

BREWING EXCELLENCE

2025 Diners Club Barista of the Year

Coffee has always been more than a morning ritual. In the hands of a skilled barista, it becomes theatre, craftsmanship, and comfort in a cup. Now in its third year, the Diners Club Barista of the Year competition has cemented itself as South Africa's most anticipated showcase of that artistry, drawing record participation and celebrating the passion of the people who keep us caffeinated.

Now in its third year, the Diners Club Barista of the Year competition has become a veritable institution in the South African coffee scene, and in 2025, the stakes were higher than ever. Across four months, coffee lovers nationwide cast 11,260 verified votes, a remarkable 73% increase compared to last year. From a pool of 278 baristas representing 194 establishments, eight outstanding finalists emerged, each recognised for

their creativity, consistency, and the joy they bring to their customers.

MEET THE FINALISTS

- *Estiaan Lizamore* – Elvis Brew, Noordheuwel, Gauteng
- *Esam Mahlangu* – Olivia's Coffee Shop, Northcliff, Gauteng
- *Roderick Portecaro* – Yummyness, Kempton Park, Gauteng
- *Ranga Melusi* – Vida e caffè, Selby, Gauteng
- *Sebusisio Lucky* – Bem Bom,

Meadowdale, Gauteng

- *Mahlatse Mahloko* – Starbucks, Checkers Hyper, Mall of Africa, Midrand, Gauteng
- *Brian Moyo* – Royal Coffee Roasters, Meyersdal, Gauteng
- *Dion Ndlovu* – Now Coffee, Glenashley, KwaZulu-Natal

Each barista carried the pride of their coffee shop, their regulars, and their communities. Yet, as with any contest, one name had to rise above the rest.





A SURPRISE WORTH SAVOURING

On Friday, 29 August, Diners Club brought the competition to its crescendo by surprising Estiaan Lizamore of Elvis Brew with the news of his win. In front of loyal customers and colleagues at his Noordheuwel espresso bar, Estiaan was presented with the R20,000 grand prize

and a certificate of excellence to display proudly in his café.

Estiaan's triumph reflects more than just his technical skill. It acknowledges the warm hospitality and passion that have made Elvis Brew a community favourite. As he puts it:

"I'm truly honoured to hold the title



of Diners Club Barista of the Year 2025, and I'm deeply grateful to Elvis Brew and Diners Club for this opportunity. There's no greater feeling than being recognised for doing what you truly love. My motto is simple: to make the very best coffee. For me, it's about more than coffee—it's about pouring love into every cup."

BREWING A MOVEMENT

What sets the Diners Club Barista of the Year competition apart is its accessibility and impact. There's no entry fee, making it possible for cafés of all sizes to spotlight their star baristas. Each participating venue receives a QR code that integrates seamlessly into the checkout experience, allowing customers to cast a vote with every till slip. This clever approach transforms every cappuccino and cortado into an act of support.

Alongside the in-store experience, Diners Club amplifies the competition through its social media channels, introducing South Africans to the stories behind the beans. This not only drives foot traffic to the cafés but also strengthens the bond between baristas and the communities they serve.

The numbers tell the story. With more than double the entries of 2024, the 2025 competition has become a true celebration of South Africa's coffee

culture. For the finalists, the exposure alone is invaluable, deepening customer loyalty and attracting new patrons eager to taste the work of a recognised barista.

MORE THAN A TITLE

For Estiaan, the title is both a personal milestone and an opportunity to inspire. His win will be commemorated with a video interview and feature article in Signature Magazine, giving readers and coffee lovers a chance to learn more about the man behind the machine.

And while the award celebrates one champion, it also acknowledges the collective contribution of all eight finalists, who together embody the innovation and dedication defining South Africa's coffee scene.

The 2025 Diners Club Barista of the Year competition proves that coffee culture in South Africa is thriving. From Noordheuwel to Glenashley, baristas are elevating the humble cup into an experience worth celebrating. Estiaan Lizamore may have walked away with the crown, but every finalist left a lasting impact on their customers and communities. ☕

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