



Sweet dreams

Caroline Shaw gets in touch with her inner child, courtesy of Hopscotch in Barnet



Walking into Hopscotch in Barnet, you can't help but smile. The shop is a nostalgia-filled, Aladdin's cave of sweets and treats, with row upon row of jars filled with colourful candies of every shape and kind. Modelled on the traditional image of a sweet shop, the store specialises in retro sweets from as far back as the 1800s (but more of these later), as well as serving the best the modern world of sweets has to offer.

The shop opened just before Christmas, and is the brainchild of husband and wife team Alice and Michael Kentish. Inspired by a traditional sweet shop they often visited whilst on holiday on the Kent coast, the pair had long dreamed of opening a store of their own. But it was only when Michael lost his job in the City that they decided to go for it and make that dream a reality. And the City's loss is Barnet's gain, as Hopscotch is the kind of retailer that makes our high street a more interesting place. One with real personality and a character of its own. Oh, and some really tasty products...

There are more than 550 sweets on Hopscotch's shelves, from every era. Customers can find old favourites from their childhood, the best known brands, and the lesser known special names from

the UK and around world. From Herbal Tablets by Gray's of Dudley (the independent family firm established in 1826, and still going strong today), known as the 'working man's friend for cold nights and mornings', to Sarsaparilla Drops of 1940s, Spogs from the 60s, to the Sherbert Pips, Fruit Salads and Flying Saucers of the 70s and 80s. The biggest seller? Vanilla fudge, which Alice calls the "pasta of the sweet world - it's all about comfort".

"We have a sweet for everyone, and our stock really is built on people's feedback and what they ask for," says Alice. There is pick 'n' mix for the kids and old favourites for those a little longer in the (sweet) tooth. Hopscotch also really prides itself on being able to provide that perfect sweet that sums up your childhood, and if they don't stock it they will track it down for you. "We're getting quite a reputation for stocking some of the harder to find, old fashioned sweets, and people are travelling from far away to visit us, which is fantastic,"

Alice smiles.

As well as bags of toffees, coming soon are their decade boxes, with nostalgic sweets from different eras in a gift box. Start saving your pocket money.

Find Hopscotch at 88 High Street, EN5 5SN; 020 8364 9777. WWW.HOPSCOTCHSWEETS.CO.UK

