

And though many people think that specialty coffees are much stronger, that's not necessarily the case, according to Mike Ferguson of the Specialty Coffee Association of America.

"Caffeine tends to be higher in brewed specialty coffee, but this has nothing to do with the coffee itself," he writes via e-mail. "The caffeine content is higher in brewed specialty coffee because it is brewed at the correct water-to-coffee ratio. SCAA recommends two tablespoons for every six ounces of water. Most coffee in the U.S. is brewed much weaker."

While the Swiss water method may sound appealing due to its natural-sounding name, Ferguson says that coffee fans should judge decaf the same way they judge regular.

**"We do not recommend one decaffeination method over another," he writes. "What is true for regular coffee is true for decaf: Taste will rule the day."
-The Prague Post 10-26-05**

Ferguson said because of Peet's quality aims, the company is smart to diversify its distribution channels as a way to grow.

"Peet's has focused on a balanced approach to growth, continuing to open stores while expanding distribution in grocery stores, offices, restaurants and airports," he said. "And from a branding point of view, the company is wise to concentrate on growth in the West, where people are much more familiar with Peet's."

-East Bay Business Times - 08-13-04

Cuadrado, who used to own an independent auto parts store in Queens, N.Y., is right to be optimistic, said Mike Ferguson, marketing communications director for the Specialty Coffee Association of America. Having a Starbucks open is no longer the kiss of death for nearby independents that it once was.

"The first wave of people opening coffeehouses were passionate about coffee, but weren't necessarily businesspeople," he said. "They had issues with

competing. Today, they've either gone out of business or become businesspeople."

-Fredericksburg Free Lance Star 12-01-05

"While you cannot make a mediocre coffee good during the roasting process, you can ruin a great coffee during roasting," said Mike Ferguson of SCAA.

-FORBES.com, July 20, 2006

The \$11 billion U.S. market for specialty coffee keeps growing, with about 23,000 coffeehouses, reports the Specialty Coffee Association of America trade group. Spokesman Mike Ferguson says sales won't peak "until there's an espresso bar in every neighborhood."

-USA Today, December 20, 2006

SCAA's chief communications officer, Mike Ferguson, states, "The retail sector remains strong, while independents (single-unit owners) continue to hold over 50 percent of the market share in terms of coffeehouse operation—no matter how fast the national and regional chains grow. The challenge going forward remains meaningful penetration for the home consumption market for specialty coffee."

Ferguson adds, "Truly unique and quality-driven coffee retailers must create a new tier of what it means to be in the specialty coffee business. This no longer means having an espresso machine, it means having staff that create miracles on the espresso machine, beginning with properly prepared espresso, which is still a rarity. Simply serving a selection of single-origin coffee is no longer enough. You have to serve 'double-take great' single-origins and blends that can keep up with them. Finally, the new tier of specialty coffee retailers will be just as devoted to running a quality business as they are to quality coffee."

Ferguson sees burgeoning roasting/retailing on the horizon. "Ten years ago, communities were seeing their first coffeehouses opening up. While there are still plenty of towns without a coffeehouse, most people know what a coffeehouse is. Now, we see communities getting their first roaster/retailer. Existing retailers are

looking for ways to differentiate their business and feed their evolving passion for getting inside the coffee. Roasting in a retail setting provides both. The untapped niche is, again, home consumption. Specialty coffee has not even scratched the surface when you consider how much coffee is consumed at home every day.”

-Specialty Coffee Retailer June 2005

Mike Ferguson, marketing communications director of the Specialty Coffee Association, said there is a lot of room to grow nationally, with only 16 percent of U.S. adults indulging in a daily cup of gourmet coffee, and even Grants Pass has long way to go before it can rattle the world coffee order. In Italy, there's an espresso stand on every street," he said. "Until every American can walk to a coffeehouse and get a properly prepared espresso, then we can't even begin to talk about saturation."

