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Vegan cafe the Alley brings fast-healthy focus to Melbourne

NOLA JAMES Mar 9 2017 at 3:51 PM

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Beetsteak burger and Maple Bacon Burger at the Alley. Photo: Kristoffer Paulsen

Alexandra Pyke isn't a chef, or a waiter. She's a "hospitality entrepreneur" who initially trained as a lawyer. Recently returned from an eight-year stint working with veg-focussed venues the Butcher's Daughter and the Fat Radish in New York City, Pyke is the owner of new "plant-based" (read, vegan) cafe the Alley.

Set to open at the base of a St Kilda Road office building on Monday, March 20, the 35-seat venue is pitched as a cafe but takes a fast-food approach.

Line up at the counter to choose from ready-to-go or cooked-to-order dishes, and return to pick up when your buzzer goes off.



Maple Bacon Burger, taco bowl and sweet potato fries with smoky aioli at the Alley. Photo: Kristoffer Paulsen

Pyke has spent 12 months developing a plant-based menu that's cooked on-site by chef Erin Shaw (ex-Urban Projuice) and a kitchen team gleaned from the likes of Trippy Taco and Combi.

There are burgers and fries aplenty, including vegan brioche buns stuffed with beet "steak" or mushroom, sweet potato and adzuki bean patties with "maple bacon", a coconut-based concoction that Pyke says is top secret.

Other hot dishes include mac 'n' cheese with a creamy nut-based sauce, and gluten-free "spaghetti" made from ribboned pumpkin with mushroom and temp "meatballs" topped with cashew ricotta.

And as you'd expect for a plant-based menu, there's a wide range of salads.

Coffee is a Sensory Lab house blend with coconut, almond, soy and rice milk options, and there are cold-pressed juices to-go.

Open daily 8am-7pm.

417 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, 03 9820 8314, thealley.net.au



Hospitality entrepreneur Alexandra Pyke. Photo: Supplied

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