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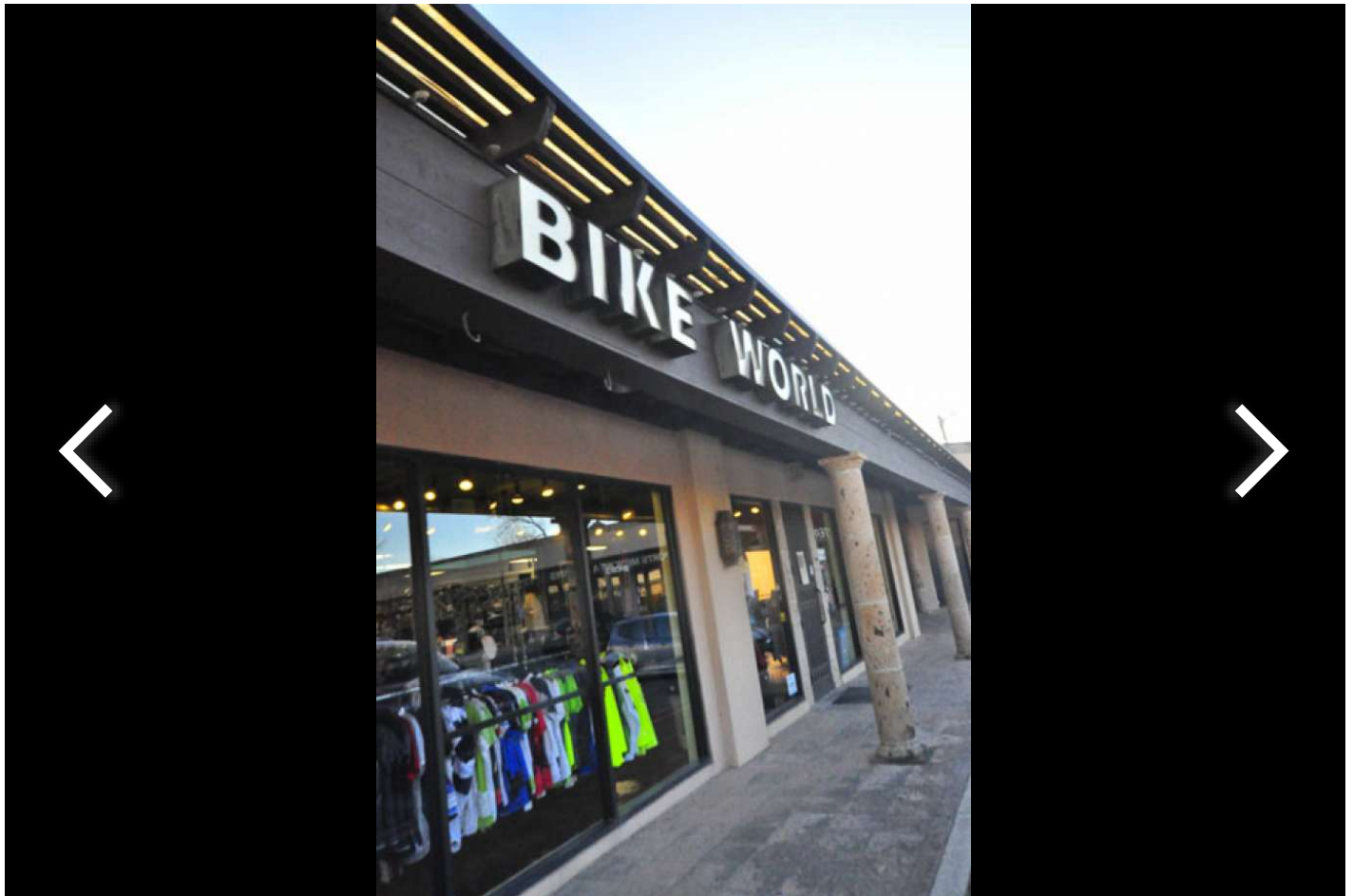


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Bike World Alamo Heights and Local Coffee are working on renovations at 5911 Broadway as part of a collaborative project. Local Coffee will open a second location next door while Bike World plans to celebrate

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Local Coffee owner Robby Grubbs' fondest memories are hanging out and studying with friends at coffee shops on snowy days as an undergraduate in Colorado.

