

Southwick supperclub celebrates Vietnamese street food.



A husband and wife team have bought a taste of Vietnam to Southwick.

Andy Poole and Nancy Meara, better known as CaPhe Republic, held their first supper club on Saturday.

The duo usually serve street food at local markets and events but explained bringing it home enabled them to branch out. "The supper club gives us the freedom to cook and serve dishes that we can't necessarily do on a stall," said Andy.

Keen to showcase a range of Vietnamese dishes the menu boasted five courses, starting with a lychee mojito and ending with Vietnamese iced coffee.

Their love for the cuisine was sparked on a five month tour of the country, which they embarked on after selling the highly acclaimed Hampstead restaurant they had run for a decade. The couple then moved to Southwick in 2014 in search of 'a better quality of life'. This extended to creating a business which would allow them to 'get back to basics'. "Not only cooking great food, but also serving it and getting to know our customers," said Andy.

"Anyone we talked to about it said they had been trying to find a Vietnamese street food offer as there were none outside of London, which made the decision an easy one."

In addition to the stall, a supper club had been on their minds and even influenced where they chose to live. "It was always in the back of our minds when we were house hunting," he said. "We knew that the large kitchen diner space at this house would be a great space to do it."

Despite having worked in London restaurants and project managed catering for five Olympic venues, Andy admitted he felt nervous ahead of the launch night. "We have cooked at all sorts of events, and dinner parties for the rich and famous, but having an unknown group of people turning up in our own house to eat our food and be served by us, was strangely nerve-racking." The worries were unfounded however, with Andy saying afterwards that 'it couldn't have gone better'. "We were so pleased with how it had gone, and the space seemed to work well."

The plan now is to make it a regular event, 'probably monthly', sharing the virtues and flavours of Vietnamese food with the potential of introducing 'other styles' in time. "It would be lovely if we can build a reputation among foodie types with our supper clubs and also get a bit of a food buzz happening around Southwick would be a bonus too."

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