

LIFE

Grab some coffee and kitty cuddles at Reno's first cat cafe, Enchanted Cat Cafe

Evan Haddad Reno Gazette Journal

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A new cafe in town wants to make you feel all warm and fuzzy, inside and out.

Enchanted Cat Cafe, which opened January 1 at 8555 Double R Blvd, serves coffee, tea, hot chocolate, snacks -- and cat time. Visitors can pay \$15 per hour, or purchase \$45 monthly passes, to spend time with the animals in a dedicated "cat lounge" separate from the cafe.

Enchanted houses adoptable cats provided by the Nevada Humane Society, a nonprofit no-kill shelter.

The cafe is owned by Devin Sizemore and his fiance, Haley Meadows, two entrepreneurs who got the idea for the business after watching a viral YouTube video of a cat cafe.

Sizemore and Meadows visited their first cat cafe last year in Hollywood to learn more about the industry, which originated in Taiwan in the late '90s and has since gained popularity throughout Asia. The couple started on a business plan when they returned to Reno in August.

"I grew up around animals. I love animals. I love creative ventures," Sizemore told the RGJ. "It checked a lot of boxes."

Sizemore and Meadows envision Enchanted as something more than a place to grab a coffee or play with cats.

"We wanted that Disneyland experience," Sizemore told the RGJ. "The goal is to create a place where people can just chill."

Sizemore said city departments were often stumped on how to handle licensing for Reno's first cat cafe.

In the end, Sizemore and Meadows obtained a grocery permit, which allows Enchanted to sell coffee and single-serve food items, much like a convenience store or gas station. The permit doesn't allow the business to make its own food, but the cafe offers a small selection of cat cake pops and other baked goods provided by Rounds Bakery and Life Tastes Good, a distributor.

Enchanted has about dozen monthly members so far. The clientele is mixed, Sizemore says. One member, for example, works with animals but can't have them at home; another, a woman who works at a welfare office, comes in to unwind after work.

"We've seen every demographic you can imagine come in in the last four days," Sizemore said.

Per regulations, the cat lounge and café are completely separate areas. Enchanted doesn't need a license for the cats as long as there are fewer than seven of them.

Through the cafe's partnership with Nevada Humane Society, Enchanted offers most of the cats on site for adoption. In less than a week after opening, two of the cafe's cats, Tater and Mesmer, had already found forever homes.

"We need cats for business, but we also need to get them adopted," Sizemore said.

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