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**World Barista Champion Wendelboe achieves surprise win at Cup Tasting Championship**



Brazil's Silvio Leite applauds as Cup Tasting Championship coordinator Alf Kramer congratulates this year's winner, current World Barista Champion Tim Wendelboe

It was a surprise—even to himself—when the reigning World Barista Champion Tim Wendelboe won the 2005 World Championship for Cup Tasters, held at the Athens **Speciality Coffee Association of Europe** event in early March.

In the final, he beat Brazilian cup tasting legend Silvio Leite by the smallest possible margin.

But, said Norwegian Wendelboe, there was an explanation. When he first aimed for the 2004 **World Barista Championship** (WBC—the competition he won in Trieste last June), he spent a year developing his own espresso blends, an activity tailor-made for each discipline within the WBC.

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This practice brought him into contact with many of the world's best coffees on a regular basis, and as a result, he became a very good cup taster. There is a lesson there, for other baristas with ambitions!

The World Championship for Cup Tasting, which began last year, is held as a series of eight triangular tests with increasing degrees of difficulty. The cup positions are changed every time using a mathematically random system, to ensure that the competition is fair. The competitors must identify the odd cup out of the three in each of eight different groups, and theoretically, the one with the most correct cups wins. However, with many competitors on the same number of correct cups, the one that achieves the highest number of correct cups in the shortest time in fact becomes the winner.

In the Athens competition, cuppers representing Colombia and Guatemala came in joint third place.

The third edition of the World Championship for Cup Tasting is to be held at the SCAE's next Conference & Exhibition, scheduled for June 2006 in Bern, Switzerland.—**Alf Kramer**

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