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Meet the Hell's Kitchen Coffee Shop Serving Unique Drinks

By [Bridget Shirvell](#) | February 21, 2019 | 📍 359 W. 45th St. New York, NY 10036

Bird & Branch is becoming a destination for both its unusual coffee drinks and commitment to the community.



Sipping the Blackbird latte at Bird & Branch makes you briefly pause your day, no matter how hectic, to simply savor the moment. It has a delightful blend of sweetness to acidity balanced with nutty notes from the macadamia milk.

The Blackbird latte at [Bird & Branch](#) is simply beautiful. Blackberry syrup swirls with macadamia nut milk (both are made in-house) over a base of espresso from [Saint Frank Coffee](#), giving the bottom half of the drink a pastel purple hue that fades into a caramel coffee shade. Sipping it makes you briefly pause your day, no matter how hectic, to simply savor the moment. It has a delightful blend of sweetness to acidity balanced with nutty notes from the milk.

“One of our Kenyan coffees has blackberry tasting notes. We were playing around with it one day and we happened to have blackberries in our freezer and thought what if we add these to it,” Bird & Branch co-owner Brandon Lee says of the drink which became one of their signatures.

Read more: [Brew Your Pour-over on the Go with This Instant Coffee](#)

Located on West 45th Street, almost at the corner of 9th Avenue, Bird & Branch is small, with only a few tables inside and some bar stool seating. The minimalist decor manages to still feel inviting with a living wall behind the counter and greenery throughout. Brandon with his wife, Faith, opened the Hell's Kitchen café in February of 2018. Despite not having any prior coffee house experience, they've turned Bird & Branch into a destination known for its interesting, funky coffee drinks and commitment to the community.



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“We had an idea to start a job training program through a retail shop for people who had barriers to employment, and we came up with the idea of coffee as the skills are transferable,” says Faith.

Working with Brooklyn-based [Hope Organization](#), Bird & Branch officially launched their job training program in December. Currently they have one employee trainee through the program and are hoping to expand the job training throughout this next year.

Read more: [This Coffee Shop Focuses Solely on Indonesian Varietals](#)

“You start to see how much businesses can impact the people around you—the community you are in and your employees,” Faith says. “We’ve seen how as bosses you can greatly affect your employees, empower them and teach them how to manage money but also encourage them to be creative.”

The husband-and-wife team with the help of their employees plans on continuing to push the boundaries, creating new seasonal drink offerings this year while staying true to their values. Faith and Brandon will make everything they can and carefully curate the goods sold and the ingredients used at Bird & Branch.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BfmthmJBETd/>

Six months before opening, they traveled to San Francisco to sit down with the owner of Saint Frank Coffee, selecting to use their coffee based not only on the excellent coffee the roastery produces but also its dedication to direct trade with small farmers.

Read more: [Believe It or Not, Instant Coffee Is Making a Comeback](#)

Whenever possible everything Bird & Branch sells has a positive environment or social impact. Order an iced Blackbird latte or Almond Macadamia Milk latte or another signature drink to stay and it will come with a stainless-steel straw, they also sell the straws in the store.

“People come in very tired, and to be able to give them not just a pick-me-up but a nice friendly interaction, it’s nice to have that kind of growing relationship with regulars,” says Bird & Branch co-founder Brandon Lee.

But their do-good philosophy applies to more than simply what they sell. It’s a feeling they try to embody when people come into Bird & Branch.

“People come in very tired, and to be able to give them not just a pick-me-up but a nice friendly interaction, it’s nice to have that kind of growing relationship with regulars,” Brandon says.

Get over to Bird & Branch and try the coffee for yourself—we hear they’re also in the process of introducing some very good desserts.

Photos courtesy of Bird & Branch.

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