

# Crème de La Crema

We're talking  
coffee this month. And  
it's one super-charged,  
hyper-caFFEinated  
conversation.





# Editor's Picks

After homicide detectives and late-night petrol station attendants, no one drinks more coffee than writers. Ours weigh in on their go-to spots for liquid inspiration.

## Katie Roberts

**HIGHLANDER COFFEE**  
49 Kampong Bahru Road  
6223 7102 | [highlanderscoffee.com](http://highlanderscoffee.com)

**I'VE BEEN A FAN SINCE:** at a Tabitha charity dinner about three years back, I won an auction bid for a barista training course. Highlander was then unknown to us, but doing the course improved our home coffee making and introduced us to Highlander beans, and we've been regulars since then.

**I ORDER:** coffee any way you like it, milkshakes for kids, and tasty snacks: cakes, croissants – the selection changes daily. It's a cosy space (like most cafés here), so be prepared to snuggle in.

**I KEEP GOING BACK BECAUSE:** I need to pick up freshly roasted beans for the home machine (\$11 for 250 grams, the best price in town) and a consistently good takeaway cappuccino. The milk is the perfect temperature every time, not too hot and not too cold.



## Rachael Wheeler

**WHEELER'S YARD**  
28 Lorong Ampas  
6254 9128 | [facebook.com/wheelersyard](https://www.facebook.com/wheelersyard)

**I'VE BEEN A FAN SINCE:** I heard about this amazing spot a month ago (it opened in July 2013), but I'm averaging twice a week. Not just because we share a name (although that is three percent why).

**I ORDER:** a latte (iced or hot based on how sweaty my face is that day) and the salmon and scrambled egg bagel. I've also been in the evening and wolfed down fish and chips, a dreamy chicken burger, nachos and cheesecake. Not at the same time. Maybe.

**I KEEP GOING BACK BECAUSE:** this is hands-down the coolest place to eat and drink in Novena, where I live. They've transformed an urban warehouse behind Balestier Road on the river, creating an unexpectedly trendy and casual café. Running down one side of the open-plan warehouse is a bike shop, piled high with amazing, handmade bicycles from Taiwan. I hate cycling, but it sure looks wicked. The interior is awesome, the atmosphere is chilled and the staff love my puppy almost as much as I do ("Oh, your dog just barfed on the floor? No problem – does she like lemon water?"). My main hope now is that they extend their opening hours (currently 10am to 8pm) so I can grab coffee in the morning and swig cider by night.

## Monica Pitrelli

**TIONG BAHRU BAKERY**  
56 Eng Hoon Street, #01-07  
6220 3430  
[tiongbahrubakery.com](http://tiongbahrubakery.com)

**I'VE BEEN A FAN SINCE:** mid-2012, when I was eating my way across town in the name of research for a story on bakeries.

**I ORDER:** the "Magic" (\$6.50), an aptly named drink of two parts coffee and one part steamed milk (a flat white in reverse? a slightly bloated piccolo latte?), plus a loaf of sourdough to munch on during the walk home.

**I KEEP GOING BACK BECAUSE:** although it's loud, it's packed, and carting a baby stroller through that ingenious, centre-pivoting door gets you death looks from a fair share of the customers, it's worth it for the *Kouign-amann* (\$3.50) – an impossible-to-pronounce (it's like something like "queen ahman", which I say really fast and low while pointing) Breton cake that is one of the best things I've ever eaten. It's not flashy, it's not covered in almonds or chocolate, but it kills all the other pastries, each of which is fabulous in its own right.



## Amy Greenburg

**KITH**  
7 Rodyk Street, #01-28  
Robertson Quay  
6341 9407 | [kith.com.sg](http://kith.com.sg)

**I'VE BEEN A FAN SINCE:** a year ago.

**I ORDER:** a simple, no-frills iced black coffee with soymilk (\$5 for a large) and a tuna, double-cheddar toastie (\$6); the freshly squeezed orange-and-carrot juice (\$6.50) is excellent too.

**I KEEP GOING BACK BECAUSE:** "Kith" literally means "familiar friends, neighbours and relatives" – a fitting name, given its sociable, kid- and dog-friendly atmosphere. As it's one of the neighbourhood's best cafés for coffee, I'm sure to run into an acquaintance or two who live in or around the quays; it's an ideal spot for couples and families to casually convene and catch up over a cup of joe. Kith's laid-back, riverside setting and outdoor seating – perfect for people-watching – combined with its reasonably priced, fuss-free menu and deliciously brewed coffee, makes for a perfect Sunday morning. ☺



## Runners-up:

Here is a list of close seconds.

