

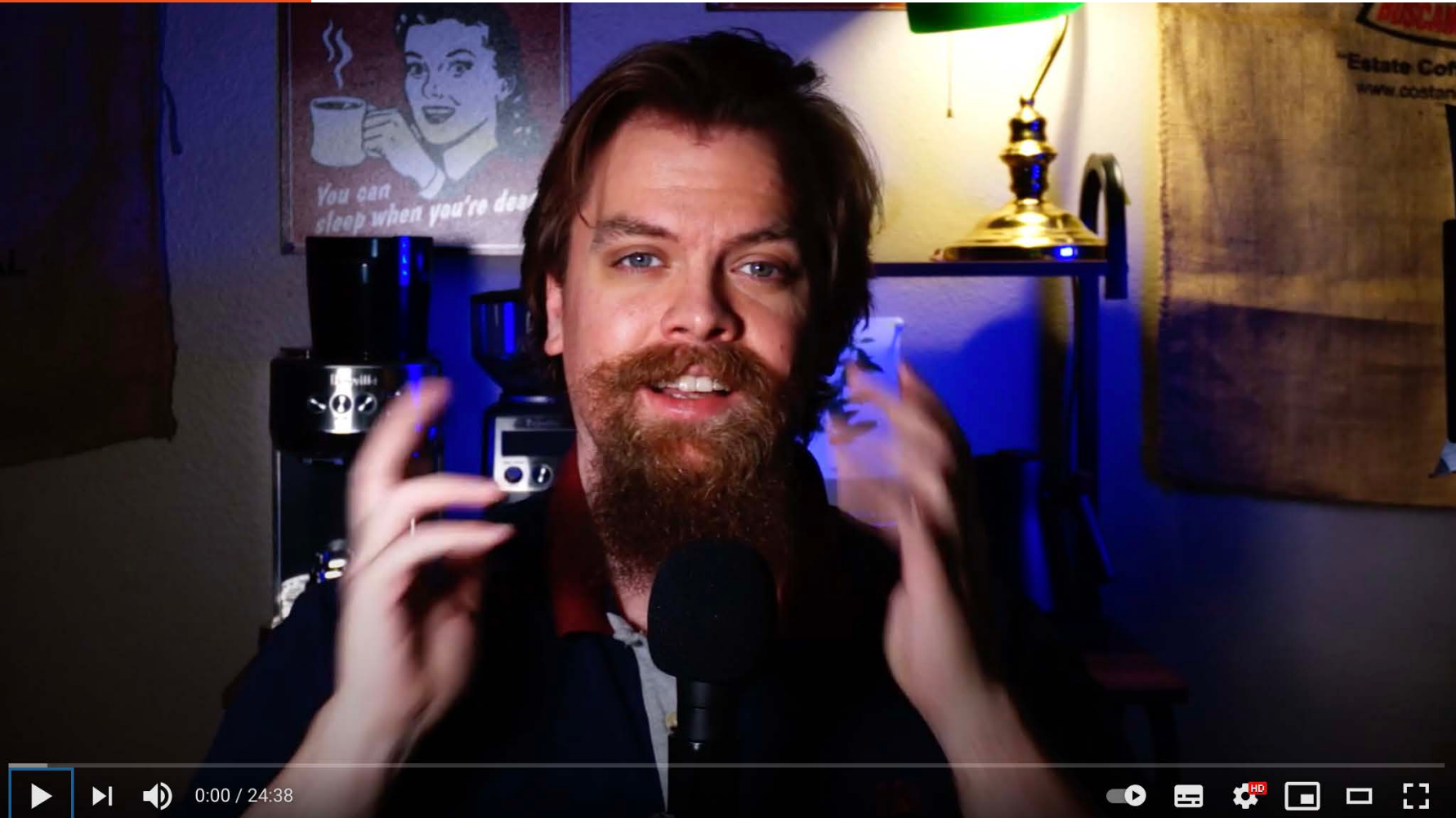
EXPLORING THE CRAFT OF COFFEE

Nº79

Extracted



Elevate Your Brew



Email Newsletter Signup

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EXTRACTED MAGAZINE seeks to educate, delight, and empower coffee drinkers everywhere bringing you into the world of **craft specialty coffee**. We build connection and understanding that raises the value and the lives of people in coffee around the world, as well as each individual cup that you enjoy.

