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# COLLECTIVE

ISSUE 12

**WHY IT PAYS  
BIG TO SOUND  
A LITTLE DIRTY**

*#thefrankeffect*

**LEANDRA  
MEDINE**

REPELLING MEN  
SINCE 1988

+

**3D  
SKETCH IT  
PRINT IT  
WEAR IT**

**ALL THE  
RIGHT  
MOVES**

NAILING  
YOUR  
NICHE

**LILY  
COLE**

*model turned everything*





# LIKE MINDS

IN A SLEEPY beachside town, four like-minded individuals hatched an idea over dinner for a CAFÉ-CREATIVE space-art GALLERY which is revitalising the occasion of getting together.

WORDS LEAH DAVIES

It was a recipe for genius; an invitation for merging brainwaves. Melissa Morgan, James Rolph, Adam Byrne and Lucy Walker are the Like Minds. They include, respectively, a joyful cook, a coffee guru, and two graphic designers, who are united by one common desire – to build and nurture community.

“At our core, all four of us love connecting with people, sharing stories, skills and experiences... Last year, we were sharing a meal and a laugh, when we realised that all four of us just wanted to bottle up that energy and share it within a bigger community,” says Lucy of their burgeoning community hub in Avoca Beach, New South Wales.

Conducting a mass inventory to delicately decipher what the public wanted, a wish-list was returned, bidding for a space where the young, the old and families alike could come together over good food, meaningful conversation and creative activities.

“People were thirsty for more connection,” reflects Lucy.

Once an old corner store, selling milkshakes and meat pies to beach folk, Like Minds was

IMAGE COURTESY OF CHLOE ISAAC

converted to hold long communal benches, adorned with fresh flowers and books and magazines featuring local creative and DIY projects, while the walls are lovingly decorated with the works of homegrown artisans.

There’s food, of which Melissa says is “simple and homemade, celebrating local, organic and seasonal produce from our small but flourishing veggie patch. I’m learning Ayurveda cooking at the moment, and it’s so important to be mindful when cooking... When I’m peaceful and happy, I make the best food, dosed with lots of love!”

Then there are the activities: yoga courses, photography exhibitions, cooking lessons, book clubs, charity events, writing classes, painting courses and art displays.

“Collaboration is what we are all about. We don’t have a set structure necessarily. That’s not how we operate. We’re really just open to the sharing of ideas and skills and connecting with others who like to do the same,” says Lucy.

And that’s what has been key to the Like Minds business model – its avant-garde approach.

“Running a new business definitely has its challenges, but we have learnt that they come and they go. Our business is fairly unique so we don’t really know what will work and what won’t. And that’s completely fine. To be honest, we want to try new things!” says Lucy, adding that the group used roughly AU\$20,000 of their own savings to start the venture and both Melissa and James work at the space full-time, while Adam and Lucy juggle Like Minds with their full-time jobs as designer and design lecturer respectively.

“We’re experimenting and attempt to stay as flexible as possible so we are able to evolve and adapt as we need, and according to what the community wants. The community is the heart and soul of Like Minds so we always return to that standpoint,” continues Lucy.

“And above all, we are curious and allow our curiosity to lead the way. It has led us to only good things so far!”

For Melissa and James, a five-month trip to Sri Lanka and India prior to launching Like Minds was part of the inspiration.

“We were immersed in countries where family



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is embraced first and foremost, and where people set up coffee shops on the side of the road with a cart and a bike and off they go!

“It was really inspiring to see how people made means in the capacity they could, so we came home enthused to start something small, local and also within our ability. The collaboration with Lucy and Adam happened so naturally (just as things should when you’re on the right path!) and Like Minds feels like our extended family now,” says Melissa.

But their expanding community is not confined by geography or a postcode.

Lucy says: “We have found tremendous support near and far, including vast followers online, nationally and internationally, as well as locally. Our community is boundary-less!”

