



Baristas
are more
respected
than
barristers



The idea of curtailing my daily intake of caffeine is too hideous to contemplate. So when the naturopath suggested going cold turkey my heart sank. “What about tea?” I asked. “Tea too,” she said.

I recoiled in horror. But it got worse. Instead of my usual sweet treat mid-morning (elevenses is the traditional English name for it), I was prescribed raw carrots.

“What am I, Bugs Bunny?”

To alternative health practitioners, eating the odd biscuit accompanied by tea or coffee seems tantamount to taking arsenic.

It was galling to be paying for advice that, if followed, would make my life utter misery. I mean, I love my morning shot and so do other people.

Notice how half the population walks around with takeaway coffee cups in their mitts. Driving, walking, in meetings, everywhere – iPhone in one hand, coffee cup in the other. If I were Dr Evil, I would lace global coffee supplies with mind-control drugs and enslave the world.

According to BIS Shrapnel’s *Coffee & Beverages in Australia, 2010* report, Australian consumers spend \$10.7 billion a year on coffee and we’re not getting much change out of \$5 per cup, even though it’s estimated the ingredients cost about 35c.

But world coffee prices have risen along with wages and the cost of utilities, which applies upward pressure on our drug of choice. And when you’re hooked, you’ll pay.

At a junior soccer match recently, the first thing I noticed on arriving was a long queue snaking its way to a coffee van servicing the caffeine-addicted



Pour shot

Life’s not worth living without a morning brew or two

parents like some mobile clinic. I quickly joined the line.

I once hired a similar van for my son’s birthday party held in a park. Parents were most appreciative, but there was disquiet when they found out the owner of the van also ran a brothel in Bowen Hills. The word inappropriate springs to mind.

We live in Wilston and a new cafe, Qwerk Espresso, has opened up the road. Customers descended on it like Depression-era hobos on a soup kitchen, half of them middle-aged blokes in budgie-smuggling bike shorts.

Cafes spring up like mushrooms after rain, and baristas are more respected than barristers.

When I arrived in Brisbane in 1986, it was slim pickings. I needed to feed the raging caffeine habit I picked up while working as a freelance journalist on the Gold Coast, where I was on a permanent flat-white drip at Tamari Bistro in Cavill Avenue. So I quickly became a fixture at Le Scoops in Paddington and, later, Aromas, where I was part of a posse known as the “Aromaholics”.

Being teetotal, coffee is my tippie. It’s a relatively harmless vice and one I’m not giving up.

You only go around once and I’m going to complete my lap with jangled nerves, a bloodstream pulsing with caffeine and a fist full of takeaway coffee.

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