**Blackbird Café**  
#01-01A The Luxe,  
6 Handy Road  
6337 3448 | [blackbird.com.sg](http://blackbird.com.sg)

**Common Man Coffee Roasters**  
22 Martin Road  
6836 4695  
[commonmancoffeeroasters.com](http://commonmancoffeeroasters.com)

**Costa Coffee**  
313@Somerset  
6636 9774  
[costacoffee.com.sg](http://costacoffee.com.sg)

**Nylon Coffee Roasters**  
4 Everton Park, #01-40  
6220 2300 | [nyloncoffee.sg](http://nyloncoffee.sg)

**Sarnies**  
136 Telok Ayer Street  
6224 6091 | [sarniescafe.com](http://sarniescafe.com)

**The Pantry**  
75 Loewen Road  
6474 0441  
[thepantrycookerschool.com](http://thepantrycookerschool.com)

**The Plain Café**  
50 Craig Road  
6225 4387 | [theplain.com.sg](http://theplain.com.sg)

**Toby's Estate**  
8 Rodyk Street  
6636 7629  
[tobysestate.com.sg](http://tobysestate.com.sg)

**Yahava Koffee Works**  
4 Jalan Gelenggang  
6554 7080 | [yahava.sg](http://yahava.sg)





# SPOTS THAT RISE BEFORE YOU DO

The blog *Obnoxious Expats in Singapore* had it right when it used an picture of a woman slapping a guy across the head to illustrate the phenomenon of the coffee shop that only opens at 11am. What gives? We dedicate this space to all the early-opening coffee shops, bakeries and breakfast spots out there.

## From 7am:

- Baker & Cook on Hillcrest Road
- Boomarang Bistro & Bar at Robertson Quay
- Kith at Robertson Quay
- Toby's Estate at Robertson Quay

## From 7.30am:

- Casa Verde in the Botanic Gardens
- Sarnies on Telok Ayer (9am on weekends)

## From 7.45am:

- My Awesome Café on Telok Ayer Street (10am on weekends)

## From 8am:

- Assembly Coffee on Evans Road (closed Mondays)
- Choupinette on Bukit Timah Road
- Common Man Coffee Roasters near Robertson Quay
- eM by the River at Robertson Quay (weekends only)
- Food For Thought in the Botanic Gardens
- Gastronomia Da Paolo at Cluny Court
- Hatched on Evans Road (closed Mondays)
- Maison Kayser in Scotts Square
- Merchants on Duxton Road (opens later on the weekends)
- Nassim Hill on Tanglin Road (closed Mondays)
- Revolution Coffee in Media Circle (Portsmouth Road)
- Riders Café on Fairways Drive
- The Book Café near Robertson Quay
- The Canopy at Bishan Park (weekends only)
- Tiong Bahru Bakery (Tiong Bahru, Raffles City, Tangs Orchard)

## From 8.30am:

- Cafe Melba at Goodman Arts Centre (weekends only)
- Jimmy Monkey at One North Residences
- Spruce in Phoenix Park (weekends only)
- The Pantry at Loewen Gardens (closed Sundays)



## AREA HIGHLIGHT: Upper Thomson TRIO

Several pockets of Singapore feature excellent Aussie-style cafés, including Tiong Bahru, Robertson Quay, Duxton and Dempsey. Tracking down a faultless flat white is trickier in the heartlands, however. Traverse the 6km of Upper Thomson Road, for instance, and you're unlikely to find much more than a *kopi* in a bag.

Then you come to the intersection of Upper Thomson and Sin Ming Road and *whammo!* – within about 50 metres of each other are three excellent cafés that wouldn't seem out of place in St Kilda.

**Habitat** is arguably the best known of the trio, and it deserves its popularity. One EL staff member is a weekend regular here and swears by the coffee and the food. Excellent espressos aside, don't miss the eggs with tomato relish and sourdough, and grab a side of truffle fries while you're at it.

About four doors down, **One Coffee Man** hit upon the clever idea of sharing the premises of Crust, the pizzeria, which was mostly using the space in the evenings. It has great coffee – beans are imported from Melbourne's Axil Coffee Roasters – supported by a satisfying if limited menu (they only have a pizza oven to work with, after all).

The third spot in this holy trinity of caffeine is **OZ Specialty Coffee**. Australia is again the inspiration – it shows in the décor and menu – though the coffee is made with Pacamara beans from Thailand. Set back from the busy main road, this is a slightly mellower spot for café lounging than the other two.

