From serious science to one cool cat

Sisters Victoria (front) and Elizabeth Carey are the smiling faces behind the wonderfully named Day Kitty cafe in the former Flaherty's Chocolate Shop, Warrnambool.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] A [/dropcap]mid all the gloom of shops closing in Warrnambool, the city's burgeoning cafe scene is stepping up to the plate to show how funky places can not only survive, but thrive.

The wonderfully named Day Kitty cafe is among the newcomers, having taken over the former – and famous – Flaherty's Chocolate Shop building in Kepler St, right next door to the Capitol Cinema.

Since opening six months ago, the cafe with a striking black-and-white decor has carved out a niche market with its emphasis on organic that includes home-made, artisan

milkshakes and icecreams, fresh-pressed juices, light meals, salads and hot drinks.

It is like a soda fountain, meets a coffee shop, meets a gourmet salad-and-juice bar – and it works.

The sisters (Victoria in the middle, Elizabeth, right) were always close and have ended up working side by side after initial careers as scientists. They are pictured here with their eldest sister, Anastasia.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] W [/dropcap]arrnambool sisters **Victoria** and **Elizabeth Carey** are behind the venture, although Elizabeth insists she is simply "helping out" Victoria, who created the dream and has pulled all of the pieces together.

Both are former scientists who, after 10 years in their respective fields (the sisters were born two years apart), decided they wanted to do something completely different with their lives.

Victoria worked in dairying manufacturing at Murray Goulburn, in Koroit, where she gained all of the experience necessary to break out into making artisan icecreams that would use only organic ingredients.

The waffle cones, which are hand-made by Elizabeth, use the egg whites leftover from the icecream.

The cafe's icecream and milkshake bar harks back to the hey-day of Flaherty's, who were known not only for their extraordinary array of chocolates – particularly at Easter – but for the entire Flaherty family each taking a turn at serving icecreams and milkshakes to cinema goers.

"I knew exactly the sort of cafe I wanted to have, and I knew it had to be here, in this building," Victoria says.

"We have had different members of the Flaherty family drop in to see how it looks, and that has been really lovely," she adds.

Victoria hand-makes all of the icecreams, using only

organic ingredients, while Elizabeth makes the waffle cones using the leftover egg whites.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] B [/dropcap]efore joining her big sister at Day Kitty, Elizabeth specialised in the remediation of contaminated land so it is not surprising that she, too, has a strong commitment to sustainability.

"We try and recycle and reuse as much as we can. Our food scraps are composted and all of the cardboard is taken away and recycled," she explains.

Even the cutlery and drinking straws are made from recycled bamboo – rather than plastic – although it did take a bit of trial and error to find the right straws.

"We started with some paper ones, but they fell apart before the drink was finished," Victoria says, laughing.

Day Kitty is now "about 95 per cent organic", according to Victoria, with a particular style of coffee bean proving to be the final, 5 per cent hurdle.

As for the name, it was chosen simply because it sounded good and is easy to remember.

"It was going to be Day Kitty-Night Owl, because we had planned to eventually open in the evening and offer cheese platters with a nice glass of wine," Victoria says.

That may still happen, but for now the pair is happy to keep growing the business during daylight hours. The next chapter is about to unfold, with the hiring of a chef so that they can expand their lunch and breakfast menu.

"One day I would really like to also run an organic fruit and vege store, but that is a little further down the track," Victoria says.

These vintage scoops were found in secondhand stores around Warrnambool and may have even been used by Flaherty's….who knows?

[box type="bio"] **Day Kitty, 53 Kepler St, Warrnambool is open Mon to Fri 8.30 to 5.30 and Sat 9-5. Ph: 5561 6921**[/box]

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