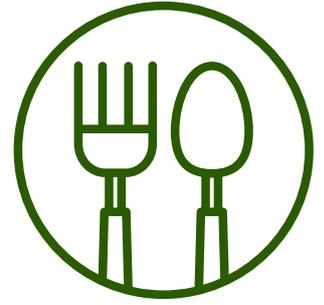


Local Food Innovators: Bateau Beach Cafe



When you live and breathe the local café scene and have a passion for serving great coffee and food, it was only a matter of time before you're running your own busy café.

In late December last year, entrepreneur **Eve Salakas** and her business partner **Kirk Donkin** opened the **Bateau Beach Café** - a welcomed local food hub in the flourishing seaside suburb. With a mouth-watering menu of freshly made dishes, we spoke with Eve to discover her journey throughout the Central Coast café culture.

How did the Bateau Beach Café come to open its doors?

After 15 years of working in cafes, I really wanted to open one of my own. My business partner and I were looking for potential locations and the shop where we trade today became available. We love the idea of great local cafes for people to enjoy in their neighbourhood. We really liked this location and believed that it would be a perfect spot for a café. It was ideal...and here we are!

The café seems always busy. Why do you think it's so popular?

The café is in a perfect location. We're situated in the heart of Bateau Bay and being open nice and early in such a beautiful spot, we cater to the early strollers and those off to work, as well as offering yummy seaside breakfasts and lunches for those who want a more leisurely café experience.

Café culture is expanding rapidly on the Central Coast, and with the coastal suburbs so spread out, we're finding that our café is a great place for locals to meet and catch up with friends and family without having to travel too far.

We also know how much you all love your coffee, so we made sure that the Bateau Beach Cafe stocked a great brew - **Single Origin**. Plus, you can't go past our fresh, healthy delicious food. Our eggs are proudly from the **Egg Shed** at Erina.

We get our fruit supplied through the **Fruit Spot** in Gosford.

The Green Tangerine in Long Jetty also supplies some amazing bread for our dishes.

In your time working in hospitality, how has the industry changed over the years, in particular on the Coast?

I've worked in cafes locally for a while now, and in the last five years especially, I feel the café scene has grown to become so much more than just coffee. People live and work a lot differently these days. We'll often serve people who are working remotely or are holding a business meeting - which is great because we're helping people stay off the M1 and not commute too far from home. Plus, eating out at cafes is now very much a fundamental part of the coastal lifestyle.

Is it easy for someone in your industry to learn the ropes whilst still living on the Central Coast?

I think that anyone who is passionate and hardworking can work in a café. It's a very accessible and rewarding career. You wouldn't need to leave the Coast to study or train in the industry. On-the-job training is the best way to learn and there's plenty of cafes around to master it! However, I feel that you need to be someone special to be good at it! You want your customers to love you and keep coming back.

What's the best advice you received when venturing into your own hospitality business?

"Don't be greedy - you can't do it all!"

The business in the shop before us was a restaurant so I thought we should trade at night too. When we first opened, we traded in the evening for the dinner crowd, but we really wanted to be a café (open for breakfast and lunch). Eventually we dropped the nights to just focus on running the best café we can. This works so much better for us as owners and our staff.

What advice would you give to anyone contemplating a career or move into the hospitality industry?

Go for it! If you're not scared of hard work, just go for it and give it a try. Being such a big industry and culture on the Central Coast, people will come. Work hard, serve great food and drinks, select a good location.... and love your customers! Be different, there's a lot of competition.

What's next for the Bateau Beach Café?

Just get used to us! We opened our doors and fired up the coffee machine over the Christmas / New Year break and have been busy cementing ourselves into the Bateau Bay beach lifestyle. Whether it's for a quick coffee, a business bite, a Mother's Day breakfast or a yummy spot to work from the laptop, we just want to get to know our customers and cater for their needs.

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

Oh, I can't pick. BUT, if I had to, I'd pick the Salmon Poke Bowl. Our peanut sambal is the best. Obviously, I am biased, but it really is!



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