Habitat,  
223 Upper Thomson Road | 6456 2567  
One Coffee Man,  
215R Upper Thomson Road | 6456 1555  
OZ Speciality Coffee,  
11 Sin Ming Road, #01-13 Thomson V Two  
All three cafés have Facebook pages with more information

### ALSO NEARBY:

November 8 Café & Company, 11 Sin Ming Road, #01-30 Thomson V Two

# DID YOU KNOW?

## COFFEE FACTS that are probably true

The stuff can kill. The lethal dose of coffee for an adult is 100 cups.

### Civet coffee – boring.

Elephant dung coffee is where it's at now. A cup of the brand Black Ivory Coffee goes for over \$60 in northern Thailand.

Australia has been named the one English-speaking country that "Starbucks cannot conquer". By 2008, its 87 outlets there had reported a loss of \$143 million, which is attributed to the fact that, like France and Italy, Oz "already has a sophisticated coffee culture".

The most long-lived cat on record, **Crema Puff**, was 38 years old when she died in 2005. She lived on a diet of **bacon, eggs, broccoli and coffee.**

The Italian word **barista** does not refer only to someone who serves coffee, but to anyone who serves drinks, hot or cold, and from coffee to alcohol.

A cup of coffee is in every scene in **Fight Club.**

There is a spa in Japan where you can bathe in coffee. (We'd caution against drinking it, though.)



# The Art of the Pour

A Step-by-step Guide *By Monica Pitrelli*

Ever wonder how those delicious little designs end up on your cappuccino? Oriole's Aslam Yusoff shows us that latte art is easy (for him).

*to fill the base of the coffee with milk without disturbing the "crema ring" along the outer edge of the cup.*



1

**Hold the espresso in one hand and the pitcher of milk in the other. Give the espresso a little tap on the table. Give the milk a good swirl.**

*to allow the milk to enter smoothly without breaking the crema*



2

**Tilt the pitcher a little, then "sink" the milk by pouring it directly into the centre of the coffee, and then in a small circle.**

*to reach the milk at the bottom of the pitcher*



3

**"Float" the milk by simultaneously tilting the cup and increasing the tilt of the pitcher to allow the foam to pour out.**

*to keep the milk from separating too much*



4

**Straighten the cup while pouring the foam quickly from side to side and simultaneously pulling the pitcher back towards you.**

*to make the rosetta design emerge when the milk rises*



5

**Level the cup and cut a thin pour of milk across the length of the coffee to create the stem in rosetta.**

**ON DESIGNS, FROM EASIEST TO HARDEST:**

Heart, tulip, layered tulip, rosetta (looks like a fern), inverted tulip (a combination of rosetta and tulip), swan

**ON HOW LONG IT TAKES TO MASTER:**

Quick learners could produce art worthy of serving to customers in a month. Others never get it down.

**ON WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE BARISTA SCREWS UP THE DESIGN:**

No latte art is better than bad latte art. We don't waste coffee, but we don't serve bad art either.

**ON THE POPULARITY OF LATTE ART ON SOCIAL MEDIA:**

It's become a social standard of "good coffee", though we all know it's not.

**ON ETCHING VERSUS POURING:**

Etching used to be big, back in the day. The emphasis now is on the barista's ability to pour the perfect design without using any tools.



**ON ITS DETRACTORS:**

I liken it to a chef's plating. Coffee is about good quality ingredients and presentation.

**ON THE LATEST TREND, 3D LATTE ART:**

The one popular in Japan, using dry foam shaped into the shape of cats? Yeah, we're not into that.

## Preparing the milk

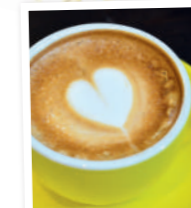
The consistency and temperature of the milk is critical. Follow these tips to get it right:

- Start with a clean pitcher and cold milk. Insert steaming nozzle just below surface at a tilt. As volume increases, sink the tilted nozzle further into the pitcher. The milk should swirl vigorously, and the pitcher should get so hot you can't touch it for long.
- Listen for a hissing sound. If you hear screeching, the nozzle is too close to the metal pitcher.
- The whole process should take about 30 seconds. If steamed too little, your milk will be flat. If too much, the foam will be dry. The result you want is a creamy, almost velvety milk (steamed past the microfoam phase).
- Work quickly. The milk starts to separate immediately, so have your espresso on hand when the milk is ready.



## What the...?

If you get one of these, you may want to send that cuppa back. Nicely, of course.



