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## Business

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### Small business spotlight

## Roaster brews up new career

### Former cantor spreads passion for high-quality coffee to eateries

**Dale Buss / Special to The Detroit News**

Chazzano Coffee Roasters is a pursuit borne of passion for founder Frank Lanzkron-Tamarazo. And that's a major reason [business](#) has been exploding for the Ferndale-based coffee roaster, wholesaler and retailer during the last six months.

"I wake up every day with a smile on my face because this is truly a labor of love," said the 40-year-old Lanzkron-Tamarazo, who dispenses his home-crafted brews across the counter at Chazzano Coffees and sells them to a growing roster of local fine eateries, including Bacco Ristorante and the Oakland Hills Country Club.

"It's really an exalted hobby," he added -- one that he expects to yield about a half-million dollars in revenue this year.

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A lifelong coffee maven, Lanzkron-Tamarazo never could understand why fine restaurants didn't take the same care with their coffees as they do with wines because java often leaves the last impression with patrons. Coffee presents as many as 1,500 different flavor "profiles," he explains -- about double the possibilities in wine.

A good roaster can bring out notes of nuts, chocolate, berries and spices, just as vintners and sommeliers

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characterize wine. Most restaurants, Lanzkron-Tamarazo says, also make the mistake of importing their fine coffees, and time is the enemy of taste and texture.

Lanzkron-Tamarazo started out as a synagogue cantor. Then he began roasting coffee in his garage in Chicago 10 years ago, serving it there to highly appreciative friends and congregants. A friend subsequently suggested he establish a business around his increasingly time-consuming hobby.

"He told me, 'I can't imagine you as an old cantor, but I can imagine you as an old coffee roaster,' " Lanzkron-Tamarazo recalled.

He started out selling 12-pound bags of hand-roasted coffee via mail order. Lanzkron-Tamarazo jumped into coffee full-time after he moved to Michigan in late 2008, winning about 10 restaurant accounts and then, after chance introductions to the proprietors, landing his first prestige client: Bacco in Southfield.

Now, daily he is roasting dozens of pounds of coffee and espresso -- just 12 pounds carefully at a time -- and dispensing it throughout Metro Detroit along with advice on how to use the tony French-press method to brew it. To ensure his pledge that his coffee is the highest quality that restaurants can get, Lanzkron-Tamarazo goes to his customers and tries it himself every couple of weeks and sends "spies" to make sure it's being brewed correctly.

It didn't take Chazzano long to win over the Rugby

Grille at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham.

"I absolutely fell in love with his espresso," said Keith Schofield, the hotel's director of operations. "It's soulful, nurturing stuff."

Schofield also came to believe Lanzkron-Tamarazo's pitch about freshness. And serving various Chazzano brews to his customers, the operator says, fits the Townsend's growing efforts to buy locally. Patrons "are absolutely loving" the pricey brand, Schofield says. "There's no question it's something we're going to keep."

Opened in October, the Chazzano café in Ferndale is a natural extension of Lanzkron-Tamarazo's passion because he can spread his fine-coffee gospel to lots more people.

"I want it to be like Cheers," the fictional bar from the hit 1980s comedy television show, he says.

If someday Lanzkron-Tamarazo comes full circle vocationally, it'll likely be at the shop. "Employees and customers have been asking me," he says, "When are you going to sing for us" in the café? "Some day, I shall."

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