-Associated Press 12-21-04

Isn't the market oversaturated? "That question has yet to be answered," said Mike Ferguson, a spokesman for the Long Beach, Calif.-based Specialty Coffee Association of America. "We have yet to see what saturation means for quality espresso in Seattle."

-The Spokesman Review 02-19-03

One explanation for all this growth is that the coffee is simply better than it used to be. "Many of the independent retailers can differentiate from chains because they can roast their own beans on site," said Mike Ferguson, a spokesman for the Specialty Coffee Association of America, based in Long Beach. "It's just like bread: the fresher out of the roaster, the better the coffee."

-Los Angeles Business Journal 11-15-04

“In India I saw washed robustas being treated with the same level of attention to detail and quality control as the finest Central American arabica,” says Mike Ferguson, chief of staff for the Specialty Coffee Association of America. “Then I tasted those same robustas in a shot of espresso. It was exquisite. Of course it was. The coffee had been treated like royalty from tree to cup. Is there a place in the specialty coffee industry for robusta treated with this level of care? I think so,

but the path is narrow and unforgiving; whereas the path for mediocre arabica remains wide.”

-March 2006 Roast Magazine

They apparently won't give up coffee, period, according to Mike Ferguson, a spokesman for the Long Beach-based Specialty Coffee Association of America. "Research has shown over the years that coffee is a rather inelastic product," said Ferguson, whose association estimates that North America imports 2.45 billion pounds of specialty coffee each year. "Whether people's incomes are going up or coming down, they tend to buy the same amount of coffee regardless. We seem to have become a recession-proof industry."

-East Bay Business Times 02-21-03

Starbucks declined to comment for this article, referring questions to the Specialty Coffee Association of America, a trade group. Its spokesman, Mike Ferguson, said that coffee shops provide an excellent opportunity for students to do their homework. "You can occupy a table for two hours for about \$3, which is unique in a retail setting," he said. "At a traditional restaurant, they will kick you out." *-Washington Post, June 18, 2005*

“There is no end for some to the fetish for industry intrigue, but I can think of few issues less deserving of their attention,” says the SCAA’s Mike Ferguson. “The NCA recognizes, even if not all their members do, that the drive for quality sustains the entire industry. COE and other auction programs not only identify some of the highest quality coffees in the world, but demonstrate the range of their true value. I think it is a good partnership and an opportunity for ACE members and COE events to conduct some ‘missionary work’ among our friends in the commodity world.”

-Fresh Cup Magazine, October 2006

“The emergence of Rwandan specialty coffee on the global market is stunning,” said Michael D. Ferguson, a spokesman for the Specialty Coffee Association of America, a trade group in Long Beach, Calif. “Everyone inside the specialty coffee industry is excited about it.”

-New York Times, August 6, 2006

Mike Ferguson, spokesman for the Specialty Coffee Association of America in Long Beach, said Diedrich is going back to doing what it knows best: roasting coffee. Martin Diedrich's father, Carl, in 1972 stuffed several sacks with beans from the family's 45-acre Guatemalan coffee plantation and moved to California with dreams of opening a roasting business. A year later, he opened a store in Costa Mesa that sold fresh roasted beans for customers to brew at home – a novel idea at the time. "Diedrich is returning to its roots," Ferguson said.

-Orange County Register, September 6, 2006

Mike Ferguson, a spokesman for the Specialty Coffee Association of America -- of which both Starbucks and McDonald's are members -- has noted that coffee's taste is relatively subjective, plus "there are so many variables, from the beans to the way they were roasted." But he says that McDonald's entry into the upscale coffee arena is a trend that has been building for at least a decade.

"Great coffee is no longer a destination for consumers," he said. "Ten years ago, coffee drinkers maybe knew three or four places where they could go to get a good cup, but now they want to find it as they go about their business throughout the day. That's why fast food chains and convenience stores are all upgrading their coffee to keep up with the demand."

-Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, February 3, 2007