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Owner Jenny McLeroy, left, and manager Carolyn Celaya re-create the A-OK seal of approval that they use for The Daily Brew logo.

## 2 women find their niches with coffee, dessert

By Patrice Stewart

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Grab a cup of Pink Grapefruit Gelato or Sweet Foam Alabama espresso-based beverage and sit down at The Daily Brew.

You'll learn a lot about how those items are made — and about the women behind them.

On the serving side of the gelato case and espresso machine, you'll find two women with different backgrounds who were ready for sweeping changes in their lives.

Jenny McLeroy, 44, grew up in Morgan County, got a psychology degree from The University of Alabama in

Huntsville and a law degree from Emory University in Atlanta. She practiced law in Decatur for nearly 15 years before deciding it was time for a sabbatical.

Carolyn Celaya, 49, majored in journalism at California State University Northridge and worked in TV sales for NBC in Seattle. Later she worked as a licensed private investigator in California and Washington for 10 years. She moved to this area in 2001 and settled in Somerville.

"But coffee has been my passion for three decades, and I believe you should pursue your passion," said Celaya. "I think a lot of women decide at mid-life to make sweeping changes. I come from a coffee culture, and I love this."

Her private-eye characteristics still come in handy, though, as she takes her keen sense of smell to coffee conferences and trade shows and sniffs out the best beans and roasters. She has her favorites, and they ship her beans here from Seattle.

"All the beans are roasted there and come in the next day," she said. "I'm from Seattle, and this is a Seattle-style coffee shop."

"People love our coffee, and we have some excellent blends," she said. The espresso roast they like has coffee beans from Hawaii, Indonesia, Latin American, South America and Africa.

Celaya checked out the coffee business in South America this year during two trips to visit a daughter who was teaching in Ecuador.

Food service isn't new to McLeroy, because she worked in the field while attending college and also worked on The Alabama Star riverboat on the Tennessee River for a time after Decatur High.

"This is certainly different from being a lawyer," she said.

"I've always liked the hospitality industry, and a coffee and gelato shop is part of that. However, owning a business and running it is new to me, for sure. Carolyn is the primary manager and the brains," said McLeroy.

"And the coffee connoisseur," added Celaya, who owned a coffee shop a few years back. "We have a rockin' gourmet drip, and not by accident. I've spent years going to coffee trade shows in cities like Chicago, Seattle, D.C. and Atlanta and tasting different roasters' blends."

For this menu, Celaya created espresso blends such as "Sweet Foam Alabama," with white chocolate cappuccino and pecan praline flavoring, and "The Diddlehopper," with Ghirardelli

white chocolate and Irish cream flavoring.

"The Diddlehopper is a tribute to my grandmother, who loved coffee more than anyone I'd ever met. She was full-blooded Irish, and my grandfather called her his 'Diddlehopper,'" said Celaya.

They have the standards and the unusual: café latte, cappuccino, chai tea latte, frappes and fruity smoothies, as well as homemade lemonade, Italian cream sodas, café au lait and all types of sandwiches that can be served cold, steamed or panini style.

They work hard at creating an atmosphere, too, and Wi-Fi is available.

"I like creating a third place — not work or home, but another place — where people come to meet and share ideas," said Celaya. "We're meeting interesting people and hearing tales from some who've traveled the world.

"This is a format where people can meet and ideas can flow. And there's no smoke or alcohol; it's not a bar."

She has visited the coffeehouses of Italy, which she said are different from those here and often include a bar. But they are not the drive-through-and-grab-a-cup-to go style like many in America.

"There are no to-go cups. They sit down and drink cappuccino from a porcelain cup and they relax and they talk," Celaya said.

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