

Your Inner Vagabond Coffeehouse & Lounge

The Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins With a Single Sip ...

What is Your Inner Vagabond Coffeehouse Lounge?

Imagine an opulent setting reminiscent of the private salons of 18th and 19th century adventurers: A room suffused with the feel of the exotic East. A Near Eastern floor design appointed with lush fabrics. An overabundance of art and decor from foreign locales. This is truly an ambience to foster a sense of adventure.

Add to this a menu of international drinks and desserts, and you will discover a coffeehouse that reflects our philosophy - *the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single sip*. Every visit will afford our guests an opportunity to explore the globe with all five senses.

As a portal to the wider world, YIV's services will be more restaurant-table than coffee-counter; more lounge than bar. Our patrons will come to sit back and relax, expecting and getting a gourmet experience, transporting them to another place and time. Drinks and sweets are no longer a mere snack to be grabbed on the run, but a social and gastronomic experience; a highlight of their visit to the shopping area in which Your Inner Vagabond Coffeehouse Lounge will be positioned.

Why open this type of Coffeehouse?

YIV's mission is to fuse a sumptuous Eastern setting with high quality and diversity in our menu as a way to elevate the modern coffeehouse to the status of posh lounge.

We believe that it is time for a new breed of coffeehouse. While in the past decade, consumers have become accustomed to quality coffee through corporate chains, the essence of the coffeehouse itself has diminished. Just as important as its eponymous drink, YIV Coffeehouse & Lounge will give patrons a place to enjoy their brew of choice in an atmosphere in keeping with the traditional function of the coffeehouse; an alternative 'third' space for social and cultural interaction.

What will YIV serve?

While it's not just about the coffee, it is our aim to not only educate coffee drinkers about the wide variety of world coffees and their characteristics, but to offer a menu of varietals that can be ordered at any time to please any palate, rather than the common practice of "coffee of the day," which gives the customer little choice and even less sense of individuality and explorer spirit.

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Few, if any, coffeehouses expand their drinks menu more than the bare modicum they feel will satisfy non-coffee lovers. Brewed coffees will only be one component to a menu of other beverages of equally high quality from around the world, presented in their traditional serving ware.

Our line of teas will comprise a large menu of their own, and we will serve only fine whole-leaf teas and herbal tisanes. Here, too, we will strive to educate tea drinkers about their beverage and its origins, never treating them as second-class citizens to coffee lovers.

All of our other beverages will be based on international recipes and preparation styles, rather than unnatural, ready-to-drink concoctions with names devised for supposed market appeal. Reading our menu will be akin to browsing a guidebook, and every visit and every order will give each customer an exciting cultural experience, whether they want to sip semi-frozen *leche merengada* from Spain, savour a strong demitasse of Turkish coffee, or linger over a steaming cup of spiced Mayan hot chocolate or Turkish *sahlep*.

Where there's drinks, there's usually foods to accompany them, and YIV will have a rotating menu of international desserts and sweets. Since the coffeehouse will be seen as a comfortable place to explore the unfamiliar, we will offer fare normally unavailable outside upscale ethnic restaurants, if not outside its home country. On offer will be some of the best baklava and Lebanese-style patisserie in the country, a variety of Near Eastern sweets such as Turkish delight, sesame halva, Indian milk fudge and almond nougat, as well as an assortment of *halvas* and puddings custom-made from traditional recipes for YIV.

Will you use organic and Fair Trade products?

Our philosophy also incorporates the idea that the closer we stay to traditional production and preparation methods, the higher quality the product and the more authentic the experience. YIV has a strong social mission in which we will participate in socially-conscious buying, utilizing as much as possible Fair Trade and organic coffees, teas & chocolates, and other organic foodstuffs (such as milk and eggs), marketing ourselves as a socially responsible dining option. The idea is not just that our products will taste better, but they will promote peace, harmony and connectedness to the wider world by allowing our consumption of these commodities to have a positive impact on the people who produce them. This in turn will prevent traditional lifestyles from becoming obsolete and disappearing into the past, and protect indigenous cultures for future generations.

How will YIV succeed?

An exotic adventure-travel theme will differentiate the ambience of our coffeehouse from other coffee and beverage establishments, and our focus on unique drinks and desserts will make us both an alternative and a complement to full-service restaurants, nightclubs and bars in the area. YIV will become a social and cultural venue that will generate, not just draw from, the discerning clientele which frequent the location for shopping, dining and entertainment pursuits. The coffeehouse lounge will provide an opportunity for customers to sample a different foreign locale every time they visit, and will appeal to the world-conscious explorer in everyone.

