

The Alma Café

Where Real Music and Spectacular Food Feeds the Soul



On entering Alma Café you are immediately embraced by authentic warmth and acceptance, superb home-fare cooking and an excellent array of seriously good music. A combination that the Tait family have achieved in what appears to be an almost effortless manner. One of the many elements that makes Alma unique is that during the day it is run as a café/coffee shop for regulars and three times a week they open their doors to both new and existing bands.

The combination of Richard's (the Einstein looking fellow) extensive musical knowledge and background, Retha's wizardry in the kitchen and Jono's (their son) all rounder can-do approach

makes Alma Café a must to visit – either as a performer or a patron.

The music nights evolved slowly over a period of years after friends encouraged Richard to come out of hiatus and play a gig at the café one evening for friends. The next major step came after Blacksmith asked if they could play a gig one night. With time, more and more of Richard and Jono's friends and contacts in the music industry joined in and by February this year, Alma Café was showcasing bands three nights a week. Wednesday night is reserved for newcomers and based on their performance they are invited back to play either a Friday or Sunday. On occasion even Richard and his son Jono are found onstage wowing the crowd with their band Four Sake.

The bands that are invited to play have to conform to Richard's high standards. They need to be passionate, committed, have humility and gratitude towards the audience, talent and that indefinable something that makes the crowd stream back for more. If you are a rock star you can hit the road and I can tell you now that many of the staff at Alma Café will hope the road hits back. I say again, humility is everything to Richard, as well as humorous interludes between sets when he grabs the mic.

While the musicians, with the help of Richard, mesmerize the crowd into a state of absolute awe and bliss, Retha is in the back sending the staff and pa-

trons into fits of uncontrollable salivation with the scent of her delicious cooking. She is the epitome of woman born multi-tasking, dancing left and right with musical purpose as she readies a feast for the night to come. With Richard being the no-nonsense and brilliant father figure the café deserves, Retha in turn takes on the motherly role who, is of course, on a first name basis with almost every patron. Arms wide open and heart lovingly warm.

Then, there is Jono, Jonathan for short, who majestically lumbers around assisting the staff (and by assisting I mean he works his ass off), chatting with the customers about music and life and playing silly buggers with the staff in the back. He is an immensely talented musician with the voice of an angel's angel. Its fascinating how someone can have so much fun at a workplace and still get 'shit' done efficiently. If you consider yourself someone who can read people, you will find Jono an utter page turner.

If you take all these people and put them into a blender, you might be arrested for triple homicide but if you do it metaphorically you get a place where music is loved, not only appreciated, where the feeling of comfort flows as freely as the warm words between customers and staff, where quite simply you can enjoy amazing music and food in a place that feels like home. A place where you will find that indefinable something, The Alma Café.

