

Café Crossroads



By Jameson Fink

Odd Fox Coffee | Brooklyn, New York

Like the woodland creature in its title, Odd Fox may seem an unusual name for a café. But for owner Adam Saucy, it's a culmination of his love of literature, theater, and whimsy. This Greenpoint, Brooklyn, spot opened in November of 2016, serving as an indoor/outdoor oasis for neighborhood residents craving an off-beat second home. Saucy first caught the coffee bug more than 15 years ago, while working as a translator for a law firm in Portland, Oregon. A birthday party for a coworker at the coffee shop across the street surprised and overwhelmed the owners, whom Saucy bought coffee from every morning, so he volunteered to get behind the counter and help. "I took off my jacket and put on an apron," says Saucy. He was offered a job that evening. Owning his own café became a reality after moving to New York. Years of coffee experience, including managing shops and educating operators, gave him the tools to be his own boss. Saucy trekked the city for the

“My favorite fables are the ones with the fox,” says Saucy. “It’s silly, sly, and clever.” That, combined with his love of British pubs known by ‘an animal name and an object,’ gave birth to Odd Fox Coffee.

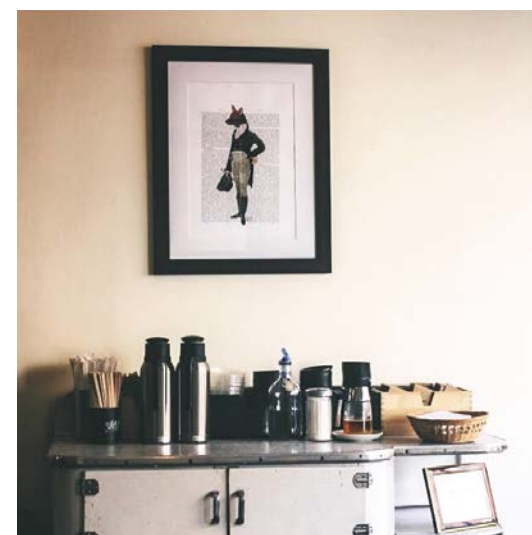
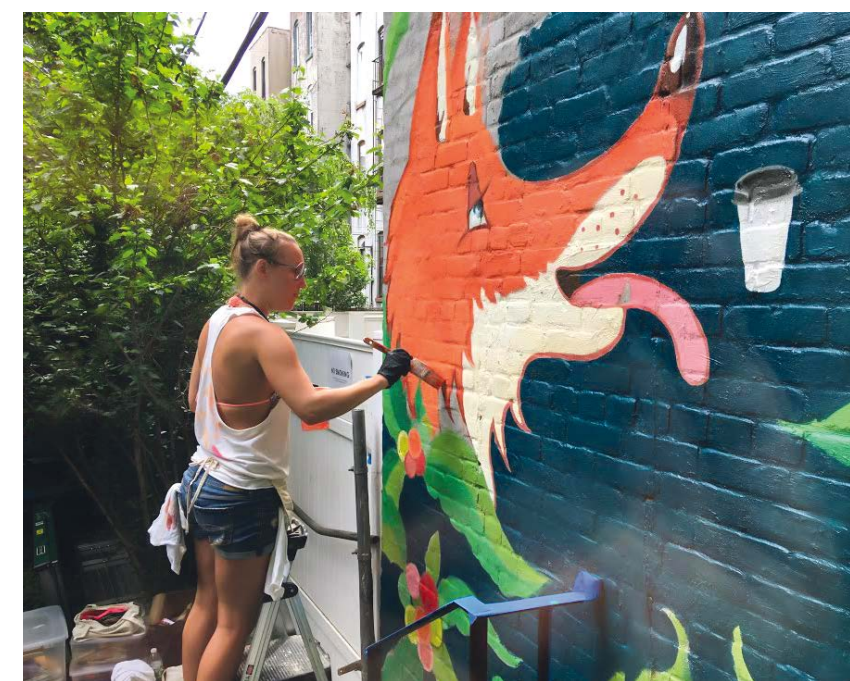
right spot, then lucked out on an opening mere blocks from his Greenpoint home.

One of the biggest decisions was settling on a name. Inspiration struck while Saucy was reading Aesop's Fables.

“My favorite fables are the ones with the fox,” he says. “It’s silly, sly, and clever.”

That, combined with his love of British pubs known by “an animal name and an object,” gave birth to Odd Fox Coffee.

