

Celebrate with coffee this season

By Lori Jones
Special Writer

The coffee generation is back and more diverse than ever. Aficionados of the drink are into decaf and regular, espressos and cappuccinos, flavored and plain. Coffee houses, hailing back to the beatnik generation, have grown up, opening throughout the metro area. Coffee shops have always been with us.

Elliott Lewkow, of West Bloomfield's Piacere Michigan, an espresso and cappuccino distributor based in California, says that "As consumption of alcohol has waned, coffee consumption has gone up proportionately."

The Midwest, he says, was a prime market for Piacere, the only maker of commercial espresso machines in the United States. After four months in Michigan, Piacere is currently in 14 Michigan counties.

One of the advantages that Lewkow sees to espressos and cappuccinos is that they are a cross-generational beverage. When it comes to drinks other than the staples like milk and pop, "espresso and cappuccino are one of the few things that parents and teens enjoy equally," he says.

Since Lewkow has been in Michigan, one of the largest parts of his job has been education. He says that espresso is "almost an elixir, the result of a sophisticated roasting and blending of beans." It is rare to find the same tasting espresso in coffee houses because the blender will generally use beans to their taste from different coffee-growing regions of the world.

When cappuccino is concerned, he says that people often have misconceptions about what the drink is. In its purest form, it is one-third espresso, one-third steamed milk and one-third frothed milk. That's it. "Everything starts with espresso," Lewkow says.

He offers up a recipe for one of his simple favorites, a semi-freddo: For one serving, use one scoop of your favorite ice cream.

Pour two shots of hot espresso over it. Add whipped cream and if you like, sprinkle with cinnamon or vanilla cinnamon on top.

What does it take to satisfy your coffee cravings in your own home, without having to travel out every time you want something a little more special than run-of-the-mill canned coffee? Not much. One beauty of the drink is that it is simple to make wonderful coffees in your kitchen without spending a lot of money.

Kathy Roy, owner of the Gloria Jean's Gourmet Coffee franchise at the Somerset Collection in Troy, says the only thing you

it's more expensive than grocery store brands, but very reasonable for a special treat to yourself or a coffee-lover you know.

When it comes to espresso and cappuccino machines, Gloria Jean's sells them in prices ranging from \$99.99 for a Krups model to the Rolls Royce of espresso machines, La Pavoni, the most expensive model ringing in at \$750.00. Coffee doesn't have to be an inexpensive habit, after all.

One of the recipes that Roy recommends from the shop is called a "Gloria Jean's Chiller." It is like an iced cappuccino, but the Chiller is an instant drink so that you do not have to own an espresso machine to make it. The concentrate is available for \$13.99 for 12 ounces and \$21.99 for 32 ounces. Made up of espresso and sugar, the only thing you have to do at home is mix it with cold milk, add whipped cream and chocolate or other

land or Wayne County is familiar with The Coffee Beanery, a chain of coffee stores offering everything from beans to mugs to thermoses to coffee machines of different types. There are eleven scattered throughout the two counties and 15 in the metropolitan Detroit area.

Kelli Brady, a spokesperson for The Coffee Beanery, cites hazelnut as a favored flavor this time of year. Like Roy of Gloria Jean's, it is Brady's personal favorite also.

The Coffee Beanery sells a variety of flavors like Irish Cream, Swiss Mocha Almond and Chocolate Raspberry. Regular and decaffeinated coffees are offered at an average of \$8.99 per pound for regular and \$10.99 for decaf. The Coffee Beanery's Swiss water processing for its decaffeinated coffees contributes to the higher price.

Brady says that the stores do a large corporate business during the holidays, with gift sets ranging from \$4.25 to \$16.99. A set that features the store's own Grindmaster Cafe' Mill and a quarter pound each of its special Beanery Blend and Vanilla Nut Cream beans sells for \$24.99.

For your in-home gourmet coffee shop, the Cafe' Mill can be purchased for \$19.99 and prices for espresso machines at The Coffee Beanery range from \$49.99 to \$399.99. It just depends on how much espresso you think you will be making and how well you want to treat yourself.