“To us, community means connecting through common values, which does not have to just take place within the physical space of Like Minds. It can transpire in our conversations with the online world. Networking across multiple platforms and building our virtual community has been significant to our success.” >







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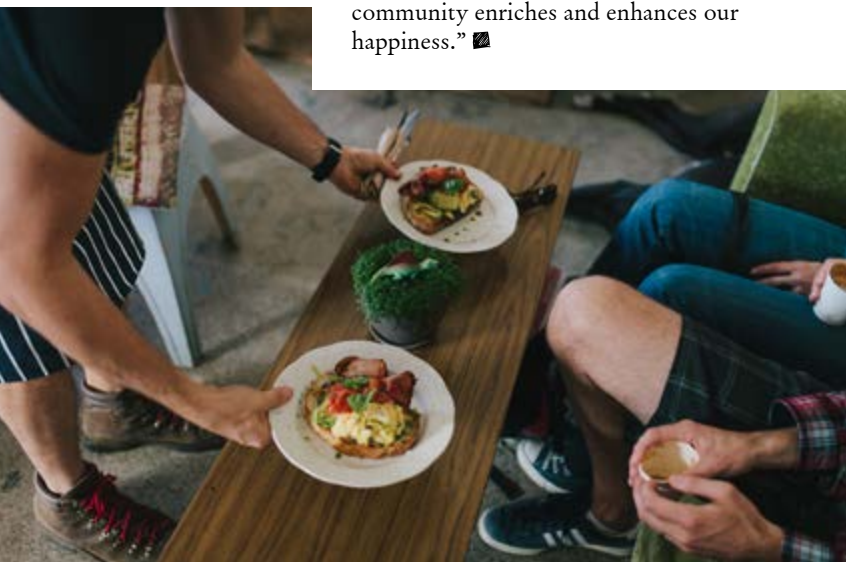
Like their most recent conversation with Santosh Koirala, which saw him visit to talk about the Moonlight Foundation Nepal. The foundation supports a school to provide free education to orphaned, disabled and impoverished children in Kathmandu and works in association with Backpacker Medics, which is building a healthcare centre in Kerasawara, a remote village in eastern Nepal.

“It’s a beautiful thing to know that what you do can inspire others and bring a bit of joy into people’s lives. It doesn’t get much better than that,” comments Lucy.

While the four friends consider themselves like-minded, united by a vision of localism, sustainability, collaboration and friendship, Lucy says, “Each of us is also very distinctive in our approach, experiences and the skills we bring to the business, and that’s something we respect and cherish. It’s important to recognise your similarities but it’s just as important to learn and grow through your differences.”

The non-negotiable, however, is community. “We all believe on a very deep level that community enriches and enhances our happiness.” 📌

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## HACKNEY CITY FARM, LONDON

While far from sunny Avoca, Hackney in London’s east also highly values community cohesion and like-mindedness. Not all that long ago, though, the neighbourhood had a reputation for being unsafe and rough, but with the emergence of new cafés, galleries and markets, the area has become gentrified in recent years, inviting families to return.

At the centre of the reformed suburb is the Hackney City Farm, a lively community hub in the heart of the city’s metropolis that’s providing city dwellers with the rare opportunity to experience farm life in their urban home. The site has been a brewery, button manufacturer and truck yard, among other things, but was reclaimed by the local council for the community.

Within its walls are donkeys, goats, sheep, two very large pigs and countless ducks and chickens. There are also vegetables, herbs and spices growing in the blossoming garden where children and adults are taught the green thumb basics, and so much more, like planning, consistency and rewards for hard work.

In addition to the farm, Hackney City Farm is a hub of social activities like:

- × Intergenerational, a program designed to bring together the young and old living in Hackney.
- × Hackney Yoga Project, which united refugee and asylum-seeking women through the transformative practice and yoga.
- × Haggerston Orchard Project, which is run on permaculture principles and is a thriving food production site.