

## Shop peddles coffee and atmosphere



**Coffee Peddler.** Jeff Evans serves a customer in The Coffee Peddler, a coffee shop he opened with his wife, Leigh Hobson, a former Olympic cyclist. Peter Lee/Record staff Source: Record staff  
**By Frances Barrick, Record staff**

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CAMBRIDGE – When Jeff Evans accompanied his wife, Leigh Hobson, while she raced on the American professional cycling circuit, the Cambridge couple loved to visit small coffee shops.

Finding that local independent coffee shop was like finding a home away from home, Evans says.

So when Hobson retired from racing after competing in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where she finished 17th, it only seemed natural for the pair to open their own coffee shop.

“We always liked the idea of hanging out with the locals in the coffee shops and we brought that home,” says Evans, whose background is in the food and beverage industry.

In August 2009, the couple opened [The Coffee Peddler](#) on Ainslie Street South in downtown Galt.

"It's a perfect name," says Evans, considering his wife's cycling career. A bike is mounted outside above the shop's windows.

Hobson is a full-time teacher at Galt Collegiate, so she leaves most of the running of the business to her husband.

He takes pride in following his shop's motto – the best coffee in the world is responsibly grown, locally roasted and passionately prepared. That's what he says separates his business from other coffee shops in the Cambridge core.

Apart from selling fair trade coffee, wraps and home-made baked goods, The Coffee Peddler provide gluten-free products. Evans and Hobson also sell the work of local authors and artists, as well as jewelry made in Uganda.

On a cool spring morning, there is a steady stream of customers into the shop. Most of them are regulars. Evans not only knows their names, but their food and drink preference.

Take Isaac Hayden, an outreach worker at the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank, located just down the street from The Coffee Peddler. Hayden comes in for either the two-egg breakfast on a croissant, no meat, or yogurt and granola with chopped up fruit and a little bit of cinnamon.

"Isaac is one of the healthiest people I have ever met," says Evans, as he prepares Hayden's yogurt order.

The shop is across the street from the Cambridge bus terminal, and attracts many bus drivers and passengers.

Tracy Rymill, a bus driver, picks up a turkey wrap, a coffee and "a whole bunch of smiles and chit chat" before her shift begins.

"You always get smiles and laughter when you come in here," she says.

Evans likes to hear that.

"This is our idea of a coffee shop. There is a sense of community here," says the 42-year-old North Bay native.

That's why he has no plans to expand the 12-seat shop. "Once you go large, you change the dynamics," he says.

Instead, Evans plans to take his business into the community and serve coffee and sandwiches under a large tent at local festivals and events such as the Tour de Grand bike run in Cambridge in June.

Evans also is looking at setting up a not-for-profit bike co-op where old bikes are repaired and sold for a nominal fee to get them back into the community.

"People come here to be part of the community," he says. "They come for the experience and that is exactly what I want."

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