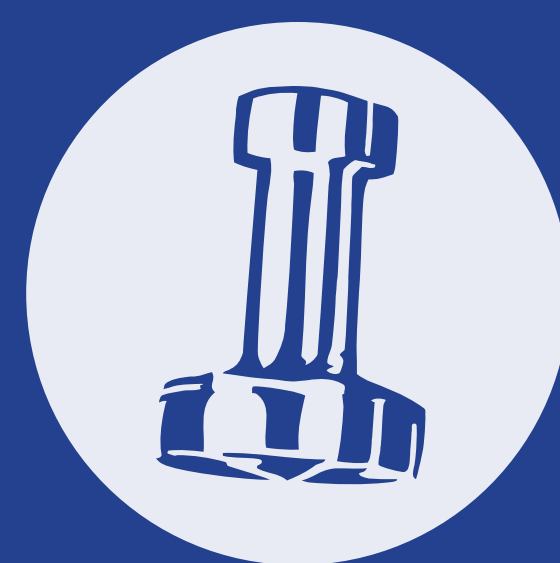




**WORLD
BARISTA
CHAMPIONSHIP™**

Beyond the Stage

25 Years of Data-Driven
Stories from WBC

October 2025

Introduction

To celebrate the first 25 years of the World Barista Championships (WBC) we dove deep into the data from competitors' presentations, focusing on the latest trends from 2022 to 2024. We captured the key stats behind every routine, from the diverse range of espresso recipes used on stage, to the innovative coffee processing methods emerging at coffee origins.

Tracking the championship over time sheds light on the skills and complex stories used to celebrate coffee, offering valuable takeaways for aspiring competitors, coffee businesses, and those just beginning their coffee journey.

Each competitor's presentation is a window into the entire supply chain. We analyzed the rich vocabulary used by competitors to describe coffee genetics and processing, providing a glimpse into the recent processing revolution and innovation at origins from Colombia to South Africa.

You'll learn that innovative processing isn't just for green coffee! Since 2023, competitors have expanded their choices of milk—both dairy and non-dairy—and applied cutting-edge techniques to perfect their milk beverages. In an era where signature beverages are becoming a café staple, we reveal the most popular signature beverage ingredients on the world stage. This provides inspiration for crafting your next great drink, whether you're an aspiring competitor, a professional barista, or making coffee at home.

A key part of succeeding at WBC is communicating coffee's sensory attributes clearly and accurately to a diverse range of judges. We mapped WBC flavor descriptors according to Coffee Value Assessment (CVA) terms, demonstrating how language can help us capture and communicate flavor complexity.

By tracking WBC since its inaugural year in 2000, we see that WBC is a vibrant gathering of coffee excellence, with broad participation from across the globe.

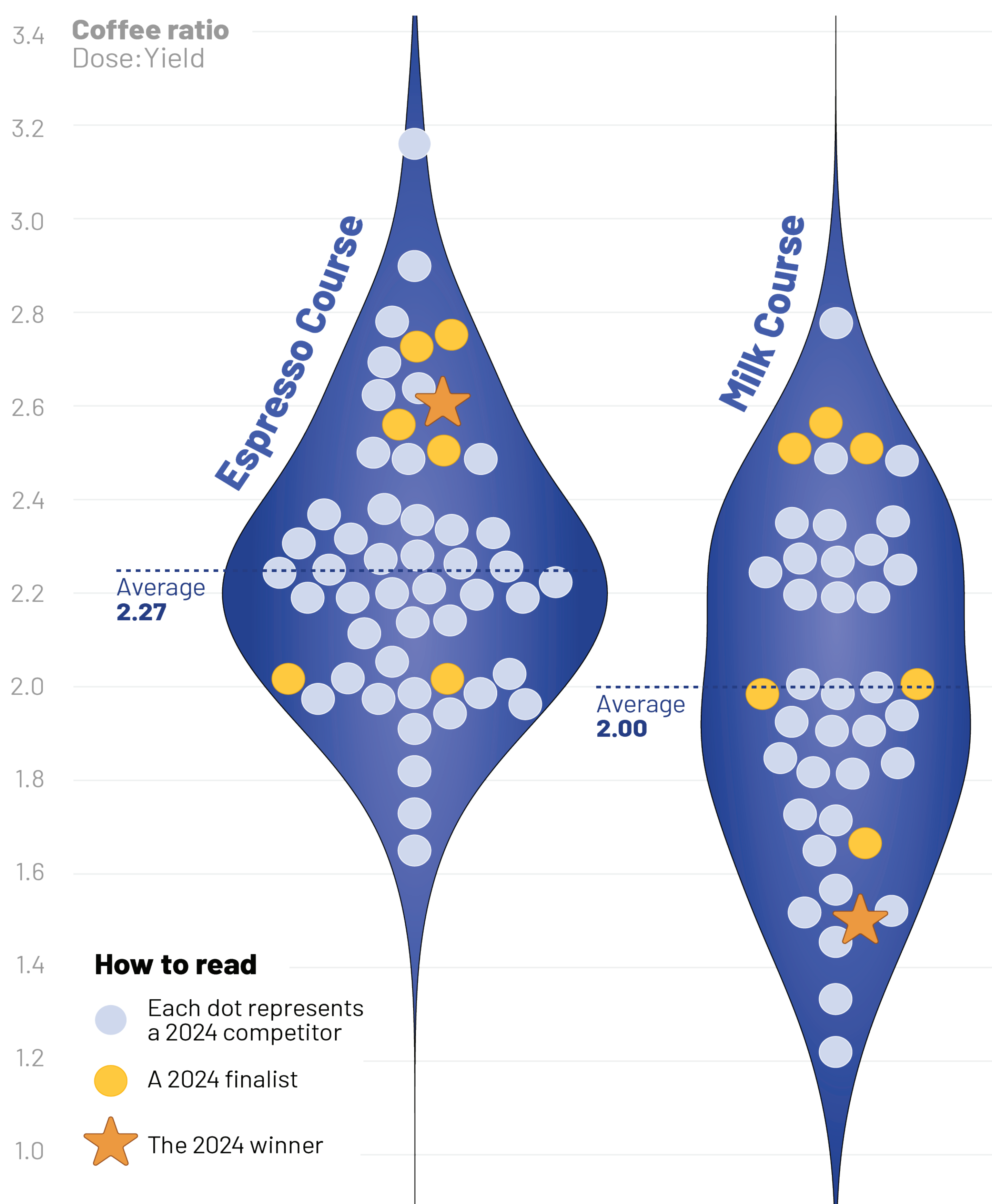
Beyond finalists and winners, the competition has been shaped by over 600 baristas over 25 years, with entire communities of producers, processors coaches, roasters, SCA Competition Bodies, and supporters behind them.

