

BEST OF NORMAN
SEPTEMBER 2024
OUDAILY.COM



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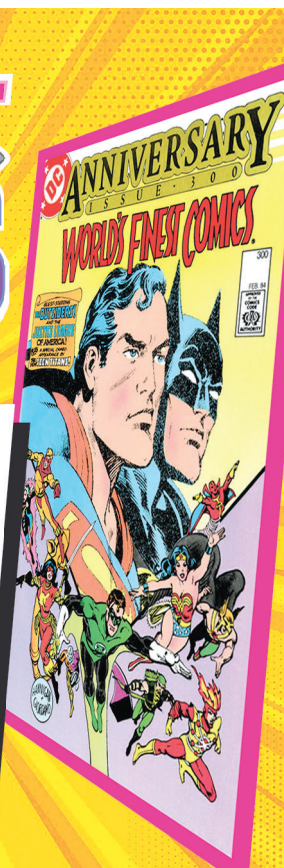
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MARY ANN LIVINGOOD, copy chief

GINA SMITH, design editor

CHASE PRIDE, advertising manager

LYNN NGUYEN, associate director/business adviser

SETH PRINCE, director/newsroom adviser

CONTACT US

860 Van Vleet Oval (Copeland Hall), Room 160
Norman, OK 73019

NEWSROOM: 405-325-3666 | dailynews@ou.edu

ADVERTISING: 405-325-2521 | dailyads@ou.edu

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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY GINA SMITH

FROM THE EDITOR



RACHEL NICHOLS/OU DAILY

One of many murals in downtown Norman, "The Heart of Norman" was created in 2007 by Palmer Studios.

Join us to explore Norman's favorites

Dear OU Daily readers,

When I arrived in Norman for my freshman year at OU, I was eager to immerse myself in a city that values the people who built it. Community was a value instilled in me from a young age, growing up in a town with a population of about 2,000.

On any given day, at any time, a drive through Norman would serve as a sight-seeing experience. While the city seems quaint, it is full of life.

Just passing by one of its parks, one might see a concert or fair being held by a locally beloved organization. Even being in the general area of downtown Norman on a Friday night, one can feel the energy exuding from a 2nd Friday Art Walk.

Connecting with community members and business owners who love to share their passions is one of my favorite things about my role at OU Daily.

Since I was 15, I have worked in the service industry. My high school summers were spent waiting tables at the local bistro, and I have worked as a barista since 2021. What I have learned in these positions is the crucial role the service industry plays in cultivating a city's culture. Every business has different values, and every customer has a reason for having their favorite place.

From an outsider's point of view, Norman might appear only as a sports-centric college town. What I have found is a city full of people with diverse interests. For this year's Best of Norman publication, I wanted to highlight this by featuring a wider range of entities.

As culture editor, I selected 25 categories that I believe not only encapsulate the experience of college students in Norman, but an array of personalities, from those who have lived here for years to those who are new to its charm.

When selecting categories, I wanted to highlight specific areas within the arts, food, entertainment and lifestyle industries. As I began considering nominees, I thought to myself, "What would I recommend, and what have others recommended to me?" With help from OU Daily staff, I compiled a list of 75 spots that I believe speak to the Norman experience.

Honoring these businesses emphasizes the necessity of their role in the city. You will find in this publication a readers' choice list, voted on by Norman community members.

To create a list of stories to be featured in this year's publication, the OU Daily culture desk collaborated to select the categories they wanted featured. I distributed a Google form to the culture desk, where each reporter selected their top 10 categories. From there, I prioritized local businesses and considered previous Best of Norman coverage as well as OU Daily readership.

I am so excited to present this year's Best of Norman publication and share the stories of nine businesses that illustrate the Norman experience.

Sincerely,
Shelby Emery



Shelby Emery

Culture editor
shelby.e.emery-1@ou.edu

MUSEUM



FILE/OU DAILY

The Sam Noble Musuem of Natural History features six permanent exhibits and a rotation of temporary exhibits.

FROM MAMMOTHS TO MODERN VOICES

Sam Noble Museum showcases Oklahoma's natural and cultural history

BY SHELBY EMERY • SHELBY.E.EMERY-1@OU.EDU

After 125 years, the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History continues to educate the Norman community and preserve Oklahoma's rich history and culture.

Located on OU's campus, the 198,000-square-foot facility is home to over 10 million objects in 12 collections sourced in and around Oklahoma. Visitors can explore the 50,000 square feet of space that features public galleries and exhibits.

Sam Noble was founded in 1899, eight years prior to Oklahoma achieving statehood. The museum was created by the Territorial Legislature to be a department of natural history and geology for the University of Oklahoma, then called Norman Territorial University.

The museum began as a series of display cases across OU's academic buildings and was housed in various spaces over the years before the current facility opened in May 2000.

The museum features six permanent exhibits: the Orientation Gallery, Hall of World Cultures, Hall of Ancient Life, Hall of Natural Wonders, Hall of People of Oklahoma and the Conoco Oil Pioneers of Oklahoma Plaza.

Just beyond the museum's front desk, visitors can marvel at the bronze statue of a wooly mammoth as it is illuminated by sunlight through two stories of windows, or they can explore the interactive exhibits that serve as educational displays for younger visitors.

Sam Noble also periodically features temporary exhibits, which currently include "Prehistoric Visions," which opened June 29 and surveys the relationship between art and vertebrate paleontology, and "Speak While You Can," which opened on Aug. 24 and aims to display the creativity and resilience of Indigenous people.

