

James Gang Coffeehouse and Eatery wins close race in Best Coffee contest

•••• by Myrna CG Mibus ••••



11 coffeehouses have been vying for the title of Best Coffee

sandwiches and salads round out the menu making James Gang an ideal destination for coffee, a meal, dessert, or anything in between.

Children, and their parents, are important customers at James Gang. An activity area keeps little ones occupied, making parents, children and child-free guests happy. The Wall of Art showcases artwork from local schools, and a special "Younger Gang" menu includes a sandwich made with their special multicolored bread, juice box, chips and a treat.

Establishment in southern Minnesota, with the results showing one of the more competitive "Best Of" contests to date. The votes are in and in by an extremely narrow margin, the winner is - The James Gang Coffeehouse and Eatery in Northfield!

Named for "the gang," coffeehouse owners Jim and Joan Spaulding's six children who range in age from 3 to 14, and for Northfield's connection to the outlaw Jesse James and his gang, The James Gang Coffeehouse and Eatery welcomes customers to their cozy atmosphere with the "sight, sound and smell" of their excellent coffee, Joan says. Beans are roasted each morning so their coffee is the freshest and most flavorful around. Their signature dark roast, appropriately called James Gang, is brewed each day along with medium, light and decaf blends. A full range of espresso drinks, including favorites like Smiling Irish Eyes and Mocha Bianca, and non-espresso drinks like tea, hot chocolate, smoothies, specialty sodas and the popular Hot Apple Pie are always available. They'll roast any coffee blend for guests to enjoy at home or while they relax in one of the coffeehouse's comfortable chairs.

The Spauldings offer top quality food too. The biscottis are superb and desserts rich and tasty. Goodies like muffins and scones are baked fresh on-site daily. Three soups and fresh, made-to-order



One might think, upon tasting James Gang's coffee and hearing the Spauldings talk about their fair-trade blends, that they were longtime coffee lovers who dreamed of opening their own coffeehouse. Not so. Instead, just under two years ago, Jim was laid off from his job that had him traveling much of the time and away from the family. Jim and Joan decided to look for something that would allow Jim more time with their family. They asked people what kind of business they thought was needed in the area. "A coffee shop at the south end of town" was the top answer.

"We hadn't really even had a latte before we decided to do this," says Joan. But, they didn't let their lack of coffee and restaurant experience stop them. They researched, worked hard and soon had a vision of what they wanted their coffeehouse to be like - a place with a certain *feel* to it that served quality coffee and food in a family-friendly setting. In the ten months since they opened they have done all this and more, which is why they've been named the best in their trade in southern Minnesota!

The James Gang Coffeehouse and Eatery is open Monday through Saturday from 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. They are located in Heritage Square on Hwy 3, which is south of Hwy 19 and across from Furlong Motors, in Northfield. Visit their website at www.jamesgangcoffeehouse.com for more info.