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THE NEWS MAGAZINE FOR THE RETAIL TEA AND COFFEE TRADES

# Boughton's

Nov/Dec 2009

# COFFEE HOUSE



Follow the plans for 2010 with Max - page 11

## More tea, Gromit?

The trade is invited to take part in another 'awareness event' charity beverage promotion, and it's one with an instantly-recognisable theme - it is the Wallace and Gromit Tea Party, which is set for November, in aid of children and their families in local hospitals and hospices across the UK.

The Wallace and Gromit Children's Foundation has raised an average of £250,000 a year since 2003 through its other event, Wrong Trousers Day.

"The coffee-bar trade is welcome to get involved in this," Wallace and Gromit told us. "All cafes or tea rooms need to do is call 0845 600 1924 or visit [www.wallaceandgromitteaparty.org.uk](http://www.wallaceandgromitteaparty.org.uk) and they will be sent a pack with all they need to take part including posters, balloons and collection box (in the shape of a tea pot). Then they can choose whether they would like to either take donations or give a percentage of takings, and we will help to promote their activities on our website."



## INSIDE -

**A NEW KIND OF COFFEE-HOUSE**  
(and it may not be what you expect) **Page 8**

**A NEW KIND OF TRAINING?** **Page 6**

**LESSONS FOR 2010**  
**Page 12**

**SEASONAL SELLING IDEAS** **Page 14**



It has become a tradition for us to put the latest and always-classy Lavazza calendar on our front page - the 2010 edition illustrates 'The Italian Espresso Experience' through Italian music. It features six of the world's most famous models, and six well-known Italian songs, such as *Nessun Dorma*. Although the calendar is a limited-edition series (having one on your wall is quite a perk) the images will be available for promotional use.

King Sturge's retail recovery team has been appointed to dispose of 70 store leases held by BB's Coffee & Muffins not included in the prepack sale of the company to the former owners. We have the list of sites - for a copy, ask the editor.

## Street awards give coffee cart traders the chance to show off their class

Coffee is expected to be a major feature in the new British Street Food Awards, launched by food writer Richard Johnson in association with chefs Marco Pierre White, Antony Worrall Thompson, Mark Hix and Thomasina Miers. The intention is to promote recognition of the fine food and drink served by the estimated 10,000 mobile vendors working in Britain.

Hot drinks, in particular coffee, are a major part of his interest - Johnson and his chef colleagues launched the contest with a photography session at Whitecross Street market, one of the 'cool' foodie locations in London, and when we enquired whether he knew of the coffee interest there, he immediately came back with the name of local hero Gwilym Davies as 2009 barista champion.

"Hot beverages lead the way in street food!" he told us. "I'm a coffee enthusiast rather than an expert. But ever since doing a TV series in Ethiopia, which led me to real coffee experts, I've understood how the difference between good coffee and bad coffee can be huge.

"I believe that a lot of these coffee people out there with Piaggio vans and carts have already got the right idea, and are showing the way - they're presenting a great product right to the market, and doing so as individuals, not as part of some capitalist monopoly.

"Mobile coffee traders are a great advert and typical of what street food should be about - something above the ordinary.



Antony Worrall Thompson and Marco Pierre White go on the streets

"Street food around the world is exciting, but you would never have said that of Britain... until now.

"Let's reward these people, and by doing so, shame the rest, by showing how good all out-of-home food really can be!"

The awards are now open for public nomination today at the project's website, [www.britishstreetfood.co.uk](http://www.britishstreetfood.co.uk).

Apart from coffee and hot drinks, there are various food categories and an overall winner. The winners will be recognised at next year's Ludlow food festival.

The first from the coffee trade to react was Adrian Maxwell of Fracino, who makes multi-fuel espresso machines for use on mobile carts. There is, he confirmed, absolutely no reason why today's mobile street operators should serve up drinks which are not the equal of those in our best coffee-houses.

Meanwhile, there is yet another row preventing progress of the on-street trade. See page 2.

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Gordon Richardson, founder of the Beanscene coffee and music house chain, is to make his return to the café scene in a partnership with the Scottish & Newcastle brewery, for a string of licensed cafes. The result, he says, will be coffee houses that will challenge pub culture. The first Caffè Luna and Libertine ventures will open in Paisley and Ayr. Sites in Edinburgh and Glasgow have been picked, and there are plans to move south across the border. Mo Templeton, former Director of Operations at Beanscene, has taken up the same role at the new business. The new cafes draw largely on the Beanscene concept of live music with coffee and casual dining. Only a couple of weeks before the announcement, a court criticised his attempt to win a share of the proceeds from the sale of Beanscene after he had left the company, calling his claim 'absurd'.

The AMT chain of coffee kiosks has been given permission to open up on York railway station. The decision is notable because the last attempt by a chain coffee bar to do so, a couple of years back, drew damning local criticism for a design unsympathetic to the distinctive historic design of the

station. Unusually, AMT is to site a kiosk in a waiting room, next to an existing serving hatch, and will be able to serve both into the waiting room and also to the main concourse.

Vegware, the company extremely active in eco-packaging for takeaway beverages, has established a 'significant' investment deal through Bradenham Partners LLP. The company says that the investment will fund rapid expansion and product development - "this means that eco-packaging will now be going mainstream, competing directly with oil-based plastic packaging," said the company's Lucy Frankel.

One-third of American workplaces provide free coffee to their employees, but only half of those workers find the coffee tolerable and one in 10 say it's terrible, according to a study. We look forward to the British version!

The Lean Green Bean Machine of Derby, which franchises mobile coffee bars operating from tuk-tuks, has opened its first London franchise, taking its total to 15. It has three on the way to America, one to Canada, eight to Scandinavia, two to Holland, and one to Byron Bay in Australia.

## Republic is 'looking to re-connect'

The new owners of the Coffee Republic chain will soon announce a new programme of ethical sourcing for all the business's coffee, will aim to open twenty new sites this year, and is aiming to be recognised for 'the best high-street coffee in the country'.

The chain fell into administration earlier this year, and was bought by Arab investments, controlled by brothers Khalid and Tariq Affara.



Tariq Affara

In their first interview with the trade press, Tariq Affara has told *Coffee House* that he is working to 're-connect' with both consumers and the company's franchisees.

"I have instigated a programme which will result in the ethical sourcing of all our coffee beans, and have had detailed discussions with Fairtrade to achieve this. I am also looking at delivering a better service to our franchisees."

It is widely said that although Coffee Republic was a true pioneer of the UK coffee bar trade, it foundered because not all its business ideas were good ones. What now is the right course for Coffee Republic?

"My priority for Coffee Republic is to

reconnect with the customer," answered Tariq Affara candidly. "Our coffee is great, coffee lovers 'get us', and now we want to fulfil our potential.

"Most importantly we need to continue to invest in training our baristas to maintain the consistency of taste for what is the best high street coffee in the country."

At the final crash, Coffee Republic actually tried to tell the administrator who they would and who they wouldn't have running the revived company. The relationship between the franchisees and the new owners will now be a good one, said Tariq Affara.

"Franchisees are also my customers, and it is important not to lose sight of that.

"There is no doubt they have been through some very unsettling times and we have spent the last few weeks listening to everyone and taking on board their comments."

## Piaggio trader suffers in licence chaos

There is yet another silly row over mobile coffee trading.

Cheltenham council refused to grant Chris Crichton a licence to sell Fairtrade coffee and muffins from his Piaggio, on the grounds that coffee was not 'an allowable food'.

They then granted a licence - but have now said he can't use it, because the Piaggio would cause an obstruction. Dozens of residents, and a councillor, have supported him in the local paper.

"I have the licence," Chris told us, "but the police are not happy with it on the pavement and the council won't allow it on the road." Bizarrely, he

says, his legal option is to remove the engine from the Piaggio and push it in every day.

As this magazine has said before, it is time that the trade, as a body, made representations in such matters.

The Speciality Coffee Association of Europe is seeking a new Executive Director to succeed Mick Wheeler, who will be stepping down towards the end of 2010.

The successful candidate is required to be in position by early-mid next year. Applicants may send C.V. and current employment details to: [newedsearch@scae.com](mailto:newedsearch@scae.com)

## Mr Graham Knight

We are extremely sad to record the death of Graham Knight, who ran the Period Life General Store in Nottingham, a very interesting venue. Graham was an enthusiastic pioneer of the idea of tasting evenings, and in particular held some quite superb events to show the wide variety of chocolate drinks which he stocked. He was equally imaginative with his teas - some were unique, such as the Georgian Old Lady and Old Gentleman teas, from Russia. The first is processed by Natela, a farming lady in West Georgia, and is an extremely large leaf tea of which probably only 20 kilos is exported from any harvest - and Graham Knight took 10kg of that!



When it was first discovered, Graham jokingly said to the producer that he would like an Old Gentleman tea to go beside it - and he was referred to a farmer in the next village, who provided exactly the right artisan tea.

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## Giants continue the poster wars

Coffee is again the star performer for the Whitbread group - Costa returned a 70 per cent rise in operating profit for the six months to August, posting profits of £12.6 million as profits for the whole Whitbread group slipped from £117 million to £106 million.

