Trust cafe upsets neighbours

By Rachel Kleinman

PLANS for a new cafe at the National Trust's East Melbourne headquarters have caused a neighbourhood stir.

Joe Molinaro will open his new cafe, The Commune, this Wednesday after taking over the venue, previously called The Tasma Cafe.

Mr Molinaro has signed a 15-year lease with the National Trust to run the premises on the corner of St Andrews Place and Parliament Place.

But his plans to increase operating hours and serve food and alcohol in an outdoor courtyard have upset some residents.

Melbourne Council planning chairwoman Catherine Ng said the council had received 26 objections to the cafe's plans.

An apartment block, Treasury Gardens, is adjacent to the National Trust's Tasma Terrace headquarters.

East Melbourne Group spokeswoman Faye Humphries said the residents' group objected to the cafe's plans to open until 11pm.

"We don't object to them having a licence but, on behalf of neighbouring residents, we do oppose them opening late," Ms Humphries said.

"The National Trust has got to make money to survive and we don't want to hamstring them but we don't think opening hours until 11pm are appropriate."

Mr Molinaro said the venue already had a liquor licence until 11pm but the previous operator had not used it.

Mr Molinaro said he planned to open until 11pm only on Thursday and Friday nights and was planning to attract a respectable, older clientele so noise would not be a problem.

National Trust project manager Tony Lee said Mr Molinaro's application to serve food and drink in the courtyard would formalise what was already happening unofficially because previous operators had used the courtyard. He said the trust would not allow the new venture to cause noise problems.

"Because we are a volunteer organisation, we have people working in the building after hours and community meetings in the evenings.

"Our offices are above the cafe so we would be directly impacted if there were any problems."

Cr Ng said the council would organise a meeting for Mr Molinaro and objectors to voice concerns.



the commune

cafe · bar · events

the building

built in 1878 and originally used as residential terraces, formally known as tasma terrace, and now home to the national trust. the transformation of the basement into a new cafe' bar showcases tasma terrace as a vibrant and exemplary use of one of melbourne's principle heritage buildings.

the commune includes a cafe', patisserie, wine bar, function venue and an adjacent courtyard which provides a unique outdoor dining area in the heart of melbourne. the new café retains all of the acclaimed heritage significance of tasma terrace while adding a new dynamic, contemporary operation to launch this heritage building as a popular destination.

café by day

enjoy one of our fine varieties of coffees prepared by our expert barista or endulge in a mouth-watering treat baked by our own exclusive pastry chef, choose from a select array of gourmet foods or simply take in the ambience and relax in our contemporary style café.

jazz bar by night

every thursday and friday night, unwind at the end of the day in our cozy candlelit wine bar, choose a fine drop from our comprehensive range of wines or for those who are in the mood, indulge in one of our specially created cocktails and take in the laid back tunes of our various jazz performers.

anything you desire by saturday

with summer approaching, there's no better place to be than soaking in the sun in the courtyard at the commune. enjoy the leafy surrounds, read the morning paper, order from the breakfast menu (for the late risers available all day), graze from the tapas menu, or enjoy lunch from our extensive chefs menu. it's a relaxed feel, come as you are!

for special occasions

the café
provides for exclusive cocktail parties up to 100 people, or sit-down dinners for up to 50 people.

the wine bar
for intimate gatherings, private use of our wine bar can accommodate parties of up to 30 people.

the function room
for the more discerning crowd, in the grandeur of the 1878 built, tasma terrace drawing room, where all the original features have been retained, our functions manager can tailor a package to suit your needs. a formal cocktail party for up to 80 people, a sit-down dinner for 40 or simply a boardroom meeting, this room is magnificent in it's own splendor.

function enquiries

info@thecommune.com.au

trading hours

Monday - Wednesday
7am - 6pm
Thursday - Friday
7am - 11pm
Saturday
7am - 5pm

the commune
cnr parliament place and
st andrews place, east melbourne

www.thecommune.com.au
tel: 9654 5477