

MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Loving the 1950s heart and soul of Cliffy's Emporium**

Back in the 1950s, Cliffy Hauser's general store in Daylesford was famous for an extraordinary range of produce, groceries and farm supplies crammed into a rustic timber and corrugated iron building.

Fast forward more than 60 years, and the heart and soul of this legendary store have been lovingly preserved. Farmers still drop into Cliffy's Emporium with fresh fruit and vegetables, the old timber shelves are full of local produce, mineral water and preserves, while specialty groceries are chosen from near and far.

Cliffy's has also become one of the region's best known cafes. Locals sometimes drop in two or three times a day for exceptional coffee, while visitors love pulling up a stool at one of the original long timber counters or sitting outdoors under the shade of the verandah and grapevines. The old bike shop next door has become part of Cliffy's café, with comfortable seating and tables and a really cosy fireplace.

Local produce including cheese, meat, eggs, oil, honey and preserves star on the menu - think eggs with sides including roasted sumac tomatoes and marinated roast mushrooms, or the go-to charcuterie plate featuring local cured meats, cheese, olives and pickled vegetables. Baskets of freshly picked fruit and vegetables on the counter will quickly inspire you for your own dinner that evening - grab a pack of Italian pasta, some fresh produce, paté, cheese, a bottle of regional wine and a loaf of locally baked bread. What more could you want?

And true to Cliffy's fame as a 'general merchant', the emporium is stocking a growing range of kitchen products that have been made with great care and attention to detail, such as hand-made millet brooms from Tumut, hand-crafted kitchen ware and a small range of ceramics.

Cliffy's has that rare character and history that welcomes you to a warm, homely place. The old signs promoting Bushell's coffee and Cadbury Cocoa still adorn the windows. The ceiling-high timber shelves, many with Cliffy's indecipherable scribbles, are still reached by an old ladder. Wooden floors have mellowed with age, and the two timber counters that run along either side of the café bear the marks of countless grocery transactions.

Attentive service is happily old style too, with locals working on the floor and in the kitchen (the pastry chef is sixth generation Daylesford), led by local business partners Liam Thornycroft and Samantha Mackley.

Breakfast is served daily from 8am until midday, lunch from midday to closing time (3pm weekdays, 4pm weekends), and house-made cakes and biscuits tempt throughout the day.

### **Meet Cliffy's Emporium co-owners**

As an 11-year-old, Liam Thornycroft was desperate to start working and used to wash dishes, flatten boxes and do anything else he could to get a foot in the door at Cliffy's. His parents own the Wombat Hill Nursery and Florist right next door, and young Liam was fascinated by everything about Cliffy's, from the songs of Shirley Bassey and Perry Como to the names and tastes of products he'd

never heard of...tallegio cheese, charcuterie and poggie (Cliffy's original molasses porridge, which now has a modern twist including chia seeds softened in apple juice and rose water}.

It was the start of his 16-year career in hospitality, which came full circle in March 2018 when Liam and his old school friend Samantha Mackley became co-owners of Cliffy's Emporium with their partners Daniel Condon and Michael Chapman.

The pair first worked together at Daylesford's well known Convent Gallery, when Samantha recruited Liam from another local café. He was employed immediately after he made the owner a perfect morning coffee (and continued to do so for 10 years). Liam and Samantha worked in a number of departments, including the café, bar, retail, office and weddings before heading off to other ventures.

Liam and his partner Daniel opened Dumbo, a café in West Footscray, to almost instant success in 2016, and were listed in the Australian Good Food Guide's Best Melbourne Cafes in 2017.

Samantha became marketing executive at the multi-award winning Sovereign Hill in Ballarat for seven years, but her heart was set on eventually being her own boss.

So when Cliffy's Emporium came on the market in early 2018, there was no hesitation in buying the business.

Samantha and Liam's philosophy is simple: provide wholesome good food, the best coffee and tea, locally sourced produce, specialty products that are hard to find, kitchenware and little treasures that are made with great care and attention to detail.

"We really want it to be a true emporium, with a wide variety of food and goods that appeal to locals and visitors," says Samantha.

So in that sense Cliffy's has also come full circle, with a rapidly growing range of produce, groceries and farm-fresh supplies of which Cliffy Hauser would wholeheartedly approve.