

Java Dock owner likes shop's buzz

Written by MARK JAEGER

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Coffee selection to be enhanced by sandwiches, creative bakery choices

The Java Dock Cafe at 116 W. Grand Ave., Port Washington, has been no stranger to change.

However, new owner Chad Austin, who took over the coffee shop in January, thinks it is time for a little stability.



Austin and his wife Allison have lived in Port for about 10 years and were frequent visitors to the shop.

“We had been looking at the Java Dock since about 2009, but the timing just wasn’t right to buy it,” he said.

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"When it became available late last year it felt like the right time, and my wife was crazy enough to let me go ahead. It has just been a lot of fun."

Austin said his supportive wife has been key in making a lot of decorating decisions at the shop, and pitches in when help is needed.

Austin said he realizes he might not be seen as the ideal candidate to own a coffee shop.

"I have no experience in restaurants or food service, but I do like coffee," he said.

"This is not something I did on a whim. It is what I do now."

Austin's professional background includes nearly 20 years promoting economic development in Milwaukee and working as a financial adviser.

With the new ownership, the coffee shop has a new commitment to quality — both in the coffees brewed and the food served.

"Whenever possible, we want to rely on local sources for our products, whether it is quality meats from Bernie's Fine Meats or greens from Port Fish," Austin said.

He said the shop is using a lot of the same names for its sandwiches, but customers have noticed a marked upgrade in the ingredients used.

The first hire Austin made when he bought the coffee shop was baker Cassidy Tyrpak.

"She has been great. She has fit right in, and people are really responding to the amazing baked goods she creates," Austin said.

Tyrpak, 20, got her baking certificate from Moraine Park Technical College in Fond du Lac and worked for a couple years at Starbuck's.

She is largely self-trained in cookie making, devouring articles and spending hours watching how-to videos.

Tyrpak gained more insights into the fine art of cookie making by attending Cookie Con, a trade show for bakers held in Salt Lake City.

"There were bakers from all around the world, and I met some amazing bakers. I was probably the youngest person there," she said.

That laid the foundation for things to come.

"When I heard through the grapevine that the Java Dock was looking for a baker I quit my job and it has worked out perfectly," Tyrpak said.

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"I get to do something I really love and get paid for it."

Talented in bread making and cookie decorating, her culinary handiwork has become increasingly popular as special orders for birthday parties and other celebrations.

"Sampling has become my favorite part of this job and my waistline is starting to show that," Austin said.

Image information: NEW JAVA DOCK CAFE owner Chad Austin (above) has found a new home, serving high-quality coffee and sandwiches. Baker Cassidy Tyrpack brings an artist's touch to the cookies and baked goods she makes for the shop.

Photos by Mark Jaeger