

Hamptons Coffee Company Offers New 'Experience' In Southampton

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Some say the comforting warmth of a freshly brewed cup of coffee cannot be matched. The right blend, the perfect brew, can hit the spot and tickle the senses.

Those who love a good cup of java may find the new "Hampton Coffee Experience Store," which opened its doors late this month on County Road 39 in Southampton, right up their alley. One of three Hamptons Coffee Company locations in the Hamptons, the store is devoted exclusively to coffee, unlike its sister shops in Water Mill and Westhampton Beach.

The former Mini of Southampton dealership has been transformed into a Seattle-esque coffee house and roastery, where taste is the focus, according to Hamptons Coffee Company CEO Jason Belkin.

"People who are really into coffee can now come here and be part of the whole coffee scene," he said while standing inside the newly painted coffee shop. "Sitting at the pour-over bar is a nice thing to do after going to a winery or going shopping. You can pick out your coffee and watch it be ground up and prepared by hand.

"It's like a 10-minute presentation," he continued, "just like they do at the winery. You can sit with us—with the baristas."

Instead of having a full menu like the Water Mill and Westhampton locations, the Hampton Coffee Experience Store has only select items. "The best few muffins, desserts and sandwiches," Mr. Belkin said. "We're putting out the best drink-makers, the best baristas."

Customers who sit at the pour-over bar can watch their beans go through the French press, the Hario V60 Drip Cone, and even a vacuum siphon brewer. Mr.

Belkin said baristas welcome discussion about coffee and encourage customers to try different direct trade coffees, or those that come straight from the growers.

Mr. Belkin noted that a farmer from the Indonesian island of Sumatra met with the company recently, and the man would have been proud if the store were decorated with photos of his farm—an opportunity the new space now offers.

“He would have loved to see pictures of his farm—it would be so nice to share them,” Mr. Belkin said. “People could hear him and see pictures and sample his coffee ... there was no way to showcase this, until now.”

The new location measures approximately 5,000 square feet and boasts a conference room for lectures and classes about the art of brewing coffee. The space can double as a meeting room for groups.

In the back of the shop sits the monstrous roaster, moved from the Water Mill location, behind glass doors so that customers can see the roasting in progress.

“People forget we roast our own coffee,” Mr. Belkin said, noting that the roaster sits in what used to be the car dealership’s car wash. “We’re keeping our heritage. It’s cool that the building is being reused again, just like our place in Water Mill.”

The company’s Water Mill location was an old service station that sat vacant until it was transformed into a buzzing coffee business in 1994. Its Westhampton building had also been vacant for some time before Mr. Belkin opened shop in 2006.

“This is our biggest accomplishment since opening,” he said. “This is a big thing.”



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