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Capitol Hill Welcomes Anchorhead Coffee to the Community

Ashley Hagar, News Editor

Coffee shops and cafés have struggled to stay open since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Stumptown Coffee Roasters on 12th Avenue was the first to close in the Capitol Hill community. Following Stumptown's closure, Café Presse, its next-door neighbor, closed its doors this past February.

Stumptown closed its Capitol Hill location and two others in 2020. The roasting company took to Instagram to announce the closures in May 2020. After the initial closure due to COVID-19, the location sat empty until recently.

1115 12th Avenue once again opened its doors for business Feb. 11 with Anchorhead Coffee now residing in Stumptown's place. Anchorhead has three other Washington locations—two in downtown Seattle and one in Bellevue—with the Capitol Hill spot becoming its fourth location.

Anchorhead's newest location is home to an in-house open air bakery with seating available on two floors. Anchorhead's team found the vacant location and informed founders Jake Paulson and Mike Steiner of the available space. They immediately took interest in the location, toured the space and imagined their future bakery downstairs.

While coffee was never in Paulson or Steiner's plans for their future, it soon became their goal to create the best coffee they could.

"Me and my business partner [Mike Steiner] went to school for audio production. We toured with bands doing front of house sound and tour management for eight years and we were like, 'this sucks, we hate this' and we both love coffee," Paulson said. "We wanted to open a coffee shop, but neither of us had any idea of what we were doing. Then I made cold brew one day and he used to home brew beer and he was like, 'why don't we just bottle this?' and so we were the first Seattle-based company to bottle a cold brew."

Bottling cold brew allowed the duo to enter the coffee industry with roughly 400 grocery locations selling their product. From there, the pair opened their first downtown café in 2016. Now, Anchorhead Coffee sits adjacent to Seattle U's campus, serving as a hotspot for studying, meetings or just a place to grab a quick bite to eat.

Third-year Finance student Jay Grant has already made good use of the space, visiting for a cup of coffee while he studies for class.

"I really enjoy having such a high quality coffee shop so close to campus," Grant said. "I have already been there a few times and have not been disappointed in the speed, quality or customer service. I also think their fully automatic espresso maker is super cool and you get to watch them make everything right in front of you."



Jordie Simpson

A fresh iced latte from Anchorhead Coffee company.

Paulson hopes to become part of the Seattle U community like Stumptown did. He hopes that with the extra seating downstairs, students, faculty and staff will feel comfortable going to Anchorhead as a meeting place or to hangout.

"I'm hoping [being next to Seattle U] will be wonderful ... We don't have any location that's a neighborhood type café, not that I would consider this one either, but more so than all of our other locations that are in the bottom of high-rises downtown. I'm super excited to build that community engagement and have people see this as a spot where they want to just go hang out and have a great time," Paulson said.

While COVID-19 has caused delays and some complications in Paulson and Steiner's hopes for the future, the two have plans in place for the public once the pandemic dies down.

"Downstairs, we have a training room as well, which [is where we] will train our employees, and then we want to do public events where people can come taste all of our coffees or different coffees from different roasters," Paulson said.

They also have hopes of building a parklet in front of the café and hosting a grand opening event when it is safe to do so. Anchorhead's new location is also home to automatic espresso machines, which are new to many employees of the roasting company. Amy Flores, a barista at the 12th Avenue location, is thankful for her coworkers and superiors when learning about the new machines and location.

"We have a stellar management team that makes sure all employees are taken care of very well. Their support in the new technology of this location and trusting us with any of the troubleshooting while opening this new location and just being so supportive of all of us," Flores said.

As Anchorhead Coffee settles into the notorious 12th Avenue spot, members of the Seattle U community have already acclimated to the latest addition to Capitol Hill's food scene. Paulson hopes to foster community engagement in the neighborhood one cup of coffee at a time.