Different Purposes, Different Preferences, Different Ratios

Yield:dose (shot strength) for espresso and milk courses

This plot shows the different ratios of coffee yield to coffee dose (measured in grams) used by 2024 competitors to prepare their espressos for espresso and milk courses. Known as “violin plots,” each plot shows the overall distribution of the competitors’ ratios, with individual competitors as dots, finalists as yellow dots, and the 2024 World Barista Champion—Mikael Jasin, representing their Competition Body Indonesia—as an orange star.

The vertical Y axis represents espresso strength: dots towards the top of the visual represent more diluted shots, while lower dots indicate a more concentrated recipe. As you might expect, competitors use a wider variety of espresso recipes when preparing their milk beverages: the milk used, the way the milk was prepared, and the final volume of the milk drink are all important factors that influence a chosen espresso recipe. We find the diversity shot strengths interesting: what factors do you think drive competitors to use more or less concentrated shots?



The Origins of Competition Coffees

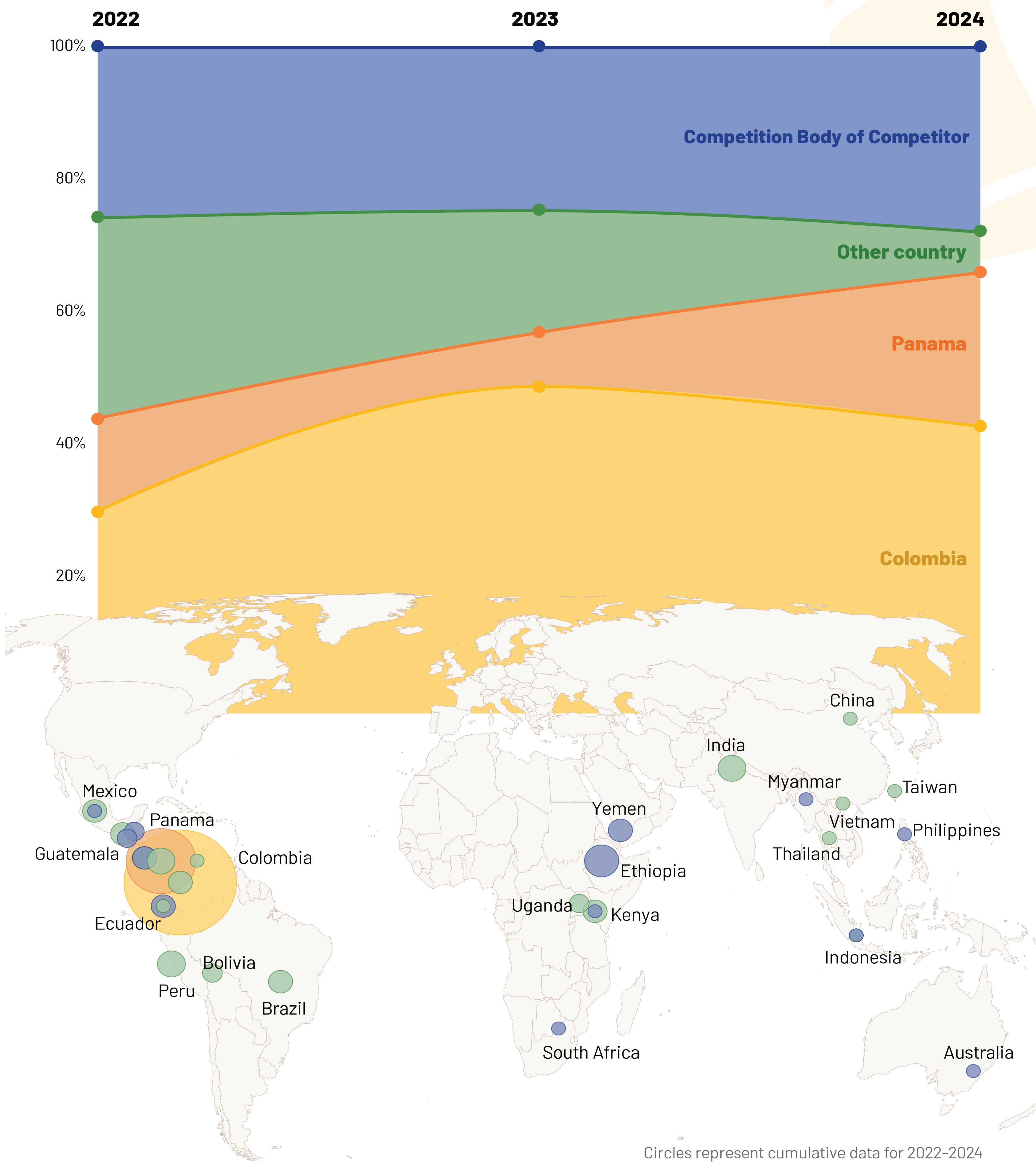
Tracking the origin of coffees presented 2022-2024

