

# Special Blend

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Lorraine's Coffee House & Music in Garner, North Carolina, Serves Up a Hot Cup of Coffee with Heaping Helping of Traditional Bluegrass

by Stephen Pitalo

As lead vocalist of Carolina Road for more than 15 years, Lorraine Jordan knows about the difference between the work of the tour and the comfort of home. As much as she brings her family on the road with her, she also has found a way to keep the home fires burning with a place that her music, and others, can call home. And with the current pandemic situation, it seems that her place is serving up a double shot of beverage and bluegrass without hesitation.

Known as the "Lady of Tradition" in the bluegrass community, Lorraine has made an indelible mark not only on North Carolina music culture but within the greater bluegrass genre. An original in her own right, she found a way to keep the music alive in the community at the place she founded, Lorraine's Coffee House & Music in Garner, North Carolina.

*"It had always been a lifelong dream of mine to have an establishment where the community could come together and mingle in a family atmosphere," Jordan said. "I am hoping this can be everyone's home away from home and become a place to relax, meet, and greet while enjoying the artistry of locally and nationally known musicians. I have played music on the road all over the country for over twenty-three years. Now, I want to come home and play in my backyard. I hope you will come to the house that Lorraine built. Use this as an excuse to get out and come see where everyone else is. Don't*

*be surprised who you might find here! I've made a lot of friends during my time on the road."*

Jordan of her hometown location, "There are many reasons why I chose to have my business here in Garner. One of its many reasons is the people and the beauty of this town. This community has the most caring, loving, and supportive people I have ever met. I have lived here for many years and taught here when I was younger. The people of the Garner community have helped Lorraine's Coffee House become Garner's Gathering Place."



Before the pandemic, the venue was packed with a weekly schedule that looked a little like this:

Thursday- Karaoke & The House Band (every other week) & sometimes gospel

Friday- Bluegrass Night

Saturday- Classic Rock, Country, Bluegrass, Americana, and Acoustic

Local bands from around North Carolina would contact Jordan Entertainment, which is an office at the Coffee House, with information about their band and we would get them booked to play a show. We help with advertising, selling tickets, and sound/set up.

“Since COVID, we had to stop having shows for a number of months, which was so sad for our fellow community musicians because most of them... that’s their way of life, their job and how they put food on their family’s table,” Jordan explained.



*"So, I had a great idea... let's use Facebook Live to stream our shows on Friday & Saturday nights and the fans can donate in a virtual tip jar that would go to the bands. It may not be face to face, but at least the wonderful people of our area are able to sit at home and enjoy the great LIVE music of National Bands and not worry about getting too close to other people or getting sick. We cross-promoted with 15 other bluegrass sites to share our live feed of the shows so far."*

<https://youtu.be/qRaGmpXkjDE>

Jordan said that the house is slowly getting back to normal

with some of the Friday & Saturday night shows being live with limited in-house tickets.

“Lorraine’s Coffee House is very special because the community has made it this way. Before COVID, every Monday night we would have bingo with prizes,” said Krissy Gear of Jordan Entertainment. “Lorraine would purchase all types of fun items for the people who loved to come sit and enjoy the games and company of one another. On Tuesday nights we would have Bluegrass Jam Nights, this was a popular event night, too, which was free to the public.”

People from all over came with their musical instruments to mingle and play and sing in harmony as a group. Most of these people became close friends because of these events.

“We would have so much fun together, soon the crowd began to get bigger and bigger, then COVID hit and we soon had to cancel the fun nights we would have together on Mondays. Since COVID, these people, not only people but friends still visit Lorraine’s Coffee House and enjoy our space. Unfortunately, we have not been able to have these special events in the last couple of months. Hopefully, soon it will be safe to have these gatherings again.”

