

Back to the future

The imposter syndrome and why the espresso machine manufacturer had to redefine its narrative to create a new category of equipment called Super Traditional.

When actor Jodie Foster was awarded an Oscar for her role in The Accused, she thought it was a fluke.

"I thought everybody would find out, and they'd take it back. They'd come to my house, knocking on the door: 'Excuse me, we meant to give that to someone else. That was going to Meryl Streep,'" Jodie said in a *60 minutes* interview.



The Eversys Cameo Super T machine integrates authenticity of taste with design aesthetics.

Lots of people have had an experience like Jodie's. The phenomenon is called imposter syndrome, a term coined by clinical psychologist Dr. Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes in the 70s. It's a mindset in which smart, successful people believe that they have fooled others into thinking they're more intelligent and competent than they really are.

THE STORY

When I attended my first coffee exhibition back in 2011 with Eversys, everyone was very complimentary about the performance of our espresso. However, we were also told that, as good as it was, it could not compete with the traditional world. But, for an automatic machine, it was amazing.

I was not quite sure what to make of this reaction. Were we truly good enough? Should we be satisfied with the comments and yet remain firmly confined within the realm of our 'automatic' world? Or could we improve and become a genuine contender, rise up the value chain, and be truly considered among the greats?

We did not want to feel like imposters, pretenders to a realm that would remain elusive, that could never be attained. And, as such, we developed a vision, a plan on how we could go, evolve from being an aspiring brand/product to becoming a market leader, part of the inner circle of coffee quality, accepted and respected by our peers.

THE MYTH

Myths are beliefs that have no real substance beyond established mores, customs, things people say. And, in specialty coffee, it is generally believed that, in order to make an authentic espresso, a person had to utilise an Italian-made semi-automatic machine.

And yet, when studying the actions of a seasoned barista, one could not fail but notice that a part from sensory, visual, taste, and quality control, the person merely pushed a defined sequence of buttons, and did not produce the beverage.

Beans in hopper. Grind button. Powder. Portafilter. Tamp. Machine-brew. Service. Milk frothing. Latte art - if and when required.

Myths, like songs, are not real even if some people believe in them...even for a short instant.

Picture yourself in a boat on a river with tangerine trees and marmalade skies. You travel on the long and winding road, working eight days a week listening to Sergeant Pepper, trying to not let anyone down while leaving yesterday behind, hoping for something to come together. You jump out of the mythical 'yellow submarine' and get back to the reality that, after all, this story is not about equipment... it is all about coffee.

THE MISSION

We began a journey of refining our espresso, analysed all the parameters that contributed to its quality and optimised them. The Eversys research and development team embarked on a mission towards in-cup excellence, and in search of espresso perfection. This included grinder control and precision, the brewing module and its various programmable components of infusion, pressure and temperature consistency and balance. To be able to compete with the traditional greats not only became a mission, it turned into an obsession. We worked with industry leaders and one of the key people we turned to was Australian Matt Perger. Matt had been an innovator in specialty coffee, had competed at international level but, the quality which appealed to us most, was his capacity to understand and evaluate complex technology and then convert them into simple programmable solutions. Matt was gifted with the discerning palate of a coffee geek as well as the logical mind of an engineer. Matt worked closely with our R&D team to help guide and marry our technology to the exact sensory demands of the world of specialty coffee.



The Enigma expands the space between super automatic and traditional machines.

From coffee techs, we had to become espresso nerds, talk the talk, and walk it. We learned words such as sensory, origin, and dialled in, and spent time studying the flavour wheel. We learned that 'papery' and 'petroleum' tastes were bad, whereas chocolate and maple syrup were good 'notes'.

THE OUTCOME

Once we had created this machine capable of producing fantastic coffee products, time and again, we began the journey of developing a vision for aesthetics, creating equipment that produced an incredible sensory experience of mouthfeel blended with visual relevance. Our team expanded beyond taste and into design and embarked on a mission to integrate authenticity of taste as well as aesthetics. An in-depth study of metals, colours, shapes, textures was initiated and that resulted in the development of a new range of machines called Cameo.

Metallic nuances, spectacular hues and shades followed an intuitive interface. Authenticity was preserved as function met art, form and substance, blended in harmony. Old prejudices vanished like a thief in the night, acceptance beckoned. The imposter syndrome was suddenly exposed as a fallacy, a myth that had been propagated by fear, ignorance, control.

Out of ashes arose Enigma, a new Eversys machine designed to decode the DNA of coffee. Equipped with a range of sensory attributes, we realised that we could no longer fit in the category of historical super automatic machines. Nor could we be, in absolute honesty, be coined a traditional machine. We had to redefine the narrative, create a new category of equipment which we called Super Traditional: 'Traditional' in sensory experience with the addition of 'Super', the technology that provides productivity, consistency, connectivity and, by eliminating a large part of the barista's 'factory' work... community.

The imposter syndrome was put to the sword, exposed as a mere myth.

Coffee is the music, the machine is the instrument, and the barista is the maestro.

"It's helpful to have some arrogance mixed with paranoia. If we were all paranoid, we'd never leave the house. If we were all arrogance, no one would want us to leave the house." - Chris Martin, Coldplay lead singer. B

For more information, visit www.eversys.com/en/