



Put This on Your Fridge

We used to have a wonderful wine bar called tutto bène. We used to have a sophisticated supper club called Jazz at the Station. We used to have....

Unfortunately that phrase “We used to have...” will likely become more common if this recession continues for an extended period. If it does, it is going to rob Bloomington of some of the local businesses that define our city’s character and make it special.

We will use that phrase when friends and relatives visit from afar. Executives from Cook Group and other big companies will say it as they show prospective hires around. And university brass may let it slip as they try to lure top academics to IU.

As IU President Michael McRobbie noted in his 20 Questions interview with *Bloom* (August/September 2008), “I think Bloomington plays a possibly even underappreciated role in both attracting and retaining faculty.... It’s very seductive. It’s a wonderful lifestyle and I think that it plays a very major role in helping to recruit many people.”

(Imagine trying to recruit Pulitzer Prize winners or Nobel Laureates by taking them to Red Lobster for dinner and showing them around Menard’s.)

Unfortunately, the businesses we are likely to lose first are the special ones, the distinctive ones, the businesses driven less by making oodles of money than by wanting to create something of quality—be it food, theater, gifts, hardware, furniture, clothing, whatever.

While the average citizen cannot do much to offset worldwide economic forces, what he or she can do is support local businesses. So here’s a little reminder to attach to your fridge door for the next time you are about to go for...

A hamburger: instead of the fast-food giants try **Opie Taylor’s, Trojan Horse, Hinkle’s, Crazy Horse, Upland Brewing Co., Nick’s English Hut, Butch’s, Wee Willie’s.**

A family lunch or dinner: Break free from the chains and try **Malibu Grill, The Irish Lion, The Uptown, Laughing Planet, Lennie’s, Runcible Spoon.**

For that special dinner out: pass on those cowboy and faux-Aussie outlets and go for real quality at **Restaurant Tallent, Finch’s Brasserie, Little Zagreb, FARMbloomington, Shanti, Limestone Grille, My Thai, Scholar’s Inn.**

For coffee or a snack, instead of the behemoth from Seattle, head for **The Copper Cup, Blu Boy, Stone Cutters Coffee, Pourhouse Café, Bloomington Bagel Co., The Bakehouse, The Green Bean, Rachael’s Café, Soma Café.**

For gifts, go for those made by real artists at **By Hand Gallery, Wandering Turtle, Different Drummer, à propos, Relish, The Venue, Elements, Lady Bugs, Gallery North, Walnut Street Sampler, Briar and Burley, Rebecca and Me, Bloomingworld Imports, Natural Elements.**

For jewelry, watches, and keepsakes, pass on those mall chains and take your business to **Williams, Argentum, Gold Casters, Settle.**

For sporting equipment, go where you get real service and know-how at **Bloomington Running Company, J.L. Waters, Nevada Bob’s.**

Obviously, I cannot list everything here, but I’m sure you get the idea. We can do something.

Note: *Bloom* has moved! Our new address is 209 N. Washington St. (corner of East 6th and Washington streets).

Malcolm Abrams
editor and publisher