

My fifty years in Coffee and Tea

I am not the one in the family who remembers anniversaries and dates. That job was long ago taken over by my wife Helen, who was an important person in the business and who shared her life as a wife, mother of three daughters, librarian and archivist. It was her idea for me to write this document and I must say I got an enormous surprise when she produced a huge folder of archives which are the basis of what you are about to read. It only fell to me to find the relevant photos and remember what I had forgotten, because, basically I had not given more than a moment's thought to the whole story. I remembered incidents from time to time but never put the whole together. Enjoy.



I bought a whole set of coffee design clothing in the USA

It is 50 years since I entered the coffee industry, but the story starts well before then. After graduating as B.Commerce (Economics) in 1960 I worked for a year at CSR Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I spent four years travelling overseas – hitchhiking around Europe (1961), the United States including walking across the Grand Canyon (1962), from New York to Buenos Aires (1963), went down the Amazon from Pucallpa to Iquitos in Peru on a boat, and hitch-hiked from London via Persia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Burma, Thailand and Malaysia to Singapore in 1964..

My first coffee dealing.

In 1963 I took a boat from Buenos Aires to Vigo in Spain. When I got to Rio de Janeiro I walked off the boat and noticed that there was a small shop near the wharf with a coffee roasting machine in it. When I came back to the boat I bought 20 kg of coffee from the shop for just 6 cents per pound or 14 cents per kg. The price was much higher in other countries because Brazil had an export tax of \$50 per 60 kg bag. I wrapped the coffee in my sleeping bag hoping to sell it somewhere. I got rid of two kilos of coffee in Vigo, Spain for 18 shillings. I only paid 13 shillings and sixpence for 10 kilos so I was already ahead. I went about 60 miles in the afternoon and got stuck in Ourense. I exchanged 4 kilos of coffee for the train ticket and got off at Valladolid.

I was carrying the coffee in my sleeping bag supported on a paling and tied up with rope. I found a room for the night and when I woke up in the morning the muscle in my right arm, the arm that had been carrying the coffee, was unbelievably sore. I walked across the road from the hotel into a grocery shop determined to sell the coffee at any price he would give me. He gave me a dollar a kilo and I was very happy – it was more than enough for a train ticket to the border. This was a clear profit of 700% which would have been 1000% if I had bought the coffee for four pence a pound in Santos instead of sixpence in Rio de Janeiro. C'est la vie. I went to the railway station to get a ticket so that I could go to Paris.

When I returned to Australia, I took a job at CSR in Sydney again, but having stepped off the career ladder for four years, it was obvious my career was going nowhere. I was underqualified and inexperienced compared to everybody else my age on the ladder.

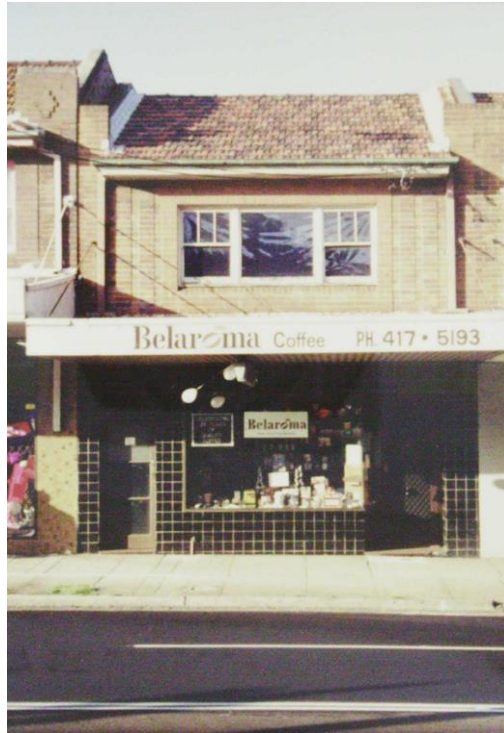
One of my jobs at CSR was to go to the Commonwealth Statistician and get some information. I was bored as hell doing this and used to bribe myself with a marzipan bar from the Nut Shop on Wynyard ramp. One day I met the owner, Paul Mendels, and asked him if he would supply me with chocolates if I opened a shop in Chatswood. He replied that I would be better off selling coffee. When I went to the CW Statistician I checked to see two things – if coffee was a growth industry and the import price for Kenya coffee which was 1/10 per pound. I ducked into David Jones food hall in George Street and saw that the retail price of Kenya coffee was 10 shillings and sixpence. I could see