Even though coffee is consumed by billions worldwide, many are unaware of the significance of the beverage in their cups. Conscious consumption of coffee leads to not only the best tasting coffee of your life, but more powerfully supports the various cultures and peoples that are responsible for that coffee.

Extracted reflects this growing awareness and empowers all coffee drinkers to discover the richness, not only of flavor, but also of the history and relationships of the coffee in your cup.

Extracted
MAGAZINE





FEATURE ARTICLE

Elevate Your Brew

Joseph Robertson

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ELEVATE YOUR COFFEE BREWING

BY JOSEPH ROBERTSON



RECENTLY I LAUNCHED MY 'BECOME A COFFEE CONNOISSEUR' INTRO SERIES ON UDEMY. It's part 1, 'The Basics of Mastering Your Brew' - with everything you need to know about brewing great coffee at home, regardless of what you're using.

I made this course with the beginner in mind, to get you from guessing at brewing coffee at home, to being as skillful as a barista in your own kitchen with any coffee tool.

Now I'm looking to the next step. How do you go from just brewing great coffee, to mastering the exploration of it, to seeing all the possibilities of what CAN be, and playing around with different tools, roasts, origins, techniques, etc, to make the most interesting exploration of tastes and aromas you could possibly find?

That's a bit of a lengthy road, and I think the next course I put out there is likely going to be HIGHLY comprehensive and several hours long filled with all the various bits of information that fuel these understandings.

BUT, that prospect leaves a step in the middle. How do you go from just brewing great coffee, to getting into the exploration of it?

I think the answer comes in the form of learning how to customize the brewing you do with what you have.

In this issue, I'm going to showcase some advanced tips and

tricks you can use with The Chemex to elevate your brewing experience with that brewer. You'll also find my advanced French Press brewing video (which is included in the course as well).

I decided to focus on The Chemex because it's elegant handcrafted nature lends itself well to getting into the nitty-gritty of process and technique. The Chemex carries an air of sophistication and technique but also calls back in history because of its relative simplicity. The brewer itself is no doubt complex, created by a scientist with calculated precision, still, it is but one piece of glass, and through this piece of glass and a sheet of the proper paper, you can brew one of the most fantastic cups of coffee you'll have in your life.

Elegance.

The Chemex has been one of those brewers which has driven much of my personal experimentation with coffee. Originally this was in pursuit of "the best cup," and replicating cups of coffee which I'd enjoyed in cafes, roasters, cupping rooms, etc. However, this evolved into an interest in creating the most consistent, clean, and clear tasting cups of coffee I could with the brewer.





One thing I've discovered with The Chemex is that even if you follow a brew guide like what I will share with you after this article, AND you get all the gear that I recommend, it's likely you'll run into inconsistencies brew to brew. This is simply because of the deeply crafted, yet minimalist, nature of both the brewer and the process. There's so much happening in a brewing process,



