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HOT
NEW
TRENDS IN
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COFFEE THE CLASSIC ITALIAN WAY

It's not just about the beans and the water—the proper method of steaming the milk can elevate a cup from bland to bellissima.

I have always loved coffee. Where I come from in China people drink it often—they still drink a lot (*a lot*) of tea, but coffee is very popular, especially with young people. I came to New York from China 10 years ago and brought that love of coffee with me, and now I make over 500 cups a day. I have many regular customers and occasionally appear on television. Martha Stewart likes the way I make her coffee, and I've been on her show twice.

I make coffee in the classic Italian way. Other places make different kinds of coffees using syrups and different flavors and that's okay, but it's not how I make my coffee. I only make three types: espresso, cappuccino and latte. When customers ask me for something else, I just say, "Try my cappuccino." It usually ends happily.

Good coffee, of course, starts with good beans. We only use ATT

the foam. Now, here's the most important part: only put the steam head about a quarter-inch below the top of the milk. Don't put it in too far because that only makes the milk hot, too hot. Don't put it on the surface because you'll only succeed in making bubbles. Put it exactly a quarter-inch below the surface and keep moving it down because as the milk steams the foam will rise. The ideal temperature you're going for is 130–135°F. Make sure to use a thermometer when you first start.

Then toss away the top layer of the foam; don't use it, ever. You just want the cream that is right below the foam. This is the best part of the milk, and is what we use for cappuccinos. Below the cream is hot milk, and that's what we use for lattes.

So we pour the espresso in the bottom of the cup and then add in the cream. If you can you should pour it so that you leave a small



IF YOU CAN, POUR THE CREAM SO THAT IT LEAVES A SMALL BROWN MARK ON THE TOP. THAT'S WHAT I USE TO MAKE DESIGNS WITH, DRAWING IT OUT WITH A TOOTH-PICK-LIKE SKEWER.



(Antica Tostatura Triestina) from Trieste. The beans are sourced from Africa, South America and Costa Rica, and then seven or eight types are blended—the exact recipe is a family secret, but the result is sublime. They do just the right roast, not too light, not too dark, and the beans are not too bitter. (Many people think that the darker the roast, the stronger the coffee in terms of caffeine. That's not true.)

Water quality is crucial, of course, and also important is to grind the coffee fresh right before it is used. But what I find many people don't understand is how to properly steam milk for lattes and cappuccinos.

Always use fresh, cold milk in a metal steaming pitcher. To repeat: cold milk, metal pitcher, always. Fill it only halfway to leave room for

brown mark on the top. That's what I use to make designs with, drawing out with a skewer, like an elongated toothpick.

You have to come to Bottega Del Vino to see my designs (pictured). I'd be happy to show you.

Sammy Lin is the barista at Bottega del Vino in New York City. He was born in Fuzhou, China, and came to the United States in September, 2000. He has lived in New York City all of that time. He started working at Bottega's sister restaurant, Via Quadronno, as a barista, and has worked at Bottega Del Vino since its opening in 2005.