



PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

# APPROACHING PERFECTION

Coffee lover meets dream roaster in *Caffé Pacori* BY SARAH DECKER

Coffee. For those of you who embrace it, it is many things: It wakes you up, keeps you going, accompanies chocolate so nicely. Living in the great Northwest, we are surrounded by amazing options when it comes to selecting a cup of brew.

For me, that choice is favored to be something bold in flavor, smooth to the finish and without bitterness. Never in my travels have I found a cup that so completely fulfills my requirements as my first cup of Caffé Pacori coffee.

I just had to meet the roaster, the man responsible for showing me what a great cup of coffee can taste like. At first when I walked into Caffé Pacori, I was confused. Surely the guy standing before me was just an employee, I thought. The man responsible for the wood-roasted perfection of Pacori must be at least 8 feet tall, arms like tree trunks and a beard of moss.

But no, Eric Pierce looks like a guy I might know, a guy I might grab a drink with, a guy I can relate to.

Pierce showed me the entire operation, from stem to stern. It took about four minutes. Coffee roasting is, all at once, painfully simple and dramatically complex. The beans, brought in from various regions and blended expertly to provide each roast with the maximum flavor, are placed in one of two roasters — gas or wood — and then roasted, bagged and shipped.

And while all of that seems simple enough, Pierce has been honing his skills since he was a teenager in upstate Idaho, roasting beans for kicks. Those kicks turned into a passion, and he has been the master roaster at Caffé Pacori for the past eight years. The roasting process — a science of its own — is mastered and polished so that to the uninitiated, it seems quite simple.

But one taste and you know you are dealing with a black belt in the art. For if there is but one defining difference among these many Northwest-produced coffee beans, it is the finished product, that first sip. And Pacori has the credentials: A two-year-running prize collector at the Oregon State Fair, once for Best Breakfast Coffee and once for Best Taste Overall, for their wood-roasted decaf, no less.

As a staple of the Eugene-based food community, Caffé Pacori can be found at many of the restaurants around town, as well as being served at Perk Cafe and available for purchase at Kiva, Market of Choice and from the café's website. However and wherever you grab a cup, be prepared to sit and savor it, because it's likely that first taste will be logged in your memory for years to come. ■

For info on Caffé Pacori, see [caffepacori.com](http://caffepacori.com) or call 868-1256.

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