



The crepe's the thing at Perk on Main in Durham, where Katie Hughes infuses Gallic flair.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Steve Blazo

Brake for Breakfast

Celebrate the top o' the morning with inimitable offerings from these east-of-Elm eateries

BY JOYCE FAIOLA

Ya gotta love early risers, those up-before-the-birds types who wake up hungry as though they spent the night hauling rocks. By 7 they're showered, shaved, dressed and ready to eat a real breakfast. A continental? Heck, they ate that at 5 when they first opened their eyes.

Every family has at least one of these types; I am blessed with two. My parents (who never worked on a farm) set their coffee maker for 4:30 so that java whiff wakes them up. They want to be sure to catch the 5 a.m. "First Outlook" on the Weather Channel.

I'm a right-around-noon breakfast gal, and at that hour even McDonald's won't fry an egg. But here's some worth-waking-up-for places that will.



My favorite is **Perk on Main, 16 Main St., Durham (860-349-5335)**, a peaceful, scenic short ride from Madison or Guilford. Their all-day breakfast is served every day year-round. Crepes! No kidding — plus omelets and breakfast burritos.

Perky owner Katie Hughes hit on crepes six years ago during a trip to Paris; Perk's has sweet and savory ones plus a bakery with baby cheesecakes, huge cookies and other desserts and smoothies. Ask for Mark — he rocks.

On my first visit, I spotted a naked three-year-old streaking through the dining room while Grandma tried to lasso the cutie back to the ladies room. Even with 20,000 cars passing this spot each day, it was obvious that this is a neighborhood hangout where everyone feels at home no matter what they wear. Couches and newspapers fill the front room and beyond are three dining areas including a wonderful deck with panoramic vistas.

The Just Egg & Cheese Crepe (\$4.25) needed some maple syrup so I poured some on. Voila — a sweet/savory winner. The toasted blueberry scone was marvelous with a dab of soft butter. Ditto the cranberry, but this one was griddled — be sure to ask for yours griddled. Smooth coffee; mine was snickerdoodle. For the big appetite try a Philly cheese steak crepe (\$7.50) plus a sunny egg on top. I took my remains of the day home for dinner.