**BUBBLES**

This means the cup has been sitting on the counter a little too long, or that the coffee was ground too close to roasting. (A week's break gives the best results.)



**BROKEN CREMA RING**

Your first taste will be milk, rather than coffee, which isn't a good thing.



**INEXPERIENCED BARISTA**

In this case, that would be yours truly. This is my first stab at latte art – a rosetta (supposedly) and evidence that this craft is not as easy as it looks.

**Oriole Café and Bar**  
96 Somerset Road  
#01-01 Pan Pacific Serviced Suites

**Oriole Espresso and Brew Bar**  
9 Raffles Place, #01-23 Republic Plaza  
oriolecoffee.com



## Going Local

Craving a strong hit of caffeine in a toe-curling brew? A cup of local coffee at one of Singapore's more than 3,000 kopitiam (coffee shops) could set you back as little as 80 cents, says VERNE MAREE – especially if it's in a heartlands market or housing estate. At famous chains such as Killiney Kopitiam and Yakun Toast, it starts from \$1.50.

### How it's made

In traditional style, the beans are wok-roasted with sugar, margarine and sometimes pineapple skin and maize, to a dark black brown, then ground and brewed with a sock-like cotton strainer in watering can-sized pots.

Both **Killiney Kopitiam** and **Yakun Toast** were started by Hainanese immigrants; Killiney's roots go back to the Killiney Road shop established in 1919, and Yakun's to 1926. According to Killiney, its coffee is made from a blend of Columbian Arabica coffee beans and Indonesian Robusta coffee beans "to create an alluring aroma and mesmerising taste".

We watched them make a *kopi-C* at Yakun Toast in Parkway Parade. After

heating the cup by pouring hot water into and over it, they put in evaporated milk and sugar, pour in the coffee, top it up with a little hot water and serve it with a teaspoon on the side.

Wherever you go, thick white china cups are mandatory, with or without the traditional blue-and-white pattern. If you ask for *tapau* ("takeaway" in Hokkien), your coffee comes in a scary carcinogenic polystyrene cup, or, even worse, a plastic bag.

### What to eat

Standard breakfast fare is the Hainanese-Western **half-boiled eggs, kaya toast and coffee** set. You're supposed to break your own very runny eggs into a bowl and season them to taste with soya sauce. Kaya is coconut jam made from coconut, eggs and sugar.

At the original Killiney Kopitiam outlet in Killiney Road, it's mandatory for your server to slop approximately one quarter of your coffee into the saucer. We also enjoy the heart-stopping screech of orders being relayed from serving to kitchen staff – preparing the adrenals for the imminent jolt of caffeine, perhaps.

We tend to prefer the kaya toast at Yakun: light brown instead of soft white, each slice of bread is toasted, then split into two thin, crispy halves that are sandwiched with a spread of kaya and a couple of generous slabs of cold butter. That said, we've had our best-ever

kopi and kaya toast at **Good Morning Nanyang Café** at Chinatown Point.

And for an East Coast hangover, you can't beat the addictively spicy chicken curry at Killiney Kopitiam in Siglap. Along with a cup or two of whatever form of *kopi* takes your fancy, it's guaranteed to set you to rights.

### HOW TO ORDER

By default, a coffee or **kopi** (*kaw-pee*) comes with condensed milk and sugar at the bottom of the cup. Or you can ask for:

**Kopi-C:** coffee with unsweetened evaporated milk (the C is for Carnation); but they'll still add sugar

**Kopi-kah-C:** extra sweet, with both condensed milk and evaporated milk

**Kopi-o:** black, with sugar

**Kopi-kosong:** black, without sugar

**Kopi peng:** sweet white coffee with ice

**Kopi-o peng:** sweet black coffee with ice

**Kopi-o-kosong peng:** unsweetened black coffee with ice

To really sound like a local, order:

**Kopi sua** – two regular coffees

# Trend Alert: Cold Brew

## What's behind the brouhaha? Let us explain.

Sure, you're familiar with iced coffee – coffee brewed hot and served cold, usually over ice – but cold brewed coffee is a different beast altogether. Here, ground coffee is slowly steeped in room temperature or cold water to produce a sweeter, less acidic cup of joe. And by replacing heat with time, you're rewarded with loads of flavour without any of the bitterness.

Why is it so popular now? After all, cold brews are anything but new. The drink took root in Japan after being introduced by Dutch traders in the early 1600s, so we figured: who better to speak with than the coffee gurus over at **Dutch Colony Coffee Co.**? Here is what we learned.

