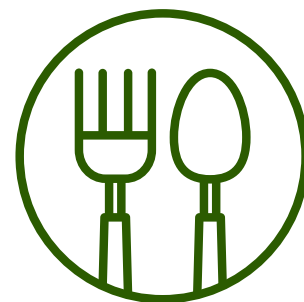


Local Food Innovators: The Savoy Long Jetty



First built in 1956, **The Savoy**, Long Jetty, housed a cinema and entertainment complex that traded until 1976. The venue has been dormant for some 40 years... until now!

The Savoy has been reimagined to bring its heritage back to this vibrant and emerging area of the Central Coast hospitality scene. Opening on the 2018 October long weekend, **The Savoy** is a venue for the people, offering craft beers, an extensive wine list, signature cocktails, DJs and live entertainment, movie nights and so much more.

We sat down with Director and Licensee, **Ben Pearce**, to talk about how this historic establishment is helping to breathe fresh life into our local entertainment and hospitality industry.

What was the inspiration behind The Savoy?

The building itself has been a part of Long Jetty as long as I can remember and we had heard stories over the years that it used to be a cinema. I remember roller-skating next door as a kid, so the building has always been significant. The Theatre was named The Savoy in 1956 and there is still an original sign painted on the northern wall, which is very faded.

After some research and speaking to different people, we discovered the building has a fair bit of history. So, it was only fitting that we used the building's original name, The Savoy, and we set out to reimagine what the building may have been in its heyday, which I think we have achieved.

You're asking people to 'Enjoy The Savoy.' What should people expect that is different about this dining and entertainment experience?

The building was originally a post-World War II community hub. It was a place where families gathered to enjoy its offerings. We are seeking to rekindle those feelings and have created an all-inclusive venue for everyone to enjoy.

Given the diverse nature of our local community, we provide a broad offering, so there is something for everyone!

How does The Savoy support the Central Coast food and beverage industry?

We source all of our produce locally. That is a big focus for us. It's great to be part of the Central Coast hospitality scene, so we work with an array of local providores to deliver our food and beverage service each week.

We had the same thought process during our construction phase - using a handful of local tradespeople to create and deliver this venue. There is so much detail behind our fit-out, there is a story behind every wall fixture or piece of furniture in the hotel.

How long have you been involved with the local industry? What have you witnessed that is unique and where do you think it's headed?

I grew up on the Central Coast but moved to Sydney shortly after finishing school and have been working in hospitality for well-known groups in big venues in the city. The Central Coast was never known for its hospitality scene when I was growing up, but after coming back after a number of years, there are so many great bars and restaurants here now.

The hospitality industry isn't something the Central Coast has been traditionally known for, so the opportunity to contribute to this hospitality growth spurt and the Coast's growing reputation in this area is very exciting. The change of scene is long overdue. I hope to see more small, independent venues pop up to give our residents increased options and continue to raise the bar of our local hospitality industry.

What advice would you give to any young people considering a career or looking to launch a business in the hospitality industry?

Knowledge is your best asset. If anyone is thinking of opening their own venue, you need to know what you are doing, make mistakes and learn from them. If you have spent all your own hard-earned money (or even someone else's) on a venue in an industry you don't fully understand, the results could be disastrous. Nothing beats experience, so do your time learning from the best.

What are your plans and aspirations for The Savoy over the next couple of years?

We want to continue providing this unique venue for the people of the area. We are still very fresh, so we are keen to have the dust settle. We have started working with some other businesses in the Long Jetty hub with cross-promotions. We want to do more of that to include other vibrant businesses so we can all lean on each other.

The Long Jetty Festival returns in 2019, so we want to do some work around that in engaging local artists, and we also want to continue to showcase local bands for our live music offering.

We're really aiming to deliver a service culture that we believe will help change what people should expect when spending hard-earned money at a bar or restaurant.

What's your favourite dish on the menu right now?

Well, if it's the drinks menu, then I'm a sucker for an Espresso Martini. The guys at **ONYX Coffee Spirits** in West Gosford do a distillery-batched Espresso Martini which would be hard-pressed to be matched for quality from any bar in Australia.

From our food menu, I like the simple things, so it's a Margherita Pizza for me. You can always judge the quality of a venue by their Margherita Pizza!



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