



## RI Bookstores: We visit the Savoy in Westerly

by Thom Cahir March 28, 2021



Tucked away in a cozy nook at the intersection of Canal Street and Railroad Avenue in Westerly and backed up to the Connecticut border along the banks of the Pawcatuck River, The Savoy Bookshop & Café has come to represent the cultural and spiritual center of downtown Westerly, especially during the past year. Not to mention, they were able to rehabilitate a major historical piece of the downtown landscape when they opened in 2016 in the former, “Martin House.”



Savoy Bookstore



The care they’ve taken recreating an Art Deco-themed shop for bibliophiles, out of what was once the lobby of a hotel for seafaring men is nothing short of amazing. Exquisitely crafted cabinets and bookshelves that are stained to make you feel as if you’re in a 19<sup>th</sup> Century library line the walls and display the coffee shop. Inlaid tile floors, covered in some places with large area rugs that are made to evoke trade from the old “Silk Road.”

Desks, chairs, and coffee tables that look more out of a Kipling novel for customers to enjoy; as well as a wrought iron stairway leading to a lower level dedicated completely to children. One feature that’s especially delightful is the placement of, “fairy holes,” throughout the store for kids, and adults, to locate, open, and maybe leave a note and possibly get one in return sometime. “You never know when your fairy is watching over you,” one of their staffers told me.



And while the pandemic may have altered every aspect of the retail sale industry, The Savoy carried on throughout, providing sales online, and caring for the needs of the community by offering lectures and virtual meet and greets with authors and guests by way of Zoom meetings. Their coffee shop is open, albeit with a glass shield now in place, and you can’t eat or drink inside yet, but they’re hoping that restriction ends soon. Another bonus is, they sell Dave’s Coffee in their shop, made locally in Charlestown; and you can even take home a bag.

Their motto is, “Locally Owned, Fiercely Independent,” it’s printed right on their receipts. Most of their titles are written by independent authors, journalists, experts in their fields, and that’s who they have in to sign books, and who they host on Zoom events. You won’t find shelves of textbooks in this store, they’re not a chain bookseller. If you need that kind of book, you’ve wandered into the wrong store. The Savoy is a bookshop that wants you to stick around and peruse their titles, that’s why they make you feel welcome, from the warm lighting above, the comfortable furniture, the warm tones of the bookcases and most of all, the friendly attitudes of everyone who works there.

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You can find The Savoy Bookshop & Café at 10 Canal St. in Westerly, RI or at (401) 213-3901 their website: <https://www.banksquarebooks.com/westerly-store> and on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/savoybookshopcafe>

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