This visualization offers a high-level view of the geographic origin of coffees used in the WBC from 2022 to 2024.

The area chart shows that around 25% of the coffees presented at the WBC came from the same country as the competition body that a competitor represented (blue section). This appears to have increased in 2024: might it continue to increase in coming years?

In recent years, many competitors have chosen to showcase coffees from Colombia and Panama (tracked separately in the area chart), significantly decreasing the presence of other coffee origins on the competition stage.

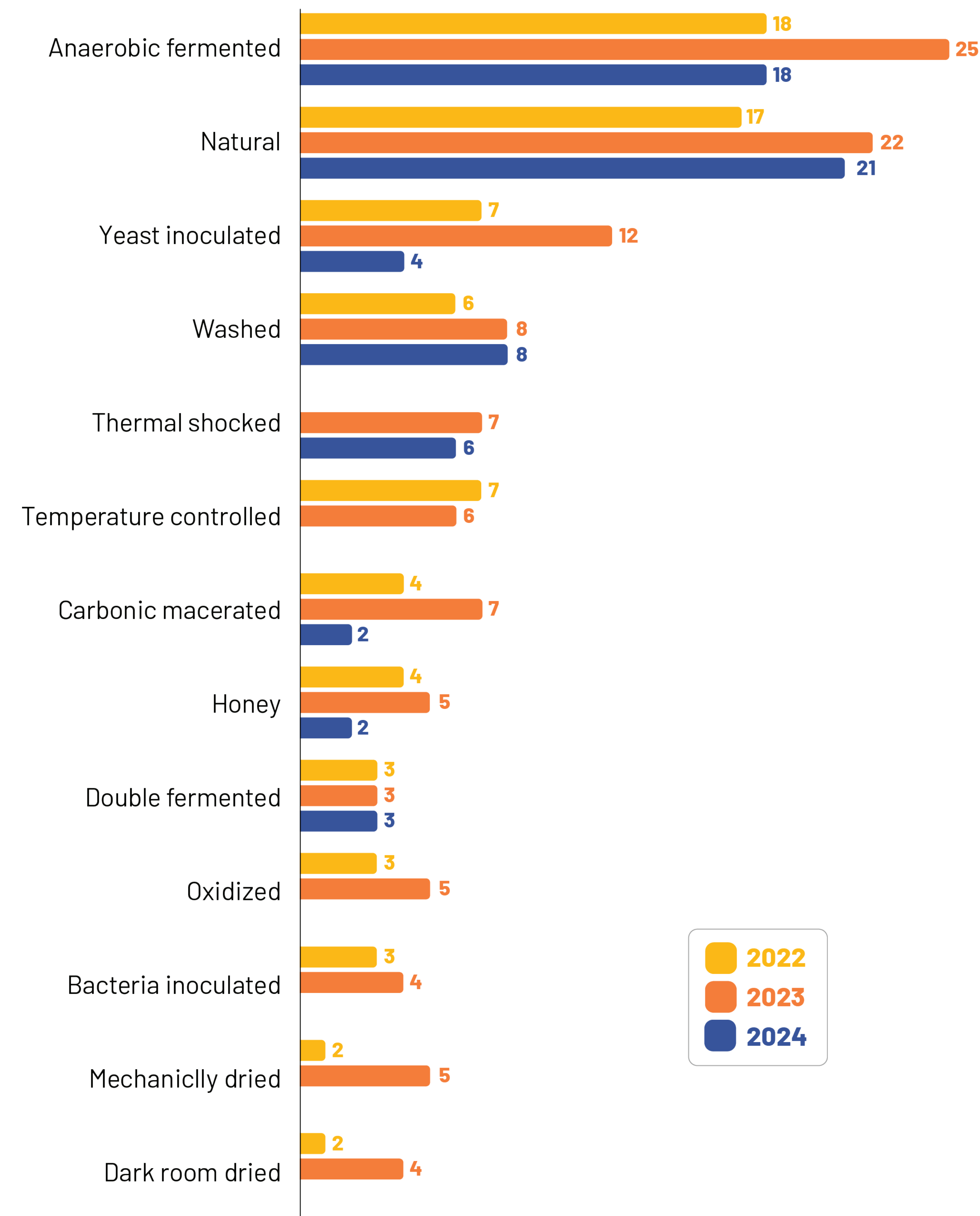
With 25 years of the WBC behind us, we know that this visual is only a small snapshot of the ever-evolving coffee trends. We're interested to see how competitors continue to find innovative ways to connect with expert coffee producers worldwide.



