

Grand Barista Championship Thailand 2009 – competition guidelines

Harnessing the essence of coffee is something that I believe is personal. It takes a barista many years of experience and knowledge for them to harness and capture coffee's nuances. Having guidelines and judging this is very difficult. To say the extraction must be between this volume and this time is good for judges to easily assess, but frustrating for a passionate barista creating the flavours they love and want to pass on to the consumer. This year's Grand barista championship gives the barista an opportunity to interpret their understanding of what they love about espresso coffee. Of course there has to be some restrictions and guidelines for judging purposes.

Black Coffee

Can you put a time and volume restrictions on black coffee? For judging purposes the minimum volume will be 15ml. Volume will be judged as far as consistency, is it a consistent volume for all 4 black coffees? Time will also be marked for consistency, each extraction will be awarded a point if they are within 2 seconds of the previous shot. The black coffee extractions won't be assessed against the milk coffee extractions in case you want to change them. There will be 3 sensory judges. The 4th will be tasted by the competitor.

Milk Coffee

Well how much milk do you like with your coffee? Again your minimum volume of black coffee is 15ml. Your milk coffee vessel can be any size you like, and you can compliment the black coffee with as little or as much milk as you desire. Volumes and times will be marked the same as the black coffee

No signature beverage

In terms of aroma and flavour, coffee is the most chemically complex food product on the planet, why add anything? Not to say that a signature beverage will be excluded from the Grand Barista Championships to come, just that it doesn't suit this year's theme and focus.

Theme

Each year we will set a theme for each competitor to adhere to. This year it is "The baristas interpretation: what espresso coffee is for you" I believe this will really show people which way the Australian Specialty Coffee industry is heading in terms of redefining quality.

Latte Art

Instead of having a signature beverage we wanted to highlight the skill and precision of the barista. You will have to present 4 identical latte art designs in the vessel of your choice, judged on skill, difficulty and presentation rather than taste.

The presentation time is now 12 minutes as there isn't a need to prep for a signature beverage.

There will only be 3 sensory judges so the 4th coffee will be tasted by the competitor. This will ensure they are tasting what the judges are tasting.

The black coffees and milk coffees don't have to be served simultaneously. In your café the coffee taste best as they are complete. You don't wait for all the coffees to be prepared before you send them to the customer, especially when they're black.

This competition highlights the baristas skill and their ability to produce quality espresso coffee.