The recent Costa campaign, in which the chain claimed that seven out of ten consumers preferred their coffee to Starbucks, has been the subject of a complaint to the broadcasting watchdog Ofcom.

The complaint was made by Starbucks, and Ofcom found that some radio stations had missed out the 'small print' of supporting information, and so upheld the complaint. Costa said it would 'continue to differentiate itself, quantify that differentiation and communicate it,



and Starbucks said the ruling 'demonstrated the need to play fair'.

Meanwhile, Starbucks created its own posters, saying 'if the coffee's not perfect... you're not in Starbucks'.

It has been reported that Starbucks UK has returned a loss of nearly £47 million in the year to 28 September. A spokesman said the size of the loss had been exacerbated by a bigger than usual (£20million) tax charge and the cost of renovating about 100 stores, and added: "selective closures will continue through 2010."

*The Bath Coffee Festival appears to have launched itself with a flavoured latte - the first three major sponsors are (from left) John Taylerson, the flavoured-syrup maker, Martin Carwardine, the coffee roaster, and Keith Collins of Highgrove Foods (Gold Top Milk). Martin Carwardine tells us: "It's a great idea to celebrate the product. We have wine festivals, beer festivals and cider festivals but no coffee ones! I think it will be grand to be able to talk about our role in the*



*chain from plant to cup, and I really hope that this will be a great success and will become a regular thing." The event is due for May next year.*

## Flick-of-the-wrist espresso arrives

Catering and Leisure Supplies, known as a main distributor of flavoured syrup brands, has made the surprise move of launching two coffee-brewing products at the same time. One is the AeroPress, a product which is already known in the UK, and variously described as 'an espresso miracle' and as 'coffee with its clothes off'. The other has unexpectedly been greeted by big-name chefs as a likely helpful move in restaurant coffee.

The AeroPress is a 30-second manual brewer - the water and coffee are allowed to mix for a few seconds, then a downward push presses the brew through a micro-filter. The supplier says it is easier and faster than a cafetiere, and gives an extremely clean cup - there is a coffee bar in the south of England that uses three of them, mounted together on a stand for ease of service.



America. List price is probably £105.00.

"We are going for both retail and foodservice sales for both devices," the company's Jonathan Money told us, adding that he has one major chain already interested in the concept of using the AeroPress for brew-coffee making so they can sell a selection of fresh single-origin coffees - much like the recent experiments with the Clover.

"The ability of the AeroPress to brew fine-ground coffee, and the low brew-time compared to a cafetiere, opens up single-origin coffee as a whole undiscovered world for consumers to explore."

To his surprise, several chefs have taken an interest in the Twist, saying that it could bring uncomplicated espresso, with a slight bit of theatre, to restaurant coffee service.

The exclusive new product is the Mypressi Twist, promoted as 'the world's first truly portable espresso maker'. The Twist is powered by a small N20 gas cartridge hidden in the handle, so it can be used virtually anywhere. It uses ground coffee or pods, and produces a single or double espresso in 20-30 seconds. Each recyclable gas cartridge makes eight single shots, and the idea has won a 'Best New Product' award from the Speciality Coffee Association of

Mike Day, who spent three years fighting railway industry red-tape to win permission to open a café from derelict buildings at Barnstaple station, has won recognition twice in a couple of months - after appearing in the Guardian's list of the top ten railway cafes, he has won the 'best retail outlet' prize from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships.

The police in Reading have warned of a gang of 'distraction thieves' who are targeting customers in coffee shops - there have been 12 incidents in a month.

The theme for Fairtrade Fortnight 2010 is The Big Swap, in which the organisers hope that consumers will exchange their normal drink for a Fairtrade version.

Coffeeheaven, the Central European coffee bar chain, has reported a loss for the year ending March of £190,000, compared to a profit of £510,000 the previous year. However, revenue grew by 53 per cent to £23million. Founder Richard Worthington said that the group did well in its main market of Poland, but trading in the Czech Republic had been hit by global financial problems and a fall in tourism to Prague.

The debate about internet usage in coffee houses has taken a new turn in Newark, New Jersey - a member of the public has been charged with criminal trespass for using a coffee shop's wi-fi service without actually buying anything. The manager of the River Road coffee house has said that his staff will usually wait for a computer user to buy something before reminding them that wi-fi usage is for customers. In this case, his staff said that the computer user had been in the café for seven hours the previous day; he waited an hour to see if she bought anything, then approached her. The customer said that she didn't think she should be forced to buy anything; when the police were called, she gave them a false name.

Joanne Fairweather has joined Beyond the Bean as account manager. She arrives from Wicked Coffee.

Taylor's of Harrogate has won the gold award at the nationwide Food and Drink Federation Community Partnership Awards. It won for its Cone Exchange, by which the factory works with 100 schools and community groups to find homes for its waste materials - it now recycles almost 30 per cent of its waste.

## This is the new La Spaziale S40



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## Kaldi

Costa has been very active... the brand interviewed 3,000 people in August to find out if they thought coffee made by a human tasted better than one made by an automatic machine. They report that 47per cent of consumers believe coffee tastes better when prepared by hand. That is, of course, a minority figure, which is probably not what the barista community wants to hear! Meanwhile, *The Burnley Express* has reported that the town's coffee lovers are 'rejoicing' that Costa is about to open there. Steady on, lads...

Vancouver, the city which has a reputation as Canada's capital of good coffee, has suffered a slight setback to its reputation - when the Winter Olympics come to the city in February, the official coffee will be Far Coast, which is made by... Coca-Cola. Vancouver is said to have the highest number of coffee shops per head of population in the world, and the Canadian brand Tim Hortons is regarded as the country's unofficial national drink. Although the Coke product is the only one allowed to be sold in the games stadiums, the local coffee trade is planning a big campaign to bring sports tourists into local coffee-houses.

Laughter in the south-west at the *Telegraph's* report of the Truro Food Festival, in which local company Origin Coffee was lauded as 'Britain's first roastery'. That puts the rest of the coffee trade in its place, then...

A columnist in Seattle is concerned that bikini baristas are being required to cover up under local American decency laws. He says he thought 'obscurity' started with Starbucks' prices for a cup of coffee...

In San Diego, California, police are searching for thieves who stole a cash machine from a local coffee house. Police say they were called when a member of the public thought it suspicious to see someone wheeling an ATM down the road...

**Kaldi's book about the trade, in aid of Shelter from the Storm, is due out in December. E-mail the Editor for order details now!**

# Coffee-shop owners told: find out what the internet world is saying about you!

**How many coffee-shop owners know what is being said about them in the big world?**

By coincidence, the subject has come up twice recently - once in a discussion with coffee bar chains, and once in conversation with our friends at the *Publican*, the paper for the licensed trade. They had highlighted the interesting matter of 'review' sites on the internet - it is now possible for consumers to 'review' their experiences of anything from restaurants to washing machines, and the great problem is... you may never know if you've been 'reviewed'.

"Being British, customers don't tend to tell their hosts if they have received good, bad or ugly service unless it has been truly awful. This is a shame, as it invariably means that the host, who might not be aware there has been a problem, can't rectify the problem there and then," wrote *Publican's* Mark Daniels. "But customers are very quick to go away and tell others if they've had a bad time. If you Google for a specific bar, restaurant or hotel or look it up on Google Maps, you are invariably offered the opportunity to review the venue and give it a rating out of five stars. How long before your business is being blighted by Internet reviews it receives that you have absolutely no knowledge of?"

Coffee House asked several players in the café trade - and the first one came up with a scary statistic about social networking, where such opinions

## Caffe Nero coy on its new roastery

**It has been confirmed, as we recently reported, that Caffe Nero has taken on the roasting of its own coffee. However, there has still been no official statement on the matter, although it is generally accepted that they are working from the Caffe Torelli site in South London.**

The move has also been reported by Coburg Coffee, which acknowledged in its latest financial results that the loss of its largest customer would have a significant effect. For the year to April, Coburg's sales for the year were slightly down at £3.5 million, and pre-tax loss was £123,000. Managing director Chris Birkle is relinquishing his role, stays on the board as non-executive director, and Bryan Stockley becomes General Manager. The chairman, Konrad Legg, regretted having to make a number of long serving factory employees redundant.



*Think of it as a new way to talk to customers - Darcy Willson-Rymer*

are frequently given. If Facebook were a country, he said, it would be the eighth biggest in the world, just after Japan.

"Increasingly, the Internet is where people are going for this information," said Paul Ettinger of Caffe Nero. "There is a 'we love Caffe Nero' page on Facebook, and we have to be aware of these things. The broadcasting of an opinion on the internet is now instantaneous - you have to look for this information and track it."

At Starbucks, British MD Darcy Willson Rymer was optimistic: "You have to be in the places where customers have conversations, and you have to know that these discussions are taking place. That's why we launched a Facebook page.

"Think of it as a new way for your customers to talk to you. We have 4.4 million people on Facebook talking to us, and I tell you, they don't give me the silent treatment! On Twitter, there is something about Starbucks every 23 seconds. I have customers sending me lists of sites where they want me to open!"