"Speak While You Can" was curated by OU alum and artist Tony Tiger and features over 30 artists representing over 20 of Oklahoma's 39 tribal nations. The exhibition includes 38 pieces, ranging from traditional art forms such as weaving to more contemporary forms like installations that feature audio elements.

Tiger, who is part of the Sac and Fox, Seminole and Muscogee Creek nations, told OU Daily the exhibition has a strong emphasis on language, which plays a crucial part in the preservation of Indigenous culture and identity.

"Our languages are important to us as Indigenous people," Tiger said. "If you lose your language, you lose so much of who you are, (who) your people were."

Tiger said due to the young audience that Sam Noble draws, he hopes that younger generations will be encouraged to consider the importance of language upon viewing "Speak While You Can."

He said the exhibition stands apart from Sam Noble's

permanent exhibits that focus on Indigenous life due to its focus on contemporary styles, which serve as a reminder that Indigenous life remains strong in the state.

"They're going to see some things (that will) make them smile and be encouraged that the Indigenous population is still here, it still has a voice," Tiger said.

Both "Speak While You Can" and "Prehistoric Visions" will be open until Dec. 1.

Alexander Mann, Sam Noble marketing and public relations officer, said it is important to have a museum that is representative of the state's natural and cultural history.

"Our natural history does impact how civilizations develop and societies develop," Mann said. "Having that here as a resource for the people of Oklahoma makes me feel like what I'm doing is worthwhile."

Admission to the museum is \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and \$7 for visitors ages 4-17. OU students and children under 3 get free admission. Tickets can be purchased on the museum's website or at the front desk upon arrival.

The Sam Noble Museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday at 2401 Chautauqua Ave. The museum is closed on Monday.

GAME DAY EATS



JENNA BURRESS/OU DAILY

The Mont's name is an homage to The Monterey Restaurant which served Norman from 1943 to 1969.

'AN ESTABLISHMENT AND A TRADITION'

The Mont remains an iconic Norman destination after almost 50 years

BY MAVI COLE • MAVICOLE@OU.EDU

Nestled between Classen Boulevard and Boyd Street lies The Mont, a Norman staple for nearly 50 years.

The historic 1930s building housed The Monterey Restaurant, commonly known as "The Mont," from 1943 to 1969. A few short-lived restaurants opened and closed until 1976, when OU alumni John Krattiger, Bill Hammons and Dick Talley opened the restaurant beloved in Norman today. It was named The Mont as an homage to The Monterey Restaurant.

OU drama student Spencer-Shane Cartwright has worked at The Mont since June 2023 and said the restaurant may not appear to be anything special on the outside, but there is a magic and energy to the restaurant.

"I tell people all the time, it's a place that shouldn't work, but it does work," Cartwright said.

Inside the small building, the lighting is dim with booths along a wall, a few tables and a large round blue couch tucked in a corner for groups. The patio is full of tables covered by umbrellas while misters continuously spray, cooling off customers on hot days. At any given time, the place is most likely packed.

The Mont's menu offers classic appetizers, burgers, sandwiches and Mexican specialties. They also serve a full bar which features the Sooner Swirl, The Mont's signature drink that is a blend of a frozen margarita and sangria.

"We try to give the same experience to every customer every day, which is good quality food and good quality drink in a fun and enticing environment," said general manager Patrick Kallin.

An average day at The Mont will bring a range of Normanites, families, students celebrating their 21st birthday with their first Sooner Swirl, couples young and old sitting at the bar and friends chatting about their weeks. The restaurant has established itself as the go-to place for a good meal and affordable drinks, usually accompanied by hours of quality time with loved ones.

"I feel like it's a place where anyone is welcome," Cartwright said. "There's so many people from so many different walks of life that walk into that place."

Kallin moved to Norman in 1997 to attend OU and started working at The Mont as a dishwasher in 1998, becoming general manager in 2012. He said he used to think of The Mont as just another restaurant but over the years realized it was much more.

"It's an establishment and a tradition, and it means so much to so many people," Kallin said.

Cartwright described his fellow staff as a family and said he even has connections with people that worked at The Mont 10 to 15 years ago. He said the restaurant's regular customers also make his experience at work worth it.

"I know for a fact that the next day going to work, I will see at least 10 people that know me by name," Cartwright said.

Due mostly to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cartwright said he has been in and out of classes at OU since 2019. He is now going back to school full time and said The Mont is the reason.

"I would not be able to afford (school) without working at The Mont, and all the people there pushed me to go for it,"

Cartwright said.

Kallin is close with several customers and has made many friendships at The Mont since his days as a dishwasher. He said he has gone on trips with some regulars, even traveling as far as Boston.

"My friend group is so huge from all the people that I know here that it kind of irritates my girlfriend when we travel," Kallin said. "Because without fail, wherever I go, I see somebody who knows me from The Mont."

Given its proximity to campus and its history with the university, OU game days are especially packed at The Mont. Ticket holders flood in before and after football games, and others tune in on the restaurant's television. Inside, The Mont displays historic "Town Tavern" 1947 OU football scoreboards.

Cartwright said The Mont has become iconic. He said people who graduated from OU decades ago have stories from the restaurant and pretty much every Sooner fan has visited.

"It has stayed strong and going for almost 50 years, and that's a pretty big accomplishment for a mom-and-pop type place," Cartwright said. "With the way that it's growing and the way that it continues to grow, I don't think it will ever shut down."

"At this point, it's part of the Norman and Sooner magic DNA," Cartwright said. "It's part of the OU story."

Found at 1300 Classen Blvd., The Mont is open from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. every day.



