

BEAN THERE

MAURO CIPOLLA AND THE ART OF ITALIAN ESPRESSO THROUGH CAFFÉ D'ARTE

Seattle has been called “the best city to contemplate the meaning of life”. And, as coffee connoisseurs as well as Seattleites themselves well know, few things help you get in a contemplative mood better than sitting down in front of a cup of strong, rich, creamy espresso. And it is perhaps still not a coincidence that Seattle is the place where Mauro Cipolla found out about his mission in life, that is, to reeducate the people to authentic coffees roasted in an Italian tradition.

The founder and owner of Caffé D'arte learned the tricks of the trade from local roasters in Caserta and Naples, and in 1985 he started his own business in the family garage in Seattle. The secret of his formula, he says, lies in the choice of green coffees purchased, in the blends used and how they are varied to keep taste consistent over time as nature changes, and in the unique roasting process of his beans. Consequently Caffé D'arte is strong and creamy, and tastes as real Italian espresso should.

Competition in Seattle is very strong: Cipolla found himself competing for space in the market against giants like Starbucks Coffee, the self-proclaimed founder of American coffee-bar culture, SBC and Torrefazione Italia. Cipolla's approach was modest but effective. He started selling his espresso door-to-door, trying to make a deal with owners by assuring them that having once tasted his Caffé D'arte artisan blends, the consumers would go back more often and happier to pay the retailer higher prices for better quality coffee experiences. Cipolla told retailers that he would buy is back if they didn't like it.

Cipolla's dedication to his art, however, is most apparent from one of the most original of his initiatives, that is, Caffé D'arte's Coffee Academy. Mauro Cipolla delivers engaging and passionate lessons on all aspects of coffee production. Passion, sensitivity and intuition, he says, are key elements in approaching coffee.

His Academy was the first of its kind in the USA. Since 1989, in fact, more than 6,000 specialty coffee retailers and coffee connoisseurs from all over the world have attended it.

The Caffé D'arte Coffee Academy created so much interest that it was mentioned in NBC news, CBS news, Good Morning America and the Charles Kouralt Show. At present the Coffee Academy has two branches, one dealing with coffee and one with the business of coffee to include marketing, managing, promoting and the profitability of coffee. Mauro Cipolla and his educational staff are often found speaking at important trade gatherings such as the latest World Coffee Conference in Italy, all major Coffee Fests and the SCAA trade shows.

Caffé D'arte blends have won more official tasting awards and special recognitions than can be listed on a full page. The Caffé D'arte flavor profiles are found beyond Seattle. In fact, Caffé D'arte can be found in the most exclusive espresso bars in the United States and in the Asian market.

Caffé D'arte realizes that its success with coffees and espressos is due to passion, care, and detailed artisanship and to continued research that allows for a better and more complete coffee experience for the end user. It is with this goal in mind that Mauro

Cipolla has just finished writing a new chapter to help all baristas. The chapter is entitled “Evaluating Espresso Extraction: a trouble-shooting guide”. It will be found in a new book entitled *Achieving Success in Specialty Coffee* available on the market by June 99. The pour will tell the whole story: “Thank you, Caffé D’arte.”

Giulia Blasi