



our collaborators had while making our ten issues of SOLO?



# FROM LA TO ZURICH

THE NEW ECHO PARK  
*with Michelle Kernen*

Words by Jenny Drinkwater  
Photography by Bárbara Lanzat



Nestled in a sheltered courtyard just five minutes' walk from Zürichsee Lake in Zurich, accessible only through a tunnel created by the surrounding buildings, sits Echo Park. A clean, minimalist space, christened with the same name as the Los Angeles neighbourhood where its owners once lived, Echo Park is a haven of calm, positive energy and quality products. Opened just six months ago, this specialty coffee shop is rapidly making a name for itself among the local community thanks to its simple all-day menu (granola, pastries, salads and cheeses) perfectly-prepared coffee and hand-picked selection of natural wines. We sat down with owner Michelle Kernen to talk specialty coffee, natural wine, and all things Zurich.

The seeds that would eventually grow into Echo Park were first planted around 10 years ago when Michelle and her husband David were living in Los Angeles. In an effort to facilitate the visa process, they started thinking about opening a neighbourhood coffee shop, spurred on by their many friends and connections in the local coffee industry.

“We wanted to try and get our US visas by investing in something, and I had always thought about opening a small coffee shop. I used to live and work in Australia, where there’s a really popular breakfast culture, and I wanted to make something like this work in LA. But unfortunately, it was a very risky bet, and an expensive one at that. We decided it wasn’t the right time to open anything, so we put the idea on hold.”

The idea lay dormant and waiting for the next viable opportunity, which finally came around one year ago, when the couple were living between Zurich and Barcelona. A space became available in David’s building in the city. It seemed the stars had aligned in terms of timing and investment capacity, and so Echo Park was finally born (a joint venture together with David’s brother, Micha). Echo Park is a reflection of Michelle and David’s interests and tastes, a brick-and-mortar representation of their experiences and lifestyle.

“We’ve moved around so much and to so many different places, with and without kids, so we don’t really own a lot of ‘stuff’. Echo Park really is a reflection of our minimalist and practical ideology. We gave the space a clean design, painting almost everything but the furniture and equipment white. Some of the furniture is second hand from Barcelona, and other pieces were designed and made by a friend of ours in Switzerland. It is a mix of Barcelona, LA and Tokyo, where we also used to live.”



This blend of cultures and styles is also evident in Echo Park’s menu. Whilst much of the food they offer, such as homemade banana bread, granola and Swiss cheese is sourced locally, other products, such as the natural wines (a house red, a house white and an orange wine) and coffee, come from elsewhere. They also have a dedicated retail space in the shop, where they sell, bottles of the natural wines, olives, handmade candles, incense sticks, handmade coffee mugs, packaged coffee beans, and more. “We always try to offer different kinds of coffee from all over the place, such as Sweden, Barcelona and Valencia, and rotate our selection on a regular basis. When we first opened, I would go to markets and check out other roasters to see what they were offering and if they wanted to sell in our space. Now, we sometimes get approached by other brands who want to sell their products through us. I’m always open to trying new things and seeing what works and what doesn’t, so these are really interesting opportunities for collaboration.”



**"I really want Echo Park to be a neighbourhood coffee shop, somewhere you can go with your family, with a friend or even go alone, and know that you'll always run into a familiar face."**

One collaboration that has helped shape Echo Park's DNA is their partnership with Stoll Kaffee, a nearby roastery just five minutes down the road. "They helped us out with a lot of equipment when we first opened. Working with them is so easy and we often send our baristas to them for training sessions. We even bought our Marzocco coffee machine from them, which used to be in their showroom. We also have two main grinders in the shop, both with coffees from Stoll Kaffee, one which is a lighter, more unique roast, and another which is a bit more mainstream. It's still high quality, but it's not too 'out there.'"

Echo Park's premise is above all, quality over quantity. Customer service and high-quality hospitality are at the top of Michelle's list of priorities. "I really want Echo Park to be a neighbourhood coffee shop, somewhere you can go with your family, with a friend or even go alone, and know that you'll always run into a familiar face. My experience with specialty coffee shops is just that, a space full of like-minded people, who appreciate a slower lifestyle, slow food, the origin story behind the product, and so on. Barcelona has this vibe. Switzerland on the other hand isn't as open. But I want Echo Park to be that open space, where you can make connections or just sit and feel at home with your coffee."

When Michelle and her husband first applied for a venue in Zurich around eight years ago, the city was lacking in new and interesting venues. But in 2023, everything has changed. "Zurich has really grown in the past five years or so, especially in terms of specialty coffee. There are four or five really good places now, such as Stoll Café, Collective Bakery or Nude, as well as other restaurants and bars that offer great food, wine and ice cream!"

Zurich's landscape promotes this all-day café-hopping, wining and dining scene. When the weather is nice, Zurich's streets, cafés, parks and

lakes swell with residents and visitors, eager to enjoy the city at its best. "On a typical Saturday in Zurich, I'd probably start with a run through the woods or along the lake, then head straight to a coffee shop or bakery for breakfast. Depending on our plans, we might sit in or drink the coffee in the park or by the river. Saturday in Zurich is also market day, so something we love to do is just stroll around and see what we can find. Later on, if it's warm enough, we might take a swim in the lake with the kids, which is always very clean, play football in the park or have a picnic."

Another favourite feature of Zurich's urban landscape are its terraces. If a café, bar or restaurant has the space and licence to offer outdoor seating, success is almost guaranteed. Gelati Tellhof is one such example that offers delicious ice cream and an enchanting patio in which to enjoy it. Kiosk Josefwiess is another, located in Josefwiess Park, serving grilled sausages, salad, beer, ice cream and coffee.

Other locations of interest include Miki Ramen, the name says it all; Gamper, a small restaurant that offers a very specialised menu with a bar next door, and Brera, an Italian restaurant right by Echo Park, just to name a few. "Before we visit any new town or city, I always do my research on places to eat and find good coffee. Places that offer something we've not seen before, or that simply do food and drink really well. For us, it's about appreciating quality and the people behind the products. We hope that's what our guests experience when they visit Echo Park."



Echo Park is open from Tuesday to Friday, 8 am until 6 pm, Saturday from 9 am until 6 pm, and Sunday from 10 am until 6 pm.

In Echo Park you can find a selection of local and international products such as wine, coffee, jam and other design objects.

A ZÜRICH CITY GUIDE  
by Michelle Kernen

COFFEE SHOP **ECHO PARK**  
Kanzleistrasse 129

PARK **JOSEFWIESE**  
Josefstrasse 197

COFFEE SHOP **FLAVOR COFFEE**  
Langstrasse 200

COFFEE SHOP & BAR **ACID**  
Langstrasse 67

ICE CREAM SHOP **GELATI TELLHOF**  
Tellstrasse 20

COFFEE SHOP **COLLECTIVE BAKERY**  
Förribuckstrasse 160

CONCEPT STORE **EDITION POPULAIRE**  
Badenerstrasse 156

RESTAURANT **MIKI RAMEN**  
Sihifeldstrasse 63

RESTAURANT **NEELA**  
Kanonenstrasse 29

MUSEUM **KUNSTHAUS ZÜRICH**  
Heimplatz 1

COFFEE SHOP & BAR **NUDE**  
Wasserwerkstrasse 127A

MUSIC BAR **STEREO**  
Brauerstrasse 156