YIV's Keys to Success:

- A location in an area with plenty of foot traffic near stores with a similar urbane feel. Many people come to the location to browse specialty stores, go to the theatre or visit a restaurant. We will be perfectly situated to offer walkers a comfortable and alluring respite between activities during the day and function as a nightspot with entertainment and activities during the evening.
- The uniquely posh feel and comfortable seating of our lounge will encourage customers to make a visit to YIV a must-do activity while visiting the area.
- Quality and selection of drinks is crucial to the experience. Being able to offer a wide variety, with weekly and seasonal changes in menu, will encourage people to return to try new things, and the excellent quality of the beverages themselves will promote a positive image and further motivation to return.
- Music and entertainment of a diverse and exciting nature will entice new visitors and foster repeat business of cultured regulars. YIV will be billed in local publications as a unique performance space, and proximity to a major urban center with numerous universities will ensure high-caliber offerings, as well as an interested audience.

Where will YIV be located?

Your Inner Vagabond Coffeehouse & Lounge will be located in a high-foot-traffic location, close to specialty shops and cultural venues. We want to reach urbane patrons who are looking for an alternative to the usual Starbucks-formula coffeehouse, as well as a change of pace from the ubiquitous ethnic cuisine lunch/dinner restaurant.

When did Your Inner Vagabond begin operations?

Your Inner Vagabond began in the summer of 2003, vending Middle Eastern home furnishings, which the owner and her husband purchased in Morocco, from a 10'x10' bazaar space at the 32nd Annual Pennsic War Festival, a two-week event in Slippery Rock, PA for medieval re-creationists. The next year saw the creation of Your Inner Vagabond Coffeehouse & Lounge. With a 20'x20' pavilion, YIV provided a period-style Near Eastern atmosphere for Pennsic attendees where they could purchase drinks and relax in a showroom where our new line of merchandise, acquired in Turkey, was on display. It was met with great enthusiasm, and we met our financial goals. With this successful experience, Your Inner Vagabond Coffeehouse & Lounge was able to double in size, with additional outdoor seating, at Pennsic 34 in August 2005. The menu was expanded to include a variety of Middle Eastern & Indian desserts and several new drinks; coffeehouse patronage increased dramatically; waitstaff and kitchen help were hired; and business boomed for two weeks in an exciting and creative atmosphere.

An unexpected setback in the form of a devastating fire in their storage area almost debilitated the fledgling business less than three months prior to the next Pennsic War. In an intense burst of

activity, investment and energy expenditure, the owners underwent an entire reconstruction process, building, buying and putting together a new and more enhanced Coffeehouse. This included a larger tent with more seating, a separate pavilion housing an upgraded kitchen, and a bigger staff. Though there was an unexpected outlay of financial resources, YIV exceeded its sales estimates for another successful season..

Now, the owners are hoping to create a travel-themed Coffeehouse, modeled in part after our Near Eastern-style Pennsic concession, with a stronger emphasis on everything foreign from the perspective of a well-heeled, well-traveled explorer and connoisseur of the exotic East.

Who is Your Inner Vagabond, anyway?

Your Inner Vagabond is the result of over five years of long-term travel throughout the world by AJ Schaffer & Andrew Watson. Their love of things exotic has created in them a desire to bring the Orient to their home in the Occident. In 2004, AJ & Andrew returned from their second long-term journey abroad - a 19 month trip bicycling from Portugal to Turkey. They chronicled their adventures, which included lengthy stops in Marrakesh & Istanbul, for their following of desktop travelers on their website www.YourInnerVagabond.com, and they have compiled their travel writings, photographs and souvenirs into a chronicle of their adventures abroad. They also have a specific interest in the lifestyle of the Middle Ages and the life and times of explorers past.

AJ Schaffer came from a professional career in New York theatre, both on and off-Broadway, creating set decor and building props & specialty costumes before embarking on the life of a world traveler. With this experience, she is well-suited to selecting high-quality arts & crafts merchandise, as well as decorating and creating the ambience of the Coffeehouse & Lounge space. She has had considerable practical, on-her-feet experience being the creator, designer, and kitchen manager of her own Turkish coffeehouse concession for the past three years. She has previous food-service experience in theatre concessions, film craft services, and coffeehouse/cafés.

AJ is assisted by her husband and fellow-traveler, Andrew Watson, also a former theatre artist with over twelve years experience both on stage and off. Integral to the creation and construction of YIV Coffeehouse, where he has functioned as host and manager, Andrew also has food-service experience in restaurants, events catering, and coffeehouse/cafés.