

Local coffee shop revamps, will add 4 upper level apartments

MICHAEL THRASHER

Stringer | mt360307@ohiou.edu

One of Athens' most popular businesses is getting more than just a face lift for its 10-year birthday. With a series of renovations beginning this summer Donkey Coffee and Espresso, is going to be looking good for its age.

Chris Pyle, Donkey's owner, purchased the building a year ago with big plans in mind. Right now, the building's upstairs is mostly empty except for Pyle's office. The office will remain but by the end of this coming spring it will share the space with four new four-bedroom apartments.

The coffee shop is also undergoing renovations. In July, the first floor women's restroom was removed to expand the kitchen, enabling Donkey to bake its own items fresh for the first time. A fresh coat of paint and a new coffee bar were also added updates.

Pyle plans to build an outdoor patio off the second floor of the coffee shop by the end of the spring. A grand opening this spring will mark the completion of the renovations and celebrate Donkey's ten year anniversary.

"We knew that we needed to do something to help pay the mortgage, so as far as the apartments go, that was no brainer," Pyle said. "The other stuff we had wanted to do for awhile, like the upstairs outdoor patio, and baking at Donkey - that probably came up in the last four or five months."

High prices are the main reason Donkey elected to start baking their own goods on site, but the business remains committed to their causes. It will continue to use local ingredients, products, and serve exclusively fair traded coffee.

"I love the idea of a coffee shop...it's just something I always had in the back of my mind. I love the idea of com-

munity, art and social justice and you can do a lot of that through a coffee shop," Pyle said.

The renovations to Donkey are as exciting for employees as they are Pyle and patrons. Ohio University alumna Evan Lilly has been working at Donkey for three years and thinks the changes will be better for both employees and customers.

"From an employee standpoint, I think we're going to have a lot more room behind the [coffee] bar. It's going to be a lot, from what I hear, better organized," Lilly said. "We are going to get busier too...People are going to want to see it and with that, want drinks. I expect fall quarter to be pretty crazy."

Lilly was also looking forward to the new espresso machine.

"I can't remember the company's name but it's a sleek looking machine. I'm excited to use it and have a taste of my first drink."



DUSTIN LENNERT | Director of Photography

The new la marzocco espresso machine is one of many planned changes to donkey coffee, along with new counter tops and more seating upstairs. The new espresso machine has three separate boilers with pressure gages which helps the barista "serve a better cup of coffee," employee myke linscott said.