Generally speaking, there are two ways to make a cold brew:

### 1) Soaking Method (aka the no-frills way)

You'll need:

- 1/3 cup coarsely ground coffee
- 1 1/2 cups room temperature or cold water, a strainer, a bowl, a paper coffee filter and a pitcher; or a French press\*

1. Place coffee grounds in the pitcher, add the water and stir to combine. Cover tightly and let steep at room temperature for 12 to 24 hours.
2. Line a fine-mesh strainer with a coffee filter. *Slowly* and patiently pour the coffee through the strainer into a bowl. Once only grounds are left in the pitcher, discard all grounds.
4. Rinse the pitcher, and pour the strained coffee back into it. Cover and refrigerate.
5. The coffee produced is a concentrate, so you can drink it straight or dilute it with water, milk or flavourings like sugar, vanilla or booze. Serve slightly chilled or over ice.

\* A French press streamlines the process – simply plunge after steeping.

### 2) Drip Method (aka the *moo-hah-hah-hah* mad-scientist way)

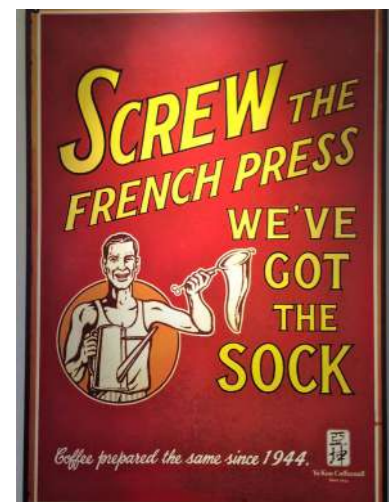
Using the same proportions of coffee and water as above, replace the kitchen items with an ultra-impressive chemistry-lab-style Japanese coffee drip that extracts coffee one drop at a time. If you're short on cash (a few thousand, for starters) or space at home, you can sample a drip-method cold brew at Dutch Colony Coffee Co. (\$6), or take one home at the same price in one of their new takeaway bottles. Otherwise, you can purchase a less expensive, but much smaller, Hario drip from them (\$359).

### THE COLD, HARD FACTS:

- Cold brew is also sometimes called "Kyoto coffee" or "Dutch coffee".
- Steeping can be done in as little as 12 hours, or upwards of 30 hours.
- Cold brews cost more than iced coffees; it takes longer and uses more beans per cup.
- The use of cold water extracts different chemical compounds within the bean structure, imparting more depth to the coffee.
- Ounce for ounce, cold brew has more caffeine than any other coffee, due to the slow extraction process. Beware – it's smooth but potent stuff.

The guys behind Dutch Colony Coffee Co. tweaked over 100 cups of coffee before agreeing on the cold brew that they serve today. The winner? A coarse blend of chocolaty Guatemalan and fruity Ethiopian beans steeped for 12 hours.