that there was quite a difference. At lunchtime I went down to Cantarella Brothers (Vittoria Coffee) who had an office on the corner of Goulburn Street and Chinatown. I could speak Italian and went up the stairs and asked Orazio Cantarella if he would supply me with green coffee and he pushed me down the stairs. My immediate reaction was that this is an oligopoly and that nobody tells me I can't do something. The decision was made in a flash to enter the coffee industry.

The next Saturday I went to the Public Library and looked at every book that they had on coffee. I had two piles of books on the table and when I left that evening, I told them to leave the books there because I would be back the next morning to read the rest. There wasn't very much of real interest because people weren't writing about what I really wanted to know but I saw an advertisement for coffee roasters in Vienna and I wrote to Otto Swadlo asking for information. When the letter came back I saw that if I contacted Elder Smith in Melbourne they might have a roaster there because three had been sold to them. They told me that two of them had been bought by Simos Spanopolous who started Bravo coffee. I bought the third and went to see George Kepper, an Estonian man who worked for Repins Coffee which had a few coffee shops in the city.

We talked for a while and he agreed to supply me with raw coffee. I found an empty shop at 457 Penshurst Street, Willoughby and rented it for \$18 per week. In my naïveté I bought a machine to make gelato second hand so that I could have an income stream in summer when I imagined that sales of coffee would drop. I knew nothing. I made really good gelato. I had only seen it made once in Bar Riviera in Leichardt. I also sold French pates and chocolates.

I went to Melbourne where my brother Ray lived and he took me to Quist's Danish coffee shop in Little Collins Street where Mr. Matthes, the owner, showed me how to roast coffee. He roasted everything very dark and had a very busy shop. I well remember his advice that if the taxation department ever asked about the roasting loss, it was always above 20%.



The first shop – 457 Penshurst Street, East Roseville

George Kepper was supposed to come on the first day and show me how to roast coffee but he didn't turn up. I dropped my first batch of coffee into the roaster and roasted, knowing only that when I got near the end I should turn the heat down until I got the coffee colour I wanted. To my amazement the coffee was OK and I took \$17.95 on the first day.



The first bag was on the left and then the second and a bag for vacuum packaging much later.

I determined that the best way to advertise was to erect some changing signs which were attached to the back of my car and parked on Penshurst Street facing the oncoming traffic. At 3 o'clock, because the road was now a clearway, I had to move my car. The takings for the whole week were \$127. I was on my way.

I was fortunate to get some publicity in the Sydney Morning Herald with an article written by Jane Tenant. Soon after we were at a party and somebody asked, "Did you have to sleep with her to get the article?" My wife Helen, who was standing right next to me said, quick as a flash, "No, I did!" I also had an article from Cherry Ripe, a popular columnist at The Australian.

George Kepper had introduced me to the Melitta filter system and I sold Melitta filters and the filter paper and we already had a few stovetop espresso machines and a few other bits and pieces that I could source locally. I had no idea about blending and decided that as a marketing ploy I would use unblended coffee which was not common at all in those days. Everybody was selling blends of who knows what and the most popular one of all was Mocha/Kenya. I had no idea why but it received accolades as the best blend. I began to learn how to recognize beans from Ethiopia, the Mocha part, and Kenya and when I checked other coffee roasters blends, it was obvious that these two expensive beans were being heavily diluted with beans from cheaper sources. At the time I heard that Robert Timms himself, the man who owned Robert Timms coffee had once said, 'The best Colombian coffee comes from New Guinea.'

One of my favourite coffees was Kenya Peaberry roasted to espresso, and my first wholesale customer who bought it was Ken Stevenson who owned the Black Pussycat coffee shop in Archer Street, Chatswood, next to the police station.