Grubbs hopes to keep the buzz alive with the tentative March grand opening of Local Coffee's second location next door to Bike World Alamo Heights, 5911 Broadway.

Independently owned and operated local companies Local Coffee and Bike World Alamo Heights began their collaboration eight months ago. The original Local Coffee is in Stone Oak.

A Bike World Alamo Heights manager told Cindi Snell, co-owner, that Grubbs was interested in opening a second Local Coffee location.

A garage-like door will separate Local Coffee and Bike World Alamo Heights. The coffee shop will provide an outdoor patio and bike racks in an effort to be dog- and cyclist-friendly.

Snell said Grubbs, a cyclist himself, is a Bike World customer. She and her son visited Local Coffee for the first time after hearing of Grubb's interest in expanding his store's location. Snell said the coffee was better than anything she has tasted. She compared it with drinking a fine wine.

"Cyclists love good coffee and they love good beer," Snell said.

Both Grubbs, who began sponsoring Bike World's racing team last year, and Snell are looking to expand their stores presence in the Pearl Brewery. Snell said Bike World and Local Coffee share similar business philosophies and both desire to provide the public with something unique.

A Bike World and Local Coffee cyclist jersey and bib short was created to solidify the stores' partnership.

Snell's husband, Whit Snell, Bike World Alamo Heights co-owner and founder, was a competitive cyclist as an Alamo Heights High School student and a University of Texas at Austin undergraduate.

"(Whit Snell) was the Lycra-wearing, tight fitting jersey guy," Cindi Snell said.

After visiting Bike World Alamo Heights with her son years ago, Cindi said she became more interested in cycling. It is also where she met Whit.

Cindi said Whit had a successful business selling bicycle parts before opening Bike World Alamo Heights in 1971.

Local Coffee's grand opening will correspond with Bike World Alamo Heights' 40th anniversary. "This is going to change the whole neighborhood," Snell said. "This is going to be the most exciting thing to happen to Alamo Heights in a long time."

Snell said the Bike World/Local Coffee collaboration fits with Alamo Heights' plan to become more pedestrian, cyclist and dog friendly.

According to Alamo Heights documents, the city aims to expand nature trails with hopes of linking a regional system of hike and bike trails.

Grubbs' passion for coffee has seeped into many aspects of his adult life. In 1994, he opened the first Starbucks in Texas in Dallas as the company's store opening specialist. He opened more stores in the state, but left the professional world of coffee to work in construction and residential development.

During his professional coffee hiatus, Grubbs said he would go into “tons” of coffee shops and, using the knowledge he learned from working for Starbucks, critique them. It was on one of these critiques in Austin six years ago when he became inspired to open his own store.

Grubbs said Caffé Medici employees were “just killing it” with their knowledge and high standards of coffee. He enjoyed the French pressed Cuvee Coffee Roasting brand products with the artistic labels.

After meeting with the owners of Caffé Medici and Cuvee Roasting in Spicewood, Texas, Grubbs designed a concept for his own specialty coffee shop, originally slated to open in Austin.

However, it was on a coffee run during a family vacation in San Antonio where he found a store vacancy on Sonterra Boulevard in Stone Oak. The first Local Coffee location opened its doors six months later.

“It just grew, man,” Grubbs said. “We’re out in this urban sprawl and we actually created some community in a place that just has no community.”

Grubbs said he wants to open a Local Coffee in Alamo Heights because of that city’s sense of community.

He also hopes to educate the community about coffee and bring people together by providing public cuppings, similar to wine tastings, and workshops on alternative brewing methods.

The San Antonio native said he owes his success to staying true to providing high-quality, artisanal coffee. He has traveled to El Salvador, New York and Los Angeles to visit renowned Third Wave Coffee shops, similar to Local Coffee.

The Third Wave Coffee movement seeks to educate the public about coffee in hopes that people will appreciate its culinary aspects.

In an effort to educate the public about coffee, Grubbs hired a world champion barista from Los Angeles to train Local Coffee employees. The shop’s training and quality control director is one of the nation’s renowned baristas.

“(Local Coffee’s) mantra is to educate, don’t intimidate,” Grubbs said.

Popular Local Coffee drinks include traditional cappuccinos and weekly on-demand single-origin specialty coffees from different roasters from around the world.

On-demand coffees are made using different methods depending on the coffee, such as the pour-over method.

For more information on Local Coffee, visit www.localcoffeesa.com.


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