

Happy Hour – with coffee!

An Edinburgh man has been shortlisted in a nation-wide competition to find the world's best coffee barista – and is inviting locals to help raise cash for charity by sampling his coffee creations.

Liam Reid, who works at Costa Coffee in Edinburgh's Fort Kinnaird, has reached the regional finals of Costa's Barista of the Year contest, which will take place in Edinburgh on 8 September.

The 18-year old will battle against 7 other Costa baristas from Scotland and the North of England to see who can produce the perfect cup of hand-made coffee. Each contestant will present their own signature drink, which is judged on its taste, presentation and innovation – and to mark his success, Liam is inviting locals to sample his creation to raise funds for charity.

Liam said:- "I've been working at Costa for about eight months now and wanted to enter Barista of the Year to put my new skills to the test. It's fantastic to be shortlisted and have my hard-work and passion for great coffee recognised."

Costa Coffee will be holding a coffee "Happy Hour" from 5.30pm on Tuesday 31 August at Edinburgh's Straiton Park store, giving customers the chance to drop in and try Liam's signature drink – a 'Winter Warmer' orange and cinnamon cortissimo topped with cream and dark chocolate shavings – for free. Donations will be collected at the sampling for The Costa Foundation, which improves the welfare of coffee-growing communities in countries such as Colombia, Guatemala, Uganda, Ethiopia and Costa Rica.

The Barista of the Year final takes place on 21 October 2010 at the Costa Roastery in Lambeth, London where the company was founded in 1971 by the Costa brothers.

Ten finalists from around the world will be tested once again on their ability to produce a technically perfect cup of hand-made coffee and their knowledge and understanding of the industry. They are also judged on their overall performance, flair and passion for great coffee. They will also have to excite the judges, lead by the Costa Master of Coffee, Gennaro Pelliccia by creating their own unique signature drink.

Last year's winning drink, created by Gabor Kamondi from the Costa store in Dorking, England was Pick Mint, a blend of Costa's signature espresso with mint, inspired by his love of the famous chocolates, After Eights.