It is not just cafes that get reviewed. Some years ago, a noted barista trainer wrote what is considered a definitive work on frothing milk. "I had this 'reviewed', and I didn't know about it for years," he told us. "Problem was - they got a lot of it wrong!"

We do believe that someone connected with the coffee trade is about to come up with a system of tracking these things. Watch this space.

## Gaggia suppliers unite

**The fall-out from the closure of Gaggia UK has sparked much activity. Watermark of Dublin have now confirmed that they will be able to provide spares and support for commercial machines in Britain, partly through Rich Coffee of Berkshire and probably other distributors.**

Watermark is proposing to establish a UK base. "We're starting a big adventure in the UK," Watermark's MD David Lawlor told us. "In Ireland, we do only commercial Gaggia machines; we have all spares, and can get them to the trade in the UK with two days."

Meanwhile, Gaggia's retail outlets are to continue under the control of the brand's former UK managing director, Raj Beadle, as Caffe Shop. Among his stock will be Gaggia domestic machines.



*Among the first of this year's in-house barista contests, which we hope will see winners entered into the nation championship, is the Krispy Kreme event. This is Becky Jane Marlborough of the Reading shop, who won the south and west event, being presented with a barista kit by Krispy Kreme's Lee Leadbetter. The final is at the end of November.*

# LONDINIUM

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BESPOKE COFFEE ROASTERS



## Eco-friendly roaster makes its Euro debut

A quite remarkable event was held on the Welsh borders last month, with the launch of the Loring SmartRoaster to the British trade. It was, said Peter James of James' Gourmet Coffee, who hosted the event, notable that a couple of dozen competing roasters attended to look at the new technology, and all got on well.

The major feature of the Loring is the recirculation of hot gases, which gives both environmental and economical benefits, but also creates an oxygen-free roast, which seems to produce a better-tasting bean - although nobody knows why.

"I come from an engineering background, and I didn't like the way roasters were built," inventor Mark Ludwig told us.

"Most coffee roasters take air at room temperature, heat it up, and then let it go - very inefficient. I kept asking roaster manufacturers why they couldn't re-circulate the hot air, and they kept giving me all kinds of reasons why they thought it wouldn't work.

"We persisted, and realised the cool elegance of a system which trapped its own hot air. The lack of oxygen in the



Mark Ludwig and the new roaster

roast is because of the recirculation of the gases.

"We haven't yet worked our way through how it affects the taste, but given the same beans and the same skill level, we do get a better taste."

Roaster Peter James, who has installed the new machine, said: "every time we tested a known coffee, the result came back brighter than we expected.

Another thing we realised was that you can't roast by eye any more. The outer colour is not what you expect.

"A bean which from a normal roaster you would think looks undeveloped, is correct from this one. This has led to interesting conversations with some very experienced, seasoned professionals, who say that the result is not going to be what their customers will expect coffee to look like!

"Several roasters visited us, and I was impressed by the way they all got involved - we roasters tend to keep things close to our chests, but with this, there was a feel that we had all started on a shared journey, about roasting coffee a different way."

As a result of the event, three of the roasters will now be manufactured for the first European customers.

## Terracycle arrives

Kenco has made the latest move in recycling of coffee packs, with the UK launch of Terracycle, which 'rewards' those who return packaging, with donations to charities of their choice.

The concept was devised in America by Tom Szaky, who pays for the waste material and turns it into a new saleable product. In the US, six million consumers are returning used packaging.



The Kenco tote bag

In the British project, Terracycle will pay 2p to charity for every used pack. Those packs will be converted into bags and plant pots - typically, the Kenco tote bag will sell at £7.

## Ian and Trudi have left the beach!

(but we're still by the sea)

Coffee House magazine has a new office - we're at:

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Website: [www.coffee-house.org.uk](http://www.coffee-house.org.uk)

Cafe2U has again won the mobile section of the Bev-E awards. Franchisee Steve Dyson won the award, but two other franchised businesses, run by Kerry Brookes, and Simon and Nicola Fletcher, will receive 'highly commended' certificates.

Coffee#1 took the national chain coffee bar award - the company's James Shapland is featured in the debate on page 12. The northern winner of the independent cafe award was Avanti of Kirby Lonsdale, with the very new Waterloo Tea Gardens in Cardiff taking the southern title. The midlands winner was the Bottle Kiln of Derbyshire. 'Highly commended' certificates go to Cafe Harlequin of York, Coffee Aroma of Lincoln, and Sadliers of Tettenhall.

## Two suppliers work to create 'real coffee' ice-creams

For the second time this summer, a specialist coffee company has worked with an artisan ice-cream maker based on a dairy farm to produce an ice-cream with the taste of fresh ground Fairtrade coffee. In both cases, the new product is not a one-off novelty, but is available in catering packs.

The new product is Cooper's Coffee ice-cream, made by Yummy Yorkshire, which won four prizes in last year's Ice Cream Alliance awards. The product is based on Cooper's Fairtrade Five Arabica espresso, which is brewed, diluted and chilled before being turned into the dessert at a farm which uses a small-batch machine producing ten litres at a time. The catering packs are of 4.5 litres.

The northern product closely follows similar work in the south-west, between the Cotswold Ice Cream Company, based at Hill House Farm in Cheltenham, and the neighbouring Best Coffee Beans company.

There have in the past been many attempts at a coffee-flavoured ice-cream, not all of which have been successful. In many cases, the ice-cream manufacturers have preferred to use instant coffee for their flavourings, which can absorb too much of the cream and give a bitter result. Dani Slatter of Cotswold says she has now proved that 'real' coffee can be used successfully in an ice-cream dessert.

"The blend of beans needs to be a robust one, as subtle flavours can be lost in ice-cream. We have also found that the addition of a very high-quality vanilla extract helps round off the flavours to give a smooth cappuccino style."

Cotswold Ice Cream's cappuccino is available in 4.5 litre tubs for catering use.

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There have been some notable training projects in recent years - the Coffee Community video course on CD/DVD was 'badged' by several companies, and sold around 30,000 copies. The BSA's work to establish a City and Guilds barista qualification is acknowledged to have been valuable work.

But it has long been said that there is a danger of unregulated training. Some people, often those laid off by big companies, have discovered a new life in barista training, and the field is now populated by both experts and those of doubtful status.

What standards should the cafe operator really expect from the modern professional barista trainer?

"We are offering the City & Guilds course, because we have had so much success from the techniques set out in it," says Rombouts' training manager Jonathan Wadham, with a noticeable amount of enthusiasm. "Although there is a bias towards espresso and speciality coffees, it covers tea, hot chocolate, juices and smoothies, and also an element of customer service. It should give a really good grounding to anyone starting out in the cafe/tea shop industry."

Why is it so good?

"This may seem obvious, but it is important to serve only the best quality coffee, by making it the best way possible, while having the best possible contact with the customer."

This is the 'added value', says Rombouts - not just teaching a barista how to make a memorable coffee, but how to interact, and how to play a part in winning customers, upselling, and retaining loyal visitors.

"Candidates on the City & Guilds course can expect to learn all the basic skills in a modern cafe environment. The training provides an excellent grounding for anyone starting out in the cafe or tea shop industry, and also has value for those who already operate a business but want to enhance their knowledge."

(Rombouts offers the three-day course at £350 per person.)

Several trainers advocate a no-non-

# Where is the added value in modern barista training?

**We have a cafe world in which you can now find a barista trainer on every street corner, and milk-steaming is no longer a rare art. But what should the cafe operator really be entitled to expect from today's trainers?**



At work in the Rombouts training school

sense approach to the basics of the job.

One is Richard Norman, the experienced barista who has been hired to man exhibition stands for several known companies, and who runs his own Mad About Coffee training, which he styles as 'from beginning to beyond! He has also done train-the-trainer courses for big tea brands as well.

"The biggest current question I get is 'how do I do latte art?' and I always answer: 'let's walk before we run!' But what is really surprising is that some of these people suggest they want to do it for takeaway coffees, which have a lid on that often never comes off... what a waste of breath! Shall we have to invent a see-through lid for latte art?"

"The other very dramatic thing we teach is machine maintenance - we will show really horrible examples of what happens if they don't get their

machine cleaning right.

"I say to cafe clients that I'm really going to scare your staff with this one, and they say 'good, give 'em a kick up the backside!'

Do not get too flash, agrees Marco Arrigo, head of quality at the Illy importer, Eurofoodbrands. There is a great value in simple, basic barista

work, so be careful you don't choose a trainer who has his head in the stars.

"We need a lot more good, simple training, without having all the barista bulls\*\*t," is

the expected no-nonsense view from Arrigo. "Training has become more and more complicated, to show how clever the trainers are - the danger is that it makes the work look impossible.

"We have a 15-minute training session that can make an absolute novice land a half-decent cappuccino or latte. It's called the ice-cube method, and it works very well for us.

"You need to clean three things, and make three types of milk - and that's all you need to know to start off with. When you have mastered this, then you can read a book on how it's grown, packaged and the Latin names of the beans!"

In the no-nonsense category, don't put up with your staff having to work the way that suits the trainer, says David Cooper at Cooper's Coffee in Huddersfield.