**Dutch Colony Coffee Co.**  
#02-K67 PasarBella @ The Grandstand  
200 Turf Club Road | 6467 0255







The Panel	What's your coffee of choice?	If I wanted a coffee in your country, what should I order or do to avoid being laughed at?	How do you "do" coffee? Are there any cultural traditions you can tell us about?	Where do you go to get your coffee here and why?
 <p><b>Stephanie Batot</b> is from Brazil and is executive director at Grayling PR agency in Singapore. She started drinking coffee when she was "probably too young".</p>	<p>I prefer an Arabica mixture with a combination of Colombian, Guatemalan and Brazilian beans.</p>	<p>Don't try to dip your breakfast pastry in your coffee like the French do; the cups are just too small.</p>	<p>Brazilians like their coffee very sweet. Fill a very small cup halfway with fine, non-crystallised sugar. Pour extremely concentrated coffee (about 75 grams of coffee per litre of water) on top and sip. The coffee will be so thick you can almost eat it with a spoon.</p> <p>For breakfast, Brazilians pair a cup of sweet coffee with <i>pão de queijo</i> (small, chewy tapioca flour buns with lots of cheese). Both are available on every street corner; it's a must-try combination.</p>	<p>I worked for Starbucks in Thailand for four years, so I can't help but be attached to the brand. Big brands like Starbucks can be trusted to consistently provide high quality coffee and do a good job of sourcing their beans ethically.</p>
 <p><b>Jean-Christophe</b> (JC) is French, is general manager APAC for HTTV, and was 15 when he had his first coffee.</p>	<p>I use Nespresso for convenience, and prefer to use South American blends. In the morning, it's boring Nescafe with milk.</p>	<p>We rarely say <i>un café</i>; we say <i>un express</i>, <i>un grand crème</i> (and not <i>un café au lait</i>, as most tourists say), <i>une noisette</i> (drop of milk), <i>un alongé</i> (with more water), <i>un serré</i> (short), and most lunches in a café end up with <i>deux cafés et l'addition</i>.</p>	<p>We have two very different ways of drinking coffee. For breakfast it's usually a filter or instant coffee in a large bowl, not too strong, black or with milk. This what we have with our toast or with croissants, and dunking is allowed.</p> <p>During a date or for a café coffee, you order an espresso made with a proper espresso machine. The French very rarely take milk in coffee, only for breakfast; and it's easy to spot the tourists, as they ask for milk with their coffee and butter with their bread.</p>	<p>Smitten in Robertson Quay and the Tiong Bahru Bakery serve coffee like back home. Paul in Tanglin Mall also offers decent coffee and good croissants and bread. I sometimes have breakfast meetings at Hediard in Tudor Court shopping arcade, where they serve good coffee and croissants.</p>
 <p>Italian <b>Corrado Riccio</b> is group operations director at Mangiatutto Group of Restaurants. "Espresso started to be a daily routine when I was 15 years old."</p>	<p>In Italy, families get used to one blend, often created by a <i>torrefazione</i> shop selling coffees and teas, and it's delivered regularly to your home. Nowadays, supermarket shopping has replaced that, and if I had to pick a brand it would be Illy.</p>	<p>If you order a latte, which literally means "milk" in Italian, you'll probably be served a cold glass of plain milk, without any coffee in it! We have two ways of mixing milk with coffee, either a <i>macchiato</i>, a double espresso with just a few drops of milk, or a <i>caffelatte</i>, a glass of milk with one single espresso poured into it.</p>	<p>"<i>Un caffè, per favore</i>" means "One coffee, please." It's the only phrase you need to receive a single espresso, in a properly pre-warmed cup, with sugar on the side. Coffee equals a single espresso, period. One shot in the morning, before going to work, one during the coffee break and the last one after lunch. The actual intake of caffeine is similar to one or two Americanos; it's just the concentration in the espresso cup that makes it feel stronger.</p> <p>Never order a cappuccino after midday: it's strictly breakfast stuff for us.</p>	<p>We run five restaurants in town (<a href="http://mangiatutto.com.sg">mangiatutto.com.sg</a>), so I really don't have much time to spend in any other establishment. Each of our restaurants has a professional machine imported from Italy, so I make my own coffee all the time.</p>
 <p><b>Kathy Campbell</b> is from Melbourne and runs a millinery business, Hats Off. She had her first "very weak" coffee when she was 17.</p>	<p>At home we use Nespresso's Arpeggio capsules.</p>	<p>I reckon that if there is any place that you can just about do anything, it is Melbourne. Order whatever you like – no one will raise an eyebrow.</p>	<p>Coffee shops in Australia are varied, but you can always rely on good coffee and a great atmosphere. Drinking coffee is really an all-day thing, and like in a lot of countries, grabbing a takeaway on the way to work is almost a tradition. Of course, there's nothing better than a weekend big brekkie with a steady flow of coffee to see you through the morning papers.</p>	<p>Most of my coffee drinking is done conveniently at The Coffee Bean &amp; Tea Leaf or Starbucks; it's a fantastic way to re-energise after a hard session of exercise. I do enjoy a latte at Beviamo, or the Melbourne-Italian icon Brunetti. In the city, I don't mind a good drop at Sarnies in Telok Ayer Street.</p>



# From Basic to Barista: Profiling the latest coffee machines

Forget plungers and percolators; check out our roundup of automatic machines to make your own barista-style coffee at home.

By Amy Brook-Partridge



**Philips Saeco Poemia** manual espresso machine promises to "deliver an authentic Italian espresso every time". It includes a classic milk-frother, can hold a litre of water and has high bar pressure (15) to extract the ground coffee aroma. It doesn't have a cup-warmer, so drink up fast. RRP \$299. [philips.com](http://philips.com)



**DeLonghi's Prima Donna XS ETAM** is its slimmest coffee machine, working well in compact kitchens. It has automatic cleaning, an active cup-warmer and a pre-brewing cycle, and can be used with beans or ground coffee. It's probably easier to say what it doesn't have (a barista chat function?). This kind of functionality comes at a price, though. RRP \$2,499. [delonghi.com/en-sg](http://delonghi.com/en-sg)



