

Edinburgh Coffee scene – Argyle Place in Marchmont

Argyle Place's long, sweeping bar immediately indicates that you are in a special venue.

The stylish interior maintains its links to the specialist coffee scene with its industrial vibe but with a very classy feel. Leading roaster Mr Eion are using Argyle Place as one of its bases. Given the twin focus on specialist coffee and contemporary Scottish cuisine, it's clearly a place with the potential to become a real hotspot for Edinburgh's foodies and coffee lovers.

For Ali McFarlane, the man in charge, Argyle Place is the fruition of more than 20 years in the food and drink industry. For most of that time he's worked for others but is now setting out on his own.

He has had a long association with Edinburgh's specialist coffee scene. This includes the Counter set of coffee boxes that he ran with his wife Sally. Those boxes used Mr Eion coffee and this latest venture builds on that relationship. The idea of a high-end food and coffee venue came to him during "a late evening drink" with friends and business partners at The Counter on the Canal. That dream is now a reality.

He admits it's been "more than a bit of a project", taking at least 18 months of concerted effort to get the place up and running. Covid-19 put things on hold for a while and "has thrown our timeline out the window". In recent weeks Argyle Place has started serving a full food menu in its elegant

dining area. The menu offers “the best of Scottish produce”, with everything made in-house.

The venue is being run in conjunction with Mr Eion coffee. Mr Eion have a roastery set up in the spacious basement area- using a gleaming Loring roaster. Argyle Place already serve Mr Eion coffees. Ali said: “We are currently working our way through their excellent range.”



Great coffee at Argyle Place

On offer on the day of our visit was their Brazil Daterra Sunrise and their fine Brazil Swiss Water Decaf, while their Ethiopian Yirgacheffe Beloya was being served as their batch brew. The cortardo we had was beautifully made, rich and creamy – the work of one of their skilled baristas. With Mr Eion roasting on site they will clearly continue their close relationship, but McFarlane plans for Argyle Place to be a “multi-roaster cafe”. He intends to use beans from Cairngorm, Cult Espresso and other local roasters to supplement the range of coffee on offer.

MacFarlane feels that “with hindsight” he couldn’t have selected a better area to start the business. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a particularly negative impact on cafés and eateries in city centres. As working patterns change and more people work from home, the main hot spots for foodies may emerge in more residential areas. McFarlane feels that while upmarket areas such as Bruntsfield, Morningside and Stockbridge are “already well served” in terms of good quality restaurants and specialist coffee places, Marchmont still has potential for growth. He believes that successful recent arrivals such as 27 Elliots and Detour Espresso indicate that there’s a growing market in the area for top class food and coffee.

MacFarlane said: “I feel Marchmont has a particularly diverse community, from the well-heeled community in the Grange, and

families and students in Marchmont to those who spend time in The Meadows. Argyle Place is within two minutes walk of the green space and I expect a reasonable amount of takeaway trade from those who go there.

“I admit it’s a weird time to be doing this though.”

The passion MacFarlane has for the project is clear as we chat. Everything is now in place for Argyle Place to become a leading destination for Edinburgh’s foodies and coffee lovers.



Argyle Place