

# Features

## Savoy's menu excellent Sister City forum creates ideas

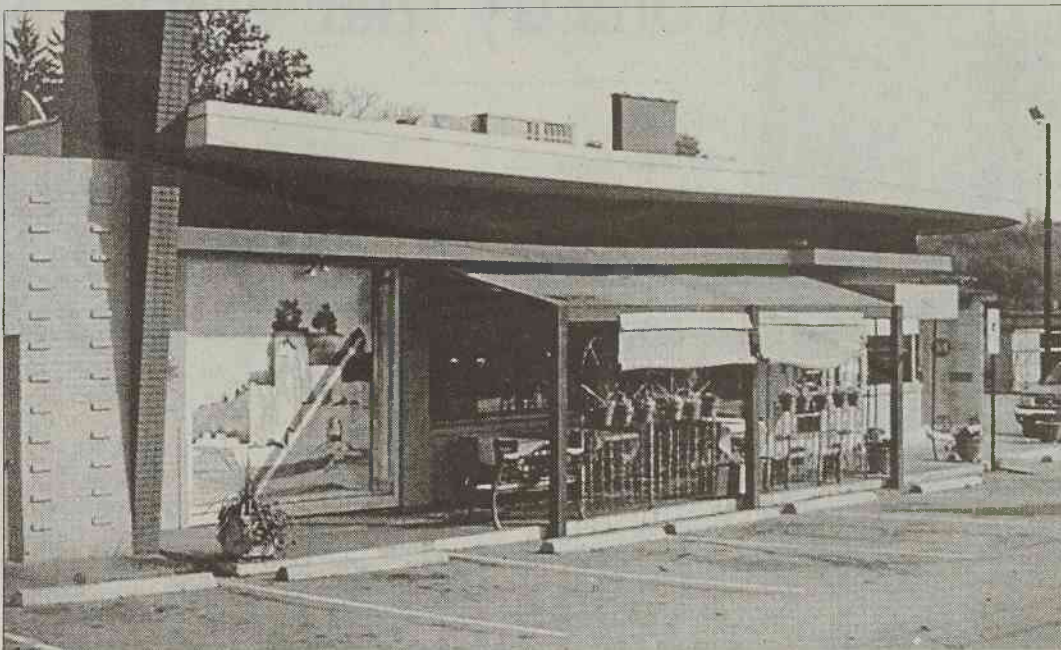


PHOTO BY PATRICK BRASWELL

Savoy on Merrimon Avenue offers a great Italian menu, but due to construction, it is wanting in atmosphere.

**Rebecca Travers**  
Staff Writer

When looking for a relatively inexpensive Italian restaurant, keep Savoy in mind.

The prices range approximately from five-dollar appetizers to 15-dollar meals.

Savoy is located on Merrimon Avenue, only a few minutes from the UNCA campus.

The atmosphere is not aesthetically pleasing, but the food is tasty. Everything I ordered, except the Caesar salad, which contained too much anchovy flavor, was delicious. The portobello mushroom appetizer was the best I have ever had. First, it is marinated in a pomodoro sauce, then stuffed with fresh mozzarella cheese and topped with a balsamic vinegar reduction.

The entrée I ordered, *al la funghi*, was simple yet pleasing. The cook mixed together various sautéed vegetables, such as spinach, wild mushrooms and diced tomatoes.

The vegetables were laid over penne pasta, which was covered

with feta cheese. A mushroom based sauce brought together the entire dish.

Savoy is generous in their portions. The appetizer, salad and entrée were all large enough for two.

The atmosphere did not fulfill my expectations.

It contains many of the elements that constitute a high-class restaurant, such as candles, limited seating and professionally dressed wait staff.

Other haphazard decorating decisions shadow the refined, artistic choices. For example, pieces of white paper served as oversized table bibs.

Granted, real tablecloths lay underneath the tacky paper ones, but sophisticated restaurants should stay clear of imitations.

The walls are painted a pretty orange-pink color, giving Savoy a warm glow.

Still, not one work of art decorated the entire place.

Savoy makes the biggest decorating mistake by exposing its interior

renovation.

I understand the need for change, especially when it comes to upgrading, but the construction work could have easily been concealed.

I felt as if I had taken a really good meal, along with my paper tablecloth, to a construction site.

Along with the appetizer and entrée, the service was exemplary.

The server was polite and efficient, and the food was delivered to my table in due time.

As soon as my appetizer arrived, the manager personally came over and handed me a perforated knife because I was having trouble cutting with the butter knife.

The manager displayed concern for his customers by paying attention to how I was enjoying my meal.

Despite my criticism about the atmosphere, I do recommend you give Savoy a try. Perhaps the current renovation will curtail this problem anyway.

After all, the most important thing about a dining experience is indeed the food.

### Review

## "Taming of the Shrew" a bore

**Casey Blankenship**  
Staff Writer

The N.C. Shakespeare Festival gave a dull and arduous performance of the "Taming of the Shrew" at the Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place in downtown Asheville Oct. 21.

With a running time of close to three hours, I was sorely tempted to flee from the scene of the crime of the awful performances of the players. The only saving grace was that the seats were comfortable.

Shakespeare's comedy about mismatched lovers was set in Padua, Italy in the 1900s. Baptista, a Merchant of Padua, has a beautiful daughter who it seems everyone wants to marry. Unfortunately, to get to the lovely Bianca, someone has to be fool enough to marry her sister, the cantankerous Katherine.

Park Krausen plays the character of Bianca to perfection, if her intention was to create a whining, irritating, empty-headed girl whose sole purpose is to flounce around in her pink dresses and pout throughout the entire play.

