

# Features

## Review

### Tomato Rumba's offers little spice

Marissa DeBlasio  
Staff Writer

For students who live on campus, dining with someone other than Marriot is considered a treat. Unfortunately, students have to be very careful when choosing where to take that blissful meal. While the food at Tomato Rumba's Pastaria Grill on Tunnel Road may be of a slightly higher quality than the cafe, many other aspects could stand some improvement.

To begin, getting seated in the place may be the biggest obstacle. Tomato Rumba's is trendy, so crowds and long waits can be expected. Moreover, it is crucial to make sure your name is on the waiting

list as soon as possible. Never sit on the waiting bench and expect the host or hostess to approach you for information concerning your party. This is a sure way to waste 15 minutes while you are completely ignored.

In addition to this initial rudeness of being overlooked, the dining experience itself leaves much to be desired. The restaurant's servers must be trained to act as if they have missed their last dosage of medication. While some patrons may enjoy the server's overpowering personalities, it can initially be a major turn-off if you are just in search of food.

Some trips to this establishment have been rather calm, but the majority have resulted in headaches and indigestion from the staff and loud music—even before the meal was served. The best suggestion is to come with an empty stomach but an open mind and bottle of pain relievers.

Following the initial assault on one's senses, seats are provided and the patron's adolescent mode has to kick in. Diners are supplied with a large sheet of white paper which serves as the table cloth. Located on the table are crayons of various colors. This is supposed to serve as a diversion while you have to wait to place an order. Needless to say, not enough crayons or

paper are provided to occupy the long wait.

With all this time to consider the menu, it can be fully appreciated. The food selection resembles that of basically all the other trendy restaurants in Asheville or any other city with a population of 100 or more. There are the standard salads, soups, sandwiches and hot dinners available at a reasonable price.

Few items really stand out on the menu. However, the lasagna and chicken parmesan are worth mentioning for their great flavor in the true Italian tradition. Another fairly safe choice is the grilled chicken sandwich. This old standby has a great full-bodied flavor, but request light butter on the

bun. It could literally be rung out with the amount on the toasted bun.

Something to avoid at all costs is the spaghetti. While this is supposed to be an Italian restaurant, this dish is flavorless and leaves much to be desired. To keep dining safe, order anything with chicken. They have a great handle on this in most anything they prepare.

The best feature of the place is their birthday dessert. While most restaurants of this class serve up a generic hot fudge sundae, Tomato Rumba's takes their complimentary dessert to the extreme. They serve the lucky individual a splendid tiramisu in a large dessert goblet. These layers of ladyfingers with a wonderful coffee flavor and chocolate sauce will cure anyone's craving for sweets. This is a true Italian treat and is second only to the same dessert offered at the Olive Garden.

With decent food and questionable service, Tomato Rumba's offers a certain distinct atmosphere. Not a first choice for an intimate encounter, the restaurant does offer a fun and rather loud environment for groups to enjoy. Small groups would benefit more by dining at a quieter establishment, but Tomato Rumba's has the potential to offer excitement for a ram-bunctious crowd.



Photo by Jeanette Webb

Tomato Rumba's combines Italian food with an eclectic atmosphere. The Tunnel Road restaurant serves lunch and dinner.

## Review



Musician Dar Williams is currently touring with headliner Joan Baez to promote her new album "Mortal City." They will play the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium on April 4.

### Folk singer looks for a place to call home

Jack Walsh  
Staff Writer

Often, folk music brings to mind images of unkempt Dylanesque bohemians, strumming three chords and whining about the government to coffeehouse audiences. Singer, songwriter, and guitarist Dar Williams, however, breaks the mold.

On her new album, *Mortal City*, she skillfully uses the medium of folk music to explore personal issues and interpersonal relationships rather than the socio-political realm of stereotypical folk-rockers.

While a folk purist might reject *Mortal City's* slick production and the pop appeal of many of Williams' songs, the album brings a fresh style to the folk genre. Both Williams' musical and lyrical skills make for a record which is a listening pleasure.

