

Ramenhead opens in Cape Town

Ramenhead, led by chefs Peter Tempelhoff and Ashley Moss - the duo behind award-winning Japanese-fusion restaurant Fyn - is making its debut.



Image supplied: Peter Tempelhoff, Julia du Toit and Ashley Moss

Open from 13 December just downstairs from its elegant older sibling at Speakers Corner in the city centre, Ramenhead might be considered Fyn's cool little brother.

Thanks to designer Tristan du Plessis' Studio A, who were responsible for Fyn's celebrated interiors, Ramenhead is vibey, casual and playful, with indoor and outdoor tables, bar seating, an open 'finishing' kitchen where patrons can watch each bowl assembled to perfection and a noodle lab complete with white-coated production chefs manning the Yamamoto Noodle Machine.



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The low-hydration noodle-making machine was purchased in Japan earlier this year when Tempelhoff and Moss went on a 10-day ramen-tasting odyssey through Osaka and Tokyo. Their mission was to gather supplies and track down the best representative ramen styles and techniques (at times tasting up to 16 ramen a day) to inform and inspire their new venture.

“Ramen is very technical in its creation ... some ramen houses in Japan are super serious and don’t even allow talking while eating!” says Tempelhoff. “But that delicate balance of ingredients — bone nutrients, lean proteins and amino acids— working together give ramen its umami, making it highly addictive and creating a feeling of euphoria.”

“Ashley has that very technical side to him, so the ramen will be as authentic as possible,” he adds. “Ultimately, ramen should be fast, cheap, filling, restorative and fun, and we will bring all those components into play for a Cape Town audience,” he continues.

For Moss, the opening of Ramenhead is yet another chapter in a long-held fascination with Japanese culture that started in his childhood.



Image supplied: Shoyu ramen

“I checked out a book on Japanese writing from the library at my Kommetjie primary school when I was a kid,” he says. “I became interested in the culture and watched Japanese anime all the time. I’ve tried to learn all I can about the country, including the language, and this last trip gave me a lot of insights into ramen’s origins and the various regional styles.”

Moss is joined in the kitchen by Chef Julia du Toit, who leaves her position as head chef of Tempelhoff’s Beyond restaurant at Buitenverwachting.

In addition to several different ramen offerings, including classic pork broth, pork-free chicken broth and vegetarian broth, as well as seasonal variations and frequent specials, Ramenhead offers both traditional and gluten-free noodles. The menu also features Japanese snacks like fried chicken karaage and gyoza dumplings and a curated selection of wines, beers and cocktails. The street-food-inspired eatery is now open for lunch and dinner daily except Sundays and Mondays and will

not take reservations, much like its counterparts in Japan.

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