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NORMAN STAPLE



ADEN CHOATE/OU DAILY

The Sports Animal broadcaster Al Eschbach (left), OU Athletic Director Joe Castiglione (center) and Hal Smith (right), owner of Hal Smith Restaurants, at Othello's on Aug. 26.

'YOU'RE NOT A CUSTOMER, YOU'RE FAMILY'

Othello's builds traditions by honoring patrons and original recipes

BY MADELINE HOFFMANN • MADELINE.G.HOFFMANN-1@OU.EDU

The near 50-year history and tradition of family-owned Italian restaurant Othello's has cemented its status as a Norman staple among long-time customers and students.

Since opening in 1977, Othello's has remained in its original location on Campus Corner serving authentic Italian recipes from the restaurant's founder, Pasqual Benso. Owner Jennifer Dennis' family took over ownership of Othello's after a brief closure in 2011 with the intent of restoring the restaurant to its roots.

"When you come to Othello's, you're not a customer, you're family," Dennis, who worked at the restaurant while studying at OU, said. "We're trying to create a wholesome place where you can come and feel comfortable and create memories."

Othello's embraces the traditions it's built on, ranging from befriend regular customers to creating a "feeling of home." Dennis said the restaurant operates in the best interest of customers by being reliable and accommodating.

"We're not like your local chain restaurants that have strict hours. We're flexible because we're family owned," Dennis said. "When there's a snowstorm or whatever, we always try to open, even if it's just one person here, because there's always someone that needs a place to go."

After being struck by lightning and sustaining heavy fire damage, Othello's closed again in 2017. Though the incident catalyzed a lengthy rebuilding process, the community rallied in support of the restaurant.

"All the staff heard and all of our regular customers came out just to show support," Dennis said. "We weren't going into the building, we weren't cleaning, it was just to come give hugs

and show support."

Following the restaurant's reopening in 2018, Othello's expanded its relationship with OU athletics which dates back to the friendship between Benso and Barry Switzer, who coached the football team from 1973 to 1989.

The historic "Table of Truth," dubbed by Benso, survived the fire and remains a relic from the original restaurant, still reserved for the coach. Switzer exclusively sat at the table with colleagues and players to discuss the team, asking that they tell the truth, otherwise the table would superstitiously crack.

"Legend was there were a lot of cracks in the table, and every time someone sat there and told a lie, (the table) would crack again," Dennis said. "Coach Switzer took a napkin, hand wrote 'Table of Truth' and taped it to the wall."

The restaurant has continued catering for the university's sports teams, spearheaded by general manager and executive chef Andy Feldman.

Othello's has also served famous Oklahomans such as Broadway performer Kristin Chenoweth and country music artist Toby Keith, who died in February following a diagnosis of stomach cancer.

"(Keith) asked us to keep a guitar on the stage, that way, when he came in, he could always sing and jump on stage with the band," Dennis said.

Othello's is well known for its live music, with stages inside and outside the restaurant. Throughout the week, Othello's showcases a variety of entertainment, from jazz and blues musicians to open mic comedy night on Tuesdays.

The restaurant is also home to many regular customers.

Among them is Mark McGuire, who has visited Othello's for 20 years, crediting not only the food but the way the staff treats their customers.

"Andy can fix anything, and they have such a wonderful command of their kitchen. I'd go back just for the coconut cream pie," McGuire said. "This is a family-run business, and you can really tell how much they care by the way they treat their customers."

Alongside new menu items like the coconut cream pie, Othello's still uses Benso's original sauce, bread and lasagna recipes. The restaurant's menu includes customizable dishes, with many pastas offering choices of different sauces and cheeses.

The menu also offers a large selection of customer creations, including "Brenda's Bruschetta," Italian nachos and pepperoni chips served with marinara sauce.

Othello's has a history of retaining employees for many years, pointing to a positive workplace culture fostered by Feldman.

"I want to cultivate a culture of happiness and hard work here," Feldman said. "You don't have to hate coming to work every day, so I might as well create an environment where people want to come into work."

At 434 Buchanan Ave., Othello's is open from 4-10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 4-11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Othello's also has a second location in downtown Edmond open from 4-10 p.m. daily at 1 S. Broadway.

SWEET TREAT



Despite the recent renaming, The Custard Factory can still be spotted on Main Street by the "Rusty's Custard Factory" sign.



PHOTOS BY JENNA BURRESS/OU DAILY

Crocheted custard cones help customers decide between sizes at The Custard Factory.

NEW NAME, SAME TASTE

The Custard Factory aims to preserve original spirit after transition of ownership

BY MADISSON CAMERON • MADISSON.R.CAMERON-1@OU.EDU

After a year under new ownership, The Custard Factory continues to embody the spirit that customers have known and loved over the past two decades.

The Custard Factory, formerly known as Rusty's Custard Factory, was opened in 2001 by Russell "Rusty" Rasmussen at 1000 Alameda St. Due to construction in the surrounding area, Rasmussen closed shop and moved his business to Main Street in 2017. In October 2023, Rasmussen approached The Wilson Company about selling his company.

The Wilson Company, owned by Sereta and Rob Wilson, owns various Norman businesses, including Yellow Dog Coffee Company and dog daycare Annie's Ruff House.

Rasmussen helped The Wilson Company navigate the restaurant industry when they launched Yellow Dog Coffee Company. After knowing and working with one another, Rasmussen approached Sereta Wilson wanting to sell The Custard Factory.

"It was a good opportunity," Sereta Wilson said. "It's a well-established (23-year) business that has a good track

record. It's well-loved, and we really wanted it to continue on."

