

Local coffeemaker pours his soul into perfect cup

By [Greg Stiles](#)

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Asher Yaron has sought the perfect cup of coffee as if it were the holy grail. From drip to espresso, he pursued the consummate cuppa joe with fervor. Yet he found little satisfaction.

"Everything always fell short," Yaron says, until he began roasting beans on his barbecue, one pound at a time. "I couldn't believe how good it was."

He soon discovered merely home roasting wasn't enough.

"About three or four days after roasting the beans begin to deteriorate and the taste starts to change," Yaron says.

The confluence of events ranging from the global recession to his own awakening led Yaron to transform his simple interest in fresh brews to a commercial venture called Wake-Up! He delivers both freshly roasted beans and cold-pressed coffee to customers out of an Ashland office.

For a dozen years Yaron and his wife, Ashara, produced fine jewelry from gold obtained during two-dozen treks to Bali and upscale handbags that retailed for \$150 in stores around the world.

"The high-end luxury business went down a while ago and we started looking for something else," Yaron says. "I had the inspiration to do the coffee roasting thing — Wake-Up! — as I was waking up to consciousness in the morning."

He began selling his beans at the Ashland Food Co-op in October, but prefers delivering straight to the customer. He also makes a cold-press coffee, soaked in water for 24 hours, and sells it in 6-ounce and 12-ounce containers.

"You don't want to use boiling water," he says. "Hot water extracts the acid and kills the subtle flavors. That's why in dark roast coffee you get a kick at the end."

Yaron roasts 50 pounds of beans a week and has the capacity to handle 200 pounds. For now, he's limited his service area within a triangle taking in Ashland, Medford and the Applegate Valley — announcing his arrival with a traditional Jewish shofar ram's horn blast.

Eventually, he hopes to franchise the approach, rather than extend his own travel.

"I want to be as sustainable and green as possible," says Yaron, who fuels his van with biodiesel and uses fair trade organic beans. "I don't ship through the mail, because that means you're relying on fossil fuel. Besides you don't want a coffee's best days spent sitting in a post office."

Along the way, Yaron teamed up with fellow Applegate resident Rourke Ball, who manufactured a personal roaster known as JavaRoast, which roasts 5 pounds at a time and sells for \$2,200.

"Home-roasting is the fastest growing part of the industry," Yaron says. "There's been a mystique, like you need an artful way of making coffee, but if you can make popcorn and stop it before it burns, you can roast coffee."

Yaron can be reached at 944-0600.