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Old *Meets* NEW

Living North catches up with Marta Obuchowska and Tomek Mlynarski, owners of the brand new bistro-cum-bakery, Black Wheat Club, that has just opened its doors in York city centre

Drawing inspiration from their roots and determined to keep things exciting, homemade and delicious, Marta and Tomek opened Black Wheat Club to great excitement early this year, joining a clutch of other fabulous eateries on York's Fossgate.

Tell us about your background.

T: We come from Eastern Europe, where food has always been a central part of our life at home. Eating out wasn't as common as it is today, so we grew up surrounded by homemade meals made with care and tradition. That shaped our entire approach to food with a respect for ingredients, slow processes and flavour – and Black Wheat Club is a reflection of the things we've experienced. A few years ago we started a street food project that shared the same philosophy. But it was a pop-up project and we knew that next time we wanted something permanent of our own. When the opportunity came, Black Wheat Club was born.

What was the vision for Black Wheat Club?

M: We wanted to create a place that felt personal, rooted in tradition, but always evolving. Despite being rooted in tradition and our background, we still wanted the place to feel modern and exciting. In terms of inspiration I would say the inspiration comes from traditional European techniques. We always try to do things a little bit differently and we love to experiment – whether it's with the bread or pastry, we always want to approach everything in our own way.



‘Food doesn’t have to be complicated and it doesn’t have to be intimidating’

Was there a particularly challenging aspect?

T: The refurbishment of the building was a big challenge. Obviously it’s just me and Marta, there was no one else behind us. The project was bigger than we thought and has become bigger along the way. It was a challenge to do everything we wanted and it took us over eight months to refurbish the building the way we wanted, but I think we did quite well.

Tell us about the menu.

T: Our menu is built around naturally-leavened bread, and homemade specialities that reflect our roots. Beyond the bakery, we love to explore bold unexpected flavours. We make our own sausages, pickles and fermented vegetables in-house, and we make the milk buns for our breakfast sandwiches which are so popular. Fermentation plays a big role here as well, and some of our dishes include our own sauerkraut. Everything is made with patience and we always try to put a twist on things so that even familiar flavours feel new.

M: It was super important for us that every customer who tries the dishes feel like they’ve been taken back to when they were kids and surrounded by family. Food doesn’t have to be complicated and it doesn’t have to be intimidating. We want it to be very simple but when you have the first bite you think wow!

What has the response been like since opening?

M: Incredible. People appreciate the quality and the effort behind what we do which we’re really happy about. Sometimes you put so much work into something and you’re not sure if it’s actually visible. I feel like people have really understood it which is great. They already come back on a regular basis. I think that connection to what we create is the best part. We have fantastic neighbours here and we all really support the businesses around us. We feel honoured to be able to set up a business in York city centre.

What’s on the horizon for Black Wheat Club?

T: We want to keep pushing ourselves, refining what we do, introducing seasonal specials, and staying true to our approach. There is always something new to learn and new flavours to explore. We’re also excited to take Black Wheat Club into the evening, so soon we’ll be opening a wine bar serving small plates designed for sharing. It’s something we’ve been dreaming about for a while. We’re excited to be sharing more details soon!

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