Most of the songs on *Mortal City* are very stripped down in their arrangements. Only four

of the 11 songs use a full band. The majority feature Williams on guitar and vocals with only a solitary cello, mandolin, or dobro for accompaniment.

Williams kicks off the album with the first single, "As Cool As I Am," a quick-tempoed farewell to a lover with a wandering eye. Although a great song, "As Cool As I Am" does not fit the feel of the album and is a conspicuous contrast with the remainder of *Mortal City*.

In comparison, although the songs that follow are beautiful in their simplicity, they, at times, seem half-finished. Whereas the quiet, slower songs such as "February," "This Was Pompeii," and "Mortal City" spotlight Williams' gorgeous three-octave range, they lack the textures and harmonies of "As Cool As I Am" or "The Ocean," which features backing vocals by prominent folk figure John Prine.

A particular lyrical standout, "The Pointless, Yet Poignant,

Crisis of a Co-Ed" is a humorous look at trendy liberalism at college. It examines the uncomfortable alliance between those who want hemp legalized for industrial use and those who just want to get high.

The character in the song recalls her experiences in the Hemp Liberation League: "I knew there was a problem, every time the group would meet everyone would light up/That made it difficult to discuss glaucoma and human rights, not to mention chemotherapy."

Williams says that while many of her lyrics come from personal experiences, some grow out of interesting stories that people tell her. Others, such as those in "The Poignant, Yet Pointless, Crisis of a Co-Ed," are merely generated by boredom. "The precise circumstances of the song are a construction engendered by long drives on the highway with little to occupy my mind," said Williams.

## Review

### Green frog and fuzzy bear sail the high seas

Troy Martin  
Staff Writer

Hi ho everybody! Kermit the frog and all the Muppet-show regulars have returned in "Muppet Treasure Island," a new film based on Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, *Treasure Island*.

The Muppet band, Sweetums, Rizzo the Rat, Gonzo, Dr. Honeydew, Beaker, and the Swedish chef all make appearances. The human cast includes Tim Curry as Long John Silver and Kevin Bishop as Jim Hawkins.

Like the TV show and the other Muppet movies before it, "Muppet Treasure Island" appeals to both children and adults, the formula that has made the Muppets a beloved part of American culture for some years.

For the adults, there's plenty

of snappy oneliners (compliments of those two old balcony hecklers, Waldorf and Statler), social parody (one Muppet prefers to be called "visually challenged" instead of "blind"), and just plain Muppet craziness.

"Muppet Treasure Island" shows an improvement by the members of Jim Henson Productions to recapture the spirit of the Muppets that seemed lost after Jim Henson's death. "A Muppet Christmas Carol," the first movie produced after Henson's death, lacked one of the most important elements that had made the Muppets so popular and loved, Jim Henson's voice.

When Kermit spoke, it wasn't the Kermit most of us had grown up with, but a well-meaning impostor. Since that time, Brian Henson has fine-tuned his voice. Aside from an

occasional moment or two of "un-Kermitness," Henson has filled his father's webbed-footed shoes. Luckily, Frank Oz returns to once again give voice to, among others, Miss Piggy and Fozzie Bear.

Even though Kermit sounds eerily like he did before the elder Henson's death, some of the other Muppets aren't so lucky, particularly Dr. Honeydew. The difference in the voices is noticeable enough to irritate those who remember how the characters originally sounded.

The final battle scene between Kermit and Long John Silver is poorly timed; by the end, it has lost both its novelty and cuteness. Also, some of the musical numbers stretch out a bit long, and Kevin Bishop is a horrible singer. By the end of the film I found myself wishing Long

John Silver would have had young Jim Hawkins walk the plank. Arrr.

The positives greatly outweigh the negatives, though. Gonzo is tortured in even more ingenious ways than usual. The sets are imaginative, the costuming is detailed, and the dialogue is witty.

Tim Curry is an excellent Long John Silver, simultaneously evil and likable. And, despite his horrid singing voice, Bishop is entertaining and not nearly as annoying with his acting.

"Muppet Treasure Island" is definitely worth the cost for those who fondly remember the Muppets, and with the original show being re-broadcast and a new show just now starting, the Muppets will surely continue to thrive with a whole new generation of viewers.

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