

MEMORABLE PERFORMANCES



DTH FILE/MELISSA KEY

Ilyan Vigo plays the Sugar Plum Fairy in Carolina Ballet's performance of "The Nutcracker." Memorial Hall hosts the performance every year at the start of the holiday season. For information about this year's Memorial Hall performances, see page 24.

# Franklin Street ‘food’-for-all

## From ‘taters to teriyaki, Chapel Hill restaurants have what you crave.

By Elizabeth Bartholf  
Staff Writer

As you dive into your studies at UNC this fall, remember to crawl out from the stacks in Davis Library and check out the local restaurants on Franklin Street. With over 30 restaurants downtown, there's a lot to choose from. Here are some of the top picks among students.

### Top of the Hill Restaurant

With an outdoor patio overlooking Franklin Street, Top of the Hill Restaurant is a popular destination for students. "We bring an environment that makes all walks of life comfortable," said floor manager Steven Torchio. "Anyone from a professor to an undergrad to a blue-collar worker, we have something for everyone." Compared to other restaurants around town, Torchio said Top of the Hill — which is at 100 E. Franklin St. — aims to connect customers to life in the town. "We try to make you feel at home right in Chapel Hill," he said.

### R&R Grill

As a family-owned restaurant, Rob Moll said R&R Grill at 137 E. Franklin St. brings a personal touch to the dining experience with their made from-scratch dishes. "This is a great place to bring your parents or come on a first

date," said Moll, who is an owner. "It's a great place to kick back and relax." With several plasma screens, Moll says R&R Grill is also a popular spot for watching Carolina sporting events.

### Spanky's Restaurant & Bar

With 35 years of business under its belt, Spanky's Restaurant & Bar at 101 E. Franklin St. is best known for its cooked-to-order burgers, said floor manager Drew Hansel. "We do ribs and barbecue better than any place on (Franklin) Street," he said. "It's really that good." Spanky's also prides itself on bringing more than good food to the community. As the found-

*"We bring an environment that makes all walks of life comfortable."*

**Steven Torchio,**  
Top of the Hill floor manager

ing restaurant of the Chapel Hill Restaurant Group, Spanky's partners with other restaurants and donates to public schools. "The Chapel Hill Restaurant Group is the number one donator in the county for Chapel Hill public schools," he said. "We believe highly in schools."

### Sakura Xpress

Just around the corner from

Spanky's on Columbia Street, Sakura Xpress offers quick service and quality Japanese dishes, said manager Pat Thirakoun. The \$5 special on teriyaki and hibachi chicken attracts many college students on a budget to the 110 N. Columbia St. location. But what really draws students in, Thirakoun said, is the restaurant's "secret special shrimp sauce." You'll have try it for yourself and come back for more, like the majority of Sakura customers. Thirakoun won't be sharing his recipe any time soon. "It's a Japanese secret," he said, smiling. "If I tell you, I've got to kill you."

Contact the City Editor  
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