The parting words from my boss at CSR, Keith Young, were that I couldn't work in an iron lung. What he didn't say was that I could work outside an iron lung and I did. Once I got going it was full steam ahead. I used to do my own customs clearances and go to the docks to pick up goods. I was in full training for the Australian Blue Arsed Fly Championship. I soon employed two women part-time to look after the shop while I raced around. I could pick up 60kg sacks of coffee in those days – no more. Soon after we were married I bought three sacks of Ethiopian coffee at auction for 6 cents per pound.

I was very ignorant and thought that the cheating ways of the coffee industry in describing Mocha Kenya coffee should stop. I was selling the real coffee when they were selling other stuff, like New Guinea X and Y grades. I complained to the government about the mislabelling and the Australian Coffee Association called a meeting for the industry to discuss new labelling requirements. I forget who was at the microphone but he asked the question, which was more or less, "Who was the bastard who reported this to the government?" I stayed silent. It was fairly obvious that many of my fellow

roasters, while proclaiming that they sold the highest quality, were a bunch of hypocrites and liars.

Soon after that Simos Spanopolous started Bravo coffee and he was very friendly even though I could learn little from him, because he was roasting Brazilian beans to a very light colour, for his Greek customers.

I didn't know anything about making espresso coffee so I bought an Astoria espresso machine, lever model, single group from Melbourne and I used to make coffee on Saturday mornings and give away cappuccinos and that is how I learnt about making coffee. There was a constant stream of well-known people including Harry Seidler (famous architect) who used to turn up every Saturday morning for a delicious cup of coffee. I used NG Wahgi A roasted to Caramel to make really great cappuccinos.

I wanted to expand the business and it was obvious that I needed wholesale customers. I liked the idea of wholesaling the filter paper method because it was obviously so good compared to electric percolators that everybody was using then. ASCO coffee held the agency for Melitta coffee filters but I managed to import direct from Melitta. The owner of ASCO was a German General Hermann Dressler from Hanover, near where Melitta was based and he had the agency and made it difficult to buy direct. Somehow I found that there were other manufacturers of filter paper in Europe and I ended up flying to Europe and going to Filtropa who were in Maastricht, Holland. I was to become their agent for several years. The trip gave me an opportunity to visit other coffee roasters and pick up ideas.

TEA

Early on I became interested in tea which I understood very little about. I paid a tea taster from Ceylon to explain it all. The only thing I remember is being told how important it was to taste the tea in the morning near a window so that the sun could shine on the surface of the tea and show the colours of the rainbow. I thought at the time that it was all mumbo-jumbo. It didn't make sense. It took decades before I realised that the tea tasters were just following blind tradition and had not been bright enough to recognize what was happening in front of their eyes – that fannings, very small leaf tea, was brewing much faster than large leaf tea.

I went to Bangalore in India and imported Tata-Finlay tea in packets. I had my own gift boxes made and imported Goenka Darjeeling tea – really good quality. Helen and I were invited to all the functions at the Indian Tea Board and had a lot of fun.

I was brought up on tea – there was hardly any coffee in Australia pre 1939 and really enjoyed a cup of black tea made with milk and sugar. That was pretty much the case for the whole British Commonwealth. The rest of the world seemed to drink green tea, mostly large leaf style but in Japan ground very fine as well.

LUCK AND GOOD FORTUNE

I have a general philosophy, that you make your own luck. In a practical sense this translates into knowing that mistakes are unavoidable but provided you make more good decisions than bad ones, you will end up in front. This meant that I was very trusting when it came to staff selection. I knew that at one time 43% of CVs for executives were false and misleading. What was I going to do? You had to take a plunge. References were often untrue and in some cases obviously written by the applicant. In any case they were useless. If a couple divorced, they would have given each other bad references but I was aware that second marriages often worked very well. I was not alone. I spoke to other business men and they all said the same thing – staff was the biggest problem.

In 1975 there was a big frost in Brazil and the coffee crop was almost wiped out. Denis Pople, who worked at ANGCO, New Guinea coffee importers, told me to buy a future contract for fifteen tons of coffee. The price went up around ten times before it dropped down again. All the big roasters had bought forward and were to some extent protected but the little ones were at the mercy of the market.

