

Local Food Innovators: Local Hero



With a passion to support their community's 'local heroes', Elisha Dowling and her husband Caleb embarked on a mission to fuel those working in the community each day.

Bringing a wealth of experience for all things coffee from across the state, these born and bred Coasties opened their flagship store in Bateau Bay in the midst of the pandemic.

We caught up with Elisha to hear about this experience and find out how they're bringing exciting and unique flavours to the Central Coast coffee scene.

What is a unique point of difference about your business?

I would say we have two major things that are particularly unique.

We roast our own coffee - my husband and I have our own roasting business and have done so for the last few years. Having that level of control and access to the roasting and sourcing process means we are able to select and showcase exciting and unique coffees that we cannot wait to bring to the Central Coast community.

The second would be the coffee equipment we have on the bar. Local Hero showcases the latest innovative equipment at the forefront of the industry, from our Lamarzocco KB90 with straight-in portafilter group heads to our quin spin automatic portafilter cleaner. This equipment helps us ensure we are able to provide the highest quality coffee to our community in a fast-paced and efficient way.

What would your customers say is the best thing about you?

Oh, that's a funny one to answer! But I guess that we pride ourselves on our amazing coffee, customer service and attention to detail. With our rapidly growing customer base and community it seems that they are liking it.

In which ways are you implementing innovation into the local hospitality industry?

We have built Local Hero Coffee Brewers to support the local heroes who are up early doing the hard yards, and we want to be able to offer them amazing specialty coffee in an approachable way. We do this by always offering two different single-origin coffees for espresso and filter coffee to showcase a diverse range of flavour profiles and processes from unique origins around the world.

Do you work with any other local suppliers/producers?

We are striving to work with as many local suppliers as we can. We are currently featuring an amazing little Swedish home baker based in Avoca - we discovered her treats during lockdown and were so excited to be able to offer them in-store every Friday. We are also talking to a couple more local bakers to set up a rotation of amazing pastries and treats every week.



What has been the biggest challenge to your business over the past two years?

We only opened in late 2021, however doing a fit-out during a lockdown and a pandemic presented so many challenges, from delays on suppliers to pricing going through the roof. But regardless of the challenges and delays we faced, we were lucky enough to be setting up in our hometown where we're surrounded by amazing friends and family. They were here with us every step of the way, from ripping up tiles to building cabinets to painting walls.

How have you applied innovation to overcome these challenges?

I have spent the last four years of my career working with cafes all around the state, from helping them by repairing their coffee machine to training their staff to do latte art or even working with them on the best workflow and layout for their shops. Having that experience along with my husband's experience of working in the industry, I was able to source the latest and greatest coffee equipment to not only improve the quality of the product we serve but increase the efficiency to speed up our service.

What would support you the most to grow your business over the next two years?

I think publicity support is amazing as we have had a few social media pages or publications feature us and it helps massively to grow our audience and reputation. Though we are focusing on what we can control - building a community and customer base that values high-quality well-sourced coffee. If we can create a space where people feel excited to come and have a coffee and even bring a friend or give us a shout out on socials then we are on the right path.

Where do you hope to see the Central Coast hospitality industry in five years' time?

My husband and I are Central Coast born and bred and we are super excited to see how the area has evolved and grown over the years. Even with the pandemic, it has been so great to see new hospitality venues popping up. With so much energy and so many amazing venues, we hope that in the next five years the Central Coast is a destination for all foodies with its range of specialty coffee shops, restaurants, and bars. It is well on the way and with some good support from the community, local publications, and the local government, the area could quickly become a must stop for all foodies.



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