



Art House

In the back streets of Collingwood, a converted warehouse offers artists and art enthusiasts endless opportunities for play. Browse the gallery, try your hand at letterpress printing, purchase a bespoke souvenir and discuss it all over coffee at the on-site café...

PICTURED: Lamington Drive Gallery, The Compound Interest Centre, Collingwood
OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM RIGHT: Vintage collectables from the Lost and Found Market, Smith Street, Collingwood; *Bikini* by Kat Macleod printed in-house by New Blank Document (limited edition); *Lizard with Drum* by Dylan Martorell; learn letterpressing at The Compound Interest Centre

Just as designer, Compound founder and all-round ideas man Jeremy Wortsman is telling us the innovative artists' space we are standing in was once a shoe factory and boiler repair centre, we notice that beneath the heady scent of sangria and macarons (which have been laid out for the launch) lurks the distinct aroma of boiler grease. Is it a tribute? A ghost of warehouse past? Or does it belong to the vintage motorcycle restorer down the hall?

But we don't have long to ponder this as Wortsman promptly ushers us out of the gallery space known as Lamington Drive and onto the next workspace which is shared by a letterpress printer (who offers workshops in her craft) and a bespoke framer (who will happily frame your letterpress creations, and anything else you might like to keep for posterity). Next we stroll through the Modern Motorcycle Company, where mechanic and industrial designer Christian Condo is at work on Wortsman's 1971 Honda, and past the offices of the Jacky Winter Group (Jeremy's agency for illustrators and cartoonists) before finishing in the enigmatically-named Variable Interest Space, which is available for lectures, workshops and general hire.

This breezy warehouse, which once breathed new life into old boilers, is now home to a motley crew of artists and artisans assembled by Wortsman over the years.

Originally from New York, Wortsman wound up in Melbourne by happy accident. "Like most ex-pats, I followed a girl down here. While we didn't end up together, I fell in love with the city and decided to stay. That's the short version!" he says.

Melbourne felt like a good fit to Wortsman and two of his ongoing projects – Jacky Winter and Lamington Drive – had their first incarnation a short stroll away in Fitzroy. When the time came to move on, he wanted to do something bigger and involve friends and artists he had collaborated with along the way.

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"The inspiration (for the Compound) was pretty simple," says Wortsman. "Find a way to spend time with your best friends during working hours."

Of course, it's much more than that. The Compound Interest Centre for Applied Arts is an overlapping network of creativity where everyone, from practitioners of traditional crafts to web designers, has a role to play.

"Collaboration is a big part of what we do," Wortsman says. "Someone might come to a gallery opening and meet John from (web design company) That Mob who could build them a website, and then John might commission illustration through Jacky Winter, which is printed by (letterpress printer) Carolyn, and framed by (bespoke framer) Ryan. We're all clients of each others' businesses in some way as well."

In the brave new world of art and design, Wortsman believes traditional and ultra modern complement each other perfectly.

"More and more I see digital productions using bespoke techniques, and bespoke techniques benefitting from digital tools, and both things being the better for it. Creators just need to focus on speaking to a dedicated group of fans who will support them." And the Compound is the perfect place to watch it all unfold (www.thecompoundinterest.com). **DV**

LOCAL HAUNTS

Since moving to the neighbourhood, Wortsman has wasted no time getting acquainted with the best local eateries and watering holes. He shared some of his favourites with us:

"About 99 per cent of the reason we moved to this block was to be next to my favourite Japanese café/gallery Cibi (45 Keele Street, Collingwood, www.cibi.com.au) as well as having The Gem as our local. It's a wonderful old pub with live acoustic sets during busier periods – they do good food too (298 Wellington Street Collingwood (03) 9419 5170). Proud Mary is a great spot for lunch and is also famous for its coffee (172 Oxford Street Collingwood (03) 9417 5930) and you can't go past the chicken sandwiches at Cavallero (300 Smith Street, Collingwood, www.cavallero.com.au). Panama Dining Room has a delicious Wagyu burger for dinner (231 Smith Street, Fitzroy, www.thepanama.com.au) and I like Easy Tiger, too (96 Smith Street, Collingwood, www.easytiger.co)." **DV**

SHOPPING LIST

- ✦ Collingwood's Smith Street is a vintage shopper's paradise, best epitomised by the Lost and Found Market (12 Smith Street, www.lostandfoundmarket.com.au)
- ✦ If vintage records are your poison, you'll want to check out The Last Record Store (304 Smith Street, www.lastrecordstore.com)
- ✦ A short stroll north-east to the more established bohemian hub of Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, and you'll find plenty more temptations like Shag (377 Brunswick Street (03) 9417 3348), Kinki Gerlinky (360 Brunswick Street, www.kinkigerlinky.com.au), Meet Me At Mikes (63 Brunswick Street, www.meetmeatmikes.blogspot.com) and Quick Brown Fox (357 Brunswick Street, www.quickbrownfox.com.au)
- ✦ For Melbourne designer wear head to Gorman (www.gorman.ws) and Alpha 60 (www.alpha60.com.au), and for unique jewellery exclusive to Melbourne try Ko Ko (332 Brunswick Street (03) 9416 0332), Ditto Day (336 Brunswick Street (03) 9416 3122) and Scally and Trombone (www.scallyandtrombone.com.au)

Take a virtual stroll down the main drags at www.smithstreet.net.au and www.brunswickstreet.com.au

