



Come & Get it!

Epicure Kitchen Cafe
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Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to manage a brand new retail food concept. The good news is: you will be able to draw on the expertise and resources of one of the country's biggest, corporate catering companies. The bad news is you'll be positioned on the ground floor of your parent company's HQ, where the Spotless Group's CEO, General Manager of Food, Licensing experts et al, will scrutinise your every move on a daily basis.

Clearly Leigh Neville, Manager of the Epicure Kitchen Cafe is a brave man, as this is his daily cross to bear. Far more than a staff cafeteria, there's a tremendous amount riding on getting the Kitchen Cafe formula right. If Epicure can successfully marry its knowledge of what busy business people like to consume during the day, with an informal, friendly and, crucially, quick counter service, chances are they'll have a template they can roll out around the country. So, no pressure, then!

PHILOSOPHICAL

Everything comes back to a "food philosophy". Epicure's food philosophy is all about keeping it fresh, sustainable and local. This philosophy underpins the food service and

the Hecker Guthrie design.

Driving the concept is Jacque Scammell, General Manager, Retail Strategy & Development, and she talked to venue about how Epicure Kitchen Cafe is subtly but fundamentally different to your run-of-the-mill sitdown sandwich bar.

"Epicure Kitchen Cafe is for people on the run, who want a 'grab and go' option, but in an environment that allows them to sit and relax for a time. All the food is made that day, fresh on the premises, and we display it such that it's easy for people to 'eat with their eyes'. They see what they want, they can see the value in that proposition and they know it's going to be ready for them in minutes. This approach means we don't need a long menu board. What you see displayed represents 99% of our output and the menu board provides regular patrons with a handful of signature dishes."

PADDOCK TO PLATE

In action, the turnaround from joining the queue to sitting with your meal is less than 10 minutes. And sure enough, the food is fresh and very well presented. The design of the space is equally fresh, honest and welcoming, with a

certain exciting bustle about it. High and low tables provide options. A separate coffee bar ensures the morning caffeine rush is well met, while branding detail in the signage and menus ensure a consistency of message.

A private dining room offers another option for Spotless management to roll out the red carpet for key clients, and acts as a testing test bed for the chefs, where sandwich, salad and muffin recipes are fine-tuned.

The back of house facilities are in full view of the public and even the hospitality 'newb' brought up on Master Cherré-runs will instantly know that this is one pimped-up kitchen. Designed by FCA, the kitchen can easily accommodate the daily lunchtime demands, along with a burgeoning 'come and get it' catering sideline for nearby businesses. One still gets the feeling the kitchen is overkill, and proudly so.

Jacque describes it as a "retail playground" and you can tell she's enjoying the process of ruggedising the Kitchen Cafe format so if and when the concept is "released into the wild" it will thrive.