One of my joys as a Roast Master is hosting a cupping for friends. Trying different coffees at diverse roast levels will amaze you with their flavor variations. Coffee is truly an amazing beverage. It has more antioxidants than red wine. The caffeine in coffee is a natural stimulant but it has so many documented health benefits that the most ardent health nut can still appreciate the “Elixir of Life.”

-Erich Cristos
Nothing quite says “Good Morning” like a great cup of coffee. Starting our day is a small part of starting our life. In that mug of delicious brew is a warm sunrise, a beautiful blossom and a true and faithful friend — waiting for you on the counter every morning. Coffee is truly the “Elixir of Life.”

Coffee has a very interesting history of its discovery by a goatherd of dancing goats to being declared the drink of divinity to becoming the invigorating elixir of poets and writers worldwide. Coffee shops became gathering places to discuss politics and plan revolts, meet with friends and fellow authors, hear local musicians, view local art and photography or just relax in a groovy vibe.

It is true that coffee is listed as a commodity but it defies the definition of commodity. Coffee flavor options are more varied than wine. In spite of all the wine growing regions, grape varietals, blending options and fermentation – there are still many more flavor profiles available in roasted coffee. The Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) lists 9 different official roast levels. In addition to the roasting options, there are 52 known varieties of Arabica coffee. The resulting combinations require a Roast Master to have the palate of a sommelier, the skill of a chef and the inquisitive nature of researcher. From this combination of Mother Nature and science, we get to enjoy the endless bounty of rich and flavorful coffee. From the blueberry essence of an Ethiopian Harrar to the woody, earthiness of Sumatra Blue Batak, coffee has a flavor for anyone.

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We hope to see you in Cristos Coffee at 89 S. Briggs Street in Erie sometime soon. There is so much more that we can tell you about coffee, but that will have to wait for another issue of ELIFE. - Erich Hardy