

IN CONVERSATION



David Myers

The chef and restaurateur is opening Adrift Burger Bar's first permanent location in the UAE following years of successful pop-ups

David Myers was one of Expo 2020's biggest winners when his burger pop-up Adrift Burger Bar, proved so popular that it sold around 115,000 burgers over six months.

Following the positive reception in the region, the Gypsy Chef, as he is known due to his highly nomadic life, has decided on a permanent home for his burger brand.

Adrift Burger Bar is opening its first permanent outlet in Abu Dhabi's Yas Mall. Myers said the location was chosen due to the enthusiasm for the brand shown by residents during Expo 2020.

"Interestingly, despite Expo 2020 Dubai being an international event, over 70 percent of our customers were in fact local residents, many of them from Abu Dhabi," he said.

Myers added that Abu Dhabi's restaurant scene has grown to become one of the most dynamic in the world, and that the Yas Island location offers the right mix of culture, entertainment and sunshine for the brand to flourish.

"The location we've chosen is at Yas

"You have to learn the local culture to understand your customers"

Mall near the Ferrari World entrance, nestled between some great sports and lifestyle brands, and concept stores. I love that we are right in the thick of all the incredible entertainment offerings available throughout Yas Island," he said.

The same designer and creative director who worked on the original pop-up in Venice Beach, Danny Gonzales, was involved in the design of the new space.

Guests will recognise the signature black and white look of the brand, with elements of Japanese shou sugi ban textures and a mural inspired by Venice Beach and Tokyo, by local artist Wesal al Ali. Myers also revealed a new element for the Abu Dhabi outlet in the form of a custom-designed surfboard inspired by the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque.

"The surfboard was made by good

friends of mine in Bali and features real dried flowers pressed onto the board's surface, representing the floral details throughout the Grand Mosque, along with graphic line work reminiscent of the outlines of its silhouettes," he explained.

Myers acknowledged that there are certain considerations that must be made. He said: "You must take the time to get to know the local culture to better understand how customers here like to dine, how they like to interact with brands and how they perceive and engage with local and international trends."

Adjusting to the post-pandemic changes that restaurateurs have had to face is another thing he said has influenced how he works.

"The only way to tackle all this change is to fully embrace it," he said. "I have always considered myself to be a lifetime student and I don't want to stop evolving, learning, adapting, and hopefully also leading some of that change."

"Change is necessary in order for us to improve the experiences that we create for our guests as well as the value that we build for our partners."

