



For Immediate Release

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West's Best Duel at SCAA's Western Regional Barista Competition

Winner Qualifies for 2008 United States Barista Championship, May 2-5 in Minneapolis

BERKELEY, Calif. U.S.A. (March 18, 2008) – The most accomplished baristas from California and Hawaii will vie to become the region's best during the Specialty Coffee Association of America's (SCAA) Western Regional Barista Competition (WRBC) – hosted by Pacific Bay Coffee Co. and Micro-Roastery – at the Gaia Arts Center, March 28-30 in Berkeley, Calif. In addition to being recognized as the West's premier barista (the Italian term for skilled and experienced espresso bar operators,) the event's winning barista receives an expenses-paid trip to the nation's hottest coffee competition – the 2008 United States Barista Championship (USBC,) held in Minneapolis, May 2-5.

SCAA's regional barista competitions and USBC are held to encourage and recognize the professional achievement in the art and skill of espresso preparation. The SCAA is the world's largest coffee trade association in the world with members in more than 40 countries and event host, Pacific Bay Coffee Co. & Micro-Roastery is a preeminent Bay Area specialty coffee micro-roaster and retailer.

The West's best baristas will demonstrate their expertise on the espresso machine while preparing and serving some of the finest coffee concoctions in the area. During their individual performances, challengers must maintain their composure while preparing and serving 12 coffee beverages including four espressos, four cappuccinos and four custom signature drinks in a 15 minute timeframe.

Seven SCAA-certified judges, including one head judge, two technical judges and four sensory judges will critique competitors. The judges evaluate contestants on taste, beverage presentation, technical skills, total impression and station cleanliness. Current USBC champion, Heather Perry of Coffee Klatch Roasting in San Dimas, Calif. has won the previous three WRBC events.

As part of SCAA's mission to educate and inform the general public about specialty coffee and the barista profession, the event will feature a fourth espresso machine for regional specialty coffee roasters to showcase and serve their favorite espresso blends as well as Clover single cup brewed single origin coffees.

Spectators have the added benefit of receiving free espressos and cappuccinos served by the area's top baristas.

"SCAA is excited to present our fourth Western Regional Barista Competition and to partner with Pacific Bay Coffee Co. & Micro-Roastery," said SCAA Executive Director Ric Rhinehart. "This event and our other regional competitions serve to heighten the general public's awareness of the distinctive skills associated with the barista profession. The addition of a fourth espresso machine and Clover brewer further provides our audience with the opportunity to get a first-hand perspective on the quality product these professionals provide."

Western Regional Barista Competition Schedule of Events

Friday, March 28 – Round One, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Saturday, March 29 – Round One, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Finalists Announced, 5:30 – 6 p.m.

Sunday, March 30 – Finals, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Awards Ceremony, 1:30 – 2 p.m.

The WRBC is free and open to the press and public. For more information: www.wrbc2008.com.

About the SCAA

Celebrating 26 years of success, SCAA is the world's largest coffee trade association. SCAA members are located in more than 40 countries and represent every segment of the specialty coffee industry, from coffee growers to coffee roasters and retailers. The SCAA's mission is to be the recognized authority on specialty coffee, providing a common forum for the development and promotion of coffee excellence and sustainability. The SCAA's dedication to excellence in coffee is realized through the setting of quality standards for the industry; conducting research on coffee, equipment and perfection of craft; and providing education, training, resources and business services for members. The SCAA's annual conference is held in a different U.S. city each year and is the coffee industry's largest gathering and exhibition.

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Note to editors: Interviews with Western Regional Barista Competition participants are available before, during and after the event. Photos of the Western Regional Barista Competition will be available upon the conclusion of the event.