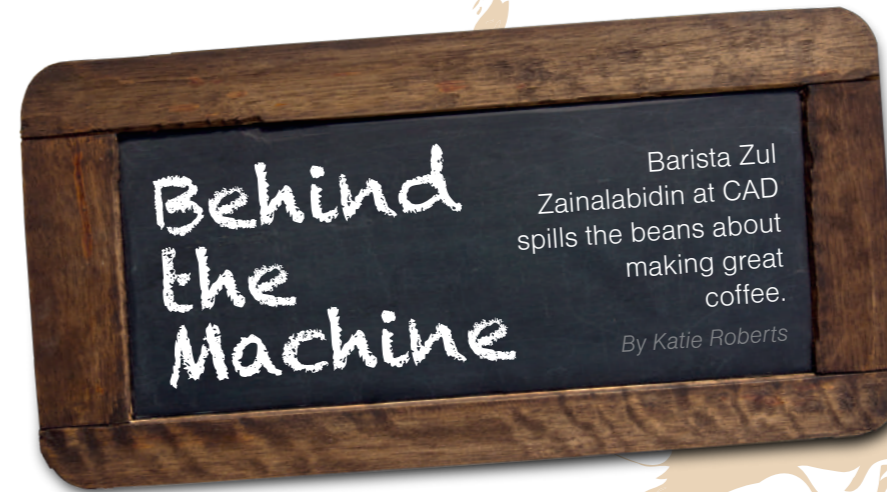
Nespresso is a home-brew favourite – easy to use, and the variety of capsules means there's plenty of choice. The recently launched **Nespresso Inissia** machine comes in black, red and limited-edition blue. It has a 700ml water tank, a 25-second heat-up and automatically powers off after nine minutes. Minus points: there's no George Clooney to serve it to you. RRP \$238. [nespresso.com/sg/en](http://nespresso.com/sg/en)



**Bosch VeroCafe** is for the serious coffee-drinking household that likes variety. It can prepare multiple types of coffees in consecutive brewing cycles, can accommodate large and small cups, and has a removable 1.7L water tank, and separate containers for beans and ground coffee. RRP \$2,199. [bosch-home.com.sg](http://bosch-home.com.sg)



**Gaggenau's fully automatic CM 450** espresso machine has a continuous-flow heater for immediate coffee gratification, along with warming drawers for your cups. There's a personalisation function for up to eight brews, so you can programme all your favourite coffees. One small snag is that you then need the flash kitchen to fit around it. Price depends on the installation option chosen. [gaggenau.com](http://gaggenau.com)



Barista Zul Zainalabidin at CAD spills the beans about making great coffee.  
By Katie Roberts

**PERSONAL COFFEE MACHINE?**

I have a Mirage at home. And by home, I mean CAD Café, my second home.

**HOW MANY CUPS A DAY DO YOU DRINK?**

Apart from the espresso shots I pull every morning to calibrate the right shot, just one cup a day.

**HOW DID YOU TRAIN TO BECOME A BARISTA?**

With great experience comes great coffee. I've worked with some experienced baristas and learned the art from them. It includes: calibrating (getting the right grind, not too coarse, not too fine), dosing (making sure there is the right amount of coffee in the basket), pulling the shot (ensuring the shot pours with a slow, constant drip to give a rich golden crema on top), steaming the milk (correct temperature and method) and doing latte art (pushing the technique and getting creative). Baristas need to know exactly what goes into the cup of coffee they're going to serve: the origin of the coffee, how it's processed, the quality and the taste profile.

**ANY WORKPLACE HAZARDS?**

When I first started out as a barista, I did get burns on my hands from the steam wand. But after a while, I got used to it, and no burns anymore.

**MOST REQUESTED ORDER?**

Latte.

**LARGEST NUMBER OF COFFEES MADE IN ONE DAY?**

I remember a day I didn't leave the machine, when we went through 3.5kg of coffee beans – that's about 200 coffees!

**WHERE DO YOU SOURCE YOUR BEANS?**

At CAD we use Toby's Estate Woolloomooloo Blend on the hopper, as it's a great, all-round smooth blend that works well in the milky coffees. Toby's Estate is an Australian coffee roaster (and café) in Singapore which roasts beans from all over the world. On Tuesdays, it holds regular public cupping sessions (the term for tasting coffee bean and roast profiles).

**OTHER FAVOURITE ROASTERS IN TOWN?**

Nylon, Oriole and Dutch Colony Coffee Co., all of whom sell beans in their cafés and online. There's so much good coffee out there, we've no need to roast our own.