Circles represent cumulative data for 2022-2024

A Glimpse of the Processing Revolution

Coffee processing, as described by competitors (2022-2024)



In this visual, we tracked how WBC competitors described the coffee processing method of their competition coffee(s) from 2022 to 2024. Because many processing terms don't have universal or standard definitions, we focused on reflecting the competitors' own vocabulary, showcasing the rich and evolving language used to describe different methods. These ranged from traditional processing methods ("washed," "natural") to newer innovations, like "dark room dried" or "thermal shocked."

From the vast number of processing methods described, we identified the thirteen most common descriptors, tracking their frequency each year. We see that many descriptors fluctuate in popularity, with some growing between 2022 and 2023, before disappearing in 2024. What do you think drives the shifting popularity of trending processing terms—which often represent substantially different methods—from year to year?

Embracing Coffee's Genetic Diversity

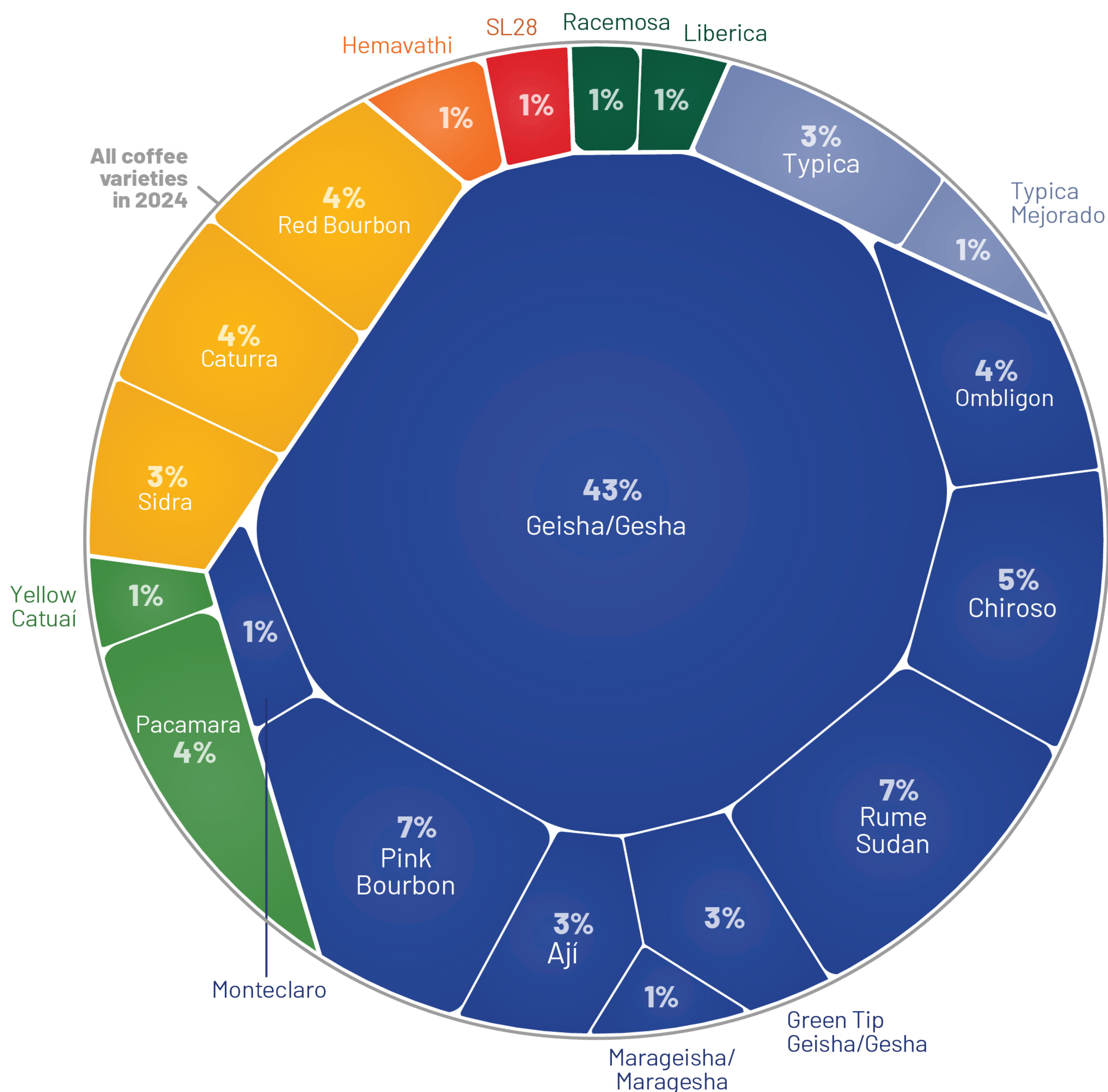
Coffee varieties and species, as described by competitors

In this chart, we tracked the coffee varieties and species presented at WBC between 2022 and 2024, as described by competitors. The size of each cell represents how frequently each arabica variety or non-arabica species was mentioned.