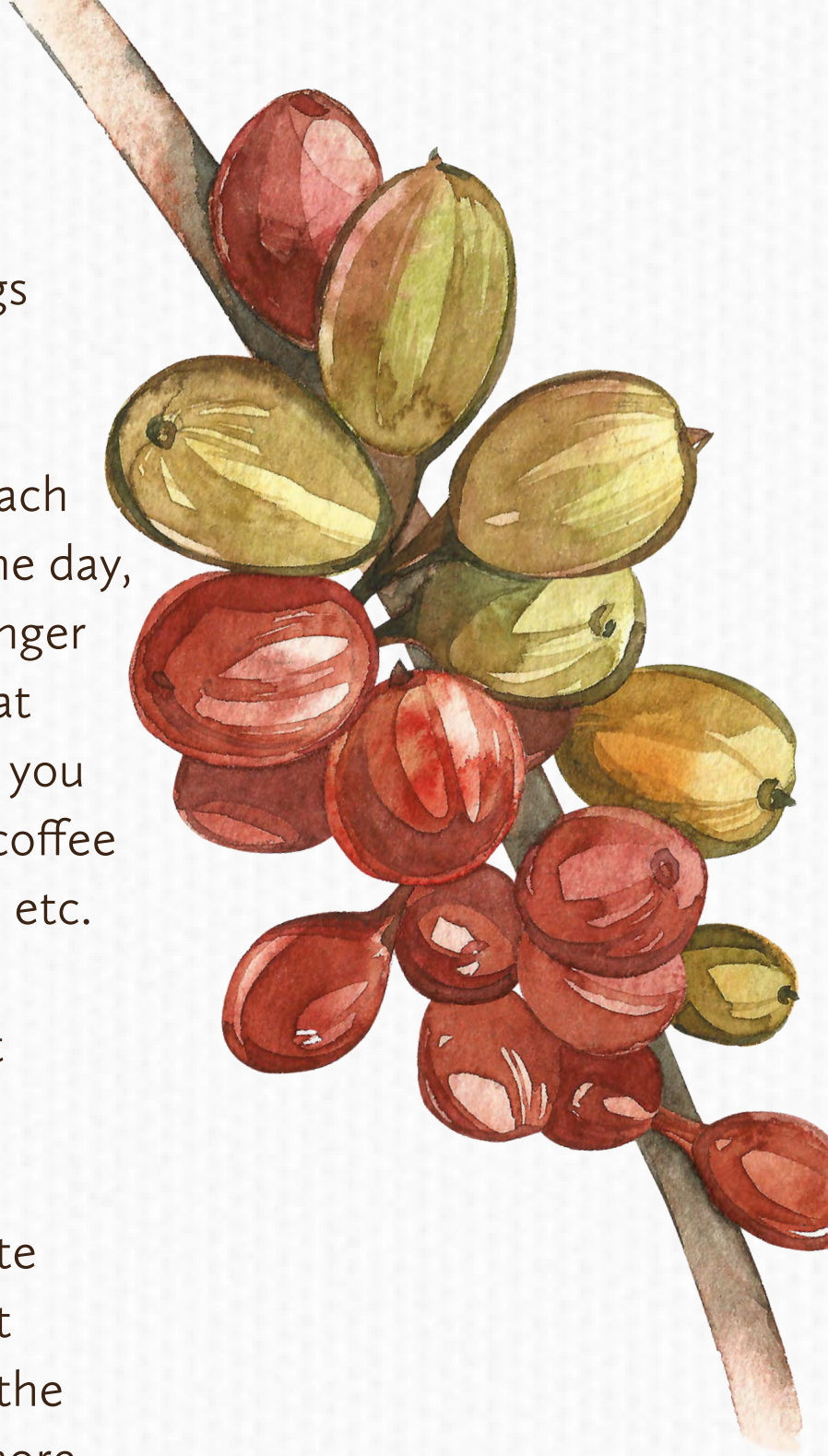
that one change in brewing can alter things enough to result in a different end taste.

Let's say you grind your coffee the same each time you brew, it's the same coffee, but one day, for whatever reason, the Chemex takes longer to flow ... your cup will taste different. That flow difference could be the result of how you poured the water, or how you placed the coffee into the filter, or how you folded the filter, etc.

Now imagine if you are exploring different coffees, always changing what you brew.

When I made the shift from trying to create the best brew, to trying to create the most consistent brew, it was because I realized the key to tasting and exploring coffee is far more about consistency than it is about extracting the absolute best taste from a particular coffee. You can go through an entire bag of coffee trying to recreate an amazing taste experience, or otherwise trying to get a particular taste you think is supposed to be there, and never really quite achieve what you're hoping to achieve.

But if you want to elevate your experience overall, the deeper approach is to find your most consistent high-quality brew process for the



brewer you are using. And then let the brewer just communicate the coffee to you.

This is where exploring and experimenting with different techniques for different brew tools can change and elevate your brew experience. Don't focus on getting the maximum out of your brewer, focus on techniques and processes which give you the highest level of consistency.

In the next couple of articles for this issue, I'm going to share my baseline Chemex brew guide, and then I'll get into advanced 'Elevate Your Chemex' brewing techniques. These are all about creating the best consistent taste clarity with your brew (and some of the techniques may look quite strange).