Some of the café's unique touches are original to the building. The bathroom has blue paint, blue tile, a blue sink, and, yes, a blue toilet—Saucy calls it “Bess The Blue Bathroom.” Other details, like vintage school desks and lockers, come from Dream Fishing Tackle, »



PHOTOS (TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT) COURTESY OF ODD FOX COFFEE; PHOTOS SOURCE (BOTTOM LEFT AND CENTER): INSTAGRAM @ODDFOXCOFFEE

PHOTO SOURCE (TOP): INSTAGRAM @KAITLINDUFFY, (BOTTOM): INSTAGRAM @ODDFOXCOFFEE



Jimmy decides to work from the coffee shop instead of at home to be social. Then puts on his headphones and hides from everyone.



Michael considers the line in front of him: How long will this take? Will he miss the bus if he stays to get coffee? They are pretty quick here, but do these look like black coffee customers in front of him, or large cappuccino kind of people?



a bait/record/used furniture shop down the street.

The real challenge was the backyard. “That yard almost killed me,” says Saucy. Spending “every last penny I didn’t have,” he blew a hole in the back wall to add a door and stairs. Patrons are now greeted with a cheery fox mural and plenty of room to stretch out and relax.

Odd Fox gets its beans from Parlor Coffee, located in Brooklyn’s Navy Yard. Saucy values the personal connection he has with the owners.

“They are a small enough company to still care about each shop that serves their coffee, yet large to source really outstanding beans,” he says.

In turn, Parlor values his feedback: “When I tell them if I love or hate a coffee, they listen.”

Like with his beans, Saucy stays local for pastries. He uses Ovenly’s Greenpoint location for sweet and savory baked goods.

“I love the pistachio loaf so much I had them make my wedding cake out of it,” he says.

Odd Fox’s and Ovenly’s relationship goes further than food; the bakery’s co-founder Erin Patinkin helped Saucy find an architect for the backyard extension, while he pointed her towards “an amazing window gilder.”

For customers who prefer tea, Odd Fox offers a wide selection.

“I come from a family of tea drinkers, most of whom wouldn’t take a sip of coffee if you paid them,” says Saucy.

One of the first people he called when the café opened was Sebastian Beckwith of In Pursuit of Tea, whom Saucy had known for years. Beckwith sources teas from all over Asia, focusing on small farms.

But don’t expect a matcha latte. Saucy enjoys matcha on its own, not in latte form. He dabbled with turmeric lattes and espresso with butter, but is stepping back from those trendier options.

“Simple and straight-forward is what I think makes a shop successful and I try to hold to that,” he says. “If something goes on my menu, it is because I believe in it, and it is there to stay....I

don’t want to offer something just to take it away in a few months. I also don’t want a menu that wraps around the four walls of my shop.”

Turning to what’s hot in coffee, Saucy is struck not by the brew itself, but what people put into it.

“The biggest trend in coffee these days is without question oat milk,” he says. “Oat milk, specifically from the company Oatly, is delicious, and steams wonderfully for espresso drinks, which has always been a problem for milk alternatives.”

Even customers with no dairy issues are choosing it. During a shortage, Saucy had a customer “shout from the entrance to ask if we still had any Oatly before she would even come in the shop.”

Upholding Saucy’s love of whimsy, Odd Fox is the only coffee shop with a miniature Lego store model on its counter, where the trials and travails of barista life are acted out by a menagerie of plastic figurines, as seen on his Instagram page, @legocoffeeshop.



His love of Legos started several years back, when his seven nieces and nephews sent him a Lego figure to photograph across New York City; he began buying outfits and accessories for the figure. At his wedding in 2017, Saucy gave small Lego sets to his guests as a party favor, each with two grooms on a stand.

Soon after, he ordered figures for everyone on staff; for Christmas in 2017, each Odd Fox employee received a Lego minifigure of him- or herself. Then he got pieces to make a miniature version of the shop. On @legocoffeeshop, Saucy reenacts quirks of customers and barista life, like gauging if the line is moving

quickly enough to catch the bus, being social versus wearing headphones, and customers who say, “No room,” then pour hot coffee into the garbage.

Part of Saucy’s inspiration for his Lego creations is his background in theater. But it’s also about bringing joy and humor to the place where he spends so much of his time.

“I am literally behind the counter making coffee over forty hours a week,” he says. “This is basically where I live.”

“The weird little quirky things I do are just because they make me smile,” he adds. “It’s nice when they make other people smile as well.”

Learn Essential Skills

Hands-On Barista Training Workshop

only at *Coffee Fest*

Guided instruction by seasoned leaders in the Specialty Coffee industry.

plus new in NY! Train the Trainer: Barista Skills

More new workshops at [www.coffeefest.com!](http://www.coffeefest.com)

next in

NEW YORK

March 3-5, 2019

Javits Center

SIDE BY SIDE WITH

HEALTHY FOOD EXPO

ONE BADGE. THREE SHOWS.

To learn more, visit www.coffeefest.com

#coffeedest #coffeedestny