That was lucky. The business grew and grew and I wanted to develop vacuum packing for my coffee. I went to the Douwe Egbert factory in Utrecht, Holland and was taken through the factory. I asked what happened to the coffee aroma when the coffee was vacuum-packed and I was taken down to have lunch. When the door opened into the space where the vacuum pumps

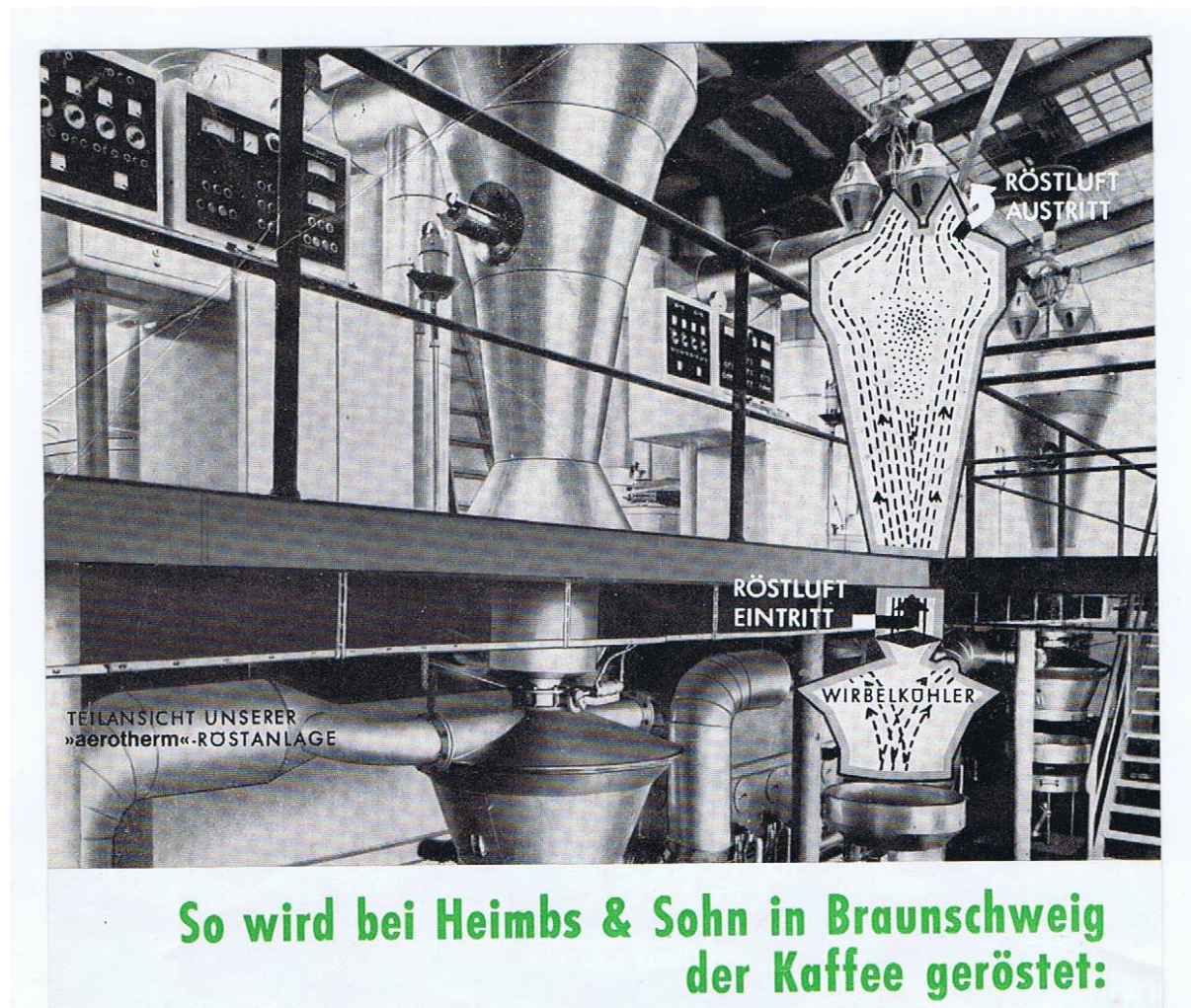
exhausted to atmosphere, there was a solid wall of coffee aroma. It was obvious that the aroma wasn't in the packet.