DREAMING OF COFFEE



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THE CHEMEX: AN EXTRA



TRACTED BREWING GUIDE



The Chemex is a fascinating unique brewer. It looks like something made by hipsters for the modern specialty coffee wave, but it has in fact been around for almost 80 years. The wave of industrial mass coffee production and automated homebrew systems pushed The Chemex out of style, but its pure craft has come roaring back in the 21st century. Let's take a look at what makes The Chemex so unique, and how to brew with it well.

Design, shape, filter.

You might think the single glass piece and shape of the brewer is what makes it unique, but the most important piece to the puzzle is the filter, and how that filter sits in the brewer.

The filter is thick. The brew walls are smooth. The filter won't perfectly align with all the sides of the brewer, but you'll end up essentially having the filter sealed around the brew walls at a certain point. So the flow is restricted.

This restricted flow means the brew is slower than other pour-over drip brewers. Think about what this means in terms of the brewing fundamentals. You'll want a courser grind because the water is in contact with the grounds longer.

The thicker filter also means more will be filtered. This results in The Chemex's signature crispness, and highlight of brighter notes (as more of the soluble fats in the coffee are filtered out).

Coffee selection.

You can of course brew anything you'd like on a Chemex.

The typical point of view on coffee selection for The Chemex would be a light to medium roast, highlighting brighter flavor notes.

You might argue washed coffees would perform better as the deeper lipid notes get more filtered out, thus making it easier to discern the subtle taste variations of washed coffee. I think this makes The Chemex an excellent candidate for exploring washed coffees, but I should note that it also still does a fantastic job brewing a natural coffee.

Interestingly I've seen The Chemex do quite well on very dark roasted coffee - probably because the filter takes out a lot of the bitter burnt oils, and mutes many of the less desirable tastes from a burnt roast.



Brewing on The Chemex

1) Select your coffee, and grind medium to medium coarse. Getting this exact on the first round is not critical. As long as your other elements are consistent, you can adjust the grind on your next brew. Remember to measure out by ratios - I like 16-17:1. On my 6 cup Chemex, I brew 750g water through 45g of coffee.

2) Simultaneously, heat water to 195-208, depending on your roast. If you have a darker roast, go lower on the temperature range. If you have a light roast, I'd recommend just boiling the water and then brewing off the boil. But if you have a temp controlled kettle you can set it to 208.

3) RINSE your filter. There are three reasons to rinse the Chemex filter.

The thickness of it means more paper taste to impart.

The thickness of it also means more liquid will be held in the filter, so pre-soaking the filter will theoretically result in a cleaner flow from the coffee bed.

Rinsing sticks the filter into place.

4) Add your coffee. Shake a little to get grounds to settle roughly evenly and flat.

5) Pour 2:1 water to coffee. So if you have 45 grams of coffee, add 90ish grams of water. Let bloom and settle (30-45 seconds).

6) Pour up to about 1 inch from the top rim of The Chemex. There are plenty of brew guides which have specific weights to pour to ... I prefer to operate visually, as the physical constraints of the brewer are more important than the specific weights and times of your brewing.

7) Let the water drain to about an inch or so above the coffee bed (if you can tell), then make another pour back up to the same height as previous.

8) Continue this process until you've reached your brew target.

9) Let drain.

10) Remove the filter and enjoy.

There are different tips and tricks to handle the process of this brewing potentially better. I've found certain techniques at certain points yield me a consistently better-tasting coffee. For these tips/tricks, I'm going to share them in the next section.



VIDEO

The First Epiphany

Cup of Joe



Coffee Tastes



Floral

Floral aromas and tastes can be found in coffees, though these are more difficult to discern. It is a common taste and aroma in the Geisha variety which is heavily grown in Panama. Getting floral out of your coffee usually requires a lightly roasted and washed processed coffee.

CHEWEX®



ELEVATING YOUR CHEMEX

Good Coffee

It isn't just about what you taste in the cup, it's also about the process, the ritual. The Chemex makes for a lovely elegant ritual and is a good example of how you can employ different technical practices to elevate your brew, and hopefully introduce a higher level of quality consistency.

Stirring the bloom.

There are two different ways you can approach 'stirring' the bloom.

Pour your regular 2:1 of the coffee. Then physically stir the grounds and the water to completely saturate the grounds, and then let it sit for 10-15 seconds before you start brewing again. This is essentially like the regular bloom method, but you're actively stirring the grounds to make sure everything blooms, and to speed up the process a little.

