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DINING BRIEFS | RECENTLY OPENED

## High Standards at a Cobble Hill Cafe

By [OLIVER SCHWANER-ALBRIGHT](#)

CAFE PEDLAR

210 Court Street (Warren Street), Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, (718) 855-7129.

The [coffee](#) is exceptional at Cafe Pedlar, which shouldn't come as a surprise. But the delicious braided pretzel (\$2.50), freshly baked, sliced, buttered and sprinkled with sea salt, is pretty unexpected.

First, the coffee. Or more specifically, the cappuccino (\$3.75). Made with Stumptown's trademark Hair Bender espresso blend and milk from the Hudson Valley Fresh dairy cooperative, the potent 6-ounce drink is brawny and creamy — it's more in line with what you'd find in Italy than the too-hot, too-watery cappuccinos so often passed off in New York.

The cafe is a collaboration among Frank Castronovo and Frank Falcinelli, of Frankies 457 and Prime Meats, and Duane Sorenson, of Stumptown. Mr. Sorenson is a rock star in the coffee world, and after a few months the espresso (\$2.50) coming out of the Marzocco is now up to his standards.

Just as important, the pretzels are up to the standards of Mr. Castronovo's father-in-law, a baker from the Black Forest. (He flew in to give a tutorial.) A proper German pretzel is as light as it is dense — more like a brioche than a hunk of bread — and it pairs nicely with coffee.

All the food I tried was up to similarly high standards.

A dozen or so pastries are available, and almost all of them are prepared daily in the basement of Frankies 457, which has been transformed into a bakery. They cost \$2 to \$4, and vary from a tiny loaf made with stout to olive oil and lemon cake to a jammy linzer torte. Around lunchtime, sandwiches are brought over from Prime Meats. They cost \$6 and change daily — last week one selection was smoked pork loin, fennel and mustard on a pretzel knot the size of a peach.

The Teutonic leitmotif is no accident. Mr. Castronovo and Mr. Falcinelli liken Cafe Pedlar to an Austrian cafe, refined and grown-up. While this stretch of Court Street in Cobble Hill will never be confused for Vienna's Graben, the spare, stripped-down corner storefront is a welcome addition to the neighborhood.