The Wilson Company aims to acquire, build and improve businesses. However, Rob Wilson said they are cautious making any changes to The Custard Factory, big or small. So far, they have updated the interior by incorporating more color into the decor. In the future, they want to add popsicles to the menu.

"We're trying not to change too much because we know it's a beloved product that's a part of the fabric of Norman," Rob Wilson said.

The Custard Factory offers a wide selection of custards and toppings, such as pumpkin custard and oatmeal cookie dough. Customers can select a premade combination from the menu or make their own. Rob Wilson suggests asking for vanilla custard with cherry pie filling and hot fudge.

Rob Wilson said The Custard Factory has faced ongoing challenges in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, so they are working to regain stability in The Custard Factory's normal business operations.

"(The Wilson Company) is holding patterns, stabilizing everything, making sure all of our businesses provide an excellent product and making sure that our employees are well cared for," Rob Wilson said. "As far as any future plans, we're open to all kinds of things, but first we need to make sure our house is clean."

Rob Wilson said that they are analyzing popular menu items to consolidate the menu, making it easier for staff to manage and customers to see.

In just under a year of ownership, Rob Wilson said they have increased employee salary and The Custard Factory is aiming to support its employees and serve high-quality products while staying true to the heart of the business.

"We're running The Custard Factory the way Rusty would have wanted it done," Rob Wilson said. "And besides, who could be unhappy with an ice cream in their hand?"

Open from 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. daily, The Custard Factory can be found at 301 E. Main St.



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BEST OF NORMAN READERS' CHOICE LIST

Check out the winners of all 25 categories

BY SHELBY EMERY • SHELBY.E.EMERY-1@OU.EDU



FILE/OU DAILY

Yellow Dog Coffee is found at 222 S. Porter Ave.

Best coffee shop

1. Gray Owl
2. Not Your Average Joe
3. Yellow Dog Coffee | Readers' write-in
4. Second Wind Coffee House

Yellow Dog Coffee received a significant number of votes through voter write-in submissions.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Tarahumara's is found at 702 N. Porter Ave.

Best international eats

1. Tarahumara's
2. Tea Café on the Corner
3. Taste of India

Best sweet treat

1. The Custard Factory
2. The Baked Bear
3. Byrdie's Bakery and Gourmet Kitchen



OLIVIA LAUTER/OU DAILY

Levity Breakfast House is found at 309 S. Peters Ave.

Best Norman newcomer

1. Levity Breakfast House
2. Prohibition Lounge
3. Mamaka Bowls

Best game day eats

1. The Mont
2. Fuzzy's Taco Shop
3. Volare



FILE/OU DAILY

The Garage is found at 307 E. Main St.

Best burger

1. The Garage
2. Classic 50's Drive In
3. Bad Daddy's Burger Bar



FILE/OU DAILY

The Diner is found at 213 E. Main St.

Best Norman staple

1. The Diner
2. Midway Deli
3. Othello's



FILE/OU DAILY

Tacos Los Huaches can be found at 1230 E. Lindsey St.

Best food truck

1. Tacos Los Huaches Taco Truck
2. 405 Yummy Spot
3. El Mexicano

Methodology: For this year's issue, OU Daily wanted to highlight a broader range of Norman businesses and organizations than in previous years. To compile this list for community polling, the fall OU Daily culture desk, led

by culture editor Shelby Emery, chose nominees that best represent Norman's diverse interests.

Locally-owned businesses were prioritized when selecting nominees for the publication. Businesses and

organizations could appear in only one category.

The poll featured 25 categories with three nominees each. Voters were encouraged to submit write-in nominations if their favorite Norman location was not listed.



FILE/OU DAILY

STASH is found at 412 E. Main St.

Best hidden gems

1. STASH
2. Robinson's Repurposed: An Eclectic Marketplace
3. Bruce's Vintage Guitars



FILE/OU DAILY

Sandalwood & Sage is found at 322 E. Main St.

Best Main Street shopping

1. Sandalwood & Sage
2. Human Interaction
3. Re:Supply

Best Campus Corner shopping

1. Tulips
2. Apothem
3. Mave



FILE/OU DAILY

Green Feather is found at 300 W. Gray St.

Best bookstore

1. Green Feather
2. Speeding Bullet Comics
3. The Lore



FILE/OU DAILY

Donate a Miracle is found at 315 E. Alameda St.

Best thrift/vintage/consignment store

1. Donate a Miracle
2. Outreach Thrift
3. Crimson Vintage

One vote separated Donate a Miracle from Outreach Thrift.

Best museum

1. Sam Noble Museum of Natural History
2. Jacobson House
3. Moore-Lindsey Historical House



FILE/OU DAILY

The Deli is found out 309 White St.

Best karaoke night

1. The Deli
2. O'Connell's Irish Pub & Grille
3. Red Brick Bar



FILE/OU DAILY

Hollywood Corners is found at 4712 N. Porter Ave.

Best live music

1. Hollywood Corners
2. Opolis
3. Resonator Institute

Best workout

1. Fusion Fitness and Yoga
2. Cycle Bar
3. Pure Barre



FILE/OU DAILY

Warped Frames performs at the 2015 Norman Music Festival.

Best annual event

1. Norman Music Festival
2. The Medieval Fair
3. May Fair Arts Festival

Best salon/barber shop

1. Clementine Hair Lounge
2. Neon Tiger Salon and Roots Salon

Neon Tiger Salon and Roots Salon received the same number of votes.