The second way to do this is more intricate, and a little weirder.

Pour as close to 1:1 water as possible, then use your stir stick (or spoon) to get all grounds wetted. With this method, your resulting coffee bed will appear just damp and will behave like wet/damp sand. You won't have much (if any) coffee dripping out.

(Note: the 'coffee bed' refers to the collection of grounds typically immersed in water in a brewing apparatus)

The goal of both of these methods is almost like a pre-infusion. This is less about off-gassing the coffee and more about getting the grounds fully saturated before the brewing. We still count this bloom water in the weight. In the second process (1:1), your focus is almost exclusively on presoaking the grounds.

On Stir Tools: I use a glass stir rod, made specifically for this because the edges are round and will not tear the filter. You can use a spoon or whatever you like - just be careful about tearing the filter.



Why 1:1 as the stir ratio?

The reason for 1:1 is that for the most part, you'll find after the brew is complete, the grounds hold onto as much water as the original weight of them (so if you started with 45 grams of coffee, the resulting wet grounds after brew will be about 90 grams).

This is also a good way to approximate the amount of brewed coffee you'll produce. Using 45 grams of ground coffee as the example, and brewing at 16:1, you'll end up brewing with 720 grams of water. The end result of the coffee amount will be approximately that 720g minus the original amount of coffee grams (because it will hold onto that much water). So you'll end up with about 675 grams of water worth of coffee.

This ends up being about 24 ounces of coffee. So a 720:45 brew gives you two 12 ounce cups of coffee (or slightly less). I like smaller cups, so to me this is Four 6 ounce cups of coffee. As a point of related interest, standard approximation suggests there's 130-150 mg of caffeine in each of those 6-ounce cups. So if I drink a full 720:45 Chemex, I'm drinking upwards of 600 mg of caffeine (one of the reasons I like smaller cups at a time, and drinking over a longer period).

Stirring at this ratio ends up creating clumps of damp coffee, and it looks strange, you might think "this can't possibly brew well, there are all these gaps and the bed isn't flat." Here's the thing. If you do this right, the first full pour of your water won't have to expend any effort in soaking into the grounds, it will immediately start extracted. Secondly, because the grounds are already saturated, the damp clumps will immediately disperse and settle. You almost always end up with no channeling using this

method. You can tell because when done right, you'll see no bubbles popping up after the pour, meaning the grounds ended up evenly dispersed within the water and there were zero air pockets.

(Fun Fact: Channeling is when water unevenly passes through a bed of coffee grounds in a pour-over brewer. Imagine a channel through the bed where a more focused flow of water occurs. This is more of an issue with Espresso due to the pressure, but can happen in drip brewing, and results in uneven extraction across the coffee grounds)

This stirring technique you can play around with using other brew methods. In some, it doesn't work, or is at best awkward, like the Kalita Wave (when you stir you just end up pushing more grounds into the waves of the filter which is not optimal). But you also might find a way this technique can improve your consistency in any brew, as the concept of "pre-infusion" or "pre-soaking" is pretty universal across brewing methods that involve water flowing (only irrelevant in the case of full immersion).

Spinning with the Chemex

Another trick I like to employ is spinning with the Chemex. This is something I learned with the Kalita Wave to get grounds out of the waves. This is also used in the V60. I started using it with the Chemex and have found good consistency.

The goal with spinning the Chemex is the same as the V60 - to both knock grounds off the sides, and also settle/level the coffee bed. I usually do this after the initial brew pour, which also acts as a way to both knock extra grounds off the sides and make sure your brew bed is evenly dispersed (no channeling).

Alternatively, you can use a stir stick to kick grounds off the side and create a little bit of whirlpool-like action to help center and settle the grounds. This trick is courtesy of Jesse over at Conduit.



Helping the Chemex Drain Faster

One of the challenges with the Chemex is how the filter and smooth glass walls pull everything down to a point. This can mean sometimes the filter gets clogged with fines and the brew slows down too much.

One way to help the brew finish faster is to simply completely lift the filter. There are two main approaches ...

The first is lifting the filter and setting it back down - this kind of resets the flow.

The other is to lift the filter up and just hold it till the brew finishes.



When you fully lift the filter, coffee which is filtering out the sides doesn't get stopped in it's flow by the seal created between the filter and the glass.

