

More coffee options coming to Lafayette with Philz

By Pippa Fisher



Philz is scheduled to open its new Lafayette store Nov. 19 in the Mercantile shopping center. Photo Pippa Fisher

The signs are up, the tables are in and very soon residents will wake up and smell the coffee ... at the new Philz Coffee shop in Lafayette.

The store is going in where the old Homegrown was at 3597 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in the Mercantile shopping center. The doors will be opening Nov. 19 and there is a special neighborhood event scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Dec. 8. This event will feature coffee and food sampling, crafts for kids, a photo booth and other family friendly activities.

Now with over 46 stores and over 1,000 employees, the Bay Area-based company opened its very first Philz Coffee shop in San Francisco's Mission neighborhood in 2003. The company's founder, Phil Jaber, spent 25 years perfecting unique blends of coffee and now Philz offers over 20 customized blends from high quality beans from around the world, roasted in its 50,000-square-foot facility in Oakland. Phil Jaber's son, Jacob, now runs the company.

Philz Coffee specializes in pour over coffee made one cup at a time. Philz Marketing Communications Manager Jolie Meschi explains,

"We do any cream and sugar you'd like for you. That means your coffee is not only fresh but made just the way you like it. While you won't find any espresso drinks on our menu, our team is well versed in recommendations that will satisfy any espresso or latte drinkers. Each of our blends was specially crafted by Phil himself, so they are unique to Philz."

And, reflecting the company's values, Meschi adds, "While the coffee is great, we really pride ourselves on service and the atmosphere we strive to create in the store. Come for the coffee, stay for the people."

Meschi says that the store will be staffed by a handful of team members coming from other Philz locations and that they've also done some new hiring. "The store is currently staffed, but we always accept applications," she says.

Philz Coffee in Lafayette will be open from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays and from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekends. The store has two-hour parking for customers around the back on Dewing Avenue. They also have a mobile app that allows customers to order ahead for quick pick up.

Sarah's story – a Lamorinda connection across the pond

By Pippa Fisher



The Minack Theatre sits on the cliffs high above the Atlantic Ocean. Photo provided

Life's bizarre twists and turns occasionally change lives. So it was for the manager of a Lafayette shop, who found herself back in the country of her birth, having called the East Bay her home for 27 years.

And sometimes through these twists and turns, someone appears in our lives. So it was for this reporter recently on a trip back to my home country of England. I was visiting the small village of Porthcurno in remote, rural southwest England with some American friends from Lamorinda. In particular, I had wanted to show my friends the beautiful Minack Theatre, hewn into the rocks of the cliffs high above the Atlantic Ocean. We toured the theatre and learned the history behind it, and as we were paying for our purchases in the gift shop, Sarah Welsh, working at the till, asked where we were from.

It is an understatement to call it a coincidence that we met her in this tiny village and that she not only knew of Lafayette but also had managed Madison's for five years. And it seemed providential she spoke to me, as I am always

ready to tell a Lafayette story.

This is Sarah's story.

Sarah Welsh moved to California in January 1990 to be with her boyfriend, Brian. They had met in Zurich, Switzerland where they had both worked in the same restaurant. At the end of their contracts Brian spent some time with Sarah back in her native England before returning to the U.S.

Sarah joined Walnut Creek-born and raised Brian in California and they were soon married. They visited her family in England every so often and on one such trip renewed their wedding vows at her twin sister's wedding.

In 1994 Sarah started working in the David M. Brian store in Walnut Creek where she managed the restaurant for 15 years. When the store relocated she worked in the stationary department and was soon promoted to manager of the Madison gift and card shop in Lafayette. "I spent five years there and loved it," says Sarah, "Particularly when the loyal customers of the community would pop in and have a chat."

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