

Analog Coffee: A Third Wave Café

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Opening its first coffee shop in the Calgary Farmer's market in March 2011, Analog Coffee by Fratello Coffee Roasters (est.1997) began its foray into retail. Now on its second shop at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> St/17<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW in the heart of Calgary, Analog Coffee is currently one of Western Canada's leaders of the third wave coffee movement. This movement is best described as the emergence of cafés serving high-quality artisanal coffee that are hand-made and poured-over as opposed to drip brewed from the previous generation, e.g. Starbucks, Second Cup, Tim Hortons.

Brothers Russ and Chris Prefontaine are the second generation owners of Fratello Coffee Roasters (*Fratello* means 'brother' in Italian) which they bought from their parents who were in the coffee business since 1974. As wholesale coffee suppliers to other cafés world-wide, they were limited to being known only in the retail circle. Although they educated businesses on what constitutes a proper café in over 30 years, they did not have their own store-front where they can directly share their passion and knowledge for coffee to who matters the most: the "people who drink and enjoy [our] coffee" (Wilt, 2013). This motivated the brothers to push towards their dream of having their own café; thus in late 2012, Analog Coffee's flagship store was finally opened for business. Since then, Analog Coffee has developed a "reputation as a hipster hangout ... where the young, hip, and gorgeous" (The Vanguard Review – Analog Coffee 17th Ave, 2013) would spend their time sipping a meticulously crafted cup of coffee, which is not necessarily a bad thing and just shows which type of clientele artisan coffee attracts. Those who consider themselves part of the third wave coffee movement will appreciate this fact considering that they are trying to raise the bar in the coffee-making industry by transforming the idea of a cup of coffee from a simple everyday commodity to a premium item of choice.

It was not always smooth-sailing for the Prefontaine brothers. Between 2007 and 2008, they decided to down-size their coffee business by terminating contracts with growers and retailers who didn't share similar beliefs. They also needed to re-focus on what they cared most about which is now reflected on their philosophy that coffee should be about people – the growers or producers, the roasters and finders of quality beans, the baristas who make coffee, and the customers who enjoy coffee (Vega, 2013). Besides being a roaster and brewer of coffee, Fratello also sources their coffee internationally using the direct-trade approach. This means they are primarily responsible for reaching out to growers and cutting a deal with them. Russ, the primary coffee bean finder for Fratello, regularly visits farms and carefully selects the beans he brings to Canada. Countries like Nicaragua, Bolivia, El Salvador, Colombia, and Guatemala are just among those he has formed partnerships with.

There is a growing interest in artisan coffee. In an article by Wilt (2013) on the booming coffee industry in Calgary, roasters, caf  s, and home-brewing websites are popping every now and then to respond to the demand. Furthermore, there is a change in perspective on how people view coffee from 20 years ago. According to the 2012 Canadian Barista Champion, Jeremy Ho, people used to think about coffee in terms of levels: light, medium, dark. Nowadays, there are more consumers asking about where their beans come from. The Agri-Food Trade Service has shown its support of the industry by attending The Canadian Coffee & Tea Show (The Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2011) , the only national show for coffee and tea entrepreneurs, independents, and chain operators, in 2011 (The Canadian Coffee & Tea Show, 2012).

Like any business, new or old, there is a need to stay current to survive in the industry. In an interview by Jeannette Vega B. (2013) with Russ Prefontaine, he says that to achieve this they

need to continuously improve and that being good is not good enough. They will strive to develop new methods of making coffee and realizing the re-birth of old and tried methods. Constant training and re-training is essential to deliver quality service. They have also taken advantage of social media outlets to keep connections and learn from others. Finally, Russ says that their goal is to be perfect but knowing it to be impossible leaves room for improvement.

As if to make a fine point, Analog Coffee is already moving forward by partnering with renowned chef Keith Luca (former pastry chef at the Clinton White House) to open Corbeaux Bakehouse that will be primarily responsible for providing Analog cafés their pastry and bread selections. By doing so, the Prefontaines have demonstrated that they are dedicated to their craft by focusing on what they do best and continuously improving upon it, leaving the other aspects (in this case, bread) to others who have the better skills to do so. (Fratello Coffee, 2014)

With their firm beliefs, three decades of experience behind them, and willingness to innovate, Analog Coffee will only continue to grow in the future and possibly expand across Canada, if not the world. In fact, Analog Coffee was recently included in internet news company BuzzFeed's top 25 list of best coffee shops in the world (Van De Walle, 2014), a recognition of its world-class coffee.

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