



PHOTO: IAN GARLICK

On the Tea Shop Trail

This month, our intrepid columnist **Louise Johncox** dons her Lycra to pay a visit to one of the new breed of cycling cafés that have sprung up lately

The low-down...

With Surrey now widely considered to be the cycling capital of the UK, one of the spin-offs of this has been the number of cafés dedicated to Lycra-clad coffee-lovers that have sprung up in recent times. So here at *Surrey Life*, we figured it was about time we visited one, and where better than GIRO in Esher, which also pulls in plenty of non-cyclists too.

“The vision was to see an independent café open in Esher that was dedicated to serving both the growing cycling culture and the local community,” says co-owner Jordan Addison, who opened the café with Neil Goodman one year ago.

On my visit, on a Sunday morning, I certainly spotted a high proportion of men in Lycra but also some locals including families. An impressive-looking black bicycle takes pride of place, mounted on a wooden plinth, and pictures by adventure photographer Geoff Waugh, who specialises in cycle sport of all disciplines, line the walls. But it's not all about the cycling - the stylish design, cosy sofas and smart armchairs are enjoyed by everyone.

Best table...

There are nine tables of varying sizes seating about 54. According to Jordan, the most popular is number nine, located on the mezzanine level that is arranged like a lounge with comfy Chesterfield sofas. “Customers tend to really relax up there as if they are in their own home,” he says.

I went to the café with my mother, Frankie, and sister, Georgina, and we chose the table closest to the door. This was the perfect place to relax and watch the customers come and go.

One cyclist almost fell on top of me but I instantly forgave him as I assumed he'd just cycled a long way. And it's not often a man dressed in Lycra falls my way!

What's brewing...

Cyclists are renowned for their love of coffee, and here they work closely with an



LEFT: Co-owner of the café, Jordan Addison

organic roaster - BeanBerry Coffee - to produce an enticing range. The café has also developed its own Espresso blend called GIROPRESSO. All the coffee and milk served is organic and reasonably priced. A flat white, for example, costs £2.25.

Cakes & pastries...

The favourite cakes are the raspberry and chocolate brownies, the lemon and Earl Grey cake and the millionaire shortbread. All cakes cost £2.50.

I enjoyed a slice of the lemon and Earl Grey cake as it combines two of my favourite flavours. My Mum and sister split

TOP TIP:

GIRO offers indoor cycle parking and free bike locks for those who want to leave their bikes outside. They also lead a number of rides from the café each week catering for everyone from beginners to a ladies-only ride.

the chocolate and raspberry brownie, which I also tried. The chocolate raspberry combination was a hit and left me feeling good as I could say I had eaten some fruit.

The cakes are supplied by Pinnocks café in Ripley, known for their high-quality fare.

On the menu...

All the breakfast and lunchtime dishes are

made in-house. The most popular item is the breakfast burrito - bacon, sausage, egg, avocado and home-made salsa (£4.50) - while a popular lunchtime choice is the chicken and avocado wrap served with a fresh salad (£6.00).

Verdict...

During the week, the majority of the customers are local residents and office workers who enjoy the speciality coffee, seasonal menu and cakes. Large groups of parents also frequent the café in term-time. As well as the café itself, there is also a retail section in-store and online, plus they offer their own brand of cycling gear and other exclusive labels.

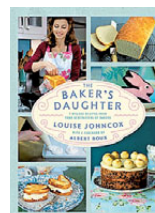
The atmosphere was buzzing, the cakes and coffee were excellent and I left determined to get back on my bike.

Need to know:

GIRO, 2 High Street, Esher KT10 9RT. Tel: 01372 701701. Web: girocycles.com. Open Monday to Saturday, 7.30am to 5.30pm; Sunday, 7.30am to 4.30pm

Reader offer:

Get £2 off Louise's new book with free postage. Call MDL customer services on 01256 302699 and quote the code G3G.



Louise Johncox's parents, Peter and Frankie, ran Peter's tea shop in Weybridge from 1958 until 2000 when they retired. Louise has written a book about her parents' tea shop, *The Baker's Daughter*, which is out now in all good bookshops (see louisejohncox.com/index.htm)