



TASTE BUDS

JUICE

that's worth the squeeze

Story by Sarah Ensor | Photos by Caroline J. Phillips

Humans have been consuming the juice of fruits for millennia. But in the 20th-century A.D., commercial and home juicers increased the availability of juice to the American public.

The proliferation of juice was helped, no doubt, by Dr. Thomas Bramwell Welch's invention in the late 19th century of a pasteurization process for grape juice. Welch, a dentist and Wesleyan Methodist minister, was opposed to the consumption of alcohol and

marketed his "unfermented grape juice" to churches, according to Wikipedia.

In the last half of the 20th century, juicing became something people could do in their own homes. Juice bars cropped up as places where health conscious people could obtain custom blends of juices that may or may not have tasted great but were touted to provide a good dose of nutrients.

More than six years ago, Jenn McCrea started her business at the lunch counter

Lightly sweet and definitely green, the juice is smooth and easy to drink.

in the back of Hill's Pharmacy. Although it is called Hill's Café and Juice Bar, and is located inside the pharmacy building, McCrea owns the business and rents the space.

It is here where locals come for JMX, short for Jenn's Magic Elixir, a blend of vegetables and fruit juices made daily. Two commercial juicers help keep up with the demand for healthy juices (Little known fact, juicing results in an enormous amount of leftover pulp and sometimes an employee will take the pulp home for chicken feed or compost).

McCrea had been working for Cisco and was looking for a change when she took over the business inside Hill's Pharmacy from a friend and customer. A customer gave her juice its name and it stuck. Every day, the juice bar offers its green juice, which is made with spinach, parsley, mint, carrots, celery, cucumbers, lemon, lime, orange, apple, and pineapple. While the wildly popular drink always will be on the menu, "we will never, ever make another 11-ingredient juice again," McCrea said. It takes a long time to make a juice with so many ingredients,



and it is a complex, but refreshing juice. Lightly sweet and definitely green, the juice is smooth and easy to drink.

At Hill's Café and Juice Bar, healthy options always have been on the menu without pressure or judgment. You can still order a hamburger and a malted milkshake, but McCrea looks out for customers' health with those choices, as well.

McCrea sources as many ingredients as possible from local farms and producers, and as many organic ingredients as possible. All the meat is from animals not treated with antibiotics, and the beef is certified Angus.

"Now, compared to six years ago, there seems to be so much local access," McCrea said.

Lettuce, berries, and milk are all locally sourced, as well as other options, and McCrea keeps a list of local suppliers on a board in the café.

If you are ordering juice and looking for a healthy lunch option, McCrea recommends the protein bowl. The ingredients vary based on what is available, but it is generally a warm, brothy meal with a base of grains and vegetables, topped with sliced chicken breast.

The protein bowl could be different every day because of the seemingly endless variations. On this



Pictured above, Hill's Café and Juice Bar's protein bowl includes different ingredients depending on what is available, and has endless variations.

day, the protein bowl is organic chicken seasoned with zathar, or za'atar, a combination of toasted sumac and sesame seeds. It rests atop quinoa, broccoli, mushrooms, carrots, and spaghetti squash in a turmeric bone broth to which McCrea has added stock.

While it is warm and filling, the meal is neither heavy nor greasy. It would work well to warm a cold body on a rainy day or to simply nourish on any day. The perfectly cooked vegetables complement the tender chicken, and it is all held together by the savory broth.

Pair it with the green juice, or for a lighter tasting option, the green lemonade, which has all the same vegetables as the green juice, but less fruit.

Other juice options include the Aronia

Berry Blast, which among other fruits includes locally sourced aronia berries. While they look like beautiful blueberries and are packed with antioxidants, aronia berries do not taste good raw. Made into jam or juiced with other fruits, aronia berries can offer their health benefits without bitterness. (McCrea noted the farmer who supplies them eats a handful on his cereal every day.)

The Flu Fighter juice, especially appealing this past winter, is a combination of grapefruit, oranges, lemon, carrots, and fresh ginger.

Selecting healthy options from Hill's Café and Juice Bar is a personal choice, McCrea said. So no one will judge a diner for ordering that milkshake and a grilled cheese. After all, healthy living is about balance. **S**