

Change brewing for Exchange café

THE FORAGER

Popular East End café Exchange Specialty Coffee is set for an expansion and refit after outgrowing its space in the burgeoning hospitality precinct of Vardon Avenue and Ebenezer Place.



Tom Roden says the past three years have seen Exchange go from strength to strength. Photo: Nat Rogers

The café, which opened just over three years ago in shops one and two on Vardon Avenue, is taking over the lease of the premises next door currently occupied by the Parente Couture jewellery shop.

Exchange owner Tom Roden says the expansion will increase the size of the current site by about a third, creating room for a much larger kitchen, plus increased indoor and outdoor dining space.

“It will involved refitting the shop so we can make good use of what will be a completely new space,” Roden says.

“We’ve really gone as far as we can with this space – on weekends we burst at the seams.

“We’ve just started advertising for a new chef because we’ll need to expand our team as well.”

The reconfiguration and refit of the site is being carried out by interior design and architecture firm Williams Burton Leopardi, which is also working on Tom and his brother James’ [new restaurant and bar Iberia](#), expected to open in Rundle Street at the end of November.

Exchange will close for about three weeks from October 30 while the changes take place.

The new-look space will see the kitchen moved next door and the dividing stud wall between the two spaces removed. The brew/filter half of the bar will be swivelled 90 degrees to the espresso bar, and the dining area will be opened up with more window seating and more outdoor tables.

While there will be design changes – such as the addition of a central communal table made of Tasmanian oak and a feature totem planter on the bar – Tom Roden says many current features will remain, including the industrial pendant lights and “our iconic magazine rack”.

“In terms of feel and style, it will be similar.

“I don’t want people to lose the sense of place ... people are creatures of habit and they want some sense of continuity.”



rawberry mousse, pistachio praline, fresh berries and espresso syrup. Photo: Nat Rogers

Coffee has – and will continue to be – the café’s main focus, but over the past three years it has also gained a strong following for its breakfast, brunch and lunch offerings, which includes items such as a Mexibreakfast, Wallace sandwich and French toast. Roden says they plan to elevate and slightly expand the menu, but will still keep it “simple, niche and focussed”.

“I want to be somewhat contemporary and innovative with our menu, so I would really like to advance that idea. Having a greater kitchen capacity will allow us to do that.”

He credits the proliferation of hospitality businesses in the Vardon Avenue / Ebenezer Place precinct with contributing to Exchange’s success. Numerous new eateries have opened in recent years, including East End Providore, Nola, Mothervine, The Tasting Room, Hey Jupiter, Sad Café and Burger Theory.

“The more places there are back here, the more attractive it is for people to come,” Roden says.

“Ebenezer Place / Vardon Avenue has become known as a really interesting lunch spot.

“We’re still growing three years in and that growth has not been slowed by the opening of new places.”

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