

2026 PCA AUSTRALIA

LATTE ART COMPETITION

Official Schedule and Competition Rules

29 October 2026

Sanremo Showroom, 77 Murphy Street, Richmond VIC 3121

COMPETITION DAY SCHEDULE

7:30 am to 8:30 am	PCA staff only. Staff, MC, photographers and judges arrive. MC reviews the script and event rundown. Volunteers are assigned and briefed. Photographers confirm the shooting plan. The head judge tests the equipment.
8:00 am to 8:15 am	Judges calibration.
8:30 am to 9:00 am	Competitor check-in and live draw. Competitors sign in and draw their competition order. Odd numbers use the left station. Even numbers use the right station.
9:00 am to 9:30 am	Competitor briefing. The head judge explains the equipment, competition flow and espresso calibration. Judges score two sample cups. Competitor Q and A is limited to approximately 10 minutes. Official group photo follows.
9:30 am	Official opening. MC introduces sponsors, organisers and the judging panel.
9:30 am to 11:30 am	Opening Round. 32 competitors, 16 advance.
11:30 am to 12:15 pm	Lunch break.
12:15 pm to 12:30 pm	Lucky draw and sponsor acknowledgement.
12:30 pm to 1:30 pm	Round of 16. 16 competitors, 8 advance.
1:30 pm to 1:35 pm	Short break, lucky draw and sponsor acknowledgement.
1:35 pm to 2:10 pm	Quarter-finals. 8 competitors, 4 advance.
2:10 pm to 2:15 pm	Short break, lucky draw and sponsor acknowledgement.
2:15 pm to 2:45 pm	Semi-finals. Winners advance to the final. The other two competitors advance to the third-place round.
2:45 pm to 3:00 pm	Final and third-place round. First, second and third places are decided. Results are held until the announcement.
3:00 pm to 3:30 pm	Results and awards. Judge certificates, sponsor gifts and thank-you packages are presented. Photos follow, then cleanup and setup for the next day's Brewers Competition.

Each match includes 3 minutes of pouring, 1 minute of voting and up to 3 minutes of judging. Three judges are selected at random for each match from Caleb, Amy, Victor and Jodie.

COMPETITION RULES

Rule 1. Official setup and check-in

The competition uses the designated PCA 300 ml competition cup. All patterns must be created by Free Pour, using direct pouring without etching.

- Official milk is Riverina Fresh Full Cream.
- Official coffee is V5 Coffee, The Major Blend.
- Official espresso machines are two Sanremo D8 PRO 2GRP BLACK machines.
- Official grinders are two Fiorenzato F64 EVO BLACK grinders.
- The organiser conducts a live draw at check-in to determine performance order.
- Odd numbers use the left station. Even numbers use the right station.
- Competitors must perform when called by the MC.
- The organiser or MC briefs competitors on venue rules, equipment operation and movement flow.
- Each competitor must arrive and sign in 30 minutes before their scheduled start time.
- Non-official beans and milk are prohibited inside the venue during competition.
- Once the competitor list is published, competitors may purchase the official beans and milk for practice.

Rule 2. Performance time

The MC starts the timer. Both competitors perform simultaneously and must complete their work within 3 minutes.

- Competitors may produce one or more cups during the 3-minute period.
- The final judging cup must be placed on the designated table before time expires.
- Scoring begins immediately when time expires.

Rule 3. Timing and equipment faults

- The head judge may pause or stop the timer if an official machine or grinder malfunctions.
- The MC gives time reminders at 1 minute, 30 seconds and 15 seconds remaining.

COMPETITION RULES

Rule 4. Design repetition

A competitor may use the same design no more than twice during the competition. A third use disqualifies the competitor from advancing.

Designs are compared by their main subject and technique. Small posture changes or added and removed decorative elements still count as the same design.

- A flying horse sitting or standing is the same design.
- A single-wing or double-wing Pegasus is the same design.
- A sitting or walking camel is the same design.
- Adding or removing dots, clouds, suns or hearts does not create a new design.
- A standing rooster and a flying rooster are different designs.
- A Native American portrait and an eagle-headed Native American design are different designs.

Rule 5. Scoring system

Three judges are selected at random for each match from Caleb, Amy, Victor and Jodie. Each panel includes one head judge and two judges.

- Completeness of the pattern.
- Colour contrast.
- Placement of the pattern.
- Creativity and difficulty.
- Bar workflow, used only when the first four categories are tied.
- Heart, Tulip and Rosetta are basic Free Pour patterns for reference.
- More complex and creative patterns, including strong colour contrast, may receive higher scores.
- Competitors may choose Single Espresso, Double Shot or Double Ristretto. The chosen extraction may affect scoring.

COMPETITION RULES

Rule 6. Bar workflow

The head judge has one independent vote for bar workflow, based on the following points.

- Clean the portafilter before dosing.
- Flush the group head before locking in the portafilter.
- Start extraction immediately after locking in.
- Wipe the drip tray before placing cups.
- Use towels correctly.
- Purge and wipe the steam wand after frothing milk.
- Keep the bar tidy and organised.
- Present a clean cup and minimise waste.
- Complete all latte art within 3 minutes.

Rule 7. Disqualification

A competitor is disqualified if any of the following occurs.

- The 3-minute time limit is exceeded.
- The cup is filled to less than 80 percent of its capacity.
- The same design is used more than twice during the competition.

JUDGING PANEL

Caleb · Amy · Victor · Jodie

Three judges are selected at random for each match.