

Hobart Coffee Rankings 2013

Last time I ranked the coffee experiences of Hobart I was very new in town, a lot less experienced in coffee, and some of the decent coffee shops in Hobart had only just opened. Here is a long overdue update.



These are subjective rankings, based on varying combinations of flat white/short black/piccolo/macchiato. I tend to choose single origin as it demonstrates both the taste of the barista and how much they care. I look for flavour, texture, aesthetic and, to a lesser extent, the environment of the shop.

Feel the love people, no disparagement intended, just an articulation of appreciation.

This post may get updated as I remember things.

Tier Two

Tier two coffee shops are where I go for a decent drinkable coffee, when I am looking for a place that is convenient (nearby), comfortable, and conducive to conversation.

Coffee-wise, I expect a decent coffee on a par with what I can make at home. A “high tier two” shop can provide an enjoyable flat white, but not anything black. A “low tier two” may require resorting to a mocha. If I have to add sugar the coffee has dipped into tier three.

In this tier:

Atlas is definitely high tier two, a good solid flat white on one of the busiest pedestrian corners in the city. Staff

friendly, welcoming and have a good memory for faces and names. A little noisy at times.

YOLO in Macquarie is nearby to me and is a comfortable place to have a chat. Flat whites are decent, but I enjoy the mocha more. Nothing amazing, but if you're with a group of friends that don't care too much about coffee, this is a reasonable option.

[Update 11/5/13 – POP Cafe in Collins is conveniently located for my walk back from the gym on Thursday mornings and includes suitable brekky munchies. A pleasant coffee – staid standard beans but very well extracted.]

Tier One

Tier one coffee shops are basically the shops that are really worth going to. Coffee is their reason for existence. They know their coffee, will have a standard blend and one or two single origins and demonstrate significant skill in extracting each roast to maximise its characteristics.

Honourable mentions in this category include the newly found Zimmah in Murray Street. The barista seems to be something of a long-standing barista mentor. He clearly emphasises strength and depth in his extraction, to the point of risking bitterness but winning the bet. This shop may be the first to replicate the Melbournian “unmarked excellence hidden down an alleyway” style.

A second honourable mention goes to Villino in Criterion Street. Villino was an early standard-setter in the Hobart coffee scene and has not fallen off its pedestal. A good range of beans ready to go with some decent nibblies. They have recently expanded to include E cru as a hole-in-the-wall takeaway which I have not sampled. It did seem a little strange to expand in that direction as Villino itself is not particularly spacious, in fact it can be quite cramped. They

lose some kudos from me for having a \$10 minimum on the EFTPOS – grrrrr.

I have two number ones. Both have been around for about 18 months – the same amount of time I have been in Hobart. Both started strong and have improved over those months. Each has its own strengths.

If you were to ask me, “what is the best coffee you’ve ever had in Hobart”, I would have to give it to Yellow Bernard. YB is very close to my office. Barista Scott is less scientist and more artful magician. Standard is high and on occasions I have been handed a triple-shot single origin flat white that has simply blown me away – often with an emphasis on the fruity zing at the front and the chocolately body.

YB’s pretty much sells nothing but coffee and they are excelling at it. They are working their brand well.

If you were to ask me “what is the best coffee shop in Hobart”, I would have to give it to Pilgrim. The standard is exceptional and consistent. Barista Will (and his colleagues) have won awards, and rightly so. Will is more the precision engineer and has taught me about brew ratios and other extracting principles. The latte art is extraordinary and award winning – for me good art is icing on the caffeinated cake. The location is a nice 5-10 minutes walk for me, so it gets me off my butt. The ambience, while often busy with medicos from the nearby hospital, is rarely overwhelming and it’s a great place for a conversation.

[Update: The extension, Property Of: Pilgrim is now open. And it’s awesome. Get the Caveman. Just do it.]

Pilgrim are expanding soon, it will be great to see where they take it.