**FAVOURITE LATTE-ART DESIGN?**

When I have time, it is definitely the swan, but the two-layered tulip is simple and easy when I'm in a hurry.

**WHY IS ICED COFFEE MORE EXPENSIVE?**

It's not only the cost of the ice. We pull a larger espresso shot and the size of the glass we serve the iced coffees in requires more milk.



23 Haji Lane | cad.sg

**About CAD**

Scottish expat Chad Samson opened CAD with a business partner in Kampong Glam in July last year. "There were no cafés on Haji Lane at the time, and we felt it was missing a place where people could have brunch before browsing the shops, or stop off in the afternoon for a coffee and bite," he says. "We have an art wall that showcases local and international artists and puts the A in Coffee, Art and Design."





## Sweet Endings

Try these Asian-inspired sweet treats when you're craving coffee in another form.

### Hong Kong Cupcakes

Difficulty level: ☕

Makes: 6 to 8 cupcakes

These soft, spongy cupcakes – here with the addition of a subtle coffee flavour – are a mainstay of Asian bakeries.

#### YOU'LL NEED

- cupcake liners
- electric mixer

#### INGREDIENTS

- 5 eggs, separated
- 50g corn oil
- 60ml milk, warmed
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee
- 100g plain flour
- 80g caster sugar

#### METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line muffin pan with cupcake cases.
2. Mix together the milk and instant coffee; set the mixture aside. Mix the egg yolk, corn oil and coffee-flavoured milk together. Sift the flour into the wet mixture; stir well to combine.
3. In a large, clean bowl, whisk the egg whites with the electric mixer until frothy. Gradually add the sugar while whisking until stiff peaks form. Fold the egg whites into the flour mixture, working carefully so as not to deflate the batter.
4. Spoon the batter into the prepared cases, filling them almost to the edges. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the centre of the cupcakes comes out clean.
5. Cool for 1-2 minutes in the pan, then remove to cool completely on a wire rack. Note: it is normal for the cupcakes to deflate slightly once removed from the oven.



### Layered Cake with Coffee Butter Cream

Difficulty level: ☕☕☕

Inspired by the classic opera cake, this cake is just as delicious and easier to make.

#### YOU'LL NEED

- 20cm square cake tin
- electric mixer
- digital pocket thermometer
- pastry brush

#### INGREDIENTS

*For the cake*

- 4 eggs
- 120g caster sugar
- 120g plain flour
- 50g melted butter (kept warm)

*For the butter cream*

- 100g egg whites
- 160g caster sugar
- 400g unsalted butter, cut into cubes and softened

*For the coffee syrup*

- 250ml brewed Vietnamese coffee, cooled (or 1 tablespoon Vietnamese coffee powder with 250ml water)

*For the ganache*

- 100g dark chocolate
- 100g whipping cream

#### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 175°C and grease the cake pan.

#### MAKE THE CAKE:

Beat the eggs and sugar with the electric mixer until the mixture becomes pale and thick. Add the melted butter and mix well. Sift the flour into the egg mixture and fold gently until just incorporated. Pour the batter into the prepared tin and bake for 40 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the cake centre comes out clean. Remove from the oven and cool the cake completely.

#### MAKE THE BUTTER CREAM:

Place the egg whites and sugar in a small saucepan over very low heat. Whisk until the sugar crystals dissolve (when the mixture reaches 70°C). Remove from the heat and pour into a mixing bowl. Beat on high speed until stiff peaks form. Gradually add the butter, beating until the mixture becomes smooth and creamy. Then add 100ml of coffee.

#### MAKE THE GANACHE:

Combine the chocolate and cream in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. Stir with a metal spoon until melted and smooth. Keep the ganache warm.

#### ASSEMBLE THE CAKE:

Split the cake into three layers. Place the first layer on a large serving plate. Brush a generous amount of coffee syrup onto the cake and cover with half of the butter cream. Carefully lay the second layer onto the first layer and brush with coffee syrup. Spread a third of the ganache evenly onto the second layer. Place the third cake layer onto the second layer and brush with coffee syrup. Spread the remaining butter cream onto the final layer. Refrigerate for one hour. Remove the cake and cover with the remaining ganache. Refrigerate the cake to set. Decorate with toasted walnuts or coffee beans.

**TIP:**  
Cut with a serrated knife to keep the cake layers neat and intact.



These recipes, plus many more, can be found in *Our Sweet Kitchen*, a cookbook with 50 classic cake and cupcake recipes, all with a touch of Asian flair. Pick up a copy at Kinokuniya for \$21.90.