



## Making coffee not all froth and bubbles

By Scottie Callaghan

To get an understanding of the many caffeine varieties being served up on a typical coffee menu, it is best to start with an explanation of the key flavour ingredient, the base or foundation of your coffee - the espresso.

The espresso is the star - if you get the espresso right and provided you simply heat the milk to 65 degrees and only heat it once, you are set for a delicious cup of nectar.

Get this wrong and you will probably need to add lots of sugar to make it palatable.

The base or foundation of all drinks on the Australian coffee menu, a flat white, a latte, a cappuccino and so on, is either an espresso, a ristretto, a double espresso or a double ristretto. I say Australian menu because we are one of the few countries that predominantly serves espresso. In fact, when people from other countries come to Australia, they are surprised that all they can find is espresso coffee.

A ristretto is the first 15ml of the espresso pour (extraction).

An espresso is the full 30ml of an espresso pour. What determines the flavour of each particular coffee is the base, whether you use a ristretto as the base or an espresso.

Each particular menu item can be served with any one of the four options as the base (ristretto, double ristretto, espresso or double espresso).

If a ristretto is used as the base for your coffee, it will be quite weak. If a double ristretto is used, your coffee will taste strong but not bitter. If a double espresso is used, your coffee will taste strong and

bitter.

Generally, 95 percent of coffees served in Australia are made with an espresso as the base for a small coffee and a double espresso for a large coffee. This is not necessarily what tastes the best - it has just become the Australian norm. More recently, this style has begun to be challenged by some new, merging, funky and more experimental cafés and espresso bars.

Once we have our coffee base, all we need to do is heat our milk on the steam wand, create some froth while doing so, and control the level of thickness of the froth. This thickness of froth on top and the size of the vessel/cup used are the only two factors that determine what your coffee is called.

A cappuccino, for instance, might have an espresso as the base and then heated milk with 15mm of froth; a flat white in comparison might have the same espresso as the base and a thin 3mm of froth - the only difference between the two coffees is the level of froth on top.

At Belaroma we have been working on a coffee guide for our café partners because we know that getting it right will bring back happy customers.

I love demonstrating the differences in person, which is why I'm often behind the machine at our Manly Vale Coffee Centre. I believe people should experiment and enjoy the different types of coffee. My favourite is a piccolo latte.

Scottie Callaghan is head trainer and brand ambassador for Belaroma Coffee and is a past world Latte Art and Barista Champion.