

MUSINGS OF AN AUSSIE COFFEE GUY



Curiosity, humor, coffee, and the small absurdities of life

By Way of Explanation - I'm Sorry and Good Luck as You Go

*A brief apology for what you're about to read, and a gentle
warning that I wrote it anyway.*

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In my defense: I was left unsupervised.

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The following pages began life as a three-minute radio spot known as *Michael the Aussie Coffee Guy's Monday Morning Musings*.

They were written for radio—mainly because, as I've often been told, I have a face made for radio. There's no grand literary style here to boast about, no carefully curated themes or clever placement of elusive thoughts. Just my wandering, slightly feral ideas, captured and locked away in the zoo of literary expression, where they can do the least amount of damage.

A musing is simply my mind wandering off to who-knows-where, and when I finally notice it's gone, returning with an earnest explanation of where it's been and why it left in the first place.

As you read on, you may notice a few musings bumping into one another. That's because the deeper parts of my brain tend to slosh about in a murky pool of thought that is, frankly, incomprehensible even to me.

As for literary style, it may read as though there are several voices rattling around in my head, all keen to have their turn.

Well, what about the name?

Musings of an Aussie Coffee Guy is the title for a few simple reasons.

First, I'm an Aussie bloke living in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Second, I roast coffee.

Third—and somewhat to my surprise—I've become known as “*that Aussie coffee guy.*”

And finally, the thoughts in these pages—about life, the universe, and everything—have a habit, at least in my mind, of working themselves out through the art of coffee roasting, coffee brewing, and coffee drinking.

That's really all there is to it.



Tradition, Truth & Coffee

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Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world

A bunch of old-timers came into Essence for their morning coffee. These dudes were the real deal. In Australia we'd call them 'fair dinkum' South Dakotans. You know what I mean, the guys who probably grew up kick-starting tractors and a relaxing day off is wrestling a steer to the ground.

Now these guys used to conduct their tribal coffee ritual elsewhere, but when the pandemic hit and many closed their doors, Essence stayed open – like an oasis in the desert. Since their usual oasis was dry, they ventured out and discovered a whole new coffee experience. Essence became their place.

The ritual began like this:

Order coffee.

One bloke asks for decaf (a young fella, clearly still learning the “ways of coffeewood”).

The others rebuke him immediately:

“No neutered coffee here, son. Full caffeine. No cream. FULL STOP.”

Once seated the gathering of the “coffeewood” came to order and matters arising... well... arose. Or at least they tried to. The conversation was like riding the prairie looking for strays – it wandered all over the place. Through politics, weather, tractors, and theories on how “the powers-that-be couldn't save a melting ice cube at the North

Pole.” One of them even felt it necessary to point out that big-city folk seem to think milk comes from almonds.

Eventually, one of them said, “I’m sure glad we found this place. This is real good coffee — worth every penny.”

And that’s the heart of it:

Life is too short, and good coffee is worth the journey.

I’ve been a soldier, a salesman, a missionary through Asia and Africa, a lecturer, a pastor — and somewhere in there, a coffee guy. I wasn’t satisfied with the army’s fizz-in-the-cup concoction, so I sought out better.

This journey eventually produced the Aussie coffee guy. True story: I became a roaster just to guarantee a great brew anywhere, anytime.

But here’s the deeper bit:

Don’t let old experiences, past training, or inherited traditions limit your journey — coffee or otherwise.

In Australia the lamb roast is iconic. We had a friend who, when preparing her lamb roast, would, before cooking, cut off a portion of the leg and throw it in the trash. For me that part, which is actually the shank, is the best part of a lamb roast. When asked why, she said, “Mum always did it.” Mum said, “Grandma always did it.”

Turns out Grandma did it because her pan was too small.

A tradition born from a pan.

Ancient wisdom puts it like this:

“Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

Tradition is good — until it isn't.

Coffee traditions often say coffee must be burnt, bitter, and corrosive enough to dissolve metal.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Coffee should taste as good as it smells.

So — in life and in coffee — be willing to question assumptions, review your opinions, and boldly go beyond inherited limitations.

Musing on life, the universe, and everything may not give us all the answers —

but it certainly goes well with a great cup of coffee.