You'll see that, while Geisha/Gesha was the most popular variety presented by competitors at 43% of mentions, there's remarkable genetic diversity on the world stage. Competitors used language ranging from highly specific terms like "Green Tip Geisha" to the more nebulously defined "Pink Bourbon."

The green cells at the top of the circle show two non-arabica species—Racemosa and Liberica—representing just 2% of mentions during this period.

As the processing revolution expands our understanding of flavor potential, will competitors embrace even greater diversity in their coffee choices? Could a wider range of varieties and species gain prominence, especially as competitors continue sourcing?



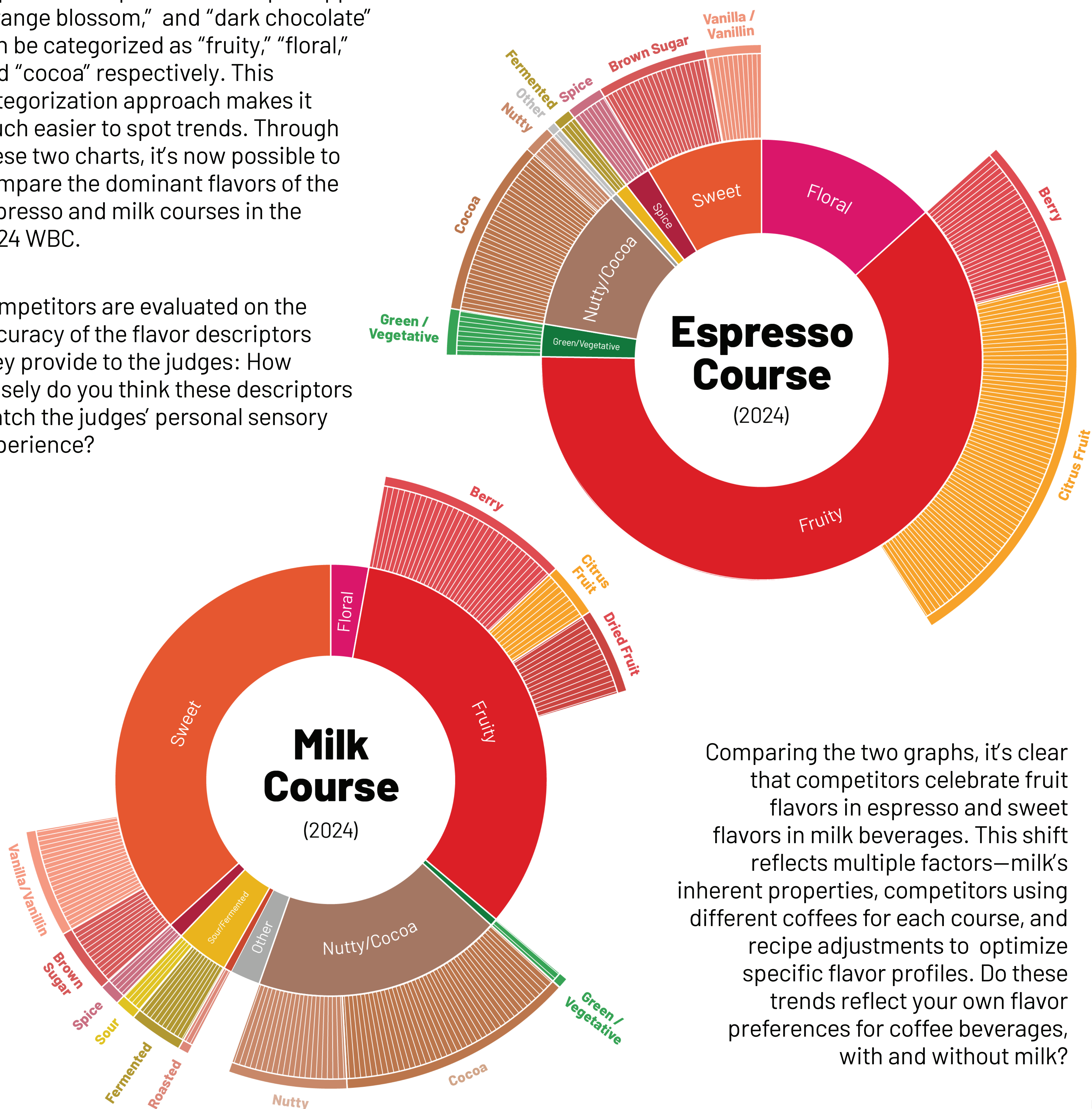
Capturing Flavor Complexity

Exploring flavor descriptors through CVA terms

These two sunburst charts, modelled on the Coffee Taster’s Flavor Wheel, show the frequency of flavor descriptors stated by 2024 competitors during their espresso and milk courses. Using the CVA Descriptive Assessment CATA boxes to categorize the descriptors, each segment represents a flavor category or sub-category from the Flavor Wheel. The size of each segment reflects how frequently a descriptor was used—the larger the segment, the more times a flavor was mentioned.

