

My Thesis on the Coffee of Kelvin Grove

A gift to QUT students



Sleep deprived? Staying up all night to get those hard-earned distinctions? No? It's ok, me either. All I've been doing is drinking coffee. I honestly should have majored in it. Sure, I study, but only with coffee. Sure, I attend lectures (sometimes), but only if I have coffee in my hands. Sure, I enjoy evenings in the bar, but only with an espresso martini.

Considering my self-appointed doctorate in the fine cafés of the QUT Kelvin Grove campus, I have a comprehensive guide to the two caffeinated dealers to avoid, and the one you want to be at.

Keywords: coffee, sleep, deprived, university

Method

I've decided to review Beadles (most popular), Mean Beanz (most popular with QUT staff and locals), and B+C Lab (invisible).

Step 1: observe surroundings. Stalk prey (barista).

Step 2: order coffee: 'small almond milk flat white.' Make them feel weak.

Step 3: pay with phone.

Step 4: after receiving coffee, judge it. Glance at the barista; let them know I'm really judging them.

Step 5: smell.

Step 6: taste. Scowl, or smile.

See results on the next page.



Results



1) Beadles: On the Quad

Price: \$4.50

Once you've decided you want to enter the glorious world of University education, you're going to become acquainted with the library. With this new friendship, you'll spend your time glancing up from your laptop across to Beadles.

Do yourself a favour, skip this one. I know it's tempting. You'll be walking into the library, planning on studying, then that bitter smell wafts through the electric library doors, like KFC after a night in the valley.

I must admit, Beadles seating facilities are well equipped and comfy, and the food has been well loved, but let me tell you, it's love that the coffee lacks. And also, over my five years on campus, I spent the first three religiously going to Beadles (which at bare minimum comes to about 300 visits). And in that whole debt-accumulating time, not one of the staff members even pretended to recognise me. Bruh.

The coffee was bitter, owing to the cheap mass market quality of Elixir Beans. It had a thick, heavy mouthfeel, and somehow felt like it was giving you bad coffee breath. The crema on my flat white was excessively thin, as if it was an espresso shot with milk that was heated in the microwave. There also was no attempt at latte art, which tells me that the barista was either in a rush, or didn't care. I'll give Beadles the benefit of the doubt, they are the most popular cafe on campus. Which leads to my last frustration: when I arrived to try it again for this review, I joined a twelve-person line, which can be murder worthy when waiting for your morning coffee.

2) Mean Beanz Espresso

Price: \$3.70

Nestled away under student accommodation is the totally cute little café, Mean Beanz Espresso. This comic book filled space was full of friendly staff and a cozy seating area. When I walked in however, the first thing that hit me was the smell of stale beans. This didn't make me excited for the coffee.

When I was told I got a 50c discount for being a student, and another 50c for bringing my own cup, I thought: sick. The service was fast too, and I was ready to take that first mouth-watering, knee weakening sip. I sniffed, imaging myself as a true connoisseur and noticed a nice earthiness to the beans. I prepared my lips. It was burnt. Sour. Excruciating. From what I could tell, the extraction time was too short or the tamp not being firm enough for the coffee.

The almond milk was also clearly not barista grade, likely Woolworths home-brand. At first glance this doesn't seem like such a sin, but when stretching this milk, it separates the water from the rest of it, giving the drink an overall watered-down taste. Cheap milk also makes it near impossible to stretch the milk correctly, and my coffee had a crema at least 3cm thick, with no latte art, and a white, beach foam colour.

It seems like there is a reason why this coffee was so affordable. You'd have to be a mean bean to go to this one.

3) B+C Lab

Price: \$4.50

B+C Lab is a coffee shop hidden up Musk Avenue doing its best to not call attention to itself. When you first walk in, you'll be hit by its minimalist, concrete aesthetic. A shy barista might greet you, or he might not, and a menu consisting of coffee, tea and cakes will accompany him.

'Dude,' I said as I approached the counter. 'What's that smell?'

He told me it was their specialty blends, made at high altitude, which gives it a fruity flavour. I imagined this shy little barista climbing the alps, walking stick in hand, map in his pocket, falling in love with a villager; her telling him about the enlightened coffee farmers at the peak of the mountains; that's good, he says, hiding from her that that's why he's really there; will you be back? she asks; yes, he lies, leaving to her to find the mythical coffee beans.

'Do you want to try it?' he asked me.

'Yeah.'

He got me a glass and poured me a shot from what looked like science equipment. I imagined that this was a secret technique taught to him by the monks who tended the beans. I knew that it was really just a fancy coffee drip.

He handed me a little sipping glass. I took a sip. It was alright, tasting faintly of blueberries and chocolate, but mostly just like coffee. I then ordered my almond milk flat white and watched him make it. He tended over the coffee like he was a surgeon and it was his patient. First, he measured the coffee ground to the exact gram. 'Do you measure it every time?' I asked.

'Yes,' he said, annoyed at my interruption.

'Goodness.'

Second, he extracted the shot from the coffee machine, smelt it, and gazed out the front window to the distance.

I looked out the window too, expecting answers, but instead he sighed and poured the coffee shot down the drain. He shook his head, then started all over again. 'Wow,' I said, backing up nervously towards the staircase, and then scurrying up and taking a seat. When my coffee arrived, it was deeply aromatic. The crema was silky smooth, and the latte art on the coffee was two swans flapping nervously as I picked up the mug and lifted it to my mouth. I took a sip. The almond milk was of high quality, not overly sweetened, not overly almondy. My guess was Milklab. At first the beans whispered to me that they were traditional, but then the flavour of dark chocolate said hello, and then a smoky flavour appeared in the aftertaste, like an old man talking to you over a campfire. So basically, the coffee's pretty good at B+C Lab. You should go there.

Conclusion

Go to B+C Lab, avoid the rest.

