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History takes the stage at The Old Globe with "Camp David." **Details on page 3**

Coffee, beer collaborations gain steam

BY LAURIE DELK

Walk into Cafe Virtuoso in Barrio Logan and find yourself greeted with a veritable smorgasbord of aromas. From fruity to caramel to dark chocolate, your pondering proboscis will be perked while your mind attempts to file all of these scents under the heading "Coffee."

Born out of owner Laurie Britton's garage in 2008, Cafe Virtuoso has grown exponentially, and includes well-known clients that include Mr. A's, Urban Kitchen Group, Claire's on Cedros, Mille Fleurs and UCSD.

It has recently expanded its space on National Avenue and acquired a state-of-the-art Loring roaster to handle the capacity and

DRINK

demand. Certified from day one as organic, Virtuoso undergoes annual inspections of both paperwork and facility to maintain its certification status.

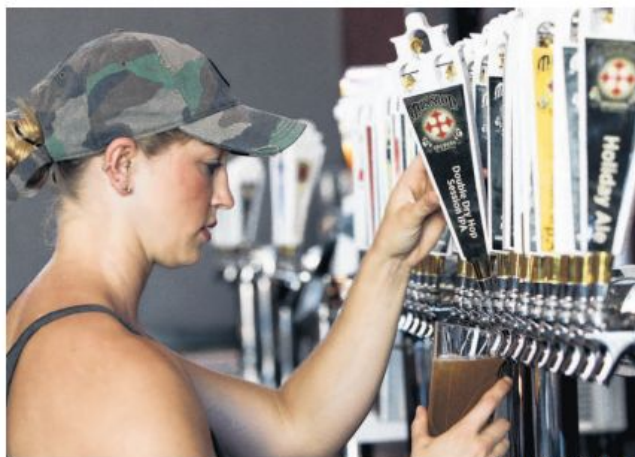
Why organic?

"It is our belief system," said Britton. "Coffee farmers all over the world are being sprayed by chemicals, many of them not legal here in the United States. If you are worried about fair trade, don't overlook that these workers are being sprayed, and we are consuming those chemicals too."

While fewer than 10 percent of all roasters worldwide are organic, Virtuoso ranks with some of the most respected internationally by its scores in Coffee Review. A unique aspect of Virtuoso

is its exceptional decafs (something often scorned by coffee purists, because of its distasteful past). The Honduras decaf is delicious, with notes of toasted marshmallow, nuts and caramel. As someone intolerant of caffeine, I was exceptionally impressed and now feel the world of coffee is open to me again.

Virtuoso's most recent projects have been collaborations with lead brewer Bobby Oliver and Mission Brewery down the street on several coffee beers. The Coffee IPA is made with Indonesian coffee beans and custom roasted by Q grader Nelson Teskey. (A Q grader designation from the Coffee Quality Institute is the coffee equivalent of a wine master sommelier. He is one of only 2,500 in the world, with the test having a 90 percent fail rate). The Cof-



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Mission Brewery teams up with Cafe Virtuoso for tasty coffee brews.

fee IPA is perfectly balanced, with Nelson looking for brighter citrus and acidity in his selection of beans, while matching it with the hops already present in the beer.

Mission head brewer John Egan remarked: "With the IPA, the hops range from citrus to stone fruit to grass to lemon, and when you taste it, you get the fruitiness of the coffee with the fruitiness of the hops, and it makes its own thing."

Nelson also worked with Bobby on Dark Seas, an imperial Russian stout with coffee. For this the "mission" was a darker Indonesian roast, with notes to complement the malt and sweetness profile of a heavy-hitting stout. Deep and full-bodied, it has notes of dark chocolate, blackstrap molasses and fig. Coming soon is a milk stout, which will focus on rich, bold flavors with coffee beans from Peru.

"The response has been amazing for both beers," Egan said. "Both are phenomenal, but I especially



COURTESY PHOTO

At Mission Brewery, the Coffee IPA is perfectly balanced, joining the fruitiness of the coffee and hops.

like the funky, mushroomy Sumatra coffee in the Dark Seas. The marriage was something we've never tasted before, it's definitely unique."

So here's your itinerary: Head to Cafe Virtuoso and have a coffee or espresso. They have a beautiful rotating selection of six coffees and three espressos to choose from. Then walk down the street to Mission and try the collaboration brews, IPA first, then Dark

Seas, and wedge the milk stout in there if it's on tap. What a perfect afternoon in Barrio Logan. Cheers!

With 18 years in the restaurant and beverage industry and more than 850 reviews under her belt, Laurie Delk is a one-stop guide to all things craft beer, wine and spirits. You can follow Delk on Twitter @100beers30days or Instagram @sandiegobeer. Send ideas for featured drinks to lauriedelk101@gmail.com.