



Emma McDougall is the Communications and Administration Co-ordinator of the NZSCA.

New champions

NZSCA's Emma McDougall recounts a jam-packed weekend of events, results, and hotly contested competition that proves New Zealand's coffee talent is well and truly alive.

What a weekend for coffee the NZSCA finally had. On Friday 15 July, the New Zealand Cup Tasters Championship, held by epic venue host L'affare Melrose in Newmarket, saw 28 eager coppers compete for the national title in front of supporters and coffee lovers who enjoyed the pumping atmosphere.

The first round saw two-time Cup Tasters Champion, Alan Bruce from Flight Coffee Roasters in Wellington, take the lead. The next three coppers chopped and changed with steady numbers and tight times coming in.

In the end, Ewan Kim from Camper Coffee, Auckland was victorious, became the new national champion with a stunning 8/8 in a slick time of 2.09 minutes. Ewan has been competing almost every year since 2017 and got so close to winning in 2019. Thankfully he came back again.

Han Lee of Meebz Coffee in Auckland was runner up, scoring 7/8 in a time of 1.44 minutes. August Hislop of Atomic Coffee Roasters in Auckland placed third with a score of 7/8 in a time of 1.48 minutes. Former champion Alan Bruce scored 5/8 in a time of 2.16 minutes.

The key to Ewan's winning preparation, he says, was to "drink lots of brown stuff and familiarise yourself with many different coffees. The more you taste, the more sensitive you get".

"It's also a brain game so don't just slurp without connecting your palate to your brain. Do not over-practise close to the competition date. Your tongue gets tired too," he says.

Ewan will now compete in the World



From left: Top three NZ Latte Art Champions Hoony Chae, Dennis Hsueh, and Honoka Kawashima.

Image: @7.30_y, Yuki Zhang

Cup Tasters Championship in Athens, taking place in June 2023.

Thanks to our sponsors, Cafetto, Ozone Coffee Roasters, AMC Roastery Supply, Acme Cupco, Alpro via Real Foods, and Marco via L'affare.

It was a quick turnaround, with judges calibration on the Saturday, then the Meadow Fresh New Zealand Latte Art Championship on Sunday 17 July. Host venue The Sapphire Room in Ponsonby Central, Auckland was the place to be, with 13 competitors vying for the national title.

Dennis Hsueh of Grey Street Kitchen in Hamilton poured three beautiful designs and will now represent New Zealand at the World Latte Art Championship in November 2023 in Taipei, Taiwan.

In response to winning, Dennis says: "no great thing is suddenly created, success comes with patience and dedication".

We think the "ghost pour" (practicing hand actions without tools) is the best training technique, and Dennis agrees.

"My practice routine has slightly

changed. I first started sketching out my latte art patterns on a piece of paper. Repetitively, I have the pattern pasted into my brain's memory. In the practice, I would repeat the same movement over and over again until I think it was the result that I wanted," he says.

Hoony Chae from EOS Coffee in Auckland was this year's runner-up, a former two-time NZ latte art champion. Honoka Kawashima of Frank's Coffee in Wellington took third place.

Many thanks to our sponsors Meadow Fresh, La Marzocco, AMC Roastery Supply NZ, Cafetto, Loveramics, Allpress Espresso, and Alternative Dairy Company, for all their support.

After four date changes, all our sponsors continued to believe in us, as did our community of judges, volunteers, spectators, and supporters. **■**



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