

Buffalo Brewing

Specialty coffee and coffee-house thoughts in WNY.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2010

Egg Cream Espresso

Following [a discussion on Barista Exchange](#), I've been thinking about espresso, crema, foam and carbonation, and I decided to give a chocolate egg cream soda a try, and then add some espresso to the mix.

Egg cream, by the way, contains neither egg nor cream (discuss): it's milk frothed up with seltzer water, with chocolate then stirred into the bottom to make a layered drink. Full disclosure: I've never had a "real" [egg cream soda](#), so I can't be sure how close I'm getting to the real drink.

I don't have a seltzer siphon, but we have a soda "gun" at work, so that is what I'm working with for now. I used about 4oz of milk in a 16oz cup, then went to town with the soda gun. It foamed the milk up a lot more than I was expecting, which I'm taking to be a good sign.



Then I carefully stirred in 1oz of Ghirardelli chocolate sauce, making sure not to upset the head of foam. This, in theory, is the completed egg cream soda. I took a drink, and I was surprised by how not-gross the combo of soda water and milk is, especially with the chocolate milk/soda to chase any bitterness away.

The problem came when I tried to add espresso. The milk foam was subsiding pretty quickly, and the hot espresso seemed to melt it even faster, so it very quickly seemed like a watery iced mocha, with just a little bit of foam on top. I tried making another and adding the espresso earlier, right when I added the chocolate, but I got pretty much the same result. I don't know if this would be any different if I were using a seltzer siphon.

Not a terrible drink, but: not what I was hoping for. I'd like to get something that uses

ABOUT ME



Jacob Casella
PA boy from the sticks, living in Buffalo. Dig SF & Philosophy. Also, bikes. Do coffee like it's my job. Or religion.

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Coffee by Braun

carbonation/foam to emphasize the texture of espresso crema.



Flat within about 5 seconds after adding espresso.

At Spot we have a “drink bible” that might better be called the “cabinet of curiosities” because it’s full of bizarre drinks people have made up over the years, using whatever ingredients and techniques they can get their hands on. Once of the perennially popular ones, at least on the barista’s side of the counter, is the “Chilly Hillbilly”: espresso and root beer.

I find that the best way to make this is to mix the espresso and root beer at about a 1:2 or 1:3 ratio. I’ll take a large rocks glass (7oz, I think) and pour about 3 or 4oz of root beer. Make sure it’s ice cold, and try to pour it very carefully so that it foams up as little as possible. Then I’ll pull a shot (sometimes I’ll split it so I can just take a single), and as soon as it’s done pour it into the root beer. As soon as the espresso hits, it seems to spark some kind of weird reaction. Something in the espresso, the heat, the oil, the crema, I’m not sure, seems to release all the carbonation in the root beer, and the whole glass will quickly foam up—as Brady says in the bx thread, it’s like the whole drink is crema for a second. A sweet, root-beer-infused crema. You need to drink it the split-second that it starts to foam.

It’s very, very weird—you can feel the reaction still going on in your mouth, sometimes even in your stomach. But also very tasty.

I think maybe the thing to do is to pursue some variants of the chilly hillbilly. I’ll have to do some more research on how root beer is made, see if I can find some significant variations. I know that Virgil’s root beer is much creamier, and tastes more like sassafras, than most standard brands, so I’ll have to try that out (haven’t found a place to get sassafras in Buffalo, to my sorrow). I also need to figure out why espresso reacts differently with different carbonated beverages: I used to know a customer who asked for “sparkling” Americanos, and the espresso never foamed up the same way. Maybe something to do with the sugar content? If I could figure out what’s needed to make the “uber-crema”, then we could just add different ingredients to that to make interesting flavor/texture combinations. If I make any headway, I’ll put it up.

Posted by jdc at 5:26 PM



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