



**John Lazarou's views on: Basing in Brisbane:**

I was born and bred in Brisbane, I still live in Brisbane and I love Brisbane - it's been an amazing place for me and our business. I love it when people think The Coffee Club concept came from America or Europe and I proudly say we started it right here.

# Greek - Australian "Coffee Experts" are Looking to Enter the Greek Market

People complain about the price of a cup of coffee in Greece, but -let's face it- Greeks know how to create upscale coffee environments around the world. Three Greeks are leading the way in the coffee and restaurant market in Australia and recently travelled to Greece to bring their successful business to the land of their ancestors. Last week, the director of Australia's largest home-grown cafe group The Coffee Club was in Greece looking for potential store locations to expand their hugely successful franchise.

John Lazarou was in Athens until 21 August to discuss with possible partners The Coffee Club's international expansion plans.

As one of the three Greek-born directors of The Coffee Club, John says it is widely recognised for introducing a European-style cafe culture to Australia, so it is only fitting The Coffee Club is looking to open its first European location in Greece.

**Success Story 1989 to now...**

In 1989, founding directors, Emmanuel Kokoris and Emmanuel Drivas were out searching for a late night cup of coffee in Brisbane, Australia, and not just a coffee, an excellent coffee. After an unsuccessful journey and hours of chatting, the pair planned a new business venture: The Coffee Club.

Their idea was to create more than just a place where people could meet for coffee. It was to provide a relaxed meeting place that is casual yet sophisticated, stylish yet affordable. In short, their plan was to meet an untapped need in the Australian hospitality marketplace.

At first, The Coffee Club opened in 1989 in Brisbane's magnificent Eagle Street Pier complex on the banks of the Brisbane River. The founding Directors' hard work paid off because it met with instant success. Today, The Coffee Club has expanded its presence to a franchise chain of almost 220 outlets throughout Australia & New Zealand, all working towards one mission: to provide good food, great service and excellent coffee! The Coffee Club offers two types of experiences - the 'Club' and the 'Cafe Bar Restaurant'.

Here are some interesting statistics on The Coffee Club:

- The Coffee Club is Australia's largest home-grown cafe group with

- 252 cafes across Australia, New Zealand and Thailand
- The Coffee Club serves more than 40 million cups of coffee every year
- The Coffee Club generated over AUD\$260 million in revenue internationally in the past year

Total store sales have increased 17.5 per cent in Australia, and 8.8 per cent

in New Zealand in the past year

- Last year, one of the largest hospitality and leisure companies in Asia Pacific, Minor International, took a 50 per cent stake in The Coffee Club, fuelling its international growth - as well as Europe, sights are now set on New Caledonia, Bahrain, Vietnam and Mauritius.



## A few words about the founders

**Emmanuel Drivas**

Property tycoon & silent achiever



Caught out having said: "Think about the Egyptians... it wasn't too hard for them to throw together a few pyramids."

Emmanuel Drivas, an original founder of The Coffee Club back in 1989, has been associated with the retail hospitality industry for almost 40 years through owning and managing successful family businesses. These businesses have included cafts, takeaways and fruit markets in the suburbs and the CBD of Brisbane. Furthermore, Drivas has acquired an investment property portfolio that includes retail centres, commercial and residential property.

In 1994, Drivas was awarded the National Australia Bank's Ethnic Business Award Queensland in the non-manufacturing category and, in 2000, the Centenary Medal for services to business.

In his personal life, Drivas is heavily involved in community and charity initiatives, supporting many groups both financially and with devoted presence. Drivas has held many board seats for community groups and local sporting teams including the 'Greek Community of St George' and 'Olympic United Soccer Club'.

Drivas' peers describe him as a man of true entrepreneurial integrity inspired by a heart of gold and fierce motivations. He keeps himself firmly planted in the background but remains to be an apparent player in the success of The Coffee Club.

**Emmanuel Kokoris**

Operations mogul & unswerving pragmatist



Caught having said (after every sentence): "... and that's the end of the story"

Emmanuel Kokoris, an original founder of The Coffee Club back in 1989, has had a long association with the retail hospitality industry for almost 40 years having owned many small businesses in Brisbane, some of which were co-owned by co-founder of The Coffee Club Emmanuel Drivas. Furthermore, Kokoris has had experience in the franchise industry as a franchisee for Big Rooster in Queensland.

In 1988, Kokoris and Drivas set up Lectmont Pty Ltd (now The Coffee Club Franchising Company Pty Ltd). In 1989, Lectmont Pty Ltd established The Coffee Club's first store at Eagle Street Pier, Brisbane, which has now progressed to a franchise of almost 200 stores.

Kokoris is currently involved in day to day leadership of

The Coffee Club as Director, with a special interest and gift in the area of Operations.

In his personal life, Kokoris has held a number of committee member seats in Hellenic community groups in Brisbane. His selfless endeavour to improve the lives of sick children in Australia has led to The Coffee Club Changing Children's Lives initiative which raises much needed funds for Children's Hospital Foundations Australia (CHFA) ongoing. See here for more details on this wonderful enterprise.

Kokoris' peers describe him as a man of intellect, knowledge and creativity who seems to make practical sense every time he speaks. A perpetual realist, Kokoris aggressively seeks absolute solutions to any challenge and never leaves an opportunity waiting. Many describe him as inspirational in his pursuit for best practice operations. He's also well-known as the 'Director of Golf' amongst colleagues, friends, and himself!

**John Lazarou**

Public Relations guru, networking magnate & persistent doer



Caught out having said: "Give me 1 hour of your time and we'll end up being the best of friends"

John Lazarou is well known throughout Brisbane as a public figure with a flair for public relations. This flair has helped to establish The Coffee Club brand as we know it today.

While Lazarou's trade is hairdressing, he has worked most of his life in retail hospitality, including some of Brisbane's best known Restaurants. In 1991, Lazarou operated The Coffee Club at Brookside Shopping Centre under a franchise agreement and later that year was invited to become a Director of The Coffee Club Group.

Lazarou is currently involved in day to day leadership of The Coffee Club as a Director, with a special interest in the marketing of the business. Lazarou provides valuable publicity & public relations work for the Group, a talent that the 'Emmanuel's' openly brought to the business. Lazarou is often found moving about the media and entertainment circuit, enjoying the relationships that his friendly and engaging personality has brought him.

Lazarou's peers have an interesting opinion of their most flamboyant Director: "He drives us insane with his far-fetched and seemingly unachievable ideas. Somehow though, he manages to motivate the masses, get himself involved, and make it happen over and above all initial expectation. Luckily for us, we're in the business of excellent coffee, and we've learnt to drink it strong!"