

## Maxie B's serves Greensboro's best homemade cupcakes

BY LILY LOU  
STAFF WRITER

Within a strip mall, at 2403 Battleground Ave. lies Maxie B's, a locally owned bakery glowing from the fairy lights wrapped around its pink and brown sign.

Upon entering the bakery, customers notice the unique ambience — it resembles a home turned into a bakery.

"Maxie B's has a very nice, tranquil and homey environment," said Early College junior Jeyla Savage.

In the background, past the murmured roar of conversation, soft music creates a relaxing atmosphere.

"Maxie B's has a very unique environment that cannot be found anywhere else," said café coordinator Abby Brannon. "Aside from the handpicked décor from the owner, Robin, our cakes are made from scratch and in-house with lots of love and passion. It's a truly magical place, and we are all here because we love what we do."

Leather couches and fleur de lis patterned fabric armchairs surround white, antique coffee tables, creating comfortable sitting spaces for customers. Black leather chairs circle a tall white table in a corner of the store. Each table is decorated with a flower.

"(Choosing décor for the store) is just based on what I like at the moment," said Robin Davis, owner of Maxie B's. "It's always a work in progress. It's fun to create spaces for people to relax in."

The line of customers waiting to place their orders for doggy birthday cakes, Eggnog Pound Cakes and Pink Lemonade Cakes runs from the register to the back of the store, which speaks on the desirability of their treats. Though the line is long, the wait is only around five minutes, depending on the time of day you go.

Cakes are stacked on the counter in glass stands while cupcakes sit on shelves behind a large glass display.

"It's nice that they have such a large variety of desserts; not only do they have what seems like an endless list of cake choices, but banana pudding, cookies, cupcakes and bars," said Greensboro resident Zahe Zalal in an email interview. "When I say it's hard to decide, I'm not kidding."

A small chalkboard sign sits above the counter. Maxie B's is a bit pricey at \$2.50 for a cupcake and \$4.75 for a slice of cake, but they also sell half-priced slices of day-old cake. The prices may be worth it, though, considering the quality of ingredients they use.

"We bake from scratch, and we use the very best ingredients, just like our mothers would use at home," said Davis. "(That means) real butter, local eggs, pure vanilla and organic carrots."

I ordered an Oreo Cupcake and a Strawberry Pot Cupcake for around \$6. The cupcakes arrived promptly to my table, served on two square paper plates.

The Oreo Cupcake, topped with half an Oreo, had the perfect balance of rich chocolate flavor and buttercream icing. The fluffiness of the cake contrasted with the thickness of icing, creating an overall rich flavor.

The Strawberry Pot Cupcake perfectly combined creaminess and strawberry compote. The strawberry filling brought freshness to the cupcake and added a delicious, refreshing texture without being overwhelming. The cake brought hints of sweetness, but most of the sweetness came from the icing.

The bakery serves over 33 different flavors of cupcakes — some rotating seasonally. The most popular flavor is Fresh Strawberry Buttercream Cake: a layered cake



ALISON STALBERG/GUILFORDIAN

with strawberries and covered in sweet buttercream.

"I cannot find the words to convey the perfection of this cake," said Whitney Ostercamp, a blogger for The Newlywed Chefs in a blog post. "The buttercream is unlike any other I've tasted. It's super buttery. It has the right amount of sweetness and a smooth, creamy texture."

It is no wonder WFMY News 2 dubbed Maxie B's Greensboro's as "your favorite dessert spot." Southern Living Magazine has also listed Maxie B's on their list of the South's Best Cakes, along with four other bakeries. Though not for the health-conscious, Maxie B's is a great place to go for a sweet treat.

Maxie B's charm may come from their commitment to the



ALISON STALBERG/GUILFORDIAN

Maxie B's of Greensboro was placed on Southern Living Magazine's list of the South's Best Cakes alongside bakeries located in Ga., Miss., S.C., and Fla.

Greensboro community.

"We know our cakes and our customers and love what we do," said Davis. "We have staff who

have been with us the entire time we have been baking. Our head decorator has been with us 10 years now."

## 'Hercules' provides nonstop action for fans of mythology

BY AMOL GARG  
STAFF WRITER

Villages left razed. Innocent lives taken. Green bodies scattered on the ground with the distinct scent of burning flesh in the air.

This is what meets the mighty Hercules' army while marching to intercept Rheseus. It is all over. Everyone is dead. Hercules trots over to a nearby corpse to judge when the damage had occurred. Suddenly, the eyes of the corpses flash open, and their bodies rise.

It was a trap. Hercules and his army find themselves

"surrounded by bloodthirsty barbarians.

Donning the head of the Nemean lion as a helmet and baring only a loincloth, Dwayne Johnson sets out as a legendary mercenary in the movie "Hercules." Directed by Brett Ratner, the action-packed film is a representation of the graphic novel "Hercules: The Thracian Wars."

Starring Dwayne Johnson, Ian McShane, Reece Ritchie, Ingrid Bolsø Berdal, Joseph Fiennes and John Hurt, "Hercules" slammed into theaters July 25, making it the second Hercules film to be released in 2014.

"Dwayne Johnson certainly attempts to provide, and to an extent, creates the emotions of an ordinary human, but the

plot fails him," said Early College junior Pratham Chhabria. "The director's use of extensive computer graphics certainly indicate technical prowess, but he fails in his direction to provide a new take on an old story."

Portraying Hercules as an ordinary man with inhuman strength, the movie focuses on a traveling mercenary accompanied by a group of loyal friends rather than the magnificent hero who accomplished 12 glorious labors.

"In this version, there's nothing supernatural about Hercules," said sophomore Gary Stanback in an email interview. "He's an ordinary human being, just one who happens to be exceptionally strong. It's basically the story of the real person who, hypothetically, could have inspired the myth."

This is what really makes the movie a must-watch. Hercules, instead of being this lionized character, is depicted as someone that is struggling to match the exaggerated myth of being the son of Zeus.

Haunted by hallucinations of Cerberus, three-headed wolves functioning as Hercules' only remaining labor, Hercules must make his way to Thrace with his band of warriors to prepare the Thracian armies for an upcoming battle against warlord Rheseus.

Hercules follows a complicated character progression, starting off as a man who does not believe himself to be a hero. Hercules is forced to take up the role of the legendary warrior he once was and learns to have faith in his abilities.

Having a straightforward and inverted checkmark plot structure, most of the movie is what avid Greek mythology fans might expect. Littered with violence and fighting, the film's main asset, however, is the amount of action packed into the 99 minutes of screen time and the alternate take on Hercules' character and his struggles to rediscover himself after his family's death.

Each battle scene followed by another kept my eyes glued to the screen. The story seemed to give off a hype of excitement as Hercules continued to perform amazing tasks, keeping the viewer engaged throughout.

Despite not having an emotionally connecting plot until the end, Hercules' pain and frustration was effectively conveyed to the viewer. I clearly remember feeling sympathy and anger when Hercules was chained to a boulder and Cerberus released upon him.

Overall, "Hercules" is an action-packed film, and I would recommend it to anyone that enjoys mythological films filled with action.



"Hercules," starring Dwayne Johnson, was released in theaters during July, making it the second film about Hercules this year.

COURTESY OF ZEPHYRUS.ORG