

Premiere Issue Fall 07 / Portland's Magazine of Food + Drink

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HALLOWED COFFEE GROUNDS

You think you know coffee? Well, Spella Caffe will slap your foggy brain upside your head. Working from his little trailer-cart kitchen, Andrea Spella hand-pulls each shot with an Italian Rancilio lever machine, which in turn allows for the kind of hand control a serious coffeehead demands. ("If there's more humidity today, you hold it for 10 seconds, not seven seconds," says Spella, revealing the good fanatic that he is.) And Spella's from-the-farm Brazilian beans — roasted in a rented garage nearby — are softer and sweeter,

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more Italian if you will, than what typically flies around town. The result? A thick, rich, roasty, side-of-the-mountain, blessedly bitter-free espresso with a creamy, heady, bubble-tight cap of crema on top. In short, Old World; the kind of mythical sip you stumble across in some unmarked hideaway off the Spanish Steps in Rome. Everything here is terrific — luscious lattes; beautifully balanced, barely sweet mochas with Italian cocoa powder; and delicately sweet-spiced chai from Spella's own mix. All this, plus two daily choices of Stella Gelato, the addictive artisan brand from Eugene (all the better served "affogato" or drowned in espresso); swoon-worthy, walnut-packed brownies; and real, toothy biscotti meant for dunking.

We can only hope Spella will realize his dream of opening a sit-down cafe in the next year or so. Meanwhile, come and be wowed.

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this report on Spella*

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Hand-pulled shots are the signature drink at Spella Caffe.

PHOTOS BY MATT EICH, JAMIE FRANCIS, FREDRICK D. JOE