FILE/OU DAILY

Lake Thunderbird offers a variety of activities on land or water.

Best outdoor experience

1. Lake Thunderbird
2. Sutton Wilderness
3. Reaves Park

Best mani-pedi

1. Filed Nails
2. Noir Nail Studio
3. BOSS Nail Spa

One vote separated Filed Nails from Noir Nail Studio.



FILE/OU DAILY

The NOUN Hotel is found at 542 S. University Blvd.

Best hotels

1. NOUN
2. Embassy Suites
3. The Montford Inn

Best nonprofit

1. Center for Children and Families, Inc.
2. Red Dirt Collective
3. Transition House, Inc.



FILE/OU DAILY

Scratch Kitchen is found at 132 W. Main St.

Best date night

1. Scratch Kitchen
2. Blu
3. Pinot's Palette



GINA SMITH/OU DAILY

Illustration of the bison bike rack on the corner of Main Street and Webster Avenue, one of many colorful bike racks found in Norman.



FILE/OU DAILY

The Bizzell Memorial Library is found at 401 W. Brooks St.

Best study spot on campus

1. Bizzell Memorial Library
2. Haystack Coffee
3. Union courtyard

COFFEE SHOP



JENNA BURRESS/OU DAILY

Gray Owl Coffee offers plenty of comfortable seating to do homework, read or hang out with friends.

FIND YOUR FLOCK

Worker-owned Gray Owl Coffee provides space for community connection

BY NIKKI WOMACK • KIRSTEN.N.WOMACK-1@OU.EDU

Worker-owned since 2021, Gray Owl Coffee aims to be a welcoming space to everyone who enters its doors.

Gray Owl was opened in 2009 by Mike Beavers but was later sold in 2012. Come 2021, the coffee shop was purchased by Erika Barker and her co-workers, who transformed the shop into a worker-owned business, meaning employees have a financial stake in the shop.

Barker said employees having control in how the business is run allows workers to shape the business.

"It's fulfilling to be able to decide the direction that the coffee shop is going, what kinds of events we want to have there and what kinds of drinks," Barker said. "People think that the vibes have been good since we became a worker-owned coffee shop."

Barker said because the shop is worker-owned, she cares more about how much customers enjoy their experience.

Gray Owl's menu offers a variety of coffees, teas and baked goods with an emphasis on espresso drinks. All of their syrups

and baked goods are made in-house, which Barker said allows staff to try different combinations and bounce menu ideas off of one another.

"I have tried probably every single baked good we've ever sold or a version of every single baked good we've ever sold," Barker said. "If we taste it and we're like, 'Something's not working,' then we have the control to change the recipe."

Gray Owl also offers a seasonal menu, and depending on customer demand, some seasonal items become part of the permanent menu.

"My coworker, Ryan, is the one who came up with our shaken espresso drink, and it's kind of like a variation of a Starbucks drink," Barker said. "That was our seasonal special all through the spring, and then we actually added it to the menu because people liked it so much."

Gray Owl regularly holds community events such as its monthly collage night and live performances by local musicians. Along the walls of Gray Owl hangs purchasable artwork

by local artists. The shop also holds four events throughout the year for artists to sell their own work.

"We don't take commission on any of those, so it's a good spot for artists who are just starting out," Barker said. "They handle any purchases people make themselves, but people often will buy art off our walls."

Gray Owl is also involved in 2nd Friday Art Walk as well as the Norman Music Festival held in April.

Barker said Gray Owl's atmosphere feels authentic thanks to its regular customers, fostering a space where customers can meet new people.

"I notice many of our customers who regularly come to the shop know each other, which is really sweet," Barker said. "I think people make friends at Gray Owl, and that's really cool."

Gray Owl Coffee is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily at 223 E. Gray St. Gray Street is currently under construction, but the coffee shop is open at their regular times with limited parking.

LIVE MUSIC



JENNA BURRESS/OU DAILY

Resonator Institute offers workshops and classes for all ages in a variety of disciplines, such as charcoal drawing, screen printing, soldering and more.

‘SUPPORTING ALL FORMS OF CREATIVITY’

Resonator Institute’s journey to becoming a safe space for local art

BY NIKKI WOMACK • KIRSTEN.N.WOMACK-1@OU.EDU

Nonprofit art and music venue Resonator Institute provides a home for Norman’s creatives, aiming to be a space for all art forms to flourish.

Co-founded by Curtis and Tammy Gordon Jones, Resonator opened in 2016. The Jones’ moved from Oakland, California, to Norman in 2005, where Curtis Jones began his role as a print-making professor at OU.

While in Oakland, Jones said he was surrounded by independent art spaces. After moving to Norman, he said he noticed a creative energy in the city that needed a home.

Jones said during his first couple years at OU, his students would often throw house parties where they would hang their artwork and have their friends’ bands perform.

“It was a chance to see their work in a public space,” Jones said. “All we need to do is create a space for the idea.”

In 2014, Jones and his wife assisted his recently graduated students in opening an art venue on Crawford Avenue called Dope Chapel.

After Dope Chapel closed in 2015, Jones and his wife partnered with the students to open Resonator, which was located in a warehouse on University Avenue. In August 2018, the

venue moved to its current location on Main Street.

“When we moved from there to Main Street, that’s when the community at large started to know we exist, and artists that didn’t know we were out there started to find us,” Jones said.

According to Jones, Resonator offers classes such as art theory and criticism and craft making to children and adults while also holding workshops for screen printing, glass fusing, soldering and more.