Popular descriptors such as “pineapple,” “orange blossom,” and “dark chocolate” can be categorized as “fruity,” “floral,” and “cocoa” respectively. This categorization approach makes it much easier to spot trends. Through these two charts, it’s now possible to compare the dominant flavors of the espresso and milk courses in the 2024 WBC.

Competitors are evaluated on the accuracy of the flavor descriptors they provide to the judges: How closely do you think these descriptors match the judges’ personal sensory experience?



Comparing the two graphs, it’s clear that competitors celebrate fruit flavors in espresso and sweet flavors in milk beverages. This shift reflects multiple factors—milk’s inherent properties, competitors using different coffees for each course, and recipe adjustments to optimize specific flavor profiles. Do these trends reflect your own flavor preferences for coffee beverages, with and without milk?

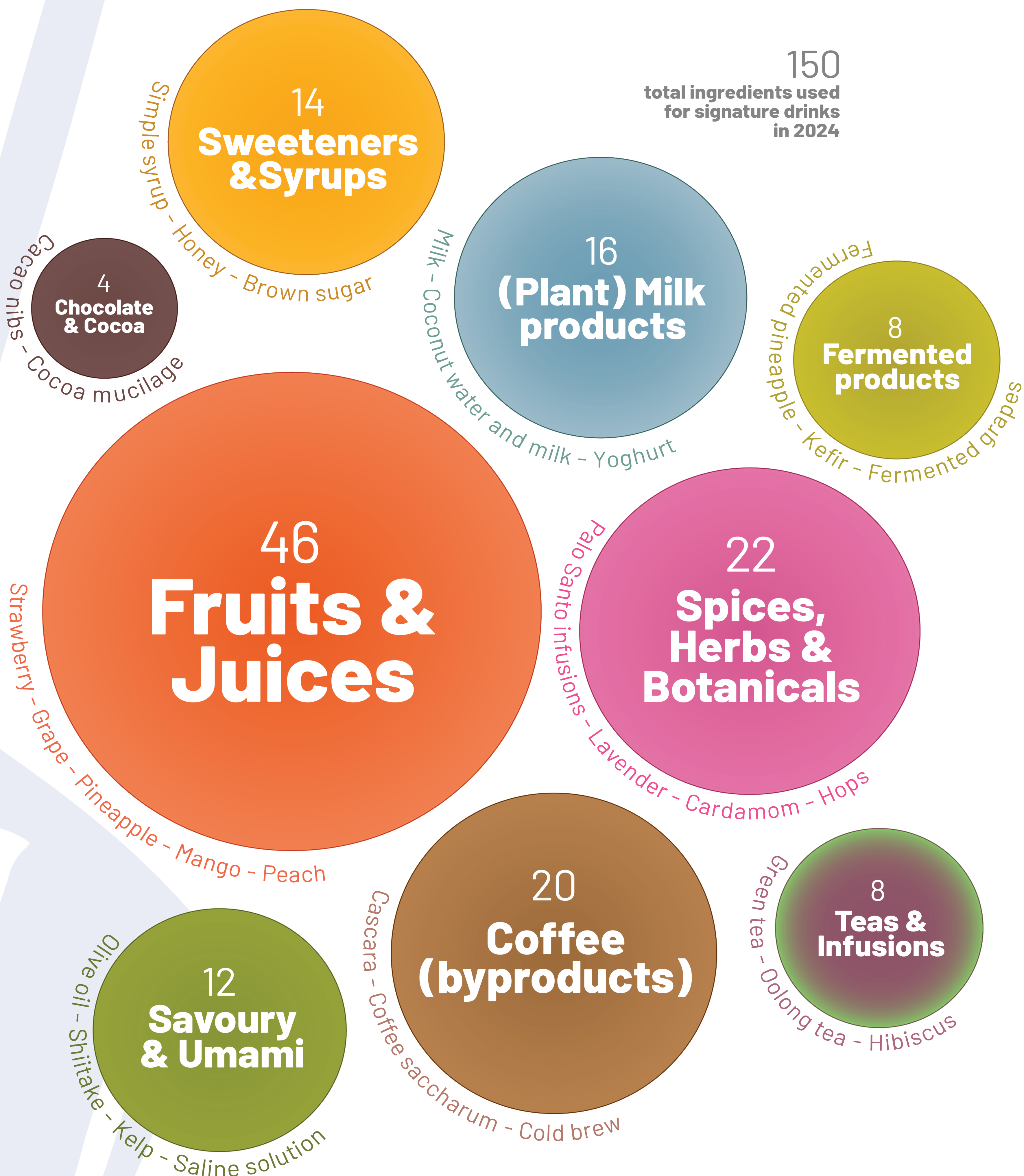
Signature Beverages, Signature Ingredients

A visual representation of signature beverage ingredients

The signature beverage course is a key part of any competitor's routine: it allows them to showcase extra skills, tell a more complex story, and stand out. Ingredients often carry sentimental or symbolic meaning and contribute fun textures or interesting flavors.

