

Coffee Festival of Outcasts

Steam leaks into the air as a quick puff announces to the world “I am here, and I am hot!” The smell of the roasted beans fills my nostrils as my eyes widen. I am used to a Greggs latte or some other noxious monstrosity that pops out of a preprogramed, touch screen laden, machine. So, the smell of real coffee being prepared and represented by genuine coffee experts was a welcome change of pace. As I wait for my cup the people behind the counter begin explaining the long journey that these beans have taken from an ethical farm to being roasted in Colombia and flow to Glasgow. I try and remain engaged, asking questions and offering compliments, but I would be lying if I said my mind was not fully occupied with the delicious black liquid that has filled my mug. I take a deep breath of the contents of the cup, an aroma of dirt, berries, wood, and most definitely coffee fills my nose, that was how I started the Glasgow Coffee Festival in 2022.

For the past two years the GCF has been delayed and cancelled for a multitude of reasons, most of which are tied inextricably to the global pandemic. Starting in 2014 the GCF has become a staple of Glasgow’s coffee culture and the perfect place for wanky coffee snobs to congregate. So, obviously, I felt right at home.

The rich aroma filled the hall as more and more people began to arrive, what was just a few dozen people sampling coffees and the occasional pastry had ballooned into well over a hundred of Glasgow’s most ferocious coffee lovers. They ranged from elderly men in polos and cargo shorts with beautiful young women on their arms to couples who wanted to introduce their baby to coffee culture early. Hair every color of the rainbow made an appearance as well as animal print haircuts paired with animals print clothes.

My americano was lovely, just the right mixture of earthy coffee tones with rich fruity berry. I walked for minutes holding my coffee with two hands blowing on it like I was trying to start a jug band. But as I eventually managed to cool the drink, I realized that an americano, coffee and hot water, has going to be far too much liquid for me. I mean I was there to drink as many different coffees as possible as possible and there was no bathroom in sight, so I changed my approach.

Instead of ordering my usual of an oat milk latte, I know I know I’m a little bitch for not drink black, but you can bite me, I would instead get in touch with my Italian roots and order espresso. This change sped up my coffee consumption by an extreme degree. Within an hour I had consumed probably around six shots of espresso along with a pistachio cannolo, yes it was as good as it sounds, so needless to say I was very awake and very tired at the same time.

Each shot was spectacular in its own way with many off the coffees having hints of fruit and nuts as well as chocolate and other, more interesting, flavors. I would highly recommend every coffee shop that had an exhibition as GCF, but this isn’t a coffee review this is...well I’m not exactly sure what this is but I know it’s not a coffee review.

As I wandered the coffee festival feeling the urge to run a marathon and take a nap at the same time, I was able to overhear conversations. Discussions ranging from the ethics of coffee production to secret hidden flavors within the black drink to conversations that had nothing to do with coffee. Some people talked about television, movies, music, live events, and most importantly, other places to go talk and drink coffee. That was when the real point of the coffee festival dawned on me.

The reason we are all here isn’t to try delicious coffee that we may not have had access to before, even though that is a plus, it was to meet other coffee nerds. Unlike cars, films, sports, or comics coffee is

something that nearly everyone has as opinion on and a working knowledge of. Beans + fire + hot water = coffee. And while this equation may not be too far from truth of the matter there are many more steps that go into that cup of coffee that is slowly getting colder and colder as you forget about it on your desk. The snobbishness of coffee culture seemed to melt away in the festival, as if the pretentious attitude of coffee purists is just another wall, a defense to protect them from the harm reality that...not many people actually care about coffee. And thats okay because there is a place that you can go and have your odd obsession with beans be celebrated. The Glasgow Coffee Festival is not only a fantastic place to get free coffee, but also the Comic-Con of coffee turning weird, highly caffeinated, shut-ins into the life of the party. So, if you get the chance, go to the Glasgow Coffee Fest and while your there, can you get me a cup as well.

Coffee Companies I Enjoyed at The Festival:

Figment Coffee

Us v Them

U Roast

Shibui Leaf Tea

Cakesmiths

Thompson's Coffee

Aritsan Sicilian Bakery

Go Green Coffee

Grain and Grind

Andian

Coffee Bean Culture