Jones said Resonator supports various art forms, acting as a venue for groups to host art showcases, theater productions, dance showcases and live music. It also partners with the monthly 2nd Friday Art Walk and the annual Norman Music Festival held in April.

“The idea is for us to be supporting all forms of creativity,” Jones said. “We’re not just a band building (or) just a place to have an art show once a month”

Jones said Resonator aims to be an approachable and comfortable space for visitors.

“A lot of the complaints we heard in the beginning about art spaces is that a lot of people don’t feel welcome when they walk into an art gallery,” Jones said.

Fine arts senior and Resonator intern Madison Pixley said the venue provides a space for students to socialize outside of OU. With her father in the military, Pixley spent her childhood moving from place to place. Coming to Norman, Pixley said Resonator helped her branch out.

“I think it’s just a really, like, super relaxed community-building space for people who have a common interest,” Pixley said. “Coming here from out of town, it can be really intimidating and really easy to stay on campus and not really participate in community events.”

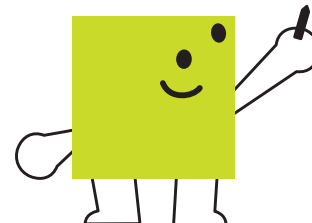
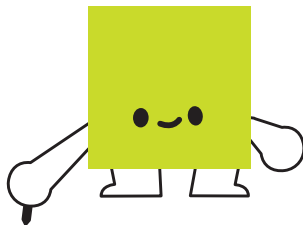
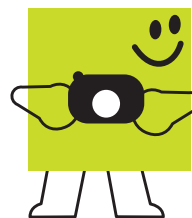
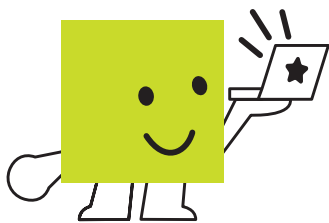
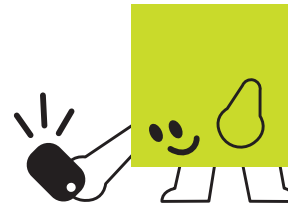
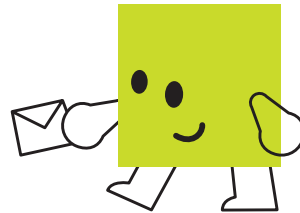
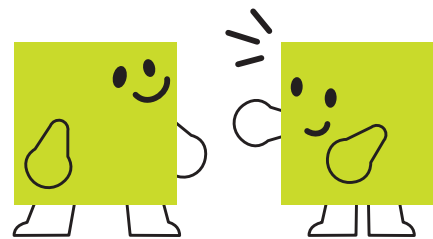
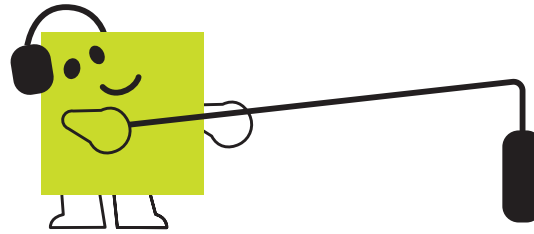
Pixley said Resonator is a place that helps artists who are starting out find a home for their artwork and get it out for the community to see.

“They give such a good spotlight to smaller artists and local artists and people who might find it harder to have their work shown elsewhere,” Pixley said.

According to Jones, Resonator’s art shows are currently booked two years in advance, with a four-month-long wait for musicians.

Resonator Institute is at 323 E. Main St., with hours depending on events and programs taking place.

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KARAOKE NIGHT



BOB NGUYEN/OU DAILY

Local band The Aints playing The Deli on Oct. 30. The Aints have been Monday night regulars for over eight years.

NOT YOUR AVERAGE DELI

Historic dive bar offers year-round live shows for generations of music lovers

BY SHELBY EMERY • SHELBY.E.EMERY-1@OU.EDU

A Norman staple for decades, historic dive bar The Deli is attracting a new generation of music lovers.

On any given night, Normanites over the age of 21 can pop into The Deli and find a lively performance on stage, performers' faces lit blue in front of a red curtain backdrop. Aside from the lights illuminating the stage and strung across the walls, the room is dim as strangers chat over \$2 beers.

Open year-round, The Deli is Norman's longest continuously running live music venue and the oldest bar on historic Campus Corner. The space first opened as a deli, called Deli City, in 1973 and would often welcome musicians to perform. It became The Deli in 1988, transitioning from a sandwich shop to a bar with daily music and has since seen generations of musicians enter its glass doors, including The Flaming Lips and Bowling For Soup.

Norman musician Mike Hosty has been performing at The Deli since he was an OU student in the early '90s. Now he performs in cities across the country but always makes it back to The Deli for a Sunday night performance.

"If I play Memphis on Saturday, I'm back to play Sunday," Hosty said. "When (visitors) come in and say, 'I've had the worst week and you made me laugh all night long and dance,' that's the greatest feeling that you can get, and that's what The Deli provides."

Hosty said since he started playing at The Deli, there has always been one night of the week that brings a crowd, changing as new generations become old enough to enter the establishment. Currently, he said, Tuesday night karaoke is when college students flock in.

Every Tuesday, brave musicians, from those who have never stepped foot on stage to performers used to the spotlight, put their name on a list monitored by karaoke host Cate Elerick Cheatwood, known as "Karaoke Cate." Singers are provided microphones and a backup track to almost any song imaginable.

OU psychology senior Katie Lowe regularly attends karaoke night at The Deli, performing everything from country hits to Chappell Roan. She said The Deli's crowd, as well as the stage and atmosphere, creates a "pop star experience" for performers.