I watched at the little hotel I was in that they used 110 grams of coffee per batch, compared to 70g in Australia, in a Bravilor (Dutch) machine, which used hotter water than the Cona machines that were popular in Australia. No wonder the coffee was lousy at home. I went to the ANUGA fair in Cologne and saw all the possibilities. There were not many alternatives and so I ended up buying a KOMET vacuum packing machine from Germany and special bags for packing the coffee in retail packs. I was also vacuum packing coffee for Jens Juhl who was Danish and had started a company called Danbrew selling 70 g sachets of coffee to offices with a free loan Bardeau machine. It was not a very good machine and I started to get interested in the technology and brewing coffee at the right temperature. At some point I came across Technivorm, a Dutch company run by Gerard Smit who dedicated himself to brewing perfect coffee. I became the Australian agent for a while. I went to the factory often and had a great welcome. They always put out the Australian flag. I started trying to sell coffee to wholesale accounts and I always remember going to a big hotel in Williams Street, Sydney. I left a sample with the barman who made the coffee and came back a few days later and was told that I didn't get the account. "How did you determine which one as the best?"

"I put both coffees on the coffee machine and left it on the warming plate for a day and the other one tasted better." Unbelievable. It just went to show how ignorant people were about coffee.

In 1961 and 1964 I had travelled to almost every European country and I loved going back. I was very familiar with all the cities and enjoyed meeting coffee roasters everywhere. They seemed happy to meet me and I learnt a lot as they openly discussed what they were doing with no fear of competition from someone who came from so far away. I went to a coffee roaster in Hamburg who used a Lurgi Aerotherm coffee roaster which could roast coffee in 90 seconds. Unbelievable. I was becoming aware that there were many

ways to skin the cat. This is an advertisement for the Lurgi roaster.



I went to Oslo to meet Terje Tranberg who was the coffee specialist in the largest Norwegian coffee company. He took me to meet the Golden tongue – the man who had the best coffee palate in Norway. I always remember Terje’s comment when we were discussing the best coffee. He said, “The best coffee comes from the company where the owner stands on the roof and shouts loudest.” Wisdom indeed.

I went to the Probat coffee roaster factory and a small company in Belgium that had developed a way of improving the Italian form fill and seal machine that it had which couldn’t get the oxygen level low enough. The Northern Europeans were very suspicious of Italian machines because they thought the Italians could not be trusted to tell the truth when it came to oxygen levels. They were right. The Italians made claims about the oxygen level

achieved which were lies. It is impossible to tell if your packaging is up to standard unless you have an oxygen meter - a tool for serious coffee roasters.

I ended up going to Milan to visit Goglio Luigi who had developed the valve on coffee bags. I went to the Milan Coffee Fair many times to see all the machine manufacturers and ended up buying coffee grinders from Anfim which were excellent quality. It was always my policy to go to see the manufacturers in their own premises where I could learn so much more. I went to the grinder company in Turin, ICO Perfex who made the world's best coffee grinders including refrigerated ones. I went to Munich to see a coffee roaster who had developed the technique of dropping freshly roasted coffee beans into a stream of frozen carbon dioxide to make the *Magenfreundlich* – stomach friendly coffee.

At weekends I made sure that I was in a city where they had a large second hand market where I could buy old antique coffee machines which I had started collecting. If I was in Paris I bought a magazine *Le Collectionneur* which showed where all the markets for bric-a-brac were in Paris that weekend as well as all over France. I stayed at the Hotel Terminus Est, just across the road from the Gare de l'Est. They once told me that I had stayed there 55 times and I stayed at other hotels too.

I had a Eurail pass and used to go everywhere in search of antiques for my antique collection which was now growing and growing. In Germany I bought a magazine *Der Troedler* which told me where all the markets were in Germany. Every time I went to Europe I made sure that I could look for new coffee antiques and I knew when all the 'brocante' markets were on in Italy. For instance the last Sunday of every month in Milan along the docks of the old canal for a kilometre on both sides, there was a huge market for buying old coffee machines and old coffee books and other bric-a-brac. At another time there were markets in other cities in rotation. I always found it so exciting to buy a new treasure or something that I had never seen before. I was good friends with Ambrogio Fumagalli who lived in Milan and who had a large collection of Italian coffee antiques.

