

Meet Mashric, the new cafe set to open in Downtown Bolton

By Riley Murphy, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

For those who have walked through Downtown Bolton's Royal Courtyards recently, they may have noticed the "coming soon" signs across one of the businesses' doors.

These signs are for the brand-new cafe coming to the Bolton core, Mashric.

Mashric is a cafe founded by entrepreneur Mohammed Anwar, who also founded numerous organizations, including the Canadian non-profit Merit Empowering You, dedicated to empowering newcomers, international students, youth, and entrepreneurs; the recruitment and staffing agency HR Leaf; and the educational technology platform StudyWeg.

His newest venture is Mashric Cafe, and while it may seem like a big jump from his other avenues, coffee and its culture have always been a part of who he is, thanks to Canada.

Anwar was 15 when he moved to Germany from India, then to Switzerland, and from there, moved to Canada, where he has now resided for 18 years.

When Anwar first moved to Montreal, he spent a few days unhoused before finding the YMCA, which he says not only launched his career but also changed his life.

From there, he worked as a dishwasher, then a taxi driver, before founding numerous businesses and pursuing what he loved.

Anwar was featured in the CIBC Memento Project, which he says "shows the world how Canadian new immigrants, when they work hard and [have] the dream of being a part of Canadian society, everything is achievable."

His time in Montreal is what introduced Anwar to the culture of coffee in the first place.

"I always wanted to have some kind of a cafe business, I want to be part of it, and I had done lots of research because Canadians are the ones who introduced me to coffee," says Anwar.

It took him five years of research before he landed on a blend, creating his own roast of coffee beans, blended in Canada "which, for him, is one of the most important parts.

"We have everything in-house Canadian, for Canadians," he says.

Not only Canadian, but Anwar says that when he began his venture of opening a cafe, he knew he wanted it to be in Caledon.

The landscape of Caledon, he says, reminds him of his time in Germany, but one of the best parts, Anwar says, is the residents.

When Anwar began looking for locations in Caledon, he says almost everyone met him with a "hello" or a "how are you doing?"

"That's when I fell in love with Caledon," he says.

Not only did he want to make his cafe Canadian, but also keep up with current trends.

In speaking with the younger generation, Anwar says he heard that many people wanted matcha, and so he worked to bring it to his cafe. Wanting to make sure it was just right, he brought his matcha to the University of Toronto to see if students liked it before

bringing it to his cafe.

For Anwar, one of the key things he wanted to take note of was employment opportunities.

He says that after working in his employment business, he understands the struggle of creating opportunities.

?I thought, OK, why not just create opportunities for locals to work [here] instead of going out of Caledon?? says Anwar.

He adds that his team is currently looking to train students prior to their big opening.

At their cafe, he says they will sell their tested matcha and coffee of all varieties, salads from a Canadian company, sandwiches, different sweets and loaves, and more.

With their sights set on hopefully opening before the end of the month, Anwar says he looks forward to bringing everybody in the Caledon community together.