"You get to sing your heart out to a crowd that's listening just to you," Lowe said. "You're living out your child pop star dream, even just for a couple minutes."

Lowe said she is a regular at The Deli and has visited on every night of the week, giving her a chance to see the range of musicians. She said the safe environment and friendly staff is what has brought her back.

"They really care about the people, they care about your experience, they care about your comfortability," Lowe said.

While karaoke makes for a classic night out for college students, The Deli, at its core, is a space to hear local and touring music professionals. Every Tuesday at 7 p.m., Norman musician Caleb McGee takes the stage for an intimate performance of country, blues and rock and roll.

"I like the old man regulars who come in early, and I like the way that early crowd kind of gives way to a more middle-aged crowd, gives way to a younger crowd," McGee said. "It's cool to watch that happen throughout a night."

Various bands play The Deli throughout the week,

representing a range of genres from red dirt country to indie pop. While The Deli has stayed loyal to its older generation of performers, new groups have begun to make a name for themselves at the venue.

Indie pop band Wet Muscles is made up of five OU students and plays at several venues around Norman and Oklahoma City, including The Deli, Resonant Head and Legally Brewed. The band began playing at The Deli in 2023 and has been packing shows since.

Wet Muscles bassist Aiden Wilson said The Deli connects generations of music lovers as an accessible venue for college students and a staple for longtime Norman residents.

"I think it's almost like a bridge between the older and younger music scene in Norman," Wilson said.

In October 2023, The Deli was purchased by Cason Hill, who had been visiting The Deli since his college years in the early 2000s. Since transitioning ownership, he said his goal is to bring OU students back to the venue and expand its social media reach. Hill also said he hopes to diversify the range of music genres featured at The Deli.

The Deli offers early shows at 7:30 p.m. and late shows at 9:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, as well as open mic night every Wednesday. Hosty said he advises visitors to find their night at The Deli.

"The Deli is a laid-back, fun, throwback college dive that needs to be nurtured and fostered because there's only one," Hosty said.

The Deli is open from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. daily at 309 White St. on Campus Corner. Visitors must be 21 and up to enter.

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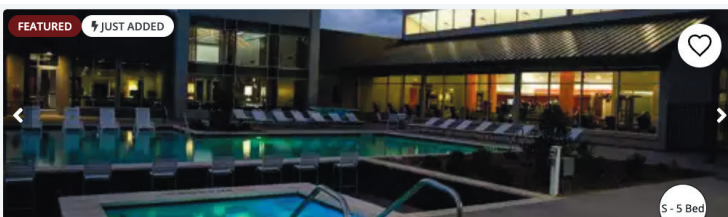
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MAIN STREET SHOPPING



JENNA BURRESS/OU DAILY

Re:Supply encourages customers to bring their own containers to refill products.

REDUCE, REUSE, RE:SUPPLY

Eco-friendly store promotes affordable and approachable sustainability

BY MADISSON CAMERON • MADISSON.R.CAMERON-1@OU.EDU

Re:Supply is a low-waste restock store aiming to make sustainability affordable and available to everyone.

Re:Supply opened its doors in 2021 in Wichita Falls, Texas. Owner Kacie Scherler has advocated for sustainability for most of her life. Now, her passions continue at OU, where she is pursuing a doctorate in environmental sustainability and geography.

“In high school, I was so worried about the environment, it felt like I was carrying the weight of the world on my shoulders,” Scherler said. “That’s part of the reason I started Re:Supply.”

Scherler developed a rare autoimmune disease that causes the immune system to attack the fatty substance that protects nerve fibers in the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves. Her diagnosis led her to pay close attention to her health.

“I developed this autoimmune disease and really started focusing on what I was putting into my body,” Scherler said. “As consumers, it’s really on us to do our homework on what is going into these products and finding nontoxic solutions.”

Scherler said due to her eco-friendly lifestyle, her symptoms have partially gone away in recent years.

Scherler’s goal for Re:Supply is to introduce people to nontoxic, low-waste products that are good for the environment. She said making the change can often be daunting, but it doesn’t have to be.

“People don’t have to replace everything in their house at once,” Scherler said. “Start small with just one product and as you need to, slowly start incorporating it into your life.”

Re:Supply offers a wide variety of products including shampoo, laundry detergent, skin care, car fresheners, organic food, teas, candles and more. Scherler said many of the products only require a small amount to be used, which makes them not only environmentally friendly but also economical.

“You don’t have to use a lot of product for it to work,” Scherler said. “Our laundry detergent for example, you need a tablespoon per load, which comes out to roughly 25 cents per load of laundry.”

Less than a year after opening in Wichita Falls, Scherler took Re:Supply to Main Street in Norman. In April 2022, Re:Supply opened the doors of its second location, where the current manager, Bridget Tanner, started her journey with the company.

“I remember its first night open,” Tanner said. “It was one of the 2nd Friday Art Walks, and I had been counting down this door opening. I couldn’t believe Norman was getting a refill store. When I came in, I was like, ‘Yep, it’s the dream. I love it.’”

Tanner began working at Re:Supply a few months after the Norman location opened, but had already been making changes in her lifestyle. By mending her clothes and cooking more, Tanner combated her sense of overconsumption guilt.

She said she hopes Re:Supply can help others overcome that guilt and start living more sustainable lifestyles.

“I have been interested in sustainability more and more over the years,” Tanner said. “We hear all about climate change and other issues, and it can feel really overwhelming. ... What in the world can I do to make a difference and not have this heavy feeling of guilt (of) overconsumption, which is really hard to overcome, especially in the (U.S.)”