Early 1980s

Earl Grey Tea.

It had been a mystery to the tea trade how Earl Grey Tea had been discovered. The most common explanation was that the Chinese invented it using lemongrass. This did not ring true as I had never seen Chinese Earl Grey tea. I went to an Italian exhibition in Sydney and saw a man selling Bergamotto liqueur. It was wonderful. He explained that the flavour came from the Bergamotto – a citron which grew on the coast of Calabria right next to the big toe of Italy. He mentioned that every year the Jews came to buy it once a year. I knew immediately that it must be the Etrog. When I got home I looked in the Jewish Encyclopaedia and found that it was originally grown in Turkey and Corfu which had been the home for the British Ionian Fleet in the 1840s at the time when Earl Grey had been the British Colonial Secretary. Problem solved.

After going to the G.W. Barth factory near Stuttgart in Germany, I installed a Barth 20kg roaster into the Peshurst Street shop. Beautiful roaster. No heat on the drum – only hot air into the drum. George Kepper was helping me roast coffee on a part time basis. He was a great help. I always remember him telling me that you could tell if the filter paper had been washed in cold water or hot water. You got a cleaner flavour when it was washed with hot water.



George Kepper with the Barth Menadino 20Kg roaster – 'A beauty'.

I made sure that the coffee business kept growing all the time and soon I was using the back of the Penshurst Street premises for packing. It was not long before I outgrew the premises and took a small factory unit in Brookvale which I used to store stock. I did not roast there. When I was in Denmark I met an English man who was married to the owner of S and K coffee grinders which were a different type to the normal flat blade grinders made in Italy. They were conical grinders, the same as Quists used in Melbourne and also Myers – they ground the coffee very evenly and because of the slow rotation and large surface area of the blades, ground very cool. Apparently there had been a chain of small coffee roasters in Denmark which had closed down and I was shown about 20 x 5 kg coffee roasters and 2 x 12 kg probate coffee roasters which had been left in a warehouse.



I bought the lot and transported them to Brookvale where I had to open a second warehouse to store them. You make your own luck. I ended up selling some and giving some to others on the basis that I would sell them green coffee. My experience with doing that confirmed my impression that it was not easy to find trustworthy people in general. Practically everybody broke the

agreements and cheated. For some people, their greed overcame all morality. This was not to be my first experience of that.



Then I moved into some huge premises in Dee Why West. They were jerry built by a Yugoslav builder without council permission and used Besser bricks which, when they got wet, would sweat into the building. I built my own fluid bed coffee roaster there. I had been to see Mike Sivetz (a famous eccentric name in coffee - author and inventor) in Corvallis, Oregon. He had a fluid bed roaster which had a square chamber. I was always very thorough when it came to technology and asked Professor Tony Fane from the University of NSW for help in assessing it. He informed that a square roasting chamber was very unusual and convinced me to build my own round chamber fluid bed roaster. When I told Sivetz that I was going to build my own roaster he told me to 'get stuffed'.



First picture. The burner assembly was on the left hand side of picture and attached to the outlet side of a large, powerful blower with stainless impellers to withstand very high temperatures and blew the hot air into the roasting chamber – right hand side. The beans were blown up into the loading chamber on top of the roasting chamber. The cyclone to catch the husks was at the back.

Second picture. The temperature was controlled by a thermocouple which operated a large pneumatic gate valve which opened and dropped the coffee into the cooler underneath. All the white tubes are pneumatic lines. It looks messy but it worked and it made better coffee than the Sivetz roaster which cooled the roasted coffee with water sprayed inside the roasting drum. I can't remember it ever failing.

I organised all the engineering and it worked – it was a 30kg roaster but put out enormous volumes of air. I met a Yugoslav engineering Professor who was visiting Australia and he convinced me to put a suspended tube in the middle with a Chinaman's hat at the top so that I could control the bean flow better. It worked. There is always a risk with fluidised bed roasters that you will blow the beans out the top. This is a problem as they get lighter as they roast.

