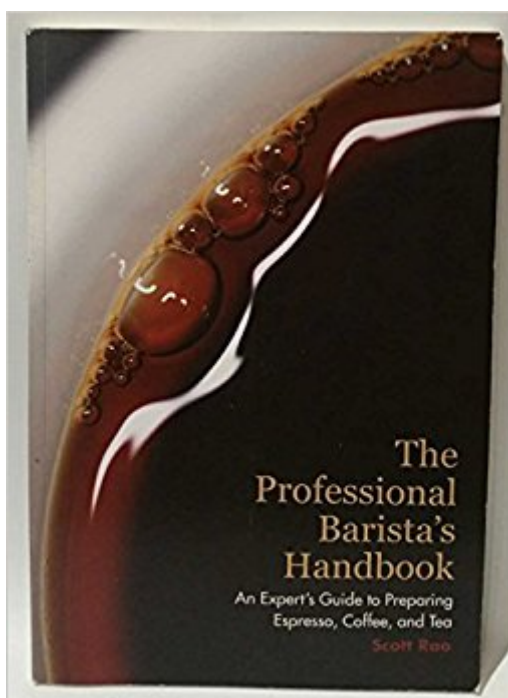


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The Professional Barista's Handbook: An Expert Guide To Preparing Espresso, Coffee, And Tea



Synopsis

FROM THE AUTHOR: When I began in the coffee business fourteen years ago, I read every book I could find about coffee. After reading all of those books, however, I felt as if I hadn't learned much about how to make great coffee. My coffee library was chock-full of colorful descriptions of brewing styles, growing regions, and recipes, with a few almost-unreadable scientific books mixed in. I would have traded in all of those books for one serious, practical book with relevant information about making great coffee in a café. Fourteen years later, I still haven't found that book. I know many other professionals as well as some obsessive nonprofessionals would like to find that same book I've been looking for. This book is my attempt to give it to them.

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Customer Reviews

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I just completed reading (except for the cupping chapter, which I'm saving for later), Scott Rao's The Roaster's Companion, and I want to recommend it to

you, although it contains information that once again sets me back on my heels, as it were, just as acquiring the heat exchanger machine did. Rao's roasts and cupped over 20,000 batches on a wide variety of roasting machines, and he combed his notes to glean commonalities from roasts that he found exceptional roasts, as he comments, that he can still taste, not just pretty good roasts. The book is a short one, but with information so densely packed that one must read it with intention. Particularly interesting is his discussion of the factors which contribute most again, in his experience to superior development of flavors in the coffee bean. Specifically, he emphasizes the importance of the rate of rise (it needs never to flat line or drop) and using a routine that encourages maximum delta T during the initial stages as well as throughout the roast, delta T being the difference in temperature between the inside of the bean and the outside of the bean. Anyway, the book is pricey, but I guessed that it would provide more valuable information than a roasting class from one of those who offer them in Sacramento. My hunch was correct. I did attend a roasting class, and while it was fun to hang around and ask questions, and to see the equipment up close and so on, it was way too basic, designed as it was to introduce people to the idea that they could roast at home. Similarly, I'm halfway through Rao's The Professional Barista's Handbook, which is also a densely packed, though equally short, book as the Roaster's Companion. I'm impressed with how much incorrect folklore exists among coffee enthusiasts, passed seemingly from one to the next without scrutiny. There are a few voices, though, on the forums that seem to arise from considered experience. Thank goodness for those. It is interesting that the brewing and roasting processes, while distinct and involving differing parameters, are alike in their complexity and in the challenges they present the would-be practitioner who aspires at each step to improve. I recall a book I read years ago called Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, wherein the author emphasizes the value in perpetually returning to the state of mind of a beginner. The heat exchanger machine forced me to begin again. Reading Scott Rao's books is forcing me to begin again, also. But something is happening a little at a time, and I'm grasping the thermal issues in both brewing and roasting more clearly. Now, if I can just end up with a remarkable cup of coffee, it'll all be worth it.

Right off the bat, the book throws you into the world of espresso - and does so unapologetically while still managing to retain the attainability of the content. One of my favorite guys in the coffee world along with the Santa Cruz crew. You have nothing to lose and much knowledge to gain from the contents of this book.

Scott Rao is one of the "go to" names for proper coffee, and espresso preparation. This book is very good; it explains in depth the mechanics behind espresso preparation and chronicles exact methods of preparing the beverage well and consistently. As for coffee preparation, the book goes in depth there as well. If you employ his methods, and follow his advice, I don't believe you will produce a bad espresso or coffee ever again.

I have been making espresso for quite some time now, but one thing that completely slipped my understanding was the trivial relation between temperature and dosing. Simply for those few pages describing this, the book was worth all the money. Thanks to the author for making my shots super consistent! One other thing I learned through reading this, but not specifically spelled out in the book or anywhere: I never did the preinfusion long enough. Now I wait for the first drops to come out of the puck just from preinfusion, and the difference is remarkable. Consistency has never been better and I probably would not have realized my mistake without reading the consistently described work flow in the book.

As a chemistry teacher, I absolutely love how this book explains the finer points of espresso and coffee. It has great pictures and doesn't water down the details on the chemistry behind making a great cuppa. Good explanation and the author allows you to skip the technical chapters if you want. Paying attention to the details (now that I understand them!) has helped me make a MUCH better cup. The book also has a great indepth section on frothing milk. I felt like they added the tea section just to satisfy current trends so ignore that part as its pretty weak.

I recently upgraded my home brew espresso machine from a semi-auto to a more hands on machine. And, while I LOVE the new machine, there has been a relatively steep learning curve :) After a month of frustration with unsuccessful attempts to create appropriate microfoam for lattes and cappucinos, and of wondering if I had gotten a defective machine (but, pretty sure the problem was user error) I bought this book and starting hitting it hard. Within 24 hours, I was making awesomely velvety steamed milk with microfoam that was a barista's dream. Scott Rao's concise, down to earth descriptions make it very easy to follow and make it possible for even a novice to become an expert very quickly. GREAT book. His instructions are so detailed, yet incredibly intuitive. I highly recommend this book for anyone looking to make great espresso drinks. Whether you're a home brewista like myself, struggling to master the art of the microfoam, or a cafe barista

looking to improve your skill level and become a master of the pull, this book is the resource you are looking for.

This guide was purchased to assist in learning how to make great coffee ahead of a new cafe opening. I found it very readable and sat and read it in one go, skipping only one of the chapters which was a bit technical for me. I had just had training with Prufrock Coffee the day I read it and I'd certainly have found some of the terminology a bit beyond me if I hadn't done the practical first I think. However it is aimed at the pro barista anyway so this is no criticism. I had this book recommended to me by Prufrock Coffee ahead of my training.

A very insightful book - more suited to baristas-in-training, but still a good read for those that are just interested about how coffee and brewing work. Be sure to purchase from Scott Rao directly, however - this book is being up-charged to an insane amount. It should only be \$50.

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