After having been introduced to the character of Bianca, it was with great hope that I watched Katherine's entrance, as she was sure to at least be witty and entertaining due to her spitefulness. Instead, Courtney Peterson as

Katherine mumbles through her lines so much that I could not understand any of her dialogue and had to rely on her clumsy physical movements to comprehend her acting.

She is called "Katherine the cursed" and I believe it with her constantly clomping around the stage snarling at the townspeople or throwing punches at her sister's suitors.

The slapstick comedy used in many of the scenes was not choreographed and the actors' timing was off. It made me wonder if they had rehearsed enough for their scenes. I would certainly have hoped they put some time into it since, even with a student discount, my ticket was expensive.

The setting was interesting, with the theme of water everywhere. A sun and moon motif lit up the stage and it was quite stunning. There was a waterfall in the background and the set resembled a beautiful, sunny courtyard in Italy.

It was much more entertaining to watch the sweat pouring down the actors' faces as they struggled against bursting and ripping their overly tight trousers than to follow their skills as performers. I wonder how anyone could find sympathy with all of the screaming and huffing and mangling of words. I found myself wish-

ing that this were a new interpretation of Shakespeare's classic where blond Bianca meets an untimely demise, therefore sparing the audience any more of her presence.

Somewhat making up for the bad acting of the ladies were some adequate performances from the male characters. Petruccio, as the suitor to Katherine, mimics a strutting peacock, while at the same time sharing an uncanny resemblance to Chef Boyardee and the Red Baron with a white hat and coat and old-fashioned goggles. He has come to Padua "to wive and thrive" and sets his sights on the dowry of Katherine.

Petruccio, as played by Harrison Long, at least gives some much-needed energy to the play even if it relies mostly on falling down and potty-humor jokes. His servant's characters must believe shouting is the key to good acting, because the more they talked, the louder they shouted.

Better yet was Petruccio's servant Grumio, who played the long-suffering attendant with sarcasm and witty speeches which could actually be understood.

But the reason I stayed in my seat in the freezing cold theatre, which smelled of moldy cheese, was the

### Review

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**Bridgette Odom**  
Staff Writer

The environment and culture forum about topics concerning Asheville and its sister city, San Cristobal, Mexico was an informal discussion in Owen Conference Center designed to address issues relevant to both cities.

The evening featured speakers and workers from San Cristobal and the state of Chiapas. They each shared their experiences from Mexico and related them to our lives in Asheville.

The program was divided in two sections. The first hour was devoted to three groups of speakers talking about preservation of Mayan culture, environmental concerns and Mayan women weavers. The second hour was less formal with open discussion with the speakers and weavers. There was also a photo exhibit showing parts of San Cristobal.

The information provided by the speakers was educational; however, the speakers did not have enough time to explain their topics adequately.

The forum, sponsored by San Cristobal Committee of Asheville Sister Cities, Inc., UNCA and UNCA's Multicultural Student Program, provided an opportunity for UNCA and Asheville community members to interact with people from other countries. It gave attendees a way to discover the commonalities among all

people.

According to the promotional brochure, Asheville and San Cristobal have many similarities. They include mountainous terrain and waterfalls; concerns about water systems, forests and wildlife; diverse cities; similar indigenous populations, the Maya and the Cherokee; and tourism-dependent economies and handmade crafts, especially weaving, that reflect the culture.

This meeting grew out of the Environment-Culture Project established by the San Cristobal Committee of Asheville Sister Cities, Inc. this year to create partnerships from Asheville and San Cristobal residents. "The project's distinctive feature is its focus on the human interaction with the environment in regions surrounding San Cristobal and Asheville," and to seek solutions with respect to the culture, according to the promotional brochure.

"Sister Cities International Inc. was created in 1956 by the Eisenhower administration to improve global understanding and cooperation. Since that time, more than 1,200 communities in the United States have been linked with more than 2,100 partners in 117 countries and involving hundreds of thousands of volunteers," according to the Sister Cities International Web site.

In addition to San Cristobal, Asheville has two other sister cit-

ies. In 1990, Vladikavkaz, located in the Caucasus Mountains of Southern Russia, became the first sister city; San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, became the second city to sign the Sister City declaration with Asheville in 1994; and Saumur, located in the Loire Valley of Central France, affiliated with Asheville in 1996, according to the Web site.

It was eye opening to learn about the challenges facing the people in San Cristobal and to see how they deal with the same issues that people in Asheville do. Both cities are culturally diverse and can share ways with each other about how to effectively cope with and benefit from such diversity.

The Mexican women face many of the struggles of American women, such as financial independence and integrating into the

workforce. One of the presenters, Claudia Rovelo, worked for an organization that provided small bank loans to help San Cristobal women start their own businesses.

This forum was not just a chance for people of another country to come and observe how we do things and then retreat back to their own environment. This program and forum established a discourse between similar lands with an even exchange of ideas and solutions.

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### Review

## Voices of Mali Oumou Sangare Habib Koite & Bamada

Songwriter, social commentator, champion of women's rights, spokesperson for her generation and sex, Sangare is a world-class musical sensation.

Guitarist Habib Koite and his band Bamada draw on rich traditions of Malian music mixed with their own modern sound.



Tuesday, Oct. 31 • 8 p.m.  
UNCA Lipinsky Auditorium

Co-sponsored by the UNCA International Student Association

WCS PUBLIC RADIO  
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### Tickets

\$5 UNCA students, (one ticket per student ID)  
\$15 UNCA Faculty/Staff/Alumni/College for Seniors members  
UNCA Ticket Office, 27 Highsmith Center  
For information and to charge tickets by phone, call 828/251-6584.

UNCA Cultural and Special Events Committee

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