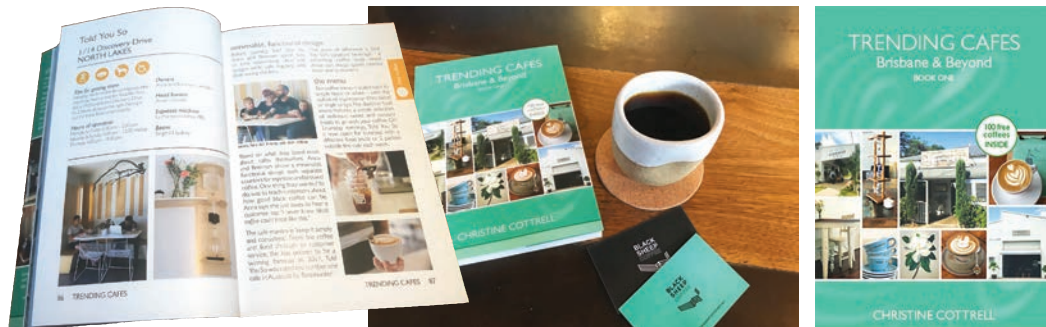


# Trending Cafes in Brisbane

[ PAST AND PRESENT ]



For decades, the Shingle Inn was the place to go for coffee. It was an ornate wood-panelled space with mouth-watering cake displays and cosy booths you'd slide into with a few friends. It opened in 1936 and I've fond memories of going there in the 80's to eat a cupcake and drink a pot of instant coffee made on milk – ceremoniously served from a heavy silver pot (as were the milk and sugar), by a waitress dressed in a frilly floral frock and white apron. It was still 'trending' back then.

To make way for development in 2002, the original cafe in Edward Street was closed; its ornate features dismantled and stored. The reassembled cafe is now on the ground floor of Brisbane City Hall – a rightful position for Brisbane's oldest cafe still standing.

The first cafe in Brisbane that served espresso coffee was the Primitif. Opened downstairs in Piccadilly Arcade in 1957, the Primitif attracted Brisbane's bohemian folk, who were curious about the new kind of coffee being served. They also went to listen to music and meet like-minded souls. A bit bold and terribly trending, it was an initiative of the entrepreneurial Peter Hackworth, whose name is behind a myriad of

local restaurants and markets, including those at Riverside and Eat Street. Primitif closed after 17 years, following the 1974 flood that inundated the city.

Brisbane's current cafes owe a lot to Peter Hackworth, as it was she who battled the Brisbane City Council to overturn archaic laws that banned outdoor dining in Brisbane. Another battle she waged was over the playing of music in a public place on Sundays. (Yes, Peter is a girl and the spelling is right!) Peter recently spoke at one of our local Women in Coffee gatherings where her message was to follow your dreams and make your own decisions; to learn from others but don't let them get in the way of what you want.

Considering the Shingle Inn and Primitif are fairly recent history, the changes and growth in Brisbane's cafe culture have been phenomenal – particularly in the past 5 years.

In the newsletter that came with our rates recently, Brisbane City Council cited some interesting cafe statistics from the 2016 Census. It said, 'More than 6,000 jobs were created in cafes and restaurants between 2011 and 2016 – a 56% increase'. And with tourism contributing 20% gross value to the state economy over 5 years,

'more than a ¼ of this growth could be attributed to growth in cafes, restaurants and takeaways.'

So Brisbane now boasts a vibrant cafe industry, which some believe is equal to that in Sydney and Melbourne, considering the significantly lower population. (In June last year, Brisbane had exactly half the population of Melbourne.) So we are doing pretty well in the national cafe stakes – a comment supported by Dean Merlo who said in QWeekend recently, 'Queenslanders have become more sophisticated with their coffee... 15 or 20 years ago... Victorians were a bit sharper when it came to the culinary side of life, but I don't think so any more... we've caught up.' Dean has been around coffee all his life, giving up a law career to do so. In 1960, his father Gino brought an espresso machine to Cafe Milano, a well-known Queen Street restaurant he ran for decades.

With Brisbane's current cafe culture barely documented, Paul and I set about doing so in our latest series of books, TRENDING CAFES Brisbane & Beyond. We decided to feature 100 cafes in each book. It's cafe history we're writing – one cafe at a time.

In particular, we wanted to feature the contribution cafe owners make to the coffee

W

>> OLIVER JAMES COFFEE, NEWSTEAD

6



## &gt;&gt; EXTRACTION ARTISAN COFFEE, SLACKS CREEK



&gt;&gt; LADY MARMALADE CAFE, GREENSLOPES



&gt;&gt; NEIGHBOURHOOD COFFEE, BARDON



&gt;&gt; QUEEN OF POPS, CLAYFIELD



&gt;&gt; NOEGO COFFEE COMPANY, ORMEAU

industry. Some time ago the focus was on the barista, then it was the roaster's turn and more recently it's been the farmer's. It's now time cafe owners receive the recognition they deserve. As well as the points of difference of each cafe, the back stories of the cafe owner/s are documented.

The cafe owners have agreed to give a free coffee to anyone who comes into their cafes with a TRENDING CAFES book – a formula that's a win, win for all.

It's free publicity for the owners and the free coffee concept is driving new customers to their doors. Customers buy a book for \$25 and can enjoy 100 free coffees, valued at around \$400. Cafe suppliers who choose to be our advertising partners get exposure to our large and growing database and social media – as well as on our blog and supplier directory, both of which are being finalised right now. Cafes and suppliers also get the opportunity to onsell the books at a profit of \$10 per book. For Paul and I, it's 'a job made in heaven'!

The Shingle Inn and Primitif were trending in their day, but now it would be impossible to name a couple that stand out from the rest. Choosing 100 was difficult enough!

We visited 400 cafes to decide on the first 100. We always make it clear that we don't 'rate' cafes and the first 100 are not 'the best' in any way. If we were to rate cafes, it would be a very academic exercise that would be time and cost prohibitive. We're looking at collecting some basic data from the cafes, not for purposes of review but so we can accurately answer questions about what's trending in cafes – a question we get asked often these days.

Our criteria for inclusion in a TRENDING CAFES book are great coffee and a great coffee story.

We're also keen to get a spread across the areas we choose, and for the first book, that included Brisbane Central, Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and the Northern Rivers. For subsequent books, we may head to more remote regions.

We're also mindful of giving exposure to small and local roasters and not have too many cafes using beans from the same roaster. Earlier this year, we emailed roasters to nominate cafes they would like us to consider. So to all roasters, if you're especially proud of a cafe using your beans, please let us know.

There's no use-by date on the free coffees in book one and no timeline for book two. Please join the Trending Cafes community on Facebook and Instagram where we post our research and updates.

Dare to ask 'What's trending in Brisbane?' and I'll suggest you get a copy of TRENDING CAFES Brisbane & Beyond! Call me on 0407 021 220 or email [christine@perfectespresso.com.au](mailto:christine@perfectespresso.com.au) and I'll point you in the direction of the nearest place to purchase one. ★

**CHRISTINE COTTRELL**

Author and writer for the coffee industry  
0407 021 220 | [christine@perfectespresso.com](mailto:christine@perfectespresso.com)