Just a little bit up the street from Metro lies a small shop that remains a contradiction: an awning that feeds into a side yard that blends into the street, but the shop would feel somewhat hollow without it; a part of an historic building, but without the blue and yellow awning, it may go unnoticed when one passes by.

Inside lies a small store where the main room could hold perhaps 25 people at most. It is absolutely packed. “After all,” said Julie Lewis, a local resident, “they don’t just sell coffee. The food and environment sells themselves.” Swede Hollow Café is the little shop that never fails to impress.

Founded in 1997, it was placed in Dayton Bluff’s Stutzman building, which blends into the surrounding 7th street aesthetic in breathtaking fashion. It may seem obvious how it acquired its name, with Swede Hollow Park located behind the building, one could call it legacy by association. But to assume that the environment and surrounding area are the reason for its success is an obvious mistake.

The food is spectacular. Along with a reliable cup of coffee that always seems to impress, the specials of the day allow for the cooks to stretch their creative capabilities while simply creating great food at an affordable price. When one considers how frequently they’re able to cycle through daily specials in order to keep everything fresh, the preparation this requires combined with affordability becomes all the more impressive.

The food quality, cost and convenience makes for one of the more viable food options in the immediate area of Metro. That’s the key: the quality of the food finds a balance between being ostensibly foodie bait, but not so highbrow that it averts the gaze of any students that are likely to visit the shop.

While the point of Swede Hollow Café’s setting and location were largely emphasized a few paragraphs up, it’s strongly needed when considering the blend of affordable pricing with higher quality. The setting reinforces the product: something that has a lot of talent on display while still being incredibly humble while giving a strong sensibility to the product they want to provide.