

What's Brewing™
News Release From The Hampton Coffee Company

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Hampton Coffee Company®
Featured In
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Restaurants

DINING OUT

More Than
Just Coffee

By Selim Algar

Coffee used to be free.

Until a few years ago, you could enjoy a cup of Joe gratis throughout your day, from the service station to the doctor's office to free refills at lunch.

Those days, of course, are long gone. The bean has become a gourmet delicacy, a luxury, and a lucrative industry in and of itself. Instead of watered down drip brew and creamer, consumers demand the good stuff, the high-end coffees that awaken the taste buds and senses.

The trend officially made its way to the East End in 1994 with the establishment of the Hampton Coffee Company in Water Mill. On the strength of the firm's solid java foundation, the business has expanded. The name now operates a small East Hampton take-out location, a coffee wholesale division, and its own "Coffee Roastery" and restaurant in Water Mill.

The café in Water Mill sees heavy crowds on weekend mornings as customers flock to the well-regarded breakfast menu. A reputation for good coffee, the owners said, has led to the creation of a menu that aspires to the same high standards.

Co-owners since 1999, Pepé Martinez and Jason Belkin have expanded the operation since its modest beginnings. A former dishwasher at the café, Mr. Martinez bought into the Hampton Coffee Company after years behind the scenes in the kitchen.

Mr. Belkin, a former journalist and public relations officer, managed the Hampton Coffee Company before purchasing his share.

"It's a dream come true," Mr. Belkin said. "Pepe and I would always talk about what we would do to improve things if we were ever owners. But it was just talk. Now it's actually happened."

They wanted a full service restaurant without the full service attitude. "We get everybody in here," Mr. Belkin said. "From farmers with mud on their boots to celebrities. We try



Hampton Coffee Company on a winter's day in Water Mill.

Hampton Coffee Company
Water Mill

- ◆ 869 Montauk Highway, Water Mill
- ◆ All major credit cards
- ◆ Dining available Sunday through Monday from 6 a.m. to around 5 p.m. Extended hours to 7 p.m. in summer.
- ◆ No reservations.
- ◆ Handicapped accessible
- ◆ 726-COFE

to be visible with a lot of charity events and actually show up and let people see us as the face of the business."

The duo created a simple but diverse menu, aided by the authentic cooking hand of Mr. Martinez's sister-in-law. The result, Mr. Belkin said, is an array of fresh, reasonably priced fare that is served with a smile.

Breakfast items include *huevos rancheros*, two eggs over easy on a bed of tortillas and cheddar cheese and salsa (\$7.95); *chilaquiles*, an authentic Mexican breakfast of corn tortillas tossed in a special sauce and topped with crumbled cheese (\$7.95); and a range of omelets.

For lunch, the Hampton Coffee Company offers a homemade "soup of the day," as well as made-to-order gourmet salads and sandwiches. The latest offering is balsamic grilled chicken served on freshly-baked sourdough bread with lettuce, tomato, and either honey mustard or creamy herb spread.

For those looking for lighter fare, the lunch menu, which extends to dinner in the summer months, also includes a grilled turkey burger and caesar, Greek, and house salads with

or without grilled chicken, made-from-scratch soups and wraps.

Besides customer favorites like the sizzling fajita platter (\$12.95), homemade Mexican tamales (\$12.95), and authentic recipe tacos al carbon (\$12.95)—bite-sized pieces of marinated steak and chopped onions atop three corn tortillas—Hampton Coffee Company's offerings includes shrimp scampi (\$14.95) and a selection of hamburgers priced at about \$10.

All varieties, including a signature Hampton Classic blend, are available in the store at \$10.99 a pound and can be delivered right to your door.

For dessert, the Hampton Coffee Company offers homemade chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin cookies, hazelnut, chocolate-dipped, and almond biscotti, and an assortment of pies and pastries.

Red/Bar Reopens

Southampton Village's Red/Bar Brasserie was scheduled to reopen on Wednesday, February 11, following a winter break. The restaurant will now be open Wednesday through Sunday at 6 p.m. for dinner.

For further information or reservations, call 283-0704.