"A big 'added value' for us is the fact that we can offer training at our own

suite or also on-site at the customer's shop. This gives the customer an option - some cafe owners prefer staff to be away from the shop floor and the distractions that come with it, but others prefer their staff to be trained on the same equipment they will be using day in, day out."

This, he says, is the operator's decision, and the trainer must be prepared to do a full job wherever and whenever it suits the client. Don't settle for less.

"Because our barista trainer Lisa has wide experience in hospitality, her role is never restricted to simple coffee training. She frequently gives advice on wider issues such as staffing recruitment, staff rotas, customer service, queue-busting, menu-planning, cup sizes including take-away, basic drinks menus including tea and chocolate, and milk options.

"Our advanced training days also incorporate cupping, roasting, and blending - these are an introduction at a basic level. We can also provide information on basic machine maintenance such as seal changes and grinder burrs, and understanding adjustments to grinder settings on site is a subject which more and more people are keen to learn.

"We always tweak our training to the individual customer's needs. I believe this gives our services an edge and provides additional value that you simply won't get from many of our competitors."

Added-value does not necessarily mean something 'new' - it can be a valuable reminder of essential basics.

"I often feel that we are helping an endangered species when we train independent operators," said Barry Kither of Lavazza. "We find that the most important added-value items are those which you must not forget.

"Market forces dictate that your staff must now make coffee very well... you have no choice. It's true that a brand like ours will give instant credibility, but you still have to make it well!"

"As a cafe operator, you must remember to train every single one of your new staff. If you don't, your standards will slide. If you do, and if you monitor those standards constantly, maybe with mystery-shopper visits

**"Market forces dictate that your staff must now make coffee very well... you have no choice."**

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which really do work well, then you are going to compete with Starbucks on customer-service levels. Try smiling and engaging with the customer and see what happens!

"If you are a 'coffee-focused' business, then train your staff to then respect the product and be prepared to educate and inform your customers. A delegate at a training course takes a lot of knowledge away - please make sure they share it with other staff and your customers when it's appropriate.

"On a good day, with a good trainer, your staff will take it all in and leave inspired."

Many trainers now offer 'added value' services which go beyond actual cafe work - make sure that you pick a realistic offer from someone qualified to do it, says Marco Olmi at Drury.

"It's very encouraging that skill levels are now certainly much better," he remarked. "Our trainer went to work with the baristas in Krispy Kreme's internal competition, and she was surprised that base skills were already so high that her job had turned into supplying the gloss on the top.

"But because there are still many people who have never frothed milk, you now have to get into different levels of training, however informally. We will also train on tea, because we know it so well (Drury's own tea blending

operation is upstairs from the roast-ery!), and we can talk you through menu development and the skill of working through a queue quickly.

"But there has to be a limit - the price of your machine doesn't necessarily entitle you to professional help in finding a property for your café and negotiating the lease!

"What this means is that it is important to appreciate how much any trainer can be realistically expected to do for you - certain business skills are best done by specialist consultants, and they will charge for their specialist expertise."

Added value must extend to a knowledge of the espresso machine, says Fracino, and this is where training which concentrates on basic milk-frothing may just not be enough.

"We focus on understanding temperature and pressure," says managing director Adrian Maxwell. "We educate them on how to clean groups and filter holders, and lubrication.

"But we make this simple, because we are trying to encourage staff to want to use the machine, rather than create a barrier by giving them too much to think about. A lot of trainers over-complicate the process, which puts the less-interested staff off from using the machines and making good coffee."

## A new kind of one-to-one

In Sheffield, trainer Youri Vlag of Absolute Coffee is the man who recently launched a remote one-to-one system of training, in which the participants are not in the same room - it is done across the internet, using a webcam and the Skype system of video/voice call.

The concept of 'added value' from a barista trainer is one which the trade must expect, he says.

"Stories about 'the perfect cappuccino' just don't impress anyone anymore. I get quite a few students who have had training somewhere else, and they tell me that this is often done in groups of four or more, and they spend most of their time watching, they have to listen to the barista trainer, and if they are lucky, they get the chance to make a couple of coffees.

"We run training with a maximum of two students, and even if we are hired to do in-house training with a big group, we will split them up. We want as much one-to-one practical work as possible, and we want every student to try their hand at everything.

"The trainer only makes maybe ten drinks in total of the whole course, and then only to set the standard...after this it is pretty much the student making everything.



Youri Vlag

"This means the student is making about 50 drinks in a couple of hours. This is enough to establish a sense of routine, and we run the course in a real coffee shop where we have a separate bar for training - we can test the drinks on all the staff.

"This training very much motivates people. We can talk a lot about their business, and often the students want to talk about their future, under no pressure."

It was his existing use of video which inspired the Skype idea. This, he says, offers a remarkable combination of benefits in both cost and practicality.

"We send them a pack of our coffee, and they buy some milk. Then they copy the trainer as he works, and can do it any time of day, and anywhere in the world."

"For those who think this is crazy and can't be done, we would like to prove them wrong. It can be done and we can do it!"

## How to aim for an empire!

At Coffee Community, Paul Meikle-Janney has devised two new courses for those who already run cafes, and are looking to make the step from an existing good business to something really special.

"Our Progressive Barista Skills is a much more advanced course - although we deliberately avoid the word 'advanced' in the title, because many trainers have used it to promote what we think are only introductory courses! Our Progressive one looks at elements like altitude and processing in coffee flavour, goes into details on the extraction theory of espresso, milk science, and a brief introduction to competitions."

This does not cover any basics, and so delegates are assumed to have some knowledge to begin with. The point, says Meikle-Janney, is to aim at elevating an existing business or personal skill from the 'standard' to the 'special'.

The Bean to Brand course takes this further, and is a specific business-elements course.

"This is a two-day course that goes through everything you need to consider in starting your coffee empire!"

explains Paul Meikle-Janney. "It used to be a one-day course but we found that delegates were coming out shell-shocked after being bombarded with information.

"A two-day programme allows us to go through information on business plans, branding, design, implementation and operational system, and take time not only to go through the theory, but start to apply it to the delegates' own plans and projects.

"We are increasingly working on this kind of consultative project, including re-branding a university's catering facilities, improving sales through improved merchandising for one chain, and various enquiries are coming in about developing café brands abroad.

"My background was in general catering before specialising in coffee, including opening hotels and restaurants in the UK and US, which has put us in a position to offer wider help.

"We are also just putting a team of companies together which will offer specialised help to certain business sectors - we're on the catering side, and our partners include design skills, graphics and signage skills, and retail knowledge."



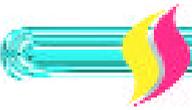
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# Prepare for a new kind of coffee-house...

Coffee houses will have to change and develop - because there is more to the out-of-home experience than just coffee.

Several speakers at the Vienna summit all found themselves pointing to the same conclusion - that the coffee-house trade cannot stand still, and that 'change' now means more than a lick of paint or a new espresso blend.

First, warned Jim Slater of Costa, we all face stronger competition coming in than ever before. "The world on-the-go market is worth \$250 billion, transactions are up five per cent and average spend up three per cent," he said. "So it's no wonder competitors are appearing - everybody wants a piece of the action. We have a rapidly emerging 'retail attached' market, with hundreds of department stores who recognise the value of an in-house coffee shop - this is a very dangerous competitor."

And most active of all, he said, are the quick-service food chains.

"In the States, although Starbucks is the leader in coffee, McDonalds is the brand in growth. McDonalds have started talking-up their coffee and they have started spending serious money across the world in support of McCafe. Subway has been very aggressive, with free coffee with any six-inch sub. You can't walk anywhere in Manhattan without seeing the Dunkin' Donuts Box o'Joe carry-out coffee box.

"Is all this a crime against what we think of as 'good coffee'? No - just think of all the consumers who are now being exposed to coffee by these people, and the fantastic opportunity for us to educate all these people to premium coffee. So we at Costa now talk of our coffee being the best, as against the entry-level coffee of Subway.

"It breaks our hearts in the coffee trade to know that the public doesn't know the difference between good coffee and great coffee. We all have to teach these fast-food customers to look for great coffee, and if we don't, we will get lost in the new crowd of people who 'just sell coffee'.

"Let's be loud and proud about great coffee!"

(American research the week after this speech did suggest that McDonalds growth against Starbucks was slowing slightly).

Paul Ettinger of Caffe Nero had the nerve to confront the standard phrase: 'it's all about the coffee'. It isn't, he said.



*"You all keep talking about the perfect coffee, but the people who cross your doorstep have a different perspective"*

- Lewis Allen

"A 'passion for coffee', which everybody used to talk about, is now only the ticket in to the game. Now, you have to do more to win the game.

"A critical change is in the decrease in market growth - the days of 25 per cent growth per year have gone, and we all have to accept that every coffee bar now has to perform to its maximum."

Watch for the high-quality independ-

Meetme.com (an online dating service) suggests that there is a lot to learn from understanding online networking.

He also speculated on the use of technology - can a door-mounted camera send a message to the counter screen saying who's just come in, and what his preferred drink is?

