

JULIUS MEINL CROWNS FIRST EVER INTERNATIONAL BARISTA CHAMPION



Caption: Left to right: Vladimir Chzou – Moldova (Espresso Category Winner), Luca Riccardi – Italy (Cappuccino Category Winner), Mario Benetseder – Austria (Signature Drink Category Winner), Raffy Vajio – UAE (Overall Winner)

Premium coffee brand Julius Meinl has crowned the winner of its first ever international barista competition, Raffy Vajio. The Julius Meinl Barista Cup took place at the company's historical Vienna headquarters on September 19th.

Vajio represented the UAE at the Finale and works for Atlantis the Royal in Dubai. He is the Head Barista for the hotel, managing over 35 restaurants. His exceptional coffee mastery impressed the judges, as did the heart and genuine passion for coffee that shone through in his performance.

"I am very grateful to have come to Vienna to compete with these amazing people," says Vajio. "When you serve with your heart, you can see the passion—it's evident. That's the secret."

The winners of the individual categories were:

- Espresso: Vladimir Chzou (Red Rabbit) representing Moldova.
- Cappuccino: Luca Riccardi (Bar Attymo) representing Italy.
- Signature Drink: Mario Benetseder (Café Orchidee) representing Austria.

The champions of 12 national barista competitions hosted earlier in the year competed with Julius Meinl's super premium 100% Arabica 'Belvedere Blend' coffee, part of the double certified The Originals Bio Fairtrade line. They were assessed by a panel of expert judges in 3 categories: Espresso, Cappuccino and Signature Drink.



More than a moment

The other baristas competing showed exceptional talent on the international stage:

- Mladen Jurošević (Café Bar Vremeplov), Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Davor Meštrović (Garaža Coffee Bar), Croatia
- Štěpánka Potůčková (Café and Bistro Chodský), Czech Republic
- Davit Nikolishvili (Ambassadori Tbilisi Hotel), Georgia
- Daria Tovkach (Mr & Mrs Coffee), Poland
- Ionela Todoran (Café Wien), Romania
- David Melicher (Crowne Plaza), Slovakia
- Coral Gamliel, (Café Noir), United State of America

"Today, each barista competed using top-quality coffee and state-of-the-art equipment, supported by the unmatched expertise of our global & local teams. This is the service we offer all our HoReCa partners. Paired with the talent and dedication of our top baristas, it guarantees exceptional coffee, every time."

- Marcel Löffler (CEO, Julius Meinl Coffee Group)

The baristas showcased their skills using the SCA certified Rancilio Specialty RS1 machine, Fiorenzato's F83 Pro Grinder, and BWT's Bestaqua ROC reverse osmosis systems. These tools, maintained with specialised cleaning solutions from Cafetto, reflect Julius Meinl's dedication to innovation and in-cup quality.

The four winners will travel to Honduras in January, where Julius Meinl sources organic, Fairtrade certified coffee for The Originals Bio Fairtrade range. The once-in-a-lifetime adventure hosted in partnership with Fairtrade offers a unique opportunity for the baristas to immerse themselves in Honduras' rich coffee culture and develop their knowledge of coffee cultivation. Fifth generation family member, Christina Meinl, and Hartwig Kirner, Director of Fairtrade Austria, will also join the trip.

Discover more about Julius Meinl and its sustainable coffee and tea solutions for businesses [here](#).

NOTE TO EDITORS

About Julius Meinl: Founded in 1862, Julius Meinl is one of the oldest coffee roasters in the world and an iconic Vienna coffee house brand. Dedication to quality has been a family trademark for five generations. With more than 160 years of experience in sourcing, blending and roasting, Meinl is a preferred coffee supplier for Vienna's leading coffee houses. Today, Julius Meinl coffees and teas help create meaningful moments for customers and consumers across the globe, and are sold in over 50,000 hotels, coffee houses and restaurants in 70 countries, plus a growing number of retail outlets.



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MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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