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# Back at the Worlds

The NZSCA highlights Alan Bruce's return to world competition in Milan, where competing was exciting, but connecting with the industry again was even better.

**W**ay back in February 2020, (remember those days?) we held the New Zealand Cup Tasters Championship, and Alan Bruce of Flight Coffee Roasters in Wellington took the crown. Our borders have been tricky and expensive to get through, with a stay in quarantine a lottery only afforded to a select few. New Zealand sadly missed the 2021 World Cup Tasters Championship (WCTC), and heartedly supported Australia in the event.

Suddenly in May 2022, the border situation changed again, and NZ had the opportunity to send our national champions to the Championship Tasters and World Latte Art Championship in Milan, from 23 to 25 June. "I immediately thought 'how can I make this happen?' and started begging my bosses for some assistance," Alan says.

Thankfully, Alan has awesome bosses who supported him all the way and helped him prepare with the short turnaround time. We would have also loved Hoony Chae, our Meadow Fresh NZ Latte Art 2020 Champion to attend the World Coffee Championships and represent NZ, however he had just opened his own café in Auckland and was unable to go.

With such short notice, Alan didn't have as much practise time as he needed. "Everything was confirmed two weeks out from travelling, so that coupled with a heavy workload meant that there wasn't much time to train – I maybe got five or six sessions under my belt before heading out to Milan," he says.

The short lead time had Alan concentrating on running a simplified version of the competition format.



Alan Bruce made the Quarter Finals of the 2021 World Cup Tasters Championship.

We watched Alan compete online, comfortably heading into the quarter finals.

"It was pretty brutal in the first round. It definitely felt harder than the 2019 Championship, but it's hard to say whether that's just down to being a little out of practice or if it was deliberately more challenging. So much of the competition is about being in the right headspace and on the second day I couldn't quite find my focus," Alan recalls.

Alan says despite the intense heat, he was most excited to see everyone. "It was my first time catching up with a lot of old coffee friends since 2019 and coming off the back of lockdowns and travel restrictions it was just great meeting up in person again – even if it was a little overwhelming," he says.

As for the World of Coffee event itself, Alan says it was so huge that even after three days, he felt like there were things he missed seeing.

"It's a bit like when you go to the supermarket without a list and end up wandering the aisles and picking up the most random stuff," he says.



Image: Diana Bovoloni

Visiting Italy was also a chance for Alan to explore Milan's coffee scene.

"The best coffee was at a place called Nowhere [Coffee Roasters]. Every coffee I tried was great, and the team were super lovely," he says, even bringing back a natural Ethiopian coffee called Iron Lion from the roaster.

Alan would like to thank his sponsors, the team at Flight Coffee and wife Bec. Special mention to his Mum and Dad who flew to Milan from Scotland to support him. Isn't that what coffee is all about? Bringing people together.

The next NZSCA event was the 2022 NZ Cup Tasters Championship, held on 15 July. Ewan Kim of Camper Coffee Roasting Co won first place, Han Lee of Meebz Coffee placed second, August Hislop of Atomic Coffee Roasters placed third, and Alan placed fourth. **■**



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