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# Kiwis at the Worlds

New Zealand's village of coffee members visited MICE to meet coffee idols in person, get inspired, learn from others, and have a whole lot of fun along the way.

It feels like a dream, but MICE2022 really did happen, and there's plenty of New Zealanders in dress-up with photo booth evidence to show of the reconnections and good times that happened back in September.

An extra drawcard and highlight of MICE2022 was the World Barista Championship, and to have the premium event so close after a nine-year break, even the lowish Aussie dollar made Melbourne enticing.

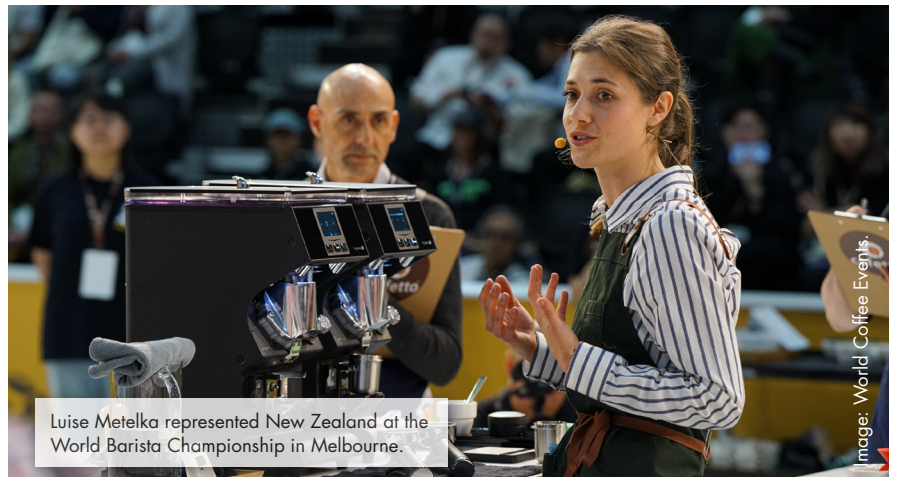
Luise Metelka, our 2021 NZ Barista Champion competed on day one of the event, and there were around 30 New Zealanders in the stands cheering her on. It was the perfect opportunity to come together and show that we can put our normal business day aside to support our best.

Chris White of Altura Coffee was shepherding and shadowing judges. He told me: "It's like having children. No one can prepare you for the experience of being on the world stage, but you know it's going to be an experience."

And an experience it was for Luise. "It was the most fun I had in a very long time, and I am so happy that the borders are open again and so many countries were able to come together. Catching up with old friends and finally meeting many of my idols was the highlight for me," she says.

Benji Taiaroa of FEOH Espresso volunteered on the coffee bars, and says the highlight was being up close to the competitors. He also had the opportunity to meet those he had idolised for years.

"Making new connections with others from around the world, building relationships with roasters, baristas, farmers and to be able to share the experience with other coffee friends



Luise Metelka represented New Zealand at the World Barista Championship in Melbourne.

Image: World Coffee Events

from NZ outside of the usual café setting was incredible," Benji says.

Joseph Heo of Coffee Supreme won the NZ MilkLab Barista Battle competition and was flown to MICE to compete in the competition's international Final where he placed runner up.

"It was a very refreshing and enlightening experience to see so many passionate industry people and leaders/innovators gathered at MICE2022, sharing and indulging in information which may lead to the next development and advancement of the coffee industry," he says.

Mike Murphy, Kōkako's Managing Director commented that the expo was "full of Kiwi specialty coffee professionals either working the stands or helping to judge the World Coffee Championships". "Much respect to all of the volunteers who give up their time to make this happen," he says.

YJ Huang of Mojo Coffee in Auckland had won Best Newcomer and placed second in the NZ Barista Championship 2022. He used his prize money to buy a

ticket to Melbourne for MICE for the first time. "It was amazing just been able to see and learn new things from other countries in the coffee industry. I'm so glad I was able to experience these moments even just for two days. The number of Kiwis at MICE was crazy. We were everywhere, which showed the world how amazing and united we are," he says.

Just like the latest barista technology, there's always a New Zealander rocking up to help. From supporting the brew bar, to emceeing and showcasing in the stands, we added to the mix of quality coffee experiences, making the early starts. Time away was worth it. We've always said it takes a village, and we have a good one. With Anthony Douglas of Axil Coffee Roasters taking out the top prize on his home terroir, coffee in Australasia continues to connect, inspire and shine, while having a lot of fun. **E**



For more information on the New Zealand Specialty Coffee Association, or to join, visit [www.nzscsca.org](http://www.nzscsca.org)