If so, said the next speaker to loud laughter, that explains why he is always thrown out of Caffe Nero - for



*There are different ways, agreed both David Anderson and Nadine Bashir*



ents he said - these cafes may be run by bankers and estate agents who have lost their jobs, but these people are good. "The day of the independent is coming, and it will last for several years," he predicted.

Meanwhile, chains such as his would be working hard to understand the possibilities of technology and the fullest possibilities of new online social-networking habits. That Caffe Nero is probably now the venue picked for twenty meetings a day through

this was Darcy Willson-Rymer, the top man of Starbucks in the UK.

He endorsed the idea that customers now need to be understood.

"I keep reading that there is a recession, and that people are going off coffee. So, is everything never going to be the same again for us?

"No, it is not - because the habits they learned during the recession will not go away. Customers will not stop looking for value, and why should they?"



*This is the Box O'Joe, referred to by Costa's Jim Slater - it was invented almost ten years ago, and is a carry-out fold-together cardboard lunch-box containing the equivalent of ten 10oz cups of black coffee. The company sells them at, we think, \$13.99 a box, but also uses them as prizes in promotions aimed at office consumers.*

"I regularly now shut a store with customers inside and invite these people to give me their opinions - and they do! They know what they want, and in the recession, they say they will not compromise on their values. Eighty per cent of them have said to me that fairly-traded products are just as important to them during a recession, which tells us that ethically-sourced products are not a 'nice to have' any more - staying true to what customers want in a recession will give you a return in customer trust afterwards.

"So this is not the time to ease off. This is the time to work harder."

You can work harder, and work differently, said Nadine Bashir, of the Cilantro Café chain from Egypt. She has 68 cafes in the Middle East, has recently opened two franchises in London, and advocates a very new approach to both customers and franchisees.

"People who think of an Egyptian café think we must cater for old men with grey beards and water-pipes. We were in fact a modern coffee house in Cairo six years before Starbucks.

"We do table service, which is unusual. Our signature item is the 'big red book' - customers can write in it, draw in it, write poems or comments, and we use it for the graphics in our stores.

"We are all about an appetite for life, and we believe we can affect the lives of our customers - someone has had a bad day, or someone has a big exam the next day, and the right welcome can help their whole day. So we see Cilantro as 'a place you come to'... oh, and by the way, you can get something to eat and drink, too.

"We had a mystery shopper call in, and his report said that when he was leaving, the staff asked if he would like another coffee. When he said 'no, thanks', they told him not to hurry off, and why didn't he just sit back down and relax, and people-watch for bit? We see regular customers coming in and sitting in their own places... then we see them getting closer, and soon they're talking to each other.

"We have now surprised ourselves in London - we have customers coming in three times a day."

This is a new way of caring for customers, she said. She accepted some scepticism from bigger competitors whose values are driven by bottom-line, but insisted that faith in her 'new way' returned dividends.

"I had a franchisee upset because a



p some new and unexpected ideas...

## ...where it isn't 'all about the coffee'

customer would keep coming in, read the newspaper which we supply, and take it away with him. The manager was worried - what should he do? I told him to buy another paper, and tell the guy that if he needs to take a paper away with him, here's one on us.

"This is a new way!

"Because our people take care of customers like this, in turn we take care of our people. We have holiday homes for them, we have football competitions for them, we have awards and we get celebrities to give the prizes, and if one of them gets married we give them dinner. We want to be part of their families - we ask if we can meet mum and dad, bring them in!

"We have a positive impact on customers and staff - and when banks are walking away from all kinds of investment in business, somebody like us has to do something new."

To underline the changes coming in business, two speakers from the design world stood up to tell the café

trade to recognise a changing world.

Lewis Allen of Portland Design Associates endorsed Caffè Nero's view that coffee alone is no longer enough to sustain a café business.

"You all keep talking about the perfect coffee, but the people who cross your doorstep have a different perspective," he told the conference. "This is the generation of people who have now realised that they need to get out and meet the people they've talked to on Facebook - life is now a fusion of online and offline activity.

"So, this gives you an issue about the role of the coffee shop. There are two roles, and only one is about enjoying coffee.

"The other is to provide a place where the customer can do what they want to do. If this means they want to occupy a seat for three hours with headphones on, what are you going to do about it - switch the power off? No - because this is what they want to do when they go out.

"So you can now see coffee shops around the world which are a combination of interests - flower shops or online areas, combined with coffee shop. Le Plug is a mobile-phone socialising café in Paris - a coffee boutique where you come in to understand and choose your new phone.

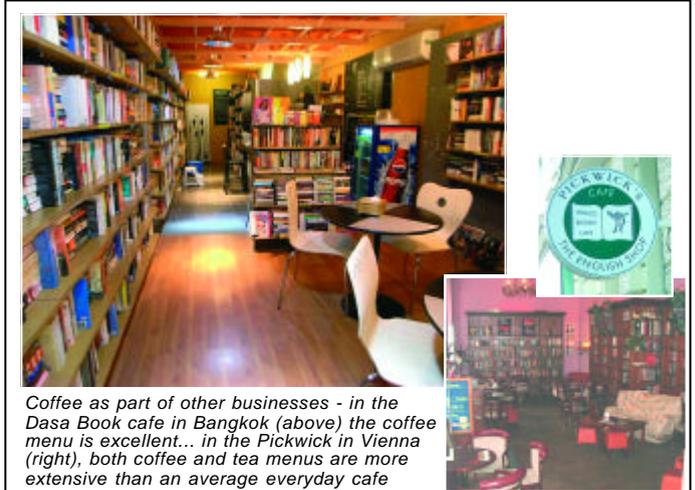
"Twenty per cent of internet users in Tokyo are 'cyberhomeless', which turns the coffee-house into a new kind of 'third place'. The café becomes almost a hotel for those who work very late. We have to accept that people now work in different places.

"In Japan, and now in London, there are places where you can say 'I want to eat spaghetti tonight - please get the stuff together for me, and when I arrive, show me how to cook it, and then I'll eat it'. For coffee shops, this means the understanding that customers may want to get together and taste.

"So the new message for the new kind of café is - 'do what you do... and do it here'. This is 'a new kind of place', and it is what 'customising your offer' really means. It does not mean offering them 6,000 ways of ordering a coffee!"

The difference goes further, he argued. It may now affect the sites which become available.

"We have to accept that we now have property developers who say they don't want another Costa or Nero - they want someone who is going to offer a different experience."



Coffee as part of other businesses - in the Dasa Book cafe in Bangkok (above) the coffee menu is excellent... in the Pickwick in Vienna (right), both coffee and tea menus are more extensive than an average everyday cafe

**The speakers talked of the trend for quality coffee houses to be part of other businesses. Here are two examples we've recently come across - Pickwick's Cafe-bar is in Vienna, and is something we found while doing a tour of the local coffee houses. It's the largest video-rental store in Vienna, but a bookshop as well, and also features live music and big-screen sport. However, its speciality coffee menu is sixteen items long, with Illy the featured brand, and the speciality tea menu is just as long, featuring a few things we'd never seen before (apple crumble tea?) The other example is the Dasa Book Cafe in Bangkok. This one combines the two activities - order a cappuccino, take a book, and sit down and read. If you buy both book and coffee, you get a discount. For buying several books, we got free coffee!**

His challenge was echoed by David Anderson of the Cada design group, who repeated the point that a coffee-house business must fit with the customer's priorities.

"If we say that cafes need challenging, we aren't talking about your colour scheme. It's about social dynamics, and you have to accept that while it is your coffee which is central to your brand, it is the 'experience' which is central to your customer.

"This means you have to give them what they want, not what you want to give them!"

Looking around the world, he said, we can see such things as a coffee-house which sells bikes - a particularly big clue, considering the mayor of London's campaign to encourage cycling in the city. He highlighted businesses which will make up a prescription, or sell gardening tools, while also taking the opportunity to sell a good coffee. (On the Welsh border, this magazine recently came across a musical instrument shop with a coffee room attached, and in Vienna, the editor discovered the Pickwick book café - picture on this page).

"You can continue down the linear path if you like," said Anderson, "or you

can create something different. It may be a place where people can fall in love, or a place where people can create the next music form, but in common, it is a place from which you sell good coffee."

The clues are out there, he said. Copy the independents, he said, observing that even Starbucks had done so in its attempts to create its new 15th Avenue West stores.

"Analysis continues to suggest that the chain coffee bars are more important than the independents. But that's just the industry talking, not the customers. Go out and visit the independent coffee shops, then take the social temperature, and ask how you can learn from it."

Our Vienna report continues next page...



### ...and a new kind of coffee retailer

*It would, said the Caffè Nero speaker, be a fool who failed to check out what Nespresso are doing in coffee retail. In some big cities they have 'prestige' stores in the classiest shopping areas. Typically (Vienna, above) the atmosphere is expensively upmarket, rather like a flash car showroom - a greeter at the door, a manager at a smart table, artistic displays of coffees, and wall displays of the Nespresso varieties. The chic European families have created a ritual, to come in every Saturday to pick their coffee for the next week... a dozen of these capsules, a dozen of those, and so on.*



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The Allegra talking shop in Vienna produced the latest round of a long-standing argument...