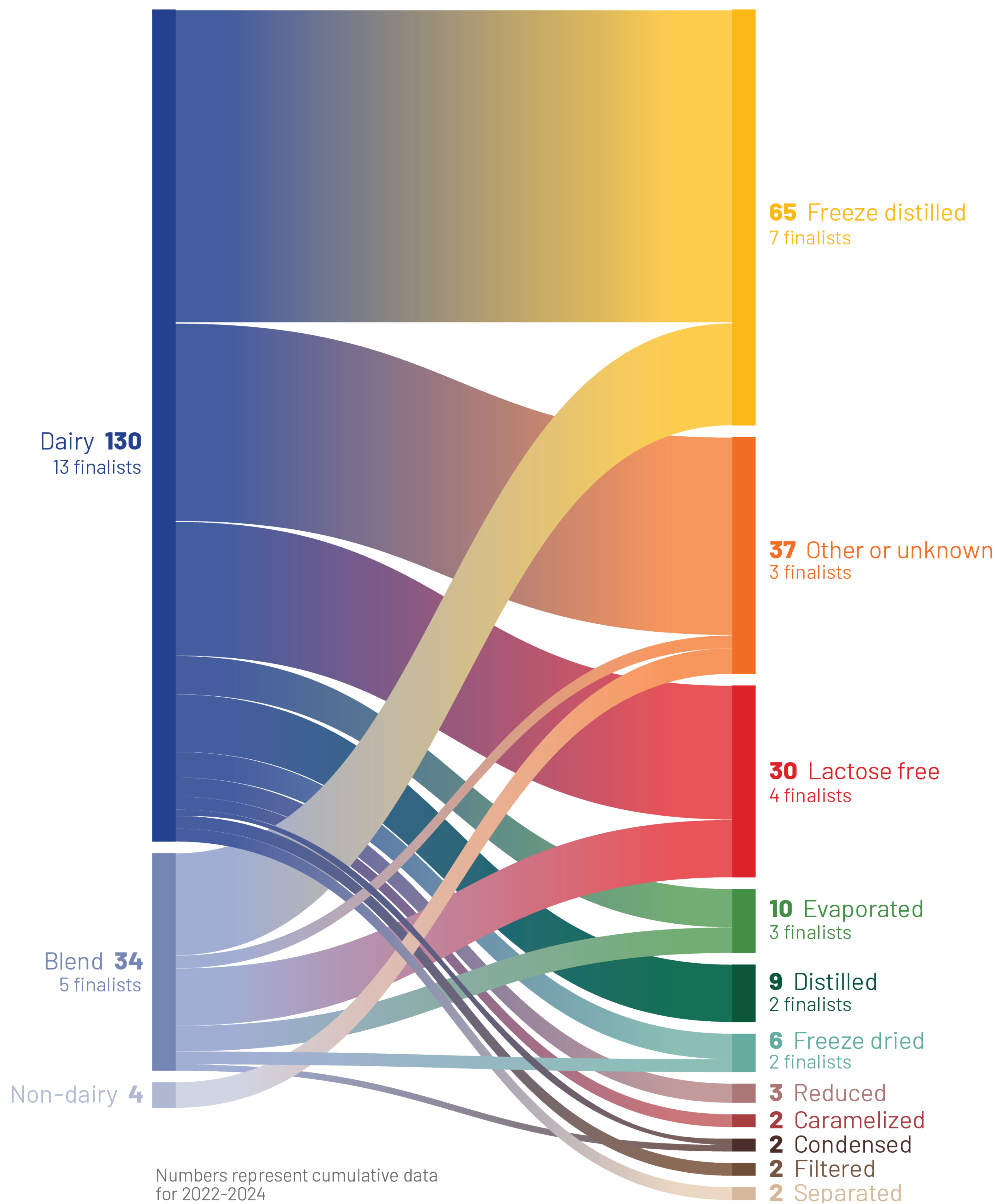
This bubble chart shows the frequency of different ingredient types used in competitors' 2024 signature drinks.

Each bubble represents an ingredient cluster, with its size indicating how often that type was used. Around each bubble, we've highlighted a few specific ingredients that either appeared frequently or are especially illustrative of the category. What ingredients feel unexpected to you, and why? Think about signature beverages you've seen recently—are there any types you expect to see on this year's stage?



Not Just Coffee Processing

Tracking trends in milk types and milk processing (2022-2024)



This Sankey diagram shows the relationship between the types of milk competitors used and how they prepared it for their milk beverage course, aggregated across the 2022-2024 competitions. The width of each flow represents how many competitors paired a certain milk (left) with a specific process (right).

