has been in business almost three years.

Folk and acoustic rock bands play at 9 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and Burgeoin plans to add coin-operated Macintosh computers soon.

Coffee Grounds

719 E. 17th Ave.

839-8120.

Hours: 7:30 a.m. to midnight Monday through Thursday; 7:30 a.m. to 2 a.m. Friday; 9:30 a.m. to 2 a.m. Saturday; 9:30 a.m. to midnight Sunday.

Owner Scott Hooton celebrated the second anniversary of Coffee Grounds on New Years and is optimistic about the future.

"What we are is a neighborhood coffee shop. I don't see us going anywhere soon. Too many people like what we're doing."

Coffee Grounds has a selection of books as well as a pool table, poetry readings at 8:30 Wednesday nights and live acoustic music Friday and Saturday nights.

The Daily Grind

Tivoli Student Union.

900 Auraria Parkway.

615-9795.

Hours: 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Wednesday; open until 9 a.m. on Thursdays; 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

Other locations: 1999 Broadway (Denver); 555 17th St. (Denver); Vail.

Auraria students, faculty and staff flock to the Daily Grind between classes for the coffee that the company roasts in Mintern and Aspen. A variety of fresh pastries and lunch choices are also offered.

The Daily Grind won Westword's Best of Denver award for a poetry series in 1995. The coffeehouse also hosts guest authors and student art shows.

Jitter's

1523 18th St.

298-8490.

Hours: 6:45 a.m. to midnight Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to midnight Saturday.

Owner Matt Haggstrom, originally from Fairbanks, Alaska, modeled Jitter's, which has been open for 14 months, after coffeehouses in New York and Los Angeles.

By far the coffee is the strongest aspect of business, but it's getting better and better with the Internet as people find out Jitter's offers four computers and will go to six shortly.

Computer use is free for student patrons, \$4 for a half hour and \$7 an hour for non-students.

"People come in who don't know how to use the Internet at all," Haggstrom says. "We show them for free. We serve as an electronic post office for some people."

When Planet Hollywood comes to town, Jitter's will move from its current 19,000-square-foot space to a bigger one around the corner on 18th Street.

#### Majordomo's Net Cafe

1401 Ogden St.

830-0442.

Hours: 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday; until midnight Friday and Saturday; until 9 p.m. Sunday.

The motto at Majordomo's is "Eat. Drink. Be Wired." The cafe opened Jan. 20 with six computers — three Macs — for use at \$6 an hour or 10CENTS a minute.

But it's not only for the wired. Majordomo's has little cafe tables with no computers.

"We often get more people that are in for coffee and pastries than for the computers," computer ace Diane Clark says.

"Majordomo" is defined as the male head of a great, royal or noble household in Webster's; in computer lingo it means a main server on the Internet. True to its name, the cafe always keeps someone on site to help people use the Internet.

#### The Market

1445 Larimer St.

534-5140.

Hours: 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday; to midnight Fridays; 8 a.m. to midnight on Saturday; 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday.

The Market has been a staple for the coffee consumer for more than 20 years and prides itself on being user friendly.

Manager Gary Greenberg doesn't see the Market changing much either.

"Caffeine is one of the last legal drugs," he says. "People like caffeine."

#### Muddy's Java Cafe

2200 Champa St.

298-1631.

Hours: 4 p.m. to 3 a.m. Sunday through Thursday; 4 p.m. to 4 a.m. Friday and Saturday.

A long-time Denver establishment, Muddy's was purchased by employee Sheila Weisenborn in April. Live music — from folk to alternative — is featured on Friday nights. She plans on presenting theater again at the end of February and hopes to restart poetry readings.

Weisenborn says she never targeted a clientele, but believed Muddy's was catering too much to kids. Now ages range from 16 to 40-something.

"People come for the social scene," Weisenborn says. "It's a place to meet people and people watch."

#### The Newsstand

630 E. Sixth Ave.

777-6060.

Hours: 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday; until 4 p.m. on Sunday.

The Newsstand, celebrating its fifth anniversary on Feb. 15, stocks newspapers from around the world.

"People like it here because they can get their coffee and their New York Times all at once," manager John Wissinger says.

The cafe occasionally hosts book readings from local authors.

Paris on the Platte

1553 Platte St.

455-2451

Hours: 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 4 a.m. Friday; noon to 4 a.m. Saturday; 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Sunday.

Paris on the Platte draws the after-theater crowd and catches the after-bar rush. From 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday is standing-room only.

The cafe is part bookstore. Music — generally acoustic blues or folk — is performed on Fridays, Saturdays and Tuesdays.

Penny Lane

1795 Pearl St., Boulder

443-9516.

Hours: 6:15 a.m. until 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday; until midnight Friday and Saturday. Hours change in the summer.

In Boulder, Penny Lane is at the top of the heap with the Trident Cafe and the Brillig Works. It features concerts and a plethora of artsy cards. Art exhibits change every two weeks.

St. Mark's Coffeehouse

1416 Market St.

446-2925.

Hours: 7 a.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday; Friday until 1 a.m.; 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday.

St. Mark's features the painting and sculpture of two artists every month.

The Trident

936 Pearl St., Boulder

443-3133.

Cafe hours: 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. weekdays; opens at 7 a.m. Saturday and 7:30 a.m. Sunday.

Bookstore hours: 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. everyday.

The Trident, which has been around for 17 years, offers the true coffeehouse atmosphere like no other. From the marble counter to the cafe tables, you'd think you were in Europe if you didn't know you were in Boulder.

But manager Mike Smith likes the customers best.

"The customers are so unique," he says. "They're not bound by any concept or class or stereotype. You get everyone — from the shelter guy to a guy worth \$25 million."

The Trident features solo musicians on Sunday nights, but is mostly a place to meet others for conversation.