

"what you do or don't do today, you will reap in a year."

bean working...

COFFEE IS THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR HOT BEVERAGE AND ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE COMMODITIES, SECOND ONLY TO OIL. COFFEE IS MORE THAN JUST A DRINK, IT'S PART OF OUR SOCIAL STRUCTURE - PEOPLE LOVE TO MEET AND CHAT OVER COFFEE. EUROPEAN'S HAVE TAKEN THEIR COFFEE SERIOUSLY FOR MANY YEARS, AUSTRALIAN'S CAUGHT ONTO COFFEE CULTURE ABOUT A DECADE AGO, QUESTIONED TRADITIONAL METHODS AND IMPROVED THE PRODUCT.

Coffee is big business and the source of many ardent discussions. Baristas - professionally qualified coffee makers - are as focused on coffee as the viticulturists are on wine. From the blend to the roasting method, the grind and the temperature, there's more to coffee than a simple pick-me-up. Zarraffa's Coffee - the name is Arabic for giraffe - has made a difference in the market since opening in 1996. Founders Kenton Campbell and Rachel Hicks stuck their necks out for a better

product. They opened a retail outlet in Australia Fair and now operate 11 stores in Southeast Queensland. Kenton said the Zarraffa's concept is a culture of product, people and service. "We serve an individually perfect cup of coffee every time. We import the best beans and roast them daily to ensure freshness. The blend is African Masai, the beans come from East African regions including Ethiopia and Kenya," Kenton said.

Californian-born Kenton lived in Seattle before coming to Australia in 1995. Kenton said he soon realised good coffee was sadly lacking on the Coast. "Using extensive experience gleaned in the USA and not much else, we started Zarraffa's. We overcame start-up challenges and confirmed Zarraffa's Coffee as a viable stand-alone entity. Since opening in Australia Fair in '96, the business has maintained a steady growth, a consistent increase in profile and store numbers," he said.

Zarraffa's roasting plant at Harbour Town roasts beans for the company's 11 outlets. Kenton said the beans are air-roasted to order. "A good cup of coffee starts with fresh beans. The air-roasting process is generally considered uneconomical and intensive but it results in clean, palatable coffee calculated to satisfy even the most demanding connoisseur. This is why we differ from the rest," he says.

Zarraffa's guarantee freshness and quality. Kenton said they can produce beans of varying acidity - to suit different tastes - in a variety of blends. "From the beginning we sought to stand-alone in our quest to woo the discerning coffee drinker. Initially we were confronted with a largely uneducated consumer market, and a glut of coffee resellers brought on by the arrival of coffee culture. We wanted to quench the needs of a comparatively small but demanding clique of gourmet coffee consumers," he said. Kenton says Zarraffa's will stay within Southeast Queensland for a while longer. "We have the potential to increase outlets from the Gold Coast to the Sunshine Coast and in between. The Sunshine Plaza coffee shop is a mecca for local people and tourists who enjoy good coffee. The local people have been very supportive," he says.

COFFEE FACTS AND FANCIES...

Experts say good coffee is similar to good wine, it is judged by aroma, body or mouth feel, flavour and the acidity or refreshing qualities. Some origin beans are very low in caffeine and body but have distinct flavours, such as chocolate, spice and wine. Beans vary in caffeine content, body, flavour and acidity. The foundation of the perfect cup is the blend of origin beans and the percentage of each type. To gain the maximum pleasure from your coffee - source a blend or create your own.

There are many ways to brew coffee; each one creates an entirely different result with variations in strength and flavour. An espresso machine captures the prime qualities of a bean better than any other brewing method but gives inconsistent results. It is essential to pay attention to every possible variable - including the weather - every time you make a cup of coffee.

Espresso translates as expressed (the bean has the juice taken out of it), rapidly and especially for you. The brew should suit your taste. Espresso should be made with very finely ground coffee with a small quantity of hot but not boiling water forced through it under very high pressure as quickly as possible.

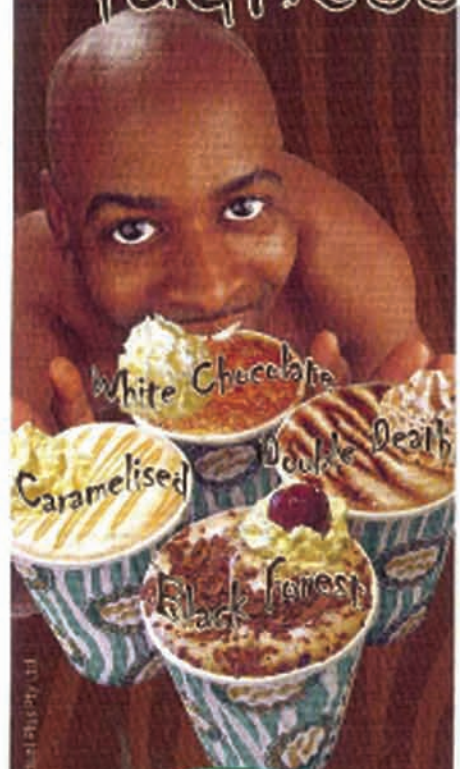
Coffee lovers should be specific about the coffee they order. If weak coffee is preferred ask for a half shot, people who prefer stronger coffee should ask for a double shot.

Coffee drinkers are equally divided about temperature; whether it is too hot or too cold shouldn't be an issue. Ask for coffee to be ready to drink or extra hot.

There isn't a right way or a wrong way to make a cup of coffee - but there is a better way to suit individual tastes. Try as many different styles and blends as you can, you wouldn't only try rising and decide you didn't like wine.

Mocha Madness

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