



LABOUR OF LOVE

WORDS **TRACY RENKIN**
PHOTOGRAPHY **FIONA HARDING**

Alexander Okenyo, who regularly exhibits at Bett Gallery in Hobart and is a garden designer, recently transformed a soulless, "hideous" Colorbond shed into a funky New Norfolk cafe. "We just gutted it," Okenyo says. "Our customers walk in and say, 'wow, I wasn't expecting this from the outside'."

First thing they notice about Badger's Bike Cafe is the beautiful, Tasmanian oak parquet floor. Rescued from a rotting pile of timber, Okenyo worked on its pattern for months to painstakingly transform it into a starburst and herringbone pattern.

"It's all very carefully put together, which was really fun for me," Okenyo says. "It's been a labour of love and was absolutely beautiful timber to work with."

He did all the timber work in the cafe and in the pretty gardens — green grass and tightly clipped, boxed topiary outside with gorgeous, hanging plants inside.

"The aesthetic of the cafe was incredibly important to me," he says. "It's a simple minimalist aesthetic, refined to basic tones: timber, white and living green."

He's always wanted to open a cafe with his mum Kathryn, but mostly works the same shifts as his wife, Sarah, so they can spend more time together. School mums pop in after drop-off and before pick-up and word is also getting out among antique lovers. "We have the friendliest and warmest people here," Okenyo says. "It's a wonderful place."

They serve sweet and savoury Jackman & McRoss treats and Tassie Zimmah Coffee.

Badger's Bike Cafe — just down the road from the Drill Hall Emporium in Stephen Street — is open daily except Tuesdays



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