



www.diddys.co.uk
[@diddysbar](https://www.instagram.com/diddysbar)

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Diddy's is a neighbourhood bar, café and 'Diddymart' on Mare Street in Hackney. It opened in 2016 and in 2020 branched out to include a store, selling homeware and larger goods; it is a place where people could enjoy a spritz or a coffee in a beautiful space – and pick up dinner accompaniments!

Owned by Hackney local Diddy Varley, it has been important to her to make an effort to be affordable, to have a truly independent working ethos and to work with interesting suppliers and producers.

69 Mare St, London E8 4RG

Bar + Cafe

The bar and café offering centres on simplicity. The drinks menu is split into four sections – Spritz, Margaritas, Sours, and Negronis, with classic versions as well as a few twists, such as a spicy Negroni with Ancho Reyes Chile spirit made from ancho chilies.

Diddy's father was such a wine buff that she ventured into cocktails "for fear of getting the wine wrong!" – but 2019 she stepped into that fear and developed the wine list further; her mother Hanny was a London dressmaker in the 80s and has been making scrunchies for Diddymart. As with all elements of Diddy's, it is all about careful consideration, not rushing and a feeling of family.





Art, Community + Diddymart

With the aim of becoming part of the community she resides in, Diddy has worked to develop the space into a hub of creativity and have hosted local arts' exhibitions, and collaborated with creatives – all featured on the website's Stories page.

The space is designed by JA Projects and the metalwork is made by Lucie Naujalis, an amazing female welder. Upholsterer Kate Hill made the downstairs furniture - and both her children have worked at the bar. Diddy's Mum was also roped in, to make curtains.

Part of the idea of community is collaboration and Diddy's has always been a place to sell various pieces of work such as ceramicist Clara Potaito, who made plates especially for the bar, to T-shirts and prints from the exhibition *There's Still Life* which exhibited at Diddy's in 2019. 2020 meant that she needed to expand this side of the business, and saw the launch of Diddymart.

They have a couple of unusual pieces on the walls too. Guests stole some booze, but the culprits were found – the punishment? Pay for the booze and write 50 lines. The individuals took pride in their work and it is now framed and hanging on the wall; the lines were:

*Complicity is a crime. I was lookout while my friend stole
from Diddy's, where everybody knows your name*

*I stole from Diddy's a small independent business, trying to
make a difference, in an industry made up of investors and
chains, but Diddy's has CCTV*

Diddy Varley

Born in London but grew up in Wales, Diddy moved back to London at 17 to work at Reindeer, the experimental pop up restaurant by Bistrotheque founders David Waddington and Pablo Flack. She was offered a job at Bistrotheque as office manager therefore plans for university went out the window: “my mother encouraged me, she said I’d learn more in London!”.

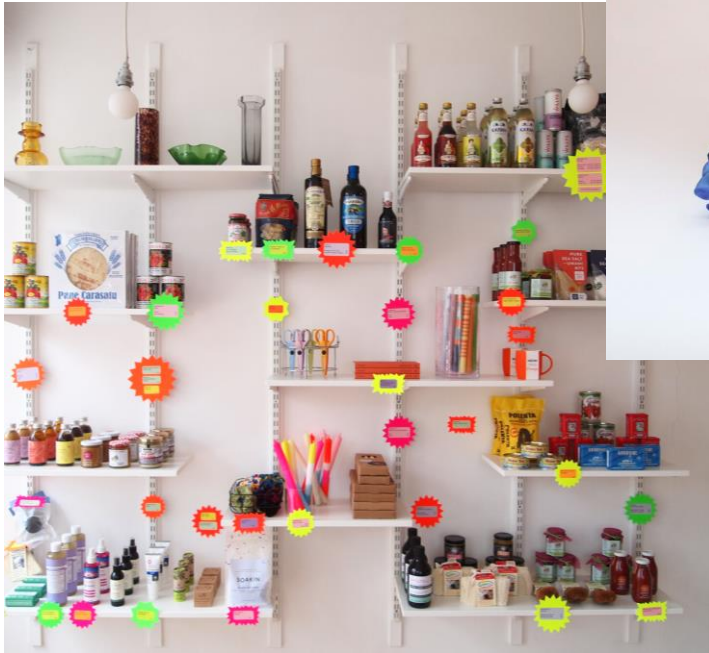
After four years at Bistrotheque Diddy went into TV working on reality shows in casting and research, including Made in Chelsea and Dinner Date. She eventually moved into the development side and spent most of her career at Optomen, with Pat Llewellyn.

Diddy found the creative inspiration and family environment that both David and Pablo, and Pat inspired in their companies was an influence on her.

But running a bar and café has always been a dream for Diddy. As a child she had set up a pub in her house called Georgian Dragon (she still has photos of the pub’s sign she made), where she would serve her parents friend’s gin for 2p.

After 5 years in TV Diddy took the plunge into making the dream a reality. She knew she wanted to be in Hackney as it was her home, a place that Diddy had spent her whole London life. It was a labour of love with friends and family helping to build, paint, and design the space.





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