

# FOOD & DRINK

## IT'S SO RAD

Mt Eden's newest cafe, The Return of Rad, is buzzing as people spill out of the open street frontage at this light and colour-filled spot.

The *Return of the Jedi*-inspired name conveys fun and child's play, as does the feeling within, with Stormtrooper artwork and table numbers made out of Lego. A true family business, co-owner and barista Duke Tran (ex Best Ugly) previously held family business Cafe Tran in Onehunga, and references his parents' various bakeries and lunch bars as a childhood inspiration. Mother Trinh Tran (pictured with Duke) runs the kitchen, father Dieu Tran bakes bread for the Rad rolls and brother Hugh is on the floor. All chipped in to bring the menu and fitout together, stripping back the building themselves.

The family's Vietnamese culture is evident, with dishes such as banh mi rolls and beef lemongrass on vermicelli offering an interesting foil to brunch items like peanut butter buttermilk pancakes (yum!). Tran's passion shines through in the coffee (available cold-drip, espresso or pour over with beans from Wellington's Flight Coffee) and the finer details (think rosewater on arrival). The decor is a whole other story — a fabulous neon sign, gorgeous mosaic counter and furniture by Auckland Cabinets' Mat Lubbe and quirky branding and details courtesy of Ok Tokio, and Material Creative. — Fiona Ralph

• Rad, 397 Mt Eden Rd, ph (09) 631 5218.  
thereturnofrad.co.nz



Picture / Babiche Martens

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