

New coffee house offers a place to slow down

By Jodi Schneider
Correspondent

In our culture, having coffee has come to be more about grabbing a 16-ounce-what-ever in a paper cup to go. It's about fueling up and going fast. In Sweden, coffee is something to look forward to, a little time where everything else ceases and you savor the moment.

Renee Reitmeier, owner of the new Fika Sisters Coffeehouse (pronounced Fee-ka) on Sun Ranch Drive, upholds the outlook of the Swedish coffee culture.

Reitmeier said, "Fika Sisters Coffeehouse is inspired by the Swedish daily ritual of taking a break with a friend or someone new over coffee and a pastry. It's all about slowing down and finding time for friends, and colleagues."

She added, "In a time when there seems to be a lot of disconnect, I wanted to create an environment where people can reconnect."

Fika is a concept, a state of mind, an attitude and an important part of Swedish culture.

The word fika originated from the 19th-century word kaffi (coffee) — then Swedes switched positions of the two syllables and removed one f.

Reitmeier grew up in Tigard, where her family of Swedish heritage loved being together around meals. Her great-grandmother Cora emigrated from Sweden near the turn of the 20th century.

"I grew up in a very hospitable atmosphere," Reitmeier told *The Nugget*.

Reitmeier longed to teach history and attended college at Biola University in La Mirada, California where she picked up an undergraduate degree in social sciences.

She said, "I moved back to Oregon for my masters in

teaching at Pacific University in Forest Grove because I wanted to get my license in Oregon."

Reitmeier moved to Sisters with a teaching degree in 2001 and taught at Sisters Christian Academy.

"That's when I fell in love with Sisters and the quaintness of the town," Reitmeier said.

After a couple of years, she relocated back to Forest Grove to teach history at Forest Hills Lutheran Middle School for nine years, while her parents made the move to Sisters.

Reitmeier is passionate about getting together with friends over a good cup of coffee and had a dream of becoming a barista one day. She was curious to learn more about that rich cup of Joe that brings folks together.

So, during her summer break from teaching in 2010 she traveled to Bradford, England, to learn about coffee.

"I got training at Limini Coffee, a small family-run business managed by husband and wife, Yuri and Samantha," said Reitmeier. "They taught me how to pull espresso, steam milk, and how to open a coffee shop."

Limini Coffee was started as a coffee wholesaler supplying specialty coffees to the coffee trade and as a training provider for people who were interested in learning more about coffee and were toying with the idea of starting a coffee shop.

Reitmeier took a trip to Stockholm, Sweden in 2015 to research fika before settling back down in Sisters, as a barista at Black Butte Ranch.

She noted that fika is both a noun and a verb.

"In Sweden I learned how they fika and who they fika with," she said. "Every generation practices it, they are

proud of it and they guard it. Fika is an everyday ritual just like a meal. It's a custom that promotes gathering together to take a break from everyday routines with coffee and pastries."

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Whether you're hanging out with old friends, sipping coffee with new ones, cramming for exams, or just escaping the world, fika is a reason for friends to meet up and spend some time together.

Besides delicious coffee and tea, Reitmeier serves up pastries Swedish style, such as "vetebullar" cinnamon and cardamom buns, "chokladbollar" chocolate balls, "mandelkaka med bjornbar" blackberry almond cake, and "prinsesstarta" princess cake. She also has homemade soup of the day, quiche and more.

"People are excited that we have a white mocha and we also carry cardamom, that goes well with the white mocha. I will be bringing in another brand of coffee within the month for coffee of the



PHOTO PROVIDED

Renee Reitmeier has opened Fika Sisters Coffeehouse.

month," she said.

Reitmeier also creates her own whipped cream to top off your hot chocolate or latte and will bring in a lavender latte flavor in early summer and pumpkin spice for the fall.

"I look forward to

providing an inspired fika space for the people of Sisters, and anyone else passing through our friendly town," Reitmeier said.

Fika Sisters Coffeehouse is located at 201 E. Sun Ranch Dr. For more information call 541-588-0311.

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