

24 Hours of Sweetness: A Review of Blackbird Bakery, Bristol, VA.

By: Taylor Harr
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Taylor7harr@gmail.com



Blackbird Bakery, Bristol, VA.

It was a weekly tradition for students at my high school to visit our local bakery each week after football games. I am from Bristol, Tennessee and I attended Tennessee High School up until I graduated in 2019. There were few things better than knowing that tomorrow was Friday, which meant Friday night football games and a trip to Blackbird Bakery after the game with all of my friends. Blackbird Bakery is the famous local bakery that serves a large variety of baked goods and coffee. I have been going to Blackbird since I discovered it when I was just a

7th grader at Vance Middle School, and I am now a student at ETSU and still frequent it with my college friends when we need a break from homework.

Location and Building:

So where exactly is Blackbird bakery located? Although I am from Tennessee, Blackbird is actually located in a different state. The bakery is nestled on a corner near State Street in Bristol, Virginia. State street is unique in that it splits into two states. One side of the street is Bristol, Tennessee and the other side of the street is Bristol, Virginia. It's one of very few streets in the country that are like this. This gives the bakery a special feel and is enough to warrant a visit in my opinion.

The outside of the bakery seems vintage while also incorporating modern aspects. Wrought iron chairs and tables sit along the sidewalk underneath strings of lights that look so beautiful when night comes. The well-known Blackbird Bakery sign is perched just above the largest window, and on top of the sign sits a statue of a black raven. The whole outside of the bakery is glass, which allows people to view the inside sitting area from the outside, and vice versa. On the largest window is the address in gold cursive letters, "Fifty-Six Piedmont Avenue". I find the outside of the building aesthetically pleasing and unique to the downtown area.

The parking is a bit frustrating at times. There is parking available along the street both in front of and beside the building. It tends to fill up very quickly, especially on the weekends, and the closest parking besides that is in a parking lot behind the bakery. The parking lot is on the corner of Cumberland Street and Johnson Street. It is completely free of charge, so there is

no need to bring extra cash for parking. It is nothing too far, so I don't mind walking a little and taking in the views of State Street along the way.

The inside is cozy and welcoming. I am always so excited to get inside and see what is in the bakery case that day. As I walk inside, the bakery case and ordering counter is to the left, and the seating area is to the right. There is a cute blue leather couch in the seating area in front of a fireplace with two other tan chairs to each side. The fireplace doesn't work, but the warm feeling is still there. Behind the couch is a wooden staircase that leads to more seating upstairs. The upstairs seating is more like a balcony, so you can see the downstairs and entrance from any table. The tables are wooden with metal chairs with cushions, typical of

many bakeries. The yellow walls are covered with pictures of old pastry advertisements.



The sitting area at Blackbird Bakery

My favorite spot for studying or just sitting with friends is downstairs, just to the right of the fireplace. There is a bar with metal barstools that sits right in front of a window with views of the sidewalk and stoplights. I love to just sit there and enjoy a dessert while watching the hustle of the traffic and people outside. Blackbird is a wonderful place for college students, as it is open 24 hours a day. Most bakeries in this area close at dinner time, so Blackbird is a first of

its kind around Bristol. I often see students inside studying at midnight while eating a doughnut, and sometimes that student happens to be me. Due to the on-going pandemic, Blackbird has temporarily switched its hours to 6 a.m.- 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Hopefully this doesn't last long, but I do appreciate the health and safety precautions they are taking.

Friendly service:

The staff at Blackbird are always courteous despite being super busy almost every time I go. They understand that it takes customers awhile to pick out which delicious baked good they want, and do not get frustrated when you need more time. There have been multiple times I have wanted something that isn't in the display case, such as a slice of cake, and they have gone above and beyond by slicing a piece off of a whole cake in the back. If you're not sure what to get, don't be afraid to ask your server because they are always willing to help and offer suggestions in my experience.

Weekends are typically the busiest times for Blackbird, especially Friday and Saturday nights. The line can sometimes wrap around the building on these days but rest assured that the service will not be impacted by this. The staff are always smiling (even under their masks) and eager to help the next customer despite the rush. If you aren't willing to wait that long,

Blackbird Bakery

Baked desserts, coffee, made-in-store ice-cream, smoothies.

Hours: 24 hours Monday-Saturday

Closed on Sunday

Address: 56 Piedmont Avenue, Bristol,

VA 24201

Phone Number: (276)- 645- 5754

Price Range: \$\$

Additional Parking available on

Johnson Street

even though it's totally worth it, then I would suggest visiting during a weekday when the traffic is not nearly as heavy.

The bakery also provides free Wi-Fi to its customers, so it is a favorite of college students and work-from-home employees alike. The Wi-Fi has always been reliable for me to do my online school or watch YouTube videos for lectures. I haven't tried the Wi-Fi during peak times on the weekends, so I cannot attest to that part. Overall, it is a good place for those who need Wi-Fi and want to enjoy a treat at the same time.

The Food/Drinks:

Now let's get to the best part of any bakery: the desserts. My personal favorites at Blackbird include the brownie tower, the orange glazed donut, and the chocolate ice cream.

The brownie tower includes fresh strawberries on top of 3 brownies that are stacked on top of each other and are covered in chocolate drizzle. The brownie is super rich and perfectly baked.

The orange glazed donut features their homemade glazed donut topped with an orange glaze that is heavenly. I can honestly say I have never had a donut quite like it, and it only costs .79 cents!

And finally, the chocolate ice cream seems basic, but Blackbird makes all their ice cream in store. It is so creamy and full of flavor and is perfect paired with a house-made waffle cone.

These are only 3 wonderful desserts that Blackbird offers, and they usually always have a stocked case. Other treats include cheesecakes, eclairs, slices of cake, tarts, and macaroons. They also offer coffee, hot and iced, smoothies, and milkshakes. I have yet to have a bad

dessert from Blackbird, unless you count the time I just had to get a pistachio macaroon, knowing that I do not like pistachios. (It wasn't the worst, so I'm sure if you like pistachios then this is a great option for you).

Final Thoughts:

Blackbird Bakery is a unique place in every aspect. If you are wanting a cozy, friendly place that serves up mouthwatering desserts, then Blackbird is the place for you. It is perfect for studying, working, or even just hanging out with friends on a Friday night after a high school football game. Blackbird never fails to bring a smile to my face, and I hope it treats you the same way. I have yet to find a bakery in this area that I enjoy as much as this one. Be sure to try one of my favorites or find your own new favorite from the amazing options Blackbird Bakery has to offer!

About the Author:

Taylor Harr is a student at East Tennessee State University. She is an English major with a minor in digital marketing. Taylor has grown up in the Tri-Cities area her entire life. She enjoys reading, writing, playing soccer, and spending time with her family and dog.