Most of the time I find the slowing of the brew happens due to fines in the grind. Instead of needing to lift your filter (or sometimes I've even re-stirred the bed), the best thing to do is upgrade your grinder for a more even grind size distribution and fewer fines. Most of the time when I brew Chemex now, I don't have this problem since I upgraded from the Baratza Encore to the Breville Smart Grinder (which is roughly equivalent to the Baratza Virtuoso for comparison sake).

These are the primary tricks I've used to elevate my Chemex brew to a high level of quality, clarity, and consistency. They are also core adjustments to the base process of brewing the coffee. Each move is an effort to influence how the water interacts with the coffee grounds, extracting the taste and aroma compounds I want in my cup.

Because we are dealing with the brewing fundamentals, each of these adjustment techniques can be applied to many other brew methods. Do so with the mind of exploration, and you might be surprised at what you discover.

VIDEO

Trade Coffee

Extracted TV





ROASTER: Conuit Coffee

Peru Ely Cruz Lopez

I LOVE BREWING THIS COFFEE ON THE CHEMEX. I imagine because Jesse (the head roaster of Conduit Coffee, who roasted this coffee) has The Chemex as his favorite brewer, that in some way this coffee is meant to be brewed with this tool.

That's not actually true. I know Jesse's process for tasting and honing in a roast is based on cupping procedures which involve tasting coffee in a more balanced setting (NOT through a Chemex) - but still, there's some aspect to enjoying this coffee through the roaster's own favorite brewing method which adds to the magic.

When you brew on a Chemex, you can't help but take extra time and care, because specificity and process are so important to a consistent Chemex brew. From the way you rinse your filter, to how you bloom, the space you decide to use within the brewing chamber, the temperature of the water ...

Brewing on a Chemex is a deliberate ritual which involves time and attention. Because of that, I get to pay attention to and smell the coffee a whole lot more while it's brewing.

This Peru for example - mildly sweet, it comes off in aroma kind of like a honeydew melon. There is also a milk chocolate aroma and a hint of some kind of spice. I'm talking about the dry aroma here, the coffee just as it's ground.

I always love to deeply smell the coffee just as it's ground. I think this is one of the points during the brewing process which you get to enjoy to the fullest when you are hand brewing. I think it's a good part of appreciating the craft which went into the production of the coffee. And I'm not talking about the roasting (though that's obviously part of it), I'm talking about all the hands and history which went into it's growing. So savor that aroma of ground coffee for a few moments and give some thought to the path it took to get there ...

The aromas while brewing come off just as mild but sweet. I know because of the Chemex I'm going to get a more crisp 'brightly oriented' kind of brew. Meaning, for example, if there's any kind of citrus in this coffee, the Chemex will highlight that brighter more delicate flavor. With this Peru, I am familiar with the taste, so I know that the aroma hides some interesting complex flavors which will only come out in the cup after I've brewed.

The aroma of the brewed coffee is much richer. Something akin to a medium chocolate, a bit of milk, a bit of dark, and almost vanilla in there. I get the smooth sweet edge of vanilla in my senses with this coffee. Interesting that the melon aroma does not come about in the cup.

Then the taste. The first taste of the coffee has that bright juicy edge. There's no citrus in this one though, that bright edge is like dark chocolate initially but fades into various hints of different fruits. I can catch something like apple skin around there. The smooth light sweetness from the dry aroma carries over to the brew, and comes across shifting between milk chocolate and melon sweetness.

Aside from the deliciousness of this coffee as a whole, flitting between chocolate, melon, and some hints of different spices (the vanilla peeks its head around in there), what's quite enjoyable and notable is how the coffee doesn't linger too long after the drink. The taste and aroma fades away on the tongue, and makes yourself easily ready for more. I could drink this coffee every day and feel both enriched and lightened.