# Gloves off at the ethical debate

There was very nearly blood on the carpet at the final debate in Vienna - and although many in the audience had seen it coming (and we predicted it in our last issue) the strange thing was that several of the participants clearly had not.

The Allegra summit had deliberately pitched four of the coffee trade's best-known ethical organisations against one anti-Fairtrade economist. It was an unjustifiably unfair contest - and indeed, the economist won the most applause by far.

It was a great shame that by the late afternoon, a less than full hall remained to hear what was intended to be a debate, but which was dominated by Dr Peter Griffiths, the author of *Why Fairtrade isn't Fair*. His presentation was a thundering and extremely emotional denunciation of the work of Fairtrade.

He advocates using marketing methods to improve the lot of farmers, and tells stories of having increased farmers' incomes by changing business systems, and even government policies. In one case, he says, his work even prevented a famine.



*Peter Griffiths in accusatory action - a quite typical moment from the ethical-trading debate.*

*(Pic courtesy of Allegra Strategies)*

"Fairtrade is frightening," he told the hall. "It is fine for the consultants it employs, but not for farmers. In a month's work I have often done more for the third world than Fairtrade has done in 25 years!"

He attacked Fairtrade's methods, the transparency of their figures, argued that the Fairtrade system actually makes things worse for farmers, and claimed that Fairtrade distorted the market, to the detriment of coffee-growers. And, he added, Fairtrade only responds to awkward questions with criticism or ridicule of the questioner.

On the panel were representatives of Fairtrade, Coffee Kids, Utz Kapeh, and the Rainforest Alliance. These were clearly not expecting any argument, and when sparks began to fly, only the Rainforest speaker did do his best to state a case. Previously, in the presentations, only Carolyn Fairman of Coffee Kids had matched Dr Griffiths' emotion in support of her cause, and she said nothing at all in the debate that followed.

The debate showed just how the Fairtrade cause can be its own worst enemy in its public relations - with the admirable exception of the top lady, Harriet Lamb, the organisation often does tend to sound like a party political broadcast. Certainly in Vienna the audience could clearly be seen to be displeased with the Fairtrade representative, whose main reaction against the criticism from Griffiths was to smile knowingly and shake his head.

The audience wanted to hear an argument in return, and when it did not come, they turned on Fairtrade.

Even Instaurator, the renowned world authority on espresso, joined in the assault, demanding (and not getting) answers on exactly how much gets back to the farmer.

Unexpectedly, Reinhold Schärf, head of the Schärf Coffee Group of Austria, also joined in, with a demand to know how many staff were employed at the Fairtrade Foundation. The answer given was 76 (actually 21 short of the real total) which was received by a moment of silence in the hall before Mr Schärf's retort: "so, if we listen to Dr Griffiths, we can do without all of you!"

Later, *Coffee House* told Dr Griffiths we were surprised that none of the other panelists had simply said to him: 'if it wasn't for you economists making a mess of it, we would not need to exist'. That would probably have been sympathetically received in the hall.

"I think the audience warmed to me because they are businesspeople and

they know what you have to look at," he replied.

"I have no personal animosity against the others - that does not get results. But in my job I have to work with people who do very nasty things, sometimes with the best of motives. My book is about stopping a famine in Africa, caused by a World Bank policy intended to help the third world!"

"There are a lot of problems with the world economy, but the answer to bad economics is not appalling economics. Markets for the poorest countries have to be made to work efficiently, which means cleaning them up periodically - that is my job, and it makes me very unpopular with the corrupt in those countries, and the inefficient."

He was not attacking ethical trading as such, he stressed. "The lady from Utz certainly did not think so - she emphasised that her way of collecting fees was far more ethical than some."

He too, he told us, was surprised at the lack of detailed response from his fellow-panelists. He too had hoped (as indeed had Allegra) that the panelists would use the opportunity to express detailed arguments in support of their ways of working. This is what the trade really wants to hear.

"I could see Fairtrade was out of his depth," he said later. "This was odd, since they knew in advance exactly what I was going to say, and what I would be accusing them of!"

*Allegra presented several awards at the event - it awarded the title of 'Most Admired Coffee Chain Brand' in UK & Ireland to Caffè Nero, and gave the equivalent title for Germany and Austria to McCafé, and named the most admired coffee chain in France as Starbucks. Costa was recognised as 'the best-performing coffee chain' in Europe. The most innovative product or brand was awarded to Nespresso, and Starbucks received an ethical award. Matthew Algie took a supplier prize. Personal recognitions went to James Hoffmann, Dr Steffen Schwarz, and Katarzyna Tondera-Rokkan, who co-founded the Coffeeheaven chain. A posthumous award recognised Simon Hargraves of Pret a Manger.*

*We teased James Hoffmann, the first British barista to win a world title, that he had been recognised at the same time as the US president had won a Nobel prize. He replied: "I suspect both Obama and myself have a common relief in not having to explain exactly what we did to get an award, but instead are just very grateful and honoured to get them!"*



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As the UK looks forward to its biggest promotional year in speciality coffee, with the world barista finals coming to London in 2010, our special correspondent Max the Bean continues to follow the warm-up stages

An important test of coffee-making skill begins this month. The contest involves the making of a particularly profitable drink, but it also gives the barista a useful chance to polish one particular skill – the under-standing of the importance of the balance of ingredients.

The event is the Coffee in Good Spirits contest, run by the Speciality Coffee Association of Europe, and organised by Paul Meikle-Janney of Coffee Community.

"However, with the rise of pub food, and a growing interest in reaching different kinds of customer at different times of day, we're beginning to see other parts of the hospitality trade take a wider interest in what they can get out of coffee," he remarks.

"Some pub groups know they should be taking coffee more seriously. They see the profit potential, and some baristas see the beginning of a whole new career path."

This, he advises, is the combination of coffee barista and licensed-trade barman, a fairly well-paid job in some of the ritziest places.

In the Good Spirits contest, entrants have to serve the judges an Irish

## A question of balance



Coffee, and then follow with a coffee cocktail of their own devising.

The Irish Coffee has commercial value but is particularly useful in keeping your skills up, says Meikle-Janney.

"Some pure coffee people see this as a dated drink, but it's still the biggest-selling combination of alcohol and coffee in the hospitality trade. The reason it is important for training is because the difference between a great Irish Coffee and a bad one is a question of balance.

"The coffee has to have just the right body, and the whiskey cannot be so harsh that it strips your mouth dry.

"The bit that really scares staff is floating the cream. It's really not difficult at all, just a question of learning to know how to get the cream to the right consistency - get the bubbles right, and you won't need a spoon, but you can just pour it on."

When you make one well, says Meikle-Janney, the Irish Coffee is a profitable skill. "Do it well, and I think you're probably scooting around just under a fiver in price – anywhere between £3.95 and £4.95.

"Exactly the same goes for the Espresso Martini, which is another matter of balancing two main ingredients.

"Get it right, and you have a very desirable and profitable menu item - get it wrong, and you can end up serving a horrific cocktail."

Entries for the Coffee in Good Spirits contest will open on November 1st, online at a new trade website, [www.scaeuk.com](http://www.scaeuk.com).

The finals of the contest will be at the ExpoWest exhibition in February 2010.

## Barista finals - live in your coffee shop?

As we predicted a few months back, the world barista finals next year might feature an unusual opportunity for those venues which cater for diehard coffee fiends – showing the finals live by video link.

Cindy Chang of the World Barista Championship organisation tells us: "With the Go Live streaming video project, any coffee shop can register on our new website, for free, to be listed as a Go Live partner.

"Partners will receive a link on our website to their business, PDF files for posters, and other promotional materials that they can print to display in their shop, as well as special offers from sponsors.

"The idea is that Go Live will offer global access to high-quality live video streaming of the event and promote all the coffee shops around that support the WBC."

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What can the coffee-house and the tea-room learn from each other? This magazine has readers in both businesses, and several people we have talked to in the trade have noticed something odd – the two are moving gradually closer together.

In many ways, of course, they are still two different breeds, and they do things in very different ways. Which leads us to the interesting thought – what can each learn from the other?

A ready response from several in the trade was that tea rooms have always known about promoting origins - coffee houses must start doing this better, say several players. We still have too many people selling espresso as a standard generic coffee, instead of promoting the qualities of origin.

Others in the hospitality trade may have moved first on this.

"Year-on-year we have seen the catering market wising-up to coffee," says David Latchem of Café du Monde. "When we first started in this business, your average caterer could not tell his cappuccino from his espresso... literally!

"These days, caterers of all kinds are demanding provenance. At one time, Jamaica Blue Mountain was the only coffee people knew by region – now more buyers in all kinds of hospitality trades are not just asking for country of origin, but asking for coffees from a single region and in some instances from a single estate."

This has been matched by demands about fairness at origin, he adds. And, he observes, the tea farmers are currently playing the ethical market well.

"In the tea market, the average auction price at the moment is actually well above Fairtrade rates, so many canny farmers are selling their Fairtrade goods better on the open market. This seriously depletes the volume of Fairtrade teas available.

"But 2010 will be the year of tea. The days of catering teabags are numbered, and many more outlets will introduce tea menus as their clientele become more adventurous."

Coffee shops can learn from the way tea-rooms present drinks with character, agreed Gary McGann of Beyond the Bean.

