



table movement. In Seoul, the practice is especially vital – in 2010, a virus wiped out 80 to 90% of South Korea's bee population.

UBS was founded to revive the bee population, and the collective has since grown and now has farms at more than 20 different locations around the city – mostly in lush enclaves including rooftops and parks – with a total of about 150 hives. The organization's first official venue – a honey-themed café called Ape in Seoul's northern Jongno district – has also just opened.

Named after the Italian word for bee, Ape (rhymes with "happy") has given UBS focus. At the café, honey drips from sticky honeycombs into collecting pots, countless jars of the golden liquid are stacked on shelves and cute bee cartoons adorn badges and leaflets made by Eo, who is also a designer.

Lee is a professional barista, so he brings coffee expertise to Ape's drinks, most of which are fortified with honey supplied by UBS farms. He knocks up a cold latte with glorious glops of honey dripping from its top. "You can lick the glass, it's no problem," he says as he hands it over.

Not everyone is a fan. Commercial beekeepers have attempted to smear UBS online, filling website comment boxes with insults about "garbage honey". Eo responds by explaining that urban-produced honey is just as healthy and tasty as countryside-produced honey. "Many people worry about pollution," she says. "But when bees take nectar from flowers, they have a process of eating it and throwing it up again, via a sac inside their bodies. They do it for each other, like kissing. They filter pollution in their bodies, then humans eat the pure honey."

apeseoul.kr; urbanbeesseoul.com – *Jamie Fullerton*

Ape's honeycomb affogato is made up of a shot of espresso, raw honey and honeycomb.



Seoul

Living the hive life

The capital city's urban beekeeping scene gets buzzy with a new honey-themed café

TREND On the grassy roof terrace of an indistinct three-star hotel in central Seoul, Ji Hyeon Eo is walking within a few feet of thousands of bees, all buzzing around wooden hives painted in pastel shades. "Of course I've been stung before!" says Eo, who co-founded Urban Bees Seoul (UBS), a beekeeping collective, with her husband, Jae Hun Lee, and their friend Jin Park in 2013.

"My husband has had it worse," Eo continues as she replenishes the insects' drinking water, not bothering to roll down her coat sleeves for protection from their barbed stingers. She laughs and wafts an inquisitive bee away from her face. "He once got stung on his eyebrow and it puffed up to the size of a baseball."

Urban beekeeping has seen an uptick in recent years in cities such as New York and London alongside the burgeoning farm-to-



IMAGES: DANIEL DEYI