

Franklin offers a myriad of tasty options

Restaurants appeal to diverse tastes

BY WILL HARRISON
SENIOR WRITER

Chapel Hill locals and those on the back nine of their college careers have likely weeded through the eclectic eateries, bars and shops on Franklin Street and settled on a few favorites, but for UNC's incoming freshman class, the street offers a number of opportunities.

Although there has been a propensity for shuttered businesses on Franklin Street in recent years, new businesses and old favorites make the street the lifeblood of Chapel Hill's commercial sector. Parking is not always a given, but the area's close proximity to campus ensures a short walk to grab a taco at 2 a.m.

"I like Cosmic Cantina," said UNC senior Kristen Hopper. "I eat lunch and dinner there, not just late night. They probably have the best salsa on Franklin Street, and you can get a full meal for like \$4." Known for its massive burritos,

Cosmic Cantina is located at 128 E. Franklin St. in the nook behind Johnny T-shirt and is open until 3 a.m. daily.

There is no shortage of Mexican restaurants in Chapel Hill, and Cosmic Cantina is kept in good company by student favorites Qdoba Mexican Grill and Chipotle, which opened in 2007 and serves up ready-to-customize burritos, tacos and salads.

UNC junior Katie Bailey said she enjoys [B]Ski's, which opened at 147 E. Franklin St. in the summer of 2006 and serves grilled tortillas filled with meat, cheese and vegetables. Bailey said that she likes the restaurant's variety and that it offers many items not found anywhere else on Franklin Street.

"Everything is really fresh," Bailey said of the food at [B]Ski's. "It's open really late, and it's good during exam time if you don't want to go someplace quiet like the library."

Both Bailey and Hopper also said they enjoy LocoPops, located in The Courtyard at 431 W. Franklin St. LocoPops specializes in popsicles that are reminiscent of paletas, a Mexican frozen sweet on a stick, and the store serves both water- and cream-based varieties.

"No one knows it's there, but it's so good," Hopper said. "If you can get past fighting the valet man ... the popsicles are amazing."

And Franklin Street also features some great places to drop in and grab a slice of pizza. Pepper's Pizza moved to 107 E. Franklin St. in 2007 after its old location entered the final stages of falling apart, and Italian Pizzeria III at 508 W. Franklin Street is a local favorite for pizza and beer specials and shows sporting events on two big screen TVs.

IP3 co-owner Angelo Marrone said the family-owned and operated restaurant has been in the community since 1980. "Everyone knows Italian Pizzeria III," Marrone said. "We've spent a long time in Chapel Hill."

Miguel Perez, a UNC graduate student, said he thinks the pizza at IP3 is the best in the area, calling it the "closest to New York-style proper pizza."

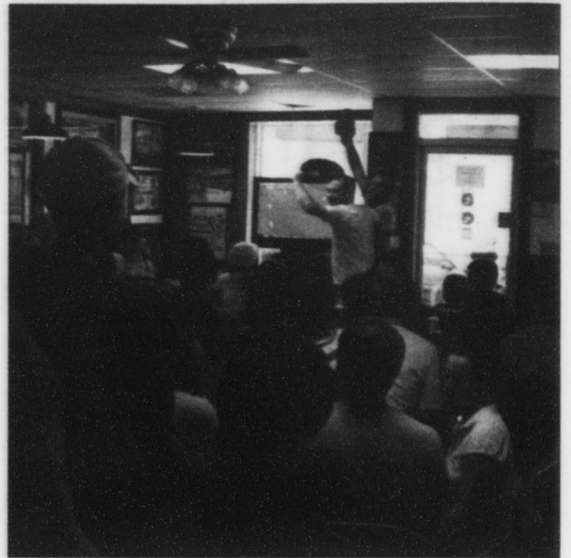
The plethora of food oases is not the full extent of Franklin Street, which also features some niche shopping.

Bailey said she likes to shop for textbooks at Tarheel Book Store, 119 E. Franklin St., because the prices are cheap and the store buys back books at the end of the semester.

Hopper said Light Years, which specializes in jewelry, as well as gifts, crafts and home accessories, is a great place to shop for eclectic gifts. She also recommended clothing from Julian's for the esteemed gentleman.

With a barrage of restaurants, shops and watering holes left unmentioned, Franklin Street is an untapped well for incoming students that is only a few brief steps from campus proper.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.



DTH/PRACHEL RODEMANN
Restaurant-goers put down their food to cheer excitedly while watching a European soccer game at the Italian Pizzeria III on West Franklin Street.

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