"A coffee-bar can learn from the way a tea-room presents its selections of loose-leaf tea, and use this in presenting single-estate coffee. A lot of this is down to individual presentation. It is a way to get away from milk-based drinks to coffees with character.

"A tea-room can learn from coffee houses about the inevitable and continuing problem of serving tea 'on the go'. Tea-rooms are primarily based on

## What must we learn to do well in 2010?

What can coffee-houses learn from the way the best tea-rooms work? And what can tea-rooms learn from the best coffee-houses? And indeed - what can both learn? What are going to be the big clues for trade in 2010?



*"The secret is to learn how the very best retailers, whatever they are, manage and enthuse their staff"*  
- Rob Lane

a longer, sit-down, table-service business model. They have the same overheads, but not the same throughput. So the question is of how they can extend their business - and they will do well to look at coffee-bars to see how takeaway works."



*"2010 will be the year of tea. The days of catering teabags are numbered."*  
-David Latchem

A practical example of presenting drinks with character comes from Peacocks of Ely - this is a tea room which has won Tea Guild awards in four successive years, including the main prize of Top Tea Place in 2007. George Peacock took a look at his sourcing, and realised that he could promote something unique – the first tea-room to offer teas from five continents at once.

"I'm confident this is unique," he told us. "We have brought together real tea from all around the world from Cornwall to Queensland."

There are several unusual items – typically Billy Tea, grown in Queensland. This is blended with lap-sang souchong for the smoky tang of the campfire, and flavoured with eucalyptus leaf. The authentic Billy Tea should be brewed in a tin can, and as George Peacock observes, the accepted technique involves swinging the can around the head to allow the leaves to settle... but not in his tea-room.

The tea business is a lesson which is already being learned, suggests Peter Kirton of the Esquires chain.

"The ability or willingness to offer both premium tea and premium coffee will be important for both tea rooms and coffee houses.

"Tea has certainly been very much a secondary offer for coffee houses, who have tended to concentrate on espresso-based beverages. I believe, however, that the market is shifting and that more premium tea will be seen in many coffee houses.

"Esquires will be offering this in the very near future, having successfully completed a trial in several of our outlets."



*"We are now constantly asked for cups, not mugs."*  
- Laurence Perloff

If the coffee shops learn about tea presentation, they will have to learn also about brewing temperatures, says Chris York of Marco Beverage Systems. This, of course, is the company which is deeply involved with the Gold Standard for filter coffees, a lot of which is temperature-related, and which also produced the prototype 'uber-boiler', with its very fine temperature control.

"Most coffee shops do not concern themselves with temperature control. Perhaps that is because the equipment does the work for them.

"On the other hand, tea rooms will know that the temperature of water used for tea is far more crucial. Black tea can probably be made without too much trauma using a pressure boiler where the water is close to 100°C, or an atmospheric water boiler at a much

cooler 93°C. Trying to use water at those temperatures on more delicate teas, such as green or white teas, is asking for trouble."

Tea aside, what can coffee houses learn from tea rooms? Their individuality of service, says David Cooper of Cooper's Coffee in Yorkshire.

"Research this year found that consumers are increasingly looking for higher quality coffee, real 'experience' and localness," he notes.

"I believe, therefore, that in 2010 we will see a migration from the high-street brands to more authentic, individual coffee shops serving hand-crafted quality coffee. This will be the year for the independents to shine, and to show off their skills and knowledge of good quality coffee in the face of the large, branded, ubiquitous chains' mediocre offering."

That individuality of service comes from knowing that reputation brings customers, said Irene Gorman of the Tea Guild. She told us that her members, top-class tea-room operators, all work particularly hard to guard their reputations.

"Tea Guild member venues tend to refer to their customers as 'guests' or 'visitors', and treat them as such," she pointed out.

As well as upgrading tea, coffee houses might offer their snacks in less of a proprietary, mass-market, production-line way, it was suggested.

"Tea-rooms are known for awesome home-baked, jaw-droppingly wondrous cakes and proper loose tea in dainty china cups which seem to make you feel rather special," said Angus McKenzie at Metropolitan. "They understand about 'occasion'.

"Coffee houses understand more about everyday activity, and are more about people, and social interaction. Tearooms could look at the coffee shops' use of sofas and nice music. A more relaxed atmosphere could transform their trade to more frequent patronage... and coffee houses might replace their standard wrapped cake bars with some simple home baking!

"Certainly, the idea of challenging each side to look at the others' businesses and looking for the best bits of best practice to share is indeed a great one... a one-week job swap of someone in a successful tearoom with the same kind of person from a successful coffee bar would give everyone some useful insight."

Meanwhile, he suggests, coffee shops could do well to look at tea-room crockery.

"I predict that, unsurprisingly, giant heavy mugs might make way for more special coffee shop crockery."



That is already happening, said Laurence Perkoff of tableware supplier Xing Xing.

"We are now constantly asked for cups, not mugs and are developing new cups for launch in 2010. In fact when we sell out of mugs, we won't be doing them in the future."

This magazine recently dropped in to the Caffé Eleganza in Ross-on-Wye, where we happened to ask owner Rob Lane a slightly different question - can tea rooms and coffee houses learn, either from each other, or elsewhere?

The secret, he said, is to learn how the very best retailers, whatever they are, manage and enthuse their staff.

"I was a chef, and I've been in food management, and it doesn't matter how great your coffee is, it is your staff attitude that matters.

"I was working in France and learned how the French operate. In France, I noticed that the waitresses can handle three times the covers of staff in this country. It comes partly from organisation, and partly from joie-de-vivre and enjoying the job.

"Here at our cafe, our people may be standing on one leg with a tray in each hand, but they will still acknowledge the customer, even if just to say 'I'll be right with you!'"

It takes some effort, he says, but is well worth it.

"Organising waitresses can be difficult if your weekend staff do things one way, and your Wednesday staff do it another - the secret is in spotting it. It's also in getting your staff to observe things - if we've had issues with the food or the coffee, it's often the girls



*"In 2010 we will see a migration from the high-street brands to more individual coffee shops serving hand-crafted quality coffee."*

- David Cooper

who have spotted it instantly, which tells you the value of getting your staff to keep their eyes open."

For tips like this, don't confine yourself to looking at other beverage businesses, agreed James Shapland of Coffee#1 - look wider for ideas.

Coffee#1 is the set of coffee shops in Wales and the West which has just won the coffee-bar chain section of the BSA's Bev-e awards. The chain was begun by James Shapland eight years ago, has eleven outlets, employs 90 people, and expects to return a turnover of £4 million this year.

"This year we have learned to focus on the basics, more than ever," he told us. "We find that the big groups tend to ultimately lose value from the £2-£3 spend, whereas we say you can't take your eye off the ball with regard to the

'customer experience'."

However, he adds, good ideas come from far beyond the café scene.

"I am fascinated by learning from retail in general. I like nothing better than looking in big department stores, from Selfridges to Macys, to pick up tips from their displays, because the big retailers absolutely nail this. I love wandering about their food halls - they've been doing it so long, they get it right.

"But I have also travelled to Greenwich Village to pick up the ambience of the boutique coffee shops there - and to see, how do they show off their muffins and pastries? I like to look at other businesses for a feel of how they shape their displays."



*"demonstrating added value in return for loyalty will be important."*

-Martin Lines

A good lesson to learn from elsewhere is how other operators hang on to their regular trade, said Martin Lines of Nescafe Professional.

"There is still demand and inexorable growth for café-style hot beverages, and all our research shows that people will pay if they perceive the product as good value and better tasting.

"The challenge for next year will be to retain regular custom. Winning new business is time-consuming and energy-hungry - and it is more expensive if your existing business is neglected and left to drop off the bottom!

"So demonstrating added value in return for loyalty will be important. All beverage caterers can look at the successful companies to learn how reward cards or meal deals make the end user feel like they have been rewarded for their loyalty."

This is a very good time to look at best-practice in related trades, said Marco Olmi of Drury.

"There are a lot of positives to take with us into 2010 - a lot of good trends are happening right now, and one is the demand for quality.

"I had thought that in hard times, customers would have wanted to downgrade, but they aren't. The move is upwards, which is astounding.

However, he adds, some caution has crept in beside this, and café owners can learn about looking for advantages in their buying.

"A lot of traders are learning to be canny. They are asking: 'if I take a few boxes, and I pay on delivery, can I have a discount? It's perfectly OK to learn how to do that!'"



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# Deck the halls...

We do not all order our Christmas specials in good time. For those of us who need inspiration for the last few weeks of the season, look no further!

## Limited-editions show the way to seasonal profit

The latest of the limited-edition cookies from Byron Bay is one with a Christmas angle - it's the plum pudding cookie.

The theory of the limited-edition cookie began with the brand's strawberry-and-cream one this summer, and that turned out to be the biggest-selling product the company has ever had.

The new one is designed to recreate the feel of a rich seasonal fruit pudding. The recipe involves plums, sultanas and walnuts, spiced with nutmeg, cinnamon and ginger, and is designed for a moistness of texture.