**A PATHWAY TO
BETTER COFFEE**

THE COFFEE ROASTER
OF EXTRACTED MAGAZINE

Coffee Facts



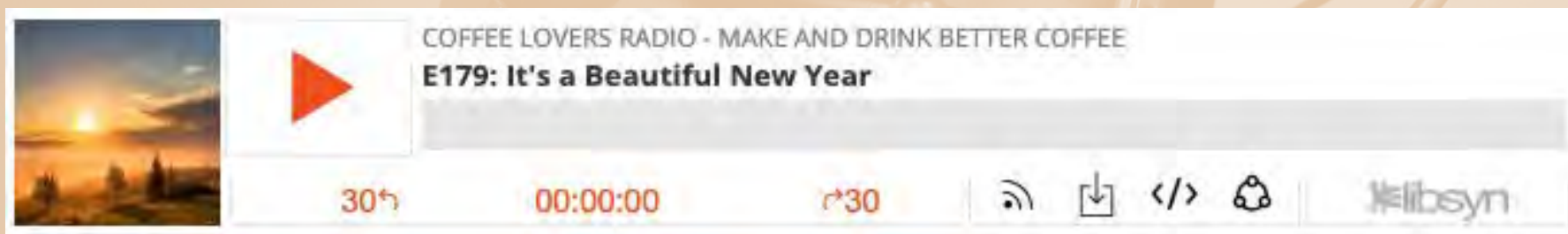
Bloom

In pour over brewing, adding a smaller amount of water to the grounds at the beginning releases initial gasses from the coffee preparing it for a more complete and even extraction. It has the visual appearance of 'blooming.'

EPISODE 179

It's A Beautiful New Year

Coffee Lovers Radio



We could have also called this episode Happy DreamPhone – but we'll leave you to listen to discover why. In our New Years episode, we leave 2020 in the dust and only look forward to what's coming.

Hosts

Joseph Robertson, Extracted Magazine

www.extractedmagazine.com

Jesse Nelson, Conduit Coffee

www.conduitcoffee.com

Forward to the Future

Hopefully by now you've watched my 'From the Publisher' video. I don't mean to repeat myself here, but I'll give a quick summary.

As you've probably noticed, this issue has come many months after the previous - quite out of the original plan for the magazine. I published monthly for almost 8 years, and then 2020 and Covid brought everything tumbling down.

I can't share completely everything that's being done to move forward right here, because this still gets published through the app on iTunes and Apple has certain restrictions about what I can and can't say inside the app.

What I CAN tell you is to please go sign up to my email newsletter, where you'll learn everything that's going on - be sure to use the link at the end of this From The Editor.



The Driving Force

One of the core driving forces for the work I've done with the magazine has been my obsession and passion with connecting people. Connecting you to great coffee and understanding what it's all about. Connecting the creators of that coffee to people who can appreciate it. And moving towards a world in which we have deeper understanding of what is real and what matters.

I intend to continue that focus, and will use Extracted here as a tool for telling stories of people who work in coffee and the deep meaningful work they are involved in. Along the way of course you'll learn about all the interesting coffees, goings on in the coffee world, and tidbits on brewing tools and techniques.

As far as content which is evergreen – like ‘How to Brew Chemex’ – I’m consolidating a lot of that sort of information under a broad video based course.

The challenge with doing that through the magazine is, if you just subscribed for this issue for example, it may take a long time of reading magazine issues for you to get a full understanding of all the core interesting parts of the craft of coffee.

I beleive you should be able to have that NOW

So again, sign up with the link below, I’ll tell you all about what’s going on and how you can keep enjoying this deep appreciation.

-Joseph Robertson

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Extracted Email Newsletter](#)

Quarterly Coffee Chronicles



How to cut carbon emissions from coffee

The concept of 'sustainability' is really loose when it comes to coffee. We don't have a good enough level of worldwide transparency to get specific. BUT this article gives an interesting look at some broad perspectives on how much carbon emissions go into producing different aspects of a cup of coffee ▶ [Read More](#)

What happened to all the coffee shops once corporate America stayed home?

You might not think about this, but interestingly enough a LOT of cafe's business happens because people are generally made to work out of office spaces. Well, that didn't happen in 2020 ... ▶ [Read More](#)

7 million children are suffering in Europe's coffee supply chain

A look at child labor in the coffee supply chain ▶ [Read More](#)

Climate change is devastating Central American coffee farms, spurring migration

This is honestly going to be an ongoing conversation and story for the rest of our lives. ▶ [Read More](#)

How coffee has kept us going in 2020

An interesting look at 2020 and how coffee has helped us through the trials and tribulations ▶ [Read More](#)