

Ethos Café

Organic NZ interviews Korin Wegener and Peter Heywood, owners of Ethos Café in New Lynn, Auckland. The café is part of the new East West Organics store, which sells a wide range of organic food, and incorporates a natural health clinic, garden centre and arts and crafts gallery.



Jane Orman: Ethos Café front of house

Why did you open the café?

As vegetarians, Peter and I always found it hard to eat out – especially if you wanted a choice or something other than the ubiquitous quiche or pasta. So we decided to start up a unique café as part of the new East West Organics superstore that served great tasting, healthy food that just happened to be vegetarian, vegan or gluten-free – and as organically and locally grown as possible. Our own organic bakery and the organic produce department ensure a fresh supply of ingredients every day. Ethos Café is a natural complement to the retail store – and who doesn't need a reviving cup of coffee or a tasty little snack when shopping!

Why did you choose the organic path?

Organic produce is unadulterated goodness – no pesticides, growth enhancers, etc. and a better way for the planet, as well as our health! You really can taste the difference – we have vibrant, colourful and natural gourmet delights.

What organic food and drinks do you specialise in?

All our food is as organic as we can make it – a lot depends on supplies and growers, and of course the seasons! Some produce, such as mushrooms, is well nigh impossible to find organically grown (if there is anyone out there who would like to take up the challenge, please let us know!).

Our organic coffee is a boutique coffee from Flight in Wellington; they work directly with small growers and promote organic and sustainable agriculture, as well as ensuring the best prices for their farmers. A great range of organic leaf teas is available, too.

We have some specialty raw juices and smoothies, and a great range of delicious cakes, cookies and pastries, always including vegan and gluten-free.

What else do you do sustainably in your business?

We grow a little organic produce ourselves in our massive planter boxes – which are harvested for the café weekly, and

Photo: Philippa Jamieson

Rachel's autumn tart

Makes 6 tarts in 12 cm diameter tins

Pastry

100g organic white flour
50g organic wholegrain flour
pinch salt
100 g butter
1 egg

Rub the butter into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add a pinch of salt and the egg, then bring the pastry together. Place in a bowl, cover and rest in the fridge for 20 minutes before rolling.

Filling

300g haloumi cheese, diced and grilled until golden brown
1 zucchini, sliced
200g spinach, chopped
2 capsicums, one red, one yellow, diced
3 large field mushrooms, sliced
1 egg
150g cheese, grated
5 eggs
2 cups cream

Line tins with the pastry. Assemble all the vegetables and haloumi together in the pastry and whisk egg, cream, salt and pepper. Pour egg mixture into the tart and top with grated cheese. Bake for 15-20 minutes at 180°C.

Salad

150g kale leaves, blanched
50g lentil sprouts
50g sunflower sprouts
2 small beetroots, sliced
4 T olive oil
4 T honey
pinch salt

Marinate beetroot with honey, olive oil and pinch of salt for a minimum of 20 minutes.

Mix all the ingredients together with your favourite dressing.

You could use bought savoury pastry, use any seasonal vegetables for tart mix and serve it with your favourite chutney.



any surplus is offered to customers. We have organised a number of gardening workshops to encourage folk to grow their own, and to become more conversant with and utilise items such as seaweed and kefir.

The entire superstore was created using recycled flooring, shelving and furniture – we scrubbed, sanded and oiled (with natural oils, of course!). All our cleaning products are environmentally friendly.

What sets your business apart from others?

We are trying to create a new shopping experience in a green oasis, a social enterprise showcasing ethical and sustainable products created by small-scale individuals rather than huge multinationals. We are the antithesis of the shopping mall – we aim for a very different retail setting, one which is relaxing, friendly, knowledgeable and family oriented – and of course, organic.

How have you overcome any challenges?

We try to persuade people that eating healthily and organically does not have to cost the earth – in both senses! We sometimes find it very hard to battle against the supermarket giants with their token organic products, who have superior buying power, but we don't intend to compromise our principles, so we strive to keep our prices low – we aim to make organics accessible and affordable for all. Many of our suppliers are incredibly supportive and help us with specials, demonstrations and tastings.

What have been the highlights and successes?

We opened last October with a moving powhiri and blessing from our local kaumatua, and a ribbon cutting from our two oldest customers, both 93 (and a great advert for organics!). We have a fantastic, knowledgeable and loyal staff who really believe in the vision.

Ethos Café gained approval from the *NZ Herald's* scout recently who put us in the top ten healthy eating establishments in Auckland.

What are your future plans?

The chefs are starting to produce our own range of organic products – we already offer hummus, dips, raw food bars and macaroons, and are intending to develop a range of super-healthy takeaway meals and salads. The bakery is trialling a number of different sourdough loaves – all artisan hand-crafted bread from our new stone ovens. 🍞

Ethos Café
East West Organics
34D Portage Rd, New Lynn, Auckland
Café open 7.30 am – 4 pm daily
09 826 5454
eastwestorganics.co.nz