The Coffee Beanery's contribution to the recipe file is one that makes enough for six mugs, more if you are serving it in small coffee cups.

Iced Mocha Mint is a refreshing, festive coffee-based drink that you can enjoy yourself or make with loved ones:

Make one pot of Beanery Blend coffee - the store's own blend that has a smooth, rich taste from the Arabica beans it uses. Let the coffee cool to room temperature. Add 3/4 cup of chocolate syrup and a 1/4 teaspoon of peppermint extract. Pour into mugs or cups and garnish with whipped cream.

Serve and enjoy. The instructions could apply to any coffee you make this season!

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Gloria Jean's has something for everyone who loves specialty coffee blends. Above, specialty blended gourmet coffee and flavoring to make a delicious treat. They also offer a variety of pre-packaged gifts for the Java lover on your list. This one includes full-bodied beans for custom-grinding and a festive coffee mug. (right, smaller)



need for wonderful coffee is a coffee maker and great coffee. Most people already have coffee makers in their homes. If you want to purchase whole beans, home coffee grinders are on the market. Gloria Jean's shop offers one for \$21.99 with a lifetime warranty - a small expense for a lifetime of terrific java. With a great blend, she says that tap water is sufficient because the flavor is in the bean.

Roy declares hazelnut her favorite coffee flavor and it comes in both regular and decaffeinated at Gloria Jean's. The shop offers 67 different varieties of coffee so there is something for every taste. At 8.99 a pound,

garnish of your choice and you have a festive non-alcoholic holiday drink.

Whether it is for yourself or a business colleague, a child's teacher or anyone else on your list, Roy does not think you can go wrong with a gift of coffee.

"It's not too personal but almost everyone enjoys it," she says. She suggests it as an alternative to the traditional bottles of wine and liquor given during the holidays. With gift sets beginning at less than \$10, it is easy to treat yourself or anyone on your list in a price range you can afford.

Anyone who has been in a mall in Oak-

Holiday video classics make great gifts

With the increasing popularity of stay-at-home entertainment, nearly every home has at least one VCR. People enjoy the convenience of having the refrigerator close by and a pause button on the remote for bathroom breaks, without missing a thread of the plot!

This year, why not buy everyone on your list their favorite movie? It's a gift that's sure to be a hit, and it can be enjoyed over and over again. You probably have a good idea of your recipient's movie tastes, but here are some suggestions from local video experts!

Blockbuster Video's Top Ten Holiday Classics:

1. It's A Wonderful Life
2. A Christmas Carol
3. Dr. Seuss: How the Grinch Stole Christmas
4. Frosty's Winter Wonderland
5. Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer
6. Year Without a Santa Claus
7. Miracle on 34th Street
8. White Christmas
9. A Christmas Story
10. Christmas Vacation.

You'll also find a variety of exercise, instruction, contemporary and horror videos that will suit even the most finicky viewers on your gift list.

VideoMax, located at 14 1/2 and Woodward, in Birmingham, has over

10,000 movies under its roof. You can special order classics in time for the holidays, or choose from foreign film, new releases and "B" rated videos, not shown at the theater.

During the holidays, VideoMax usually has a "Buy 2, get 1 free" video sale. Another option is to buy gift certificates, in \$10, \$20 and \$50 denominations, which are applicable toward video rentals. VideoMax employee, Simon Murad, predicts that among children's favorites will be the Winnie the Pooh Collection, which includes a plush recreation of one of the beloved story characters and a video of Pooh's classic adventures (\$15.99). With Aladdin and Barney

videos are close behind, as forecasted kid's favorites.

If you're looking for a more unconventional idea, gather up your old 8mm films and have them made into a video that will be cherished by its recipient. Videos by Rocky Mecoli in Westland offer this special service and more.

"We do movies of parents, grandchildren, brothers and sisters from 8mm films that their parents have taken," says Mecoli.

"Some I've done date back to the 50s. We enhance them by adding music in the background. I run the film on VHS so they can sit around especially at

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