

Passion for indulgence

Staffordshire Life editor **LOUISE ELLIOTT** indulges herself at Uttoxeter coffee lounge Indulgence, and chats to its owners David and Sue Hunter about their latest venture



EVERY so often in this job one comes across a certain person — or people — whose passion for life is enviable.

These people seem to ooze energy and thrive on seeing the happiness of others. One such couple — David and Sue Hunter — are a perfect example.

The pair have just realised a lifelong dream — to set up a coffee lounge offering quality food and drink in a relaxed and informal setting.

Indulgence, in Uttoxeter, opened in mid-August and since then has gone from strength-to-strength.

One of the aims of David and Sue was to offer customers an experience in food and that is certainly what they have achieved. They use local produce where possible and only the freshest ingredients which gives their food a good, clean wholesome flavour.

The couple have a commercial background — they also run a business and management advice company and have vast experience in IT software — and have certainly utilised their skills to make their dream come true.

Their decision to open in Uttoxeter, in the Lion Buildings off Church Street, was one which seemed to come easy to them.

“To be honest we got fed up going to the national chains of coffee lounges only to have food served which we personally, didn’t think was up to much,” says David, who began his working life at the age of 15 as a church organ builder.

“We felt, for a long time, that we could do better and so, instead of moaning about it, we decided to set up our own.”

The couple, from Barton under

Needwood, looked at various locations throughout the Midlands, including Sutton Coldfield, and Lichfield, but it was the market town of Uttoxeter that seemed to have the draw.

“When we came to look at the building it was being used as a storage for antiques,” remembers David.

“The walls were cracked, there was pigeon mess all over the beams and the stairs were in quite a state — but it just felt right somehow.”

Within 12 weeks, the derelict building had been transformed into Indulgence — a delightful two-storey building set within the picturesque setting of the Lion Buildings courtyard. The lounge caters for up to 48 customers inside and is open between 9am and 5.30pm. Although David and Sue have an alcohol licence, they don’t have any plans to open in the evening as yet.

Downstairs the lounge is accessible for wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs.

The room is decorated tastefully in reds and beiges with a beautiful wooden floor and there are, as well as tables and chairs, comfortable sofas throughout. Outside, there is a raised decking area complete with furniture, for people to dine al fresco.

New wooden stairs lead from the ground floor up to the exquisite first floor lounge which is again tastefully decorated. The high ceiling, with the original beams is dominated by a wonderful metre-wide black chandelier.

This place oozes style and elegance — reflected in the fantastic food.

“Indulgence is certainly a passion for us,” says David. “We wanted to open a place that not only offers the very freshest of foods but also provides customers with quality food from local producers.”

And you certainly cannot get any more local. All the meats used in the lounge are provided by award-winning butcher A Johnson and Son, in Alrewas. The breads are from two bakeries — one in Stoke and the other in Lichfield — and the exquisite Belgian chocolates are provided by Kimberley’s Chocolates in Rangemore, the chocolatier, David says, was actually trained by one of the greatest chocolatiers in the world — Van Coille.

Meanwhile, cheeses come from the Staffordshire Cheese Company in Leek and the various oils from Fradley. The cakes — and there is a fabulous choice — are all made by a woman who lives in Cubley, near Ashbourne.

The food is, by the way, delectable. It is clean on the palate and is made in such a way that you can actually taste each and every ingredient used.

Says David: “People will always want to indulge themselves occasionally and it’s our job to offer something that represents good value for money.

“When we first did our market research, we visited several places. But when we came to Uttoxeter we knew it was right. It is the perfect home for what we are trying to do.

“Everyone we’ve met has been lovely and when we came across this building



it sold itself to us straight away. All the pieces fell into place after that.

“People have eaten here once and are now coming back. We had one lady who came by bus from Walsall and another who is bringing friends from Sheffield — it’s great to know that we are making people happy.”

The menu at Indulgence offers a variety of open sandwiches. There is chicken and coriander caress, salmon and prawn creme and herb encrusted goats’ cheese with parma ham, as well as port o beef with caramelized onion gravy topped with a horseradish

drizzle. The sweets range from cheesecake, sticky toffee muffins, shortcake and a delightful chocolate orange cake.

“We have a place here that offers the people of Uttoxeter and the surrounding areas good quality, locally produced food,” says David, sipping one of the many coffees on offer.

“I know it probably sounds conceited but I do hope that we have given people a reason to come back to the town of Uttoxeter.”

● More information about Indulgence is available from 01889 568064.