

Life is Art



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1541 PASTRIES & COFFEE

Tucked in the corner of a small strip center on Brothers Boulevard, 1541 Pastries & Coffee is a place where a latte is more than just espresso combined with steamed milk. If there is an art to creating a brief comestible respite from life's hectic pace, Sam and Anel Olmedo are master artists at the College Station coffee shop they opened in 2011.



MANY CUSTOMERS ARE curious about the café's name. In 2001, Sam and Anel were married in Morelia, Mexico, which is both their favorite city and where Anel attended college. Morelia was founded in the year 1541; in homage to their own founding, the Olmedos named their coffee shop 1541 Pastries & Coffee.

Like the city that inspired its name, 1541 is a mix of rich traditional flavors blended with contemporary style. The Italian coffee beans they serve were selected because the brew doesn't become bitter as it cools. The decaf is free of the chemicals often found in decaf coffee products. Because ground beans start to lose flavor when exposed to oxygen, 1541 baristas grind the beans individually for each

order to assure every drink is in the freshest state possible.

Everything about the 1541 experience is personal. The espresso and coffee machines are placed so coffee lovers are face to face with Sam and Anel, who love to chat as they craft the latte or espresso ordered, and also so customers can watch their artistry up close.

Forget the whirls that adorn many lattes the world over. Coffee at 1541 is art to the palate and the eye with an image drawn in the foam of lattes, cappuccinos and even frozen coffee drinks.

Every single coffee order is crafted by a carefully trained barista who uses the steamed milk and espresso to form a design that could be anything from a bear, a horse or a dragon to a character from a movie. You might find a pumpkin atop your drink in October or a snowman in December.

“There was once a man who came in the shop with a big, noticeable mustache,” recalls Sam, “and so, after I made the coffee, I did a cat on the top but added a big mustache on his face. The man loved it!”

Impressively, Sam taught himself how to create the art that’s famous among 1541 regulars and Instagram fans. Anel jokes that it took a lot of milk to perfect his craftsmanship and to find the right balance of milk and coffee. Anel was the judge as Sam used trial and error to create the artistic methods for latte art.

Anel’s favorite part of working at the shop is seeing the customer’s face as they look at the art in their drink, and Sam nods in agreement. “That’s what we take from our customers, and it keeps us going,” says Anel. “I love to see them happy as they leave for the day.”

Sam and Anel both have artistic backgrounds with Sam devoted to origami from a young age and Anel always having a knack for creating art through



the food she prepares. It was in a baking class in culinary school where she found her true love, the fruits of which now line the pastry cases at 1541. Her favorites are detailed, artistic cakes she creates for birthday parties and weddings.

In today’s dining market, the perceived need for speed often trumps any thought of a customer’s overall satisfaction. Sam and Anel work to provide each of 1541’s customers with even a brief moment to savor the art of life – a warm, made-from-scratch cinnamon roll or perhaps the art that adorns an aromatic latte – created by people whose goal is to make sure every order is accompanied by a satisfied smile. *i*

