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# The road to WBC

New Zealand Barista Champion 2022, Hanna Teramoto, explains her inspiration and preparation behind competing on the world stage.

**H**anna Teramoto has a long history in coffee competitions. She first competed in the Christchurch regionals in 2009. She claimed her first national title in 2014, and had podium places in 2013, 2016 and 2021. After eight nationals, Hanna reclaimed her title at the 2022 New Zealand Barista Championship (NZBC), and is off to Athens to compete in the World Barista Championship (WBC) in June 2023.

We caught up with Hanna after her trip to the Special Coffee Association of Japan (SCAJ) World Specialty Coffee conference and exhibition in October where she got to taste many competition-standard coffees.

On reflection of her competition journey, Hanna says she thought she competed because of how much she learns from the experience, but rather, it's because of how she can express herself through coffee. "That is what I love," she says.

What she doesn't, however, is memorising four pages of A4 notes which makes her feel more like she's return to university than studying for a barista competition.

But the studying pays off. Hanna is in planning mode now, and has already started her preparations.

"I'm getting the competition tables custom-made. I'm also tasting a lot of coffees from all over the world. All those coffees that we purchased on auctions are starting to arrive. I have started writing down a few ideas on the concept," she says.

While it's a competition, Hanna says "of course I'd be looking for a coffee that is safe and performs well to score high, but I think the most important thing is finding a coffee that I can fall in love instantly. I'm going to be tasting that coffee for months so it's got to be the coffee like I feel is 'the' coffee".

"The part that I enjoy the most is when I come up with a concept and I find



Image: ATPhoto, Andrew Turner

a way to get that running through my entire routine. During my practice, I get emotional sometimes and almost tear up or get goosebumps while I speak out the punchline. This is when I really realise that I love sharing my thoughts and emotions through my coffee life and put that all into the coffee that I'm serving," Hanna says.

As a seasoned professional, Hanna lets us in on her tricks for a great competition campaign.

"I actually slept 12 hours on the night I arrived in Wellington (before the NZBC2022) so I saved sleep from excitement for the next couple nights. However, I do tend to get more nervous on the first day and finals are usually better. This year, I really tried to engage with the judges rather than thinking of doing a slick performance, and tried to be myself. I think this was the best thing I ever did in my competition life. [It] feels like I've gone over a giant wall of improvement," she says.

Hanna encourages anyone to compete: "You will be a better barista if you put a routine together and perform in front of a crowd. My tip would be, even if your first language is English, memorise the script so

it becomes natural. You'd be surprised how much you forget when you're up on stage," she says.

For the WBC in June, Hanna is asking for feedback and getting input from the NZ coffee community and those who are strong in their own field.

She is also looking forward to meeting people she met at SCAJ again, especially "catching up with Emi Fukahori (World Brewers Cup Champion 2018) whom I became good friends at first sight".

Hanna laughs when describing her biggest support: "It is Akio for sure. He's my poor husband who has spent most of his married life supporting my competitions year after year. Now he's deeply involved in the concept making as well. I feel like we're creating something beautiful together and we're a true team," she says.

We can't wait to see what this epic team brings to Athens for the WBC. **☑**



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