Mark Perrin, Byron Bay's sales director, reports that the summer cookie did well when presented as a menu item with tea, and suggests that the winter one should be priced as a pairing with hot chocolate or coffee.



Beyond the Bean, which distributes Byron Bay, has brought out the latest of its themed seasonal brochures - the all Wrapped Up booklet looks at ideas for profitable winter drinks, and is launched together with a new promotion, the Hot Choc Box.

The box is a kit of products which can be used to heighten the value of a chocolate drink - it includes branded mugs, bottles of syrups which work well with chocolate, menus, mini-marshmallows, and point-of-sale items.

There are several chocolate-related products worth promoting in December, says the company - combinations of two additional ingredients in one chocolate drink, such as dark and white chocolate sauces, or chocolate syrup with Irish cream syrup, or chocolate sauce and cinnamon syrup, can achieve some very profitable speciality drinks. Cream and marshmallows add to the selling price.



## Union produces its Winter coffee

We always expect something Christmassy from Union Hand-Roasted, and this year's blend has just arrived.

This is the Winter Blend recipe, described as 'a full-bodied, warming experience, which fuses together the deep, dark flavours of specially aged coffees from Indonesia with subtle spice and citrusy notes from Ethiopian beans'.

Union says that the Winter Blend 'delivers an upfront richness which is more than a match for a luxurious Christmas pudding or glass of mulled wine. Although this coffee is full-bodied in style it does not overpower, but instead seamlessly pairs with the deep warming flavours of the season.'



## Xmas teas - last year's sell-out gift

Do 'Christmas flavour' teas and coffees sell? They do, says Marco Olmi of Drury, who reports that his Christmas tea was a complete sell-out last year.

"They can be surprisingly tasty, and some are in both tea-bag and loose form. We have green tea and black tea with Christmas flavours, such as nuts and almonds, and we even have one tea which has little white chocolate snowflakes in it! You promote these by having a little bowl of it on the counter to sniff at, and having it prominently on your menu with a mince pie. Last year we had a very large number of people buying packs as stocking fillers, at about £1.50."

This year's range features Christmas Black tea, featuring apple, cinnamon, almonds, star anise and vanilla. The Christmas Green uses green tea, ice crystal sprinkles, pink peppercorns, chocolate chips and clove buds. An interesting addition is the Christmas Cookie blend, a fruit infusion of apple pieces, hibiscus, rosehip, orange pieces, cinnamon, ginger and cloves. An unusual one is a Christmas Rooibos, with cinnamon, orange blossom, blackberry leaves, cardamom seeds, ginger clove buds and safflower.

The teas do not have to be drunk on their own - they make effective hot toddies, and Marco Olmi's own favourite is to use his blood orange tea as an ingredient for mulled wine - he steeps it in with a cinnamon stick.

The Island Bakery has redesigned its selection tins. These showcase tins were designed for the gifts market and have been taken on by the John Lewis Christmas collection. The Island Bakery recently featured on television with the *Dragon's Den* team, and currently has plans for a new bio-mass-powered bakery. The plan is to use waste wood from the plantations on Mull, to create what is believed to be the world's first commercial wood-fired biscuit oven.



The Handmade Cake Company has created a more dainty cake than is usual for the Christmas period, and which will probably be a very useful counter to all the heavier excesses at this season - it is the launch of cupcakes, which were brought out for National Cupcakes Week in September. The essence of a cupcake is 'prettiness', and although the bakers say that these cakes taste as good as they look, the decorations include no artificial ingredients.





Now, here's a surprising thing which opens up a lot of selling opportunities - all breads are not the same. The Speciality Breads company points out that you can, very effectively, enhance a drink or a meal with the 'right' bread accompaniment - typically, when it comes to Christmas offerings, use the sweet mini cranberry loaf, which is the kind of touch which makes a customer say 'isn't that clever...'



And that, of course, is the reaction which helps justify a premium price. Speciality Breads supplies a unique range of exclusive breads, all of which have the 'handmade' touch, another vital part of a good selling price. There's a very good user's guide to the possibilities at [www.speciality-breads.co.uk](http://www.speciality-breads.co.uk)

## Fairtrade muffins... and Eccles cakes!



Peros has brought a Fairtrade aspect into seasonal snacks with its One World range with the addition of a Fairtrade chocolate shortbread Christmas tree! Elsewhere, the range features the expected flapjacks, chocolate brownies, shortbread and muffins. But what is the unexpected best-seller?

"Strangely, out of all the lines we did, we found that the Eccles cake was the second best-seller, behind the chocolate brownie," says director James Roberts. "This is 'perceived value for money', because the Eccles cake is seen as a mighty lump! We also do a gluten-free macaroon, which comes fourth out of 60 snack products, and I think for the same reason - it's a big product."

An instant-coffee product has been redesigned into a useful little gift pack with some assistance from Nottingham Trent University.



Shelton's Coffee Cubes are a flavoured product which look rather like an Oxo cube. They are packed in single envelopes, and a selection of flavours is offered in a little gift sack tied with a ribbon.



They are marketed by Ximena Shelton, who is from a Colombian coffee family, and who moved to England to develop the product.

The East Midlands New Technology Initiative introduced her to university help, and a grant for packaging design.

The coffee cubes are available in vanilla, lemon, brandy, cinnamon and amaretto.



Properly presented, drinking chocolate can be a good retail item. Look at this unusual pack from James Chocolates of Somerset - the hot chocolate is a blend of milk and dark chocolates flaked together. "The dark chocolate brings a rich "chocolatey" depth and some punch to the drink and the milk chocolate balances, adds creaminess and appeals to the British palate without adding a bucket of sugar," they tell us.

It's very easy to say that Christmas specials can be very profitable - but of course, you can't have something which takes ages to make. You need something short, sharp, and attractive. This is what three suppliers came up with...

Readers will know that we have a lot of time for the work of Alex Lapierre, the recipe king at Monin flavourings. He and Darril Ling of Bennett Opie, the UK distributor, have come up with these ideas - interesting thing is, there are several variations using the same flavours. "Think 'chocolate cookie delight' and you'll start to get the idea of three of them!" says Monin.

Of course, nuts are classic Christmas fare, and also go well with espresso. Monin offers two nut ideas -

**Chocolate Nut Espresso** needs 40ml Monin roasted hazelnut syrup, and 15 ml Monin dark chocolate sauce. Brew a single espresso, add 60ml milk, put everything into a blender with ice cubes, blend until smooth, and then pour into a tall glass. Garnish with whipped cream, Monin caramel sauce and crushed nuts. A very similar idea is **Christmas Toffee Nut Espresso**, which uses 40ml Monin chestnut syrup, 20ml Monin toffee nut syrup, and again a single shot and 60ml milk. Blend as before, then pour into a tall glass drizzled with Monin caramel sauce. Garnish with a toffee nut candy.



The Cookie Delight (above) and the blood orange version below

Three ideas use Monin's chocolate cookie syrup. The **Cookie Delight** needs 40ml chocolate cookie syrup, 90ml milk, a single chilled espresso and a chocolate cookie. Blend with ice until smooth then pour mix into a glass. Drizzle with Monin dark chocolate sauce. Garnish with chocolate chips. The first variation is the **Blood Orange Cookie Delight**, using 30ml Monin chocolate cookie syrup, 40ml Monin blood orange syrup, 80ml milk, and again a single chilled shot and the cookie. Blend and garnish as above, but add a dry orange slice.



Mint is also used at Christmas, and this comes into Monin's third variation, the **Chocolate Mint**. Take 40ml Monin chocolate cookie syrup, 20ml Monin frosted mint syrup, 90ml milk, and again the chilled shot and cookie. Blend with ice, and this time garnish with dark sauce and chocolate chips.

Cooper's in Yorkshire gave us these two, designed for speed of service - they're very quick to make, although a lot does depend on presentation. Note the careful and neat use of the tree stencil, and also the use of Christmas paper beneath the cups! Attention to detail like this helps justify a premium price.



The **Gingerbread Chai Latte** is two syrups and milk - 25ml Chai Tea Spice syrup and 25ml ginger spice syrup, flat latte milk, with Christmas stencil, and chocolate sprinkles. Cooper's **Frosted Gingerbread Latte** uses a double espresso and a pump of white chocolate sauce,



and a pump of ginger spice syrup, with the milk. Several companies say that mint is a Christmas flavour, and Cooper's **Minty Mocha** involves using both a pump of dark chocolate sauce and three pumps of peppermint syrup with a double espresso; dark chocolate chunks make a good topping.

The soluble coffee boys have decided that they aren't going to be left behind in festive recipes - Nescafe has given us a couple of suggestions.

The **All Canadian Coffee** is an interesting theme - 45ml double cream, 45ml maple syrup, and a splash of Canadian whisky are the main ingredients, although the booze is optional. A 7oz brewed coffee is the base, and you can either whip the cream and 15ml of maple syrup together as a topping, or top with the cream and use the syrup as a swirl.



Nescafe's **French Kiss** is another alcohol cocktail - 30ml vanilla syrup, half a shot of Scotch (or anything else you prefer) and 7oz brewed coffee. Those are all mixed together, with 45ml double cream as a topping. Sprinkle with hundreds and thousands.



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