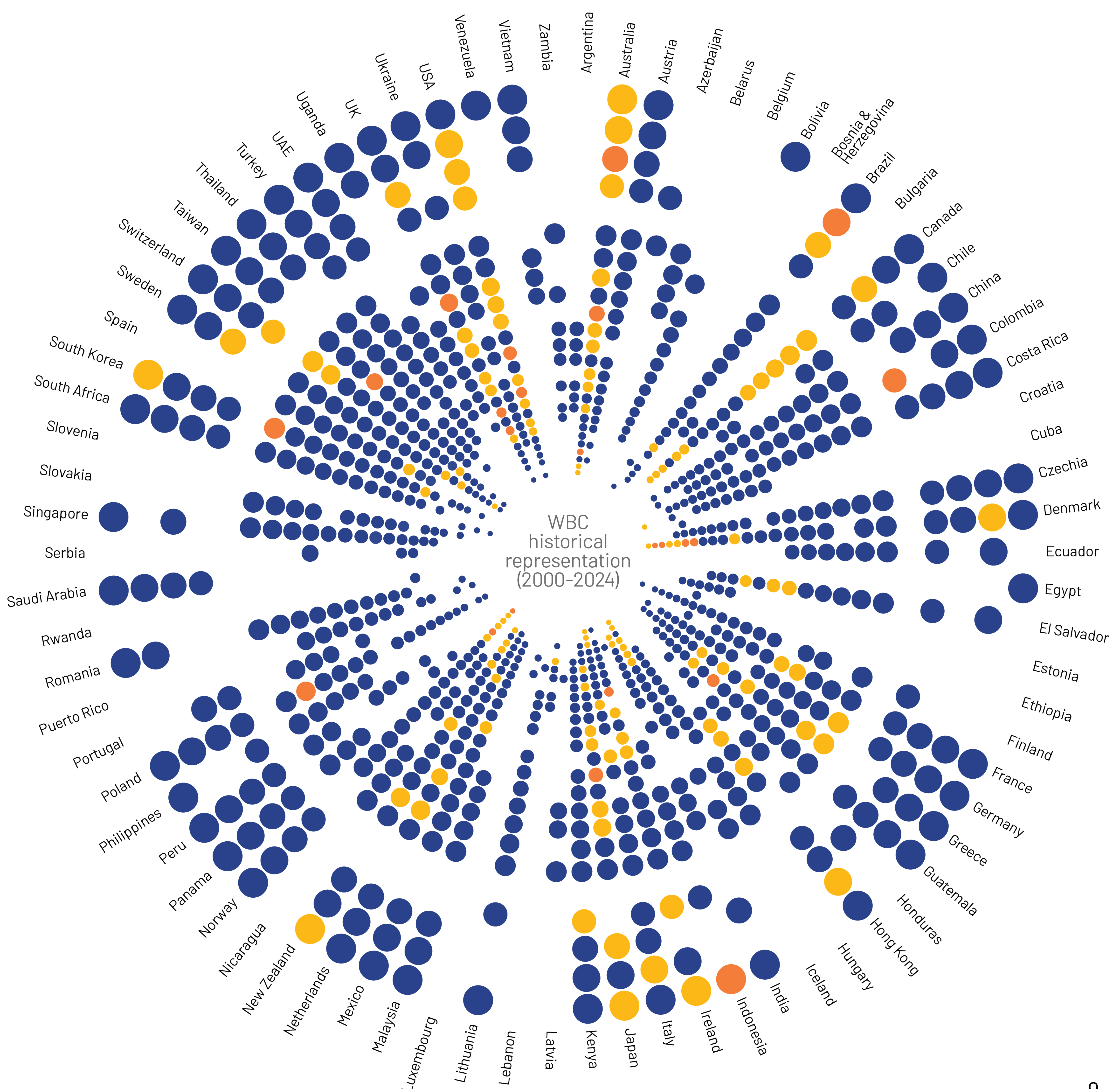
While dairy milk was by far the most common choice, WBC rules only allowed non-dairy milks starting in 2023, and competitors often adopt new opportunities gradually. Trends in milk preparation also reflect the “success” cycle on stage. Because this visual is cumulative, we can’t see trends over time—have you noticed any new milk techniques that might appear in upcoming competitions?

WBC: A Global Constellation

Tracking participation over 25 years of WBC

This visualization shows 25 years of WBC participation from 2000 to 2024, with each concentric ring representing a year—like the rings of a tree trunk. The outer ring lists competition bodies; follow a competition body's dot from 2024 to 2000 to see its participation over time. Missing dots indicate years without representation, yellow dots highlight finalists and orange dots represent winners.

Together, these connecting dots create a constellation of global coffee expertise, celebrating the wide participation that has made WBC a truly international event.



WBC Continues Evolving

The World Barista Championship (WBC) has reflected and spurred innovation across the entire coffee sector over its 25-year history. Competitors on the WBC stage have introduced entirely new technology and utilized existing techniques or tools in novel ways.

Some of these advances become trends that inspire coffee professionals beyond the stage. For example, we see coffee producers and processors applying and refining coffee fermentation techniques that have been successful in previous years, such as “carbonic maceration.” We see coffee shops adopting coffee equipment that they first saw on the WBC stage. Do you recall a moment when you witnessed new technology on stage and later implemented it in your own practice? As the coffee sector collectively learns from world-class innovation, we’re excited about seeing a broad diversity of coffee origins, species, and varieties showcased in the next 25 years.

Amidst all these exciting possibilities, however, we are reminded that, sometimes, tried and true approaches are both reliable and successful. Natural fermentation, the oldest coffee processing method in the world remains the second most frequently mentioned processing descriptor used in the past three years. As competitors embrace both recent innovations and coffee’s rich traditions, we’re reminded that preferences are diverse.

The WBC is a truly global event and the data shared in this report is just a small snapshot into the rich history of this competition. Data captures some of what’s been shared on stage, but it’s important to remember that each 15-minute performance represents the collaborative efforts of coffee professionals from across the entire value chain. Numerous people and organizations—volunteers, producers, roasters, support teams, and competition bodies—make participation possible and drive the entire sector forward.

As we reflect on the first 25-years, what is the most memorable moment from WBC’s history for you? And, looking forward what stories do you hope to see showcased in future?