Unlike in a typical retail store, Re:Supply customers can refill almost any product. Customers can bring in their own clean containers to fill or take one from the store’s community shelf of free, clean containers that have been donated. Tanner encourages people who aren’t sure about different products to take an ounce and try it before committing to a full bottle.

In addition to making sustainability accessible, Tanner said Re:Supply cultivates an inclusive environment for anyone wanting to learn about what they do.

“Don’t come here worried about being judged,” Tanner said. “We want to help you and make it fun, enjoyable and approachable. If you’ve never been, come in, wander around, have a ball and enjoy yourself”

Re:Supply is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday at 408 E. Main St. Re:Supply is closed on Monday.

THRIFT STORE



BOB NGUYEN/OU DAILY

Crimson Vintage sells a curated selection of clothing from the 1950s to the early 2000s, restocking up to 100 pieces every weekend.

'SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE'

Update your wardrobe with Crimson Vintage's curated second-hand clothing

BY MADELINE HOFFMAN • MADELINE.G.HOFFMAN-1@OU.EDU

After opening in February 2023, Crimson Vintage became Norman's first and only curated vintage clothing store, stocking one of the city's largest selections of clothing from the 1950s to the early 2000s.

"We have a little bit of everything, and I'd say there's something for everyone," co-owner Bryan Albert said. "From graphic tees, sweatshirts, hats, jackets, pants, it's just all second-hand clothing that we're trying to give another home."

Albert and co-owner Connell McBride met at a thrift store in 2020, and from there a business partnership ensued. The pair first founded Crimson Vintage on the platform Depop, an online marketplace where users can buy and sell previously owned clothing.

Following years of selling online, Crimson Vintage moved into a physical storefront on Main Street. Though it requires more work, Albert and McBride said they prefer a brick-and-mortar shop as a means to connect with the Norman community.

"We wanted to sell in person rather than just shipping the products out because we want to give people the experience and show them everything we've been curating," Albert wrote to the Daily. "We also love being able to meet who we are selling to and seeing them wear their items from us."

The pair have been interested in thrifting for many years,

with McBride beginning in high school. For Albert, vintage clothing has been an outlet of self expression and means of differentiating himself from others.

"It's always been about being able to express yourself through clothing, having stuff other people are unable to easily find and getting that out into the world," Albert said. "I've always been into having clothing that other people don't have."

Crimson Vintage carries a wide selection of curated second-hand clothing, with a wall of the store dedicated to OU apparel and decorated to match. The section's backdrop is adorned with OU clothing dating back to the 1930s and 1940s.

Albert and McBride said they take pride in the store's ability to curate its selection and restock up to 100 pieces every Saturday.

When curating its selection, Crimson Vintage employee Adam Johnson said he and the co-owners like to observe what others are wearing, what is trending online and what they themselves would wear.

"We think of what people would like and what we think is cool," Johnson said. "Every time I go to Campus Corner I just watch to see what everyone is wearing."

Albert and McBride said running social media for the shop is a newfound challenge. The pair create promotional content on Instagram, often highlighting a new selection of items

curated from a recent restock.

Albert said he is most proud of seeing clothes they have sold "in the wild" and hearing positive feedback from shoppers. Riley Sands has become a regular customer at Crimson Vintage, attributing that to the shop's unique selection and welcoming environment.

"Each piece is one of a kind," Sands said. "You know you're going to have an easy and nice experience when you go in. (They) really try to connect with the community and provide something that a lot of other stores can't."

In addition to Crimson Vintage's connection with customers, Sands said that since first visiting the store during the summer in 2023, consistent and fair pricing has brought him back.

"They have the best prices in Oklahoma," Sands said. "A lot of people tend to upcharge more because of older pieces, but they mark their prices lower and people recognize that and come back."

Regarding future plans, Albert and McBride said they hope to expand Crimson Vintage to increase their clothing capacity. They also want to hold more pop-up shops across campus to promote their selection.

At 406 E. Main St., Crimson Vintage is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Crimson Vintage is closed on Monday.



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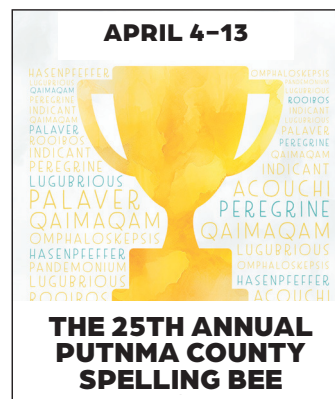
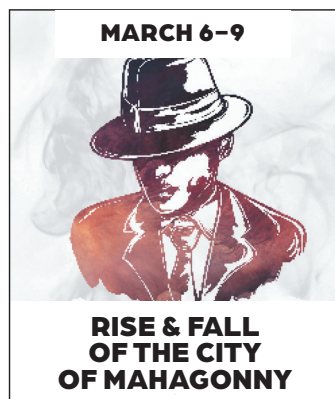
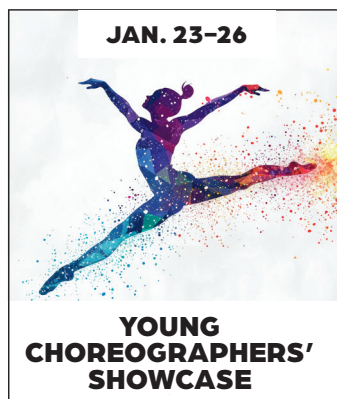
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