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## Singing 'n' sinning at the Cold Stone Creamery

With choices like "Mudd Pie," "Chocolate Decadence" and "Banana Caramel Crunch," the Cold Stone Creamery is a good dieter's nightmare ... and a bad dieter's delight.

-- *Paula Simmons, staff reporter*

The modern décor of the Cold Stone Creamery may not befit an old-fashioned, homemade ice cream shop. But patrons of the Cold Stone Creamery are not just buying old-fashioned, homemade ice cream.

They are buying legal addictions.

The Cold Stone Creamery, or as I like to refer to it, "The Dairy Den of Iniquity," is Tuscaloosa's newest vice. Who needs late night bar hopping when you can purchase a pint, quart or "ultimate bucket" of a delightfully sinful, sweet-cream-based Cold Stone concoction? Or those with more self-control than me may prefer a daintier portion of their favorite flavor served in a homemade waffle cup or cone.

While waiting in line at the creamery, one patron turned to me and said, "They say Americans are fat. How are we supposed to lose weight with shops like this one around?"

I smiled a guilty smile, shrugged and turned away. I was too busy premeditatedly murdering the diet I had started two weeks ago to reply.

And oh what a slow, painful death it was! I was having trouble picking my poison. Other patrons were impatiently waiting for me to make my selection.

My mind began to race.

"Do I want the strawberry, peanut butter or cake batter ice cream? Do I want toppings? Of course, I want toppings! Who wouldn't want toppings? Probably faithful dieters."

Mary, the smiling Cold Stone employee behind the counter, took pity on me.



Samantha Davidson, a sophomore in elementary education, molds waffle bowls at Cold Stone Creamery. (Photo by Adam Crow)

"You know, you can sample some of the ice cream if you would like."

I sampled at least five of the flavors using those "dirty little sample spoons!"

Just when I thought I had decided on the cake batter ice cream, I noticed a sign sporting a list of "Cold Stone Creations" with names such as "Coffee Lovers Only," "Cheesecake Fantasy" and "Berry, Berry, Berry Good."

Finally, I broke down and confessed to Mary that I was supposed to be dieting.

I was so ashamed.

Without saying a word, Mary pointed to the Italian raspberry sorbet and the nonfat and low fat frozen yogurts. I reasoned that these selections were tailor-made for the weight-watching, jazzercising ice cream junkies of Tuscaloosa. Buyers beware! It's only nonfat or low fat before the fudge, Oreos, Butterfingers and crushed pecans are added.

The decision was too tough to make alone, so I asked Mary to choose for me.

Immediately, Mary began mixing sweet cream, a brownie, pecans, caramel and fudge on a 16 degree, frozen granite stone -- the cold stone. She then handed me the "Founder's Favorite" in a homemade waffle cup.

I had made my purchase. Diet be damned, I was happy.

Before blissfully leaving the wicked "Dairy Den," I stuffed a dollar in the tip jar.

Mary rolled her eyes.

"I've done something wrong," I thought. "Is it the tip? Maybe I should leave two dollars."

I realized the Cold Stone employees are fond of misers when a suddenly perky Mary called to the other Cold Stone employees.

"Hey, we got a tip!"

"We got a tip?" they chimed back, immediately followed by:

"Zip-a-dee-do-dah, Zip-a-de-yea! My oh my, what a wonderful day! Plenty of ice cream headed your way! Zip-a-dee-do-dah, Zip-a-dee-yea!"

These were some talented ice cream pushers.

The "Founder's Favorite" was great, but there's still ice cream to be had. Next time, I'll try the "Mudd Pie" or the "Chocolate Decadence" or the "Banana Caramel Crunch."

Besides, I can always zip-a-dee-diet another day.

*This story was written by Paula Simmons, and edited by Jordan Hernandez.*