



A passion for life, coffee and adventure

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Wellington brand and advertising guru Dave Bassett has reinvented himself in an expanding coffee franchise business in Western Australia, and he's loving it. By John Bishop.

How many of us are prepared to go to another country and work up a business from scratch, at a starting age of over 60? Wellington brand and advertising guru Dave Bassett has reinvented himself in an expanding coffee franchise business in Western Australia, and he's loving it.

After a long career creating advertising and branding in Wellington (Consultus and then his own agency BrandNew) Dave now lives by the sea in Busselton, a town of 20 000 people, 220km south west of Perth, where he swims in the warm ocean, and goes mountain biking almost daily.

He's joined former Lower Hutt man John Batty and Alex Kok, a well known WA local in Yahava Koffee Works, a franchise business with three outlets in holiday spots including Singapore.

"It was a risk coming over here at my age (60 plus) but it really has been like a second childhood. I've lost a lot of my sedentary 'Wellington' flab and never felt more alive.

"Being a consultant most of my life I would look at businesses like Yahava and say to myself, "If this were my business I know what I'd do".

"So when John Batty asked me to help him and his partner with this coffee business I thought it could be fun. I love coffee so we got stuck in.

An invitation to assist turned rapidly into a partnership with John and Alex Kok, a "mad Dutchman known locally as the Coffee Baron."

"They flew me over to have a chat and after a stroll in the warm sea with my wife Ngareta, we said "let's do it, let's have an adventure."

Busselton is like Dave's home town of Nelson.

"The only difference is the warm endless summer days without a cloud in the sky and the lack of wind. There is a strong music scene over here with numerous festivals so I have unpacked my blues harp and I am having a ball.

Dave's adventure is working out.

"We have three major stores called KoffeeWorks. These are large facilities that roast coffee for sale on the premises and to local cafes and restaurants.

"There's a coffee brewery where customers can observe different brewing methods.

"There's tasting benches where customers can sample all the coffees and teas before they buy, a coffee academy where we train our own baristas and baristas for local cafes, a coffee and tea shed that displays and sells a range of coffee beans and leaf teas from all over the world, a café, and markets where customers can find all sorts of coffee and tea paraphernalia.

The three KoffeeWorks are in Margaret River, Swan Valley and Singapore, all tourist areas and chosen for a reason says Dave.

"People on holiday are relaxed and on an adventure, kicking back having fun, with money and time to spend. There is no better place to introduce them to new ideas and new products.

"We are now opening Yahava Kwik Koffee Drive Thrus, and Kiosks throughout Western Australia where we serve hot and iced coffee and tea, beverages, beans and food closer to where people live and work.

“My role is to manage and grow the Yahava brand including a range of Yahava products that we make including Iced Tea, Chocolates, drinking chocolate, coffee elixirs, essences, and the obvious teas and coffees.

“While the business is franchised all of the franchise systems, training and our own brands have to be built, packaging developed and the whole look and feel of the business carefully created and protected.

“Our Mantra is ‘Adventure in a Cup’ and it reflects how we find and process our coffees, teas and other products. The business has a ‘fly by the seat of your pants’ look and feel and we work very hard to build and maintain that brand reputation.

Batty and Kok are lifelong bikers, and head away each year to coffee growing countries for grown up biker adventures.

Back in WA the company sponsored a ride for life by bikers raising funds for mental health.

They rigged up a 1000cc Italian motor bike (dubbed MotoKafe) with an espresso machine and 500 kg of water, beans and other gear so the bikers could have really good fresh coffee every morning on their 15 000 km ride around Australia, and then another 4 000 kms into Ayers Rock.

The Black Dog Riders raised \$411 000 for Lifeline and Mental Health First Aid.

“It’s so much fun working with a passionate and enthusiastic team. I can now say make sure you work with good people, folk you really get along with. Make sure you are doing stuff that excites you and stuff you love in a place that is a playground.

“What makes me bounce out of bed every morning is that today I’m trying to make happen what I have always believed could be done with a brand.”

www.yahava.com.au

John Bishop is a former colleague and visited Dave Bassett in the Margaret River earlier this year.