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Portrait of a Barista

By Iulia Pascanu

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by: **Iulia Pascanu**

The barista is the Italian word for the skilled person who prepares coffee (ultimately espresso) in a coffee house.

What would you want your barista to be like?

This is not a trick question. The more I think of it, the more I believe it, that the world of coffee making must be laying on the shoulders of a barista.

I believe that because the coffee I am beeing served in a coffee house, I expect it to be good. On the other hand, the manager of the bar expects me to be pleased with the service and come again. If the coffee is not good, I will not do that.

Now who is responsible for this small gearing to work? You probably have guessed it, the barista.

Are you wondering what a barista is and how can you recognise him or her?

1. Well, he or she does not have a specific age or appearance. Nor nationality. In Italy, the country that gave the name of the job, a barista is most likely a man around the age of 40. In America, there are more chances that you find a young lady. But not necessarily.
2. One sure thing is they're susceptible to be found behind the bar-counter, always ready to prepare several varieties of coffee 'expressly for you' – by the way, did you know this was the initial definition of the espresso coffee?
3. A skilled barista, the one you would like to have prepare your cup, has several years of experience.
4. A good barista carries out to near-perfection four operations: dosing, tamping, pulling and steaming.

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5. A good barista knows that no. 4 is not enough and sometimes helpless. For example, tamping depends on the finesse of the grind. The finer the grind, the less important the tamping.
6. A really good barista pays attention both to the quality of the coffee and the presentation.
7. The skilled barista is capable of performing more operations at the same time.
8. The barista you like interacts with his or her customers.
9. A good barista can manage to make a pretty good cup with less sophisticated appliances. Needless to say, the opposite is not true.
10. A good barista can make a flourishing business out of your modest old coffee-shop. Again, the opposite is not true.

Iulia Pascanu writes for

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A Coffee Roaster For All Occasions

By Julie Carter

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Coffee roasters and those who roast, brew and serve the ultimate cup of coffee are now esteemed professionals within the social fabric of our community at large. A good coffee roaster is a little like a celebrity chef these days, complete with loyal followings, highly descriptive reviews and the ability to command premium prices for their products and services. As coffee continues to grow in elevation from merely a mundane beverage to something of art form, a good coffee roaster has begun to take on a glamorous aura.

But there is a café on almost every street corner or every suburb now and every barista thinks of him or herself as the best roaster on the block. The professional barista is a now fiercely competitive industry and cafes and restaurants across the globe fight to retain the barista that can produce a coffee that will have customers returning time and time again. So, because roasting is everywhere, how do

you choose the coffee roaster for you?

Your first question is whether you're looking for wholesale coffee roasters to supply your business, or retail roasters to keep you happily supplied with beans at home. But for our purposes, let's say you're looking for a retail roaster to feed your coffee habit because you are a die hard coffee lover.

One approach is to decide exactly which coffee beans you prefer. Once you have found the coffee beans that you like you can then search for that specific bean. It might take you some time to research this and you might want to join a coffee club so that you can do some extensive taste testing. They will send you a number of coffee varieties each month for a small fee and this gives you the opportunity to try out blends and pure coffees to see what you prefer.

But once you know what coffee you are after, the online suppliers can tell you which of the coffee roasters that carry the beans you are looking for, who has the freshest beans and who has most skill in roasting them to perfection. You might also want to look for coffee bean suppliers that are geographically close to you. By doing so you can be confident that the beans can be delivered faster and will therefore be fresher when they reach your door.

But before you make your final decisions, consider organic coffee as an option. Organic coffee is another choice you might want to make. This coffee is certified to have been grown and processed without chemical intervention and is becoming more and more popular with wholesale outlets. It generally has a mild nutty flavor. It is also becoming popular with celebrities who are eager to adopt the coffee cause. Organic coffee, understandably sells very well in Hollywood.

Now all that is left to do is try several brands of coffee to find out which one you like the best. Enjoy your next coffee!

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