

Café Corsa:

Brewing coffee in a whole different way



Jee Yoon Na | Daily Trojan



The Clover, which customizes each coffee order to a customer's satisfaction, is one of 300 special coffee machines in the world.

By **DANIELLE CHARBONNEAU**
Daily Trojan

Rick Weiche is a true coffee connoisseur.

He knows the subtle nuances of coffee beans from around the world, the exact velvety-smooth richness of good espresso and the perfect temperature to steam milk for a heavenly latte. But, Rick's knowledge of coffee isn't all he has to offer. He's armed with the Clover.

The Corsa is an \$11,000 commercial coffee maker that allows baristas to precisely make one cup of coffee at a time, giving them the opportunity to select the perfect brewing time and temperature to extract the most delectable flavor from any particular bean.

Brewing coffee one cup at a time

allows coffee shops to offer a wide variety of international coffees. The result is a freshly brewed and customized cup of coffee for each customer.

Weiche is the proud owner of one of less than 300 Clovers nationwide and one of seven in all of Los Angeles County.

Luckily for USC students, Weiche and his Clover can be found just up Figueroa Street at Café Corsa, an Italian-inspired coffeeshop in the Texere Plaza that opened in November and has received rave reviews.

"As far as quality, the only coffee that I've had that's even comparable would be from Europe," said Nick Zork, a first year graduate student studying theology and the arts.

Café Corsa is what Weiche calls a "third-wave" coffeeshop — cafés in

response to corporate coffeeshops such as Starbucks, Peet's Coffee & Tea and Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf.

Third-wave coffeeshops hope to bring back the "artisanality" of coffee, as Weiche puts it, where each drink is made by a skilled barista from superior international coffee and espresso beans. Customers can smell the variety of beans before picking out their favorite and then watch as they are ground in front of them.

The Clover allows Weiche to do this.

"It allows me to offer the selection of a wine bar," said Weiche, who has coffees from Kenya, Guatemala and El Salvador. "It allows me to offer what we call vertical flights."

Much like grapes, coffee beans have different characteristics based on the environment in which they

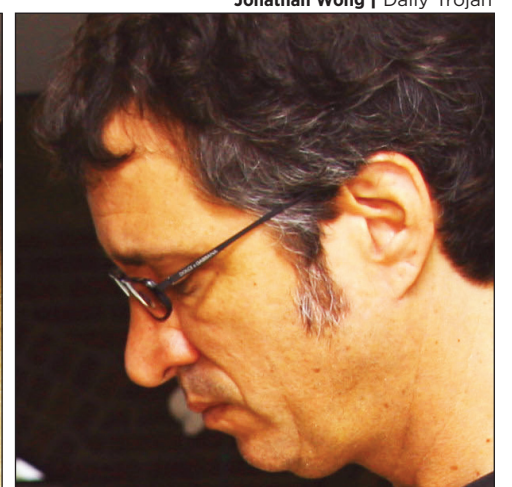
grow and how they are roasted. A coffee connoisseur such as Weiche can taste these nuances that characterize different beans.

African coffees are more "loral and fruity, whereas Central American coffees are heavier, smokier and have more chocolate overtones," Weiche said. Indonesian and Sumatran can be a mix of the two — heavy, yet light at the same time.

Roasting affects the taste by extracting acid from the beans.

"What tends to happen when you get a dark roast is you get a sweetness — a sweetness because you're roasting out a lot of the acidic oils. That's why your lighter, medium roasts are actually less sweet," Weiche said, pointing out a common misconception about coffee.

"Everybody thinks a dark roast is



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coming up

Café Corsa will host an afternoon of live music and poetry this Sunday at 2 p.m. featuring the Stevenson Ranch Davidians and Dom Campanella of The Quarter After.

The event will be the second of many to follow — owner and barista Rick Wieche plans to host similar events the first Sunday of every month.

He hopes his café can help revive the live culture and “beat sensitivity” that used to exist in cafés and offer a relax-

ing place to enjoy a Sunday afternoon. “Sunday afternoon is really important,” Weiche said. “I go back to these old shows back in the ’80s where rock bands used to play in record stores, little independent record stores all around the city.”

Stevenson Ranch Davidians and Dom Campanella, both jam bands known for their psychedelic blues and rock, will bring their energy to this weekend’s event while local poets will share their personal work.

more bitter or more acidic, but that’s actually because they’ve been getting badly dark roasted beans,” he said. “The reason why a lot of people have become dissatisfied with Starbucks is that they buy in such huge bulk that it’s hard to do quality control. When you’re buying in such huge quantities, a way to eliminate bad beans is to over roast everything.”

Weiche works with micro-roasters who directly trade with independent foreign bean farmers to not only ensure organic, well-roasted beans, but also to make a larger social impact.

“This is something I socially and environmentally believe in: the direct trade relationship. I can’t emphasize how much more fair it is than fair trade and how much more equitable it is than fair trade,” Weiche said.

“You’re working face to face with these farmers and you know where these beans are coming from. Both the roaster, and then I, the barista, are

now intrinsically involved in serving the beans that are of the highest environmental soundness.”

The Clover, along with high-class, environmentally sound beans, has made customers more than pleased.

Artist Linsley Lambert drives from Culver City just to get a latte from Café Corsa.

“This latte is so beautiful, it’s so rich and interesting and foamy,” Linsley said. “The coffee is terrific.”

One woman called Weiche from Miami before flying out for a business trip to find out the café’s hours since she knew his coffeeshop was the closest one with a Clover, Weiche said.

At Café Corsa, Weiche also hopes to revive the live culture and beat sensitivity that used to exist in cafés.

On the first Sunday of every month at 2 p.m., Café Corsa hosts live music and poetry events. This Sunday, the Stevenson Ranch Davidians and Dom Campanella of The Quarter After will perform at Café Corsa.

Weiche is also planning coffee tastings on the third Sunday of every month.

“You guys [USC students] come from good taste, you’re developing good taste,” Weiche said. “This is the place that’s going to continue to perpetuate that and hone those tastes.”

Café Corsa Menu

Brewed Coffees
Current market price —
\$2.00/\$2.50

Estate

- El Salvador — Los Immortales
Delightful, medium-bodied, velvety feel, juicy harmony
- Guatemala — El Cuervo
Balanced and composed, offers a full spectrum of flavor
- Kenya — Kianderi
Intense, enticing aroma, lingering sweetness

Blends

- El Diablo Dark
Delicious dark roast, yet delicate, clean elegant finish
- Organic Blend
Medium bodies and bright with a superb smoothness

Decaf

- Black Cat (decaf)
Swiss water processed, soft body, pleasing and smooth

• Librarian’s Blend
Bold base with hints of spice

Hot Drinks

- Espresso — \$2.25
 - Latte/Cappuccino — \$3.25
 - Cortado/Macchiato — \$3.25
 - Mocha — \$3.50
 - Dante — \$3.50
- A specialty coffee drink inspired by the Italian confections of chocolate and orange. A latte made with fresh-squeezed orange juice and chocolate with orange shavings on top.
- Chai Latte — \$2.95
 - Tea — \$1.75/\$3.00
 - Hot Cocoa — \$1.75

Cold Drinks

- Sparkling Water — \$1.75
- Juice — \$1.75
- Iced Tea — \$1.65
- Coke — \$1.25
- Italian Soda — \$2.25



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