



Into the Woods
Edmund Cafe
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The Good Neighbor

Edmund finally gives Allenby Street a neighborhood café created by locals for locals

■ *By Jennifer Greenberg*

WHILE THE FOOD & BAR SCENE IS ABSOLUTELY EXPLOSIVE ON EDMUND CAFÉ'S BLOCK – WITH BEIT HAPSANTER, TAILOR MADE, AND ROKOKO TO ITS LEFT, THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE'S PORT SAID AND OTSAR ACROSS THE STREET, AND LUCIFER AND JASMINO SHARING A WALL – THERE WAS STILL ONETHING MISSING FROM THE BUSTLING ALLENBY STRIP CONNECTING MONTEFIORE TO AHAD HA'AM: a good neighborhood café, which is exactly what Shilo Hadad and his partners David Basilian, Shai Beradt, and Naor David envisioned when conceptualizing Edmund. Named after General Edmund Allenby, who led the British Empire's conquest of Jerusalem from the hands of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century, the brand new nook of a café is steeped in its own rich history. All four co-owners have been in the restaurant and nightlife business for several years, so they know the scene inside and out.

Their handpicked staff contains an oleo of Tel Aviv nightlife veterans, restaurateurs, and barmen who practically built the entire café from scratch with the help of badass carpenters Almog Brim and Michali Tiberg. Tiberg is responsible for the bar's wooden façade crafted from the remains of a sixty-year-old house in the north. The final missing puzzle piece to complete the creative team was Talya Rasner, founder of the successful NOLA bakery. "We wanted delicious baked goods and we weren't bakers. Why start now?" Hadad chuckles. Rasner has already mastered the art of the chocolate chip cookie whereas the team needed to focus on their task at hand: "getting to know the product inside and out," aka the coffee.

The diverse staff gives the neighborhood gem its charm, and the homey atmosphere filled with ageless relics like three wooden chairs Basilian picked up at Jaffa's Flea Market and a sign from Radio Rosco, the funky Italian eatery that once stood in Edmund's place, gives the new kid on the block its personality. But it's the coffee through-and-through that really gives Edmund its edge. "Until now, there have been so many players in the coffee import industry," Hadad shares. "The beans pass through four sometimes five different hands before finding their way to Tel Aviv's cafés." The four guys at Edmund have taken a different approach. They deal directly with the coffee plants right here in Israel because they feel it

"We wanted to create a more intimate experience with a fresher bean"

creates a more intimate experience with "a fresher bean." If you think you've already come across the best cup of coffee in Tel Aviv, sample a bottle of Edmund's 7-hour Guatemalan cold brew and then we'll talk. In the future, the natural businessmen would love to expand Edmund's bottled brews and fresh roasts to restaurants and independent grocers beyond the confines of the quaint café. "Take Pronto, for instance. They have an excellent first course, and an even better second course. While their coffee is good, it's not the best. Imagine how fitting it would be to end the meal with an equally exquisite coffee," Hadad says. "There is something truly special about the cold brewing process, too. Since we brew the beans for seven hours, the end result is far less acidic and milder in terms of caffeine, which ensures a smoother, more refreshing experience." "Experience" is important for everyone behind the Edmund scenes. While the team is working extra hard to bring Tel Avivians the most exotic and high quality beans from around the world – think Nepalis beans from Mount Everest, Hawaii's world-renowned Kona, Jamaican Blue Mountain, and hopefully, the mysterious locally-sourced Golda named after Golda Meir herself – for them, coffee culture is as much about the "culture" as it is about the coffee. When we asked Hadad to describe the best cup of coffee he ever tasted, he responded, "It was in Rome when I went to visit my



Sealed with a kiss
Edmund Cafe
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sister at 16-years-old. There was something about being in Italy, sipping an espresso, and feeling like an adult as I shared the local experience with those around me...I never did get back to that café, but I still remember it to this day." At the core of Hadad's nostalgia is this recurring theme of "local experience." Despite its proximity to Rothschild Boulevard and Shuk HaCarmel, Edmund Café isn't targeting the average tourist. On the contrary, the

born-to-be-neighborhood-establishment wants to build relationships with their next-door neighbors. They want to sip coffee with the early morning caffeine addict, break bread with the man selling pitot a few shops over, get philosophical with the hipster who doesn't want to venture to Florentin for Cafelix quality coffee, and share stories with the 25-year-old writer whose wandering eye caught the bright blue door frame that had not been there the day before.
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