



SOLANOS FIREBRAND COFFEE ROASTERS / DIRECTOR, MATT MUHL

EYE TASTE

WORDS: CHRIS SILVINI, PHOTOS: EVAN MORGAN

For most of us, getting our caffeine fix at work usually consists of dipping into the bulk tins of instant that ends up more resembling sludgy estuary water than a real cup of coffee.

Luckily for coffee lover Matt Muhl, his office comes with an elaborate science lab of coffee-making equipment: a state-of-the-art machine imported from the US, scales, measures and all the bits and bobs you need for a quality brew. In this office, coffee is serious business.

In fact, coffee is Muhl's business. As the co-director of Solanos Firebrand Coffee Roasters he spends his day painstakingly roasting and testing his beans to make sure his clients are serving up the perfect cuppa.

"The coffee coming out of the machine should fit three key criteria, which are the temperature, the time and the dose. That way we get a consistent shot each time," he said.

"What we try to do is leave nothing up to chance. We make sure that we've got all the variables under control. We use

the same dosage in the basket each time, the same temperature, we weigh each shot, and we time each shot."

For someone who's made coffee his bread and butter, Muhl's first taste of the heavenly nectar came quite late in life after his dad scored a job with a large scale coffee roaster back in his home town of Perth.

"I grew up never having appreciated or tried it at all until I was about 16 or 17," he said.

"My dad is the chief technical officer at Five Senses Coffee. Before he got into the coffee industry he hadn't tried it at all.

"He was brought on board for his technical expertise not for his coffee knowledge. He introduced coffee to us."

After following his dad into the roasting biz, Muhl moved to North Queensland where he worked for another local roaster before a chance meeting with syrup manufacturer and now business partner George Solanos which gave Muhl his shot at making his own signature blends.

"The origins that we're running with at

the moment are Guatemala, Brazil which is a very popular origin, Colombia and Ethiopia," he said.

"The variety between origins is amazing. The Ethiopian, which is my personal favourite, is renowned for its dark berry flavours. The Colombian is a very sweet, well-rounded coffee. It's kind of like the all-rounder in the coffee game. It goes well by itself and it goes well in a blend.

"The Guatemalan is a much sharper acidity so you've got to be careful where you use it. It tends to overpower every blend you put it in so you have to be careful how much you're putting in."

And despite the fact that he has all the equipment and a seemingly endless supply of freshly roasted beans at his fingertips, when it comes to his own coffee intake Muhl still prefers quality over quantity.

"In a day I only go for about two cups, but the ones I do have I like to put the effort in," he said.

"I think it's really important to pick your coffee well."

EYE COOK



It's no surprise that people who eat healthy diets look and feel healthy, and get the most out of life. In the same way, people who live on fast food or other unhealthy eating habits often pay for it in the long run with chronic health issues. Sue Radd is a health professional and a scientist who believes eating a plant-based diet will reduce risk of chronic disease, and travelled to countries with low health risks, adapting their traditional cuisine for Australians. She shares 150 recipes for eating your way to good health with colourful, full-flavoured meals for the whole family to enjoy.

Shari Tagliabue

FOOD AS MEDICINE BY SUE RADD

This easy tangy recipe has all the goodness of whole fruit without the additives that usually hide in ice-cream. Perfect for an elegant ending to a dinner party. Berries are some of the highest antioxidant foods you can find. Like strawberries, raspberries are low GI and contain ellagic acid, but they have 50 per cent more of this phytonutrient and double the fibre.

REAL RASPBERRY SORBET

PREPARATION: 5 MINUTES, COOKING: 0 MINUTES, SERVES 6

2 large (approximately 120g each) very ripe bananas, peeled, chopped and frozen
2 cups frozen raspberries
2 tablespoons natural maple syrup
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Per serve: energy 405 kJ (97 cal); protein 2 g; fat 0 g; saturated fat 0 g; cholesterol 0 mg; carbohydrate 19 g; sugars 17 g; fibre 6 g; calcium 29 mg; iron 0.7 mg; sodium 2 mg

1. Remove bananas from freezer and place in a food processor. Let sit for 5-7 minutes to soften slightly, then pulse until broken down.
2. Add remaining ingredients and blend until a thick, creamy pink mixture is formed, pausing once or twice to scrape down sides.
3. Serve immediately in cups or cones, or transfer to a glass bowl with a lid and freeze for later.

TIPS:

- This recipe is great for using up bananas that are starting to go brown. Simply peel, chop and pop into the freezer for later use.
- The pink colour will intensify with freezing and turn raspberry red.
- You can also use other berries of your choice.
- Freeze leftover sorbet in an ice-cube tray to make your own smoothie cubes. Then just pop them into a blender with dairy or soy milk or yoghurt!

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