

Our State
NORTH CAROLINA

DOWN HOME SERIES

diners

FALL 2005

57 *places the locals
love to eat*

Thank You!

YOUR PATRONAGE IS APPRECIATED

SERVER: PERDUE TABLE NO:

CHECK # 83

1 meatball
96
mash

1 apple pie

plus!
best barbecue
(and banana pudding)

\$9.95



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Display until December 15



Seaboard Café

One of Raleigh's largest plant nurseries blooms with flowers, statuary, fountains, and a delightful café.

BY JANET C. PITTARD
PHOTOS BY STACEY HAINES



Looking for a garden oasis, undisturbed by the hectic pace of downtown Raleigh? You wouldn't expect to find it in a train station, but tucked away on the site of the old Seaboard station off Peace Street are Logan Trading Company, one of the area's largest plant nurseries, and the Seaboard Café, a delightful and unpretentious eatery.

The station was built by Seaboard Railway along the Southern Colonial Lines during World War II. But today, instead of travelers waiting to board the train, state workers and other downtown professionals, amateur gardeners, tourists, and mothers with small children in tow peruse seasonal flowers, shrubbery, fountains, and statuary, or sit at tables enjoying soup and sandwiches.

Logan Trading Company, a family-owned and -operated nursery, purchased the station from CSX Railroad and spent a year renovating the property before opening in

February 1991. The nursery relocated from the State Farmers Market on Hodges Street, where Robert M. Logan Sr., now deceased, opened the business in 1965. Logan's son Robert Jr. now runs the business with the help of two of his five sisters, Debby Logan and Linda O'Keeffe, and a staff of 28.

The Seaboard Café opened just a few months after the nursery and occupies the space where the original cafeteria served refreshments to travelers. Texas native Rick Perales, who worked with Logan Trading Company for a couple of years, approached Logan with a proposal for the diner space when he saw the old Seaboard Café sign on the dilapidated building prior to the station's renovation. A deal was struck, and Perales began selling hot dogs, hamburgers, and fajitas in the station's cafeteria.

Perales was joined a year later by Mary Farrar, and they added fresh salads and homemade muffins and soups.

Partner Tom Deak left Northern Telecom and joined the café full time a couple of years later to handle the menu planning and serve as the cashier.

SOUP, SANDWICHES, AND SHRUBBERY

The menu regularly includes soups, a couple of daily specials, and sandwiches. The popular Veggies on Sunflower sandwich includes cheddar and Swiss cheese layered with lettuce, onion, sprouts, mayo, cucumber, and pickle and served on sunflower bread. Other favorites are the generously portioned cheeseburger, a grilled chicken sandwich with the café's own peach pepper relish, chicken salad, and the club sandwich. Servings are garnished with

the café's homemade pickled carrot strips.

Freshly baked cookies and Fruity Bars, all-natural fruit popsicles, are available for those with a sweet tooth. For the calorie-conscious, there are five different salads from which to choose and a fat-free ziti pasta salad served as a side order.

Customers can

sit outside when weather permits or inside a glassed porch adjoining the greenhouse. Perennials, herbs, and fountain and statuary displays surround the café's outside dining area. Nursery customers browse among the plants displayed in abundance along the station's canopied waiting area.

It's hard to say whether people come to Logan's to shop for plants and then decide to enjoy a bite to eat at the café because it's so convenient, or if people come to the café for lunch and are inspired to make a purchase for their garden. Whatever the original intention, this unique destination is worth the trip.

Opposite: Specialty muffins add a touch of whimsy to diners' lunchtime experience at the Seaboard Café, housed in the former Seaboard Railway station. Above: Server Miguel Araiza and owner Rick Perales offer fresh, seasonal menu items.