Meantime I had started playing around with a horizontal fluid bed roaster which was to become the basis of the Roller Roaster. I was able to make a prototype which roasted a small amount of coffee and have a glass front so that I could see the beans circulating. All the other fluid bed roasters in the world were very tall and in fact some of them were so tall that the German model made by Neuhaus Neotec was so large that you had to build a new tall building to install them. A friend of mine Don Ebert who was a retired chemical engineer and a mate from CSR came over one day and saw it and had the idea to redesign it into a commercial reality



My good friend Don Ebert and me

It worked brilliantly and except for the fact that we used a temperamental electric solenoid gate to drop the beans when they were ready, it would still be in production. We sold over 40 in Australia and internationally. One year we exhibited at ANUGA in Cologne, the coffee fair in Milan and the SCAA fair in Boston. Gustav Luhrs (GM Neuhaus Neotec) was amazed to see the roaster working and I went to see him at Neuhaus in Germany. Neuhaus was a very large company. Tchibo, a large German roaster also bought one. In Milan it was the center of a lot of attention. All the Italians were asking where the smoke had gone. I used to tell them that they were 400 Chinese inside eating

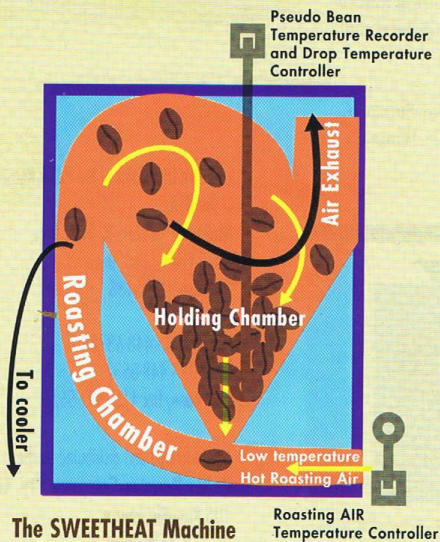
it. Once in Milan we were told that the biggest problem with the roaster was that it only had four buttons and that it needed to be more complicated. Welcome to the coffee world. The largest shop model we made roasted four kilos of coffee but we made a few 12 kg models..



THE ROLLER ROASTER™

THE COFFEE ROASTER WITH THE SWEETHEAT™ PROCESS

**THE TWO-CHAMBER COFFEE ROASTER
FOR SERIOUS USE WHICH OPENS UP
NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR
SINGLE AND MULTIPLE USERS**



The Roller Roaster - a low temperature hot air roaster which delivers an extremely consistent roast all the time. The Roller Roaster is the most professional small roaster available and offers advantages BOTH to the RETAIL ROASTER for use as a shop roaster and to the LARGE COFFEE ROASTER for use as a sophisticated sample roaster and blend maker.

SWEETHEAT™ PROCESS

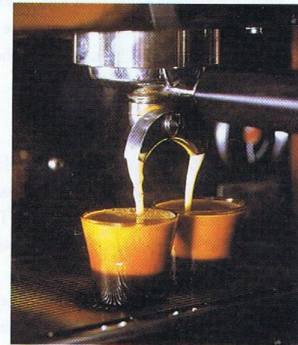
The fluidising effect of the process enables the temperature of the roasting air to be lower than in drum roasters. A built-in timer allows part of the heat to be shut off for a short time at the beginning of the roast resulting in a more gentle temperature change to the roasting air. Gentle absorption of the heat retains the goodness of the beans.

The aromas and flavors are not damaged by high heat and heat shock.

TWO CHAMBERS mean accurate temperature measurement. The Roller Roaster has a unique two-chamber system to roast the coffee. Most of the roasting air is used to elevate and circulate the beans on their roller roaster ride in the vertical chamber. This is where the greater part of the heat transfer takes place. The beans then settle down through the heated holding chamber to fall **in a controlled flow** into the air stream and continue on another roller roaster ride.

The temperature probe is in the holding chamber and transmits a temperature reading which accurately reflects the pseudo-bean temperature. Temperature measurement and roast control are extremely accurate. Very little of the temperature of the the roasting air is measured. Single chamber roasters have more turbulent roasting air in the roasting chamber and the pseudo-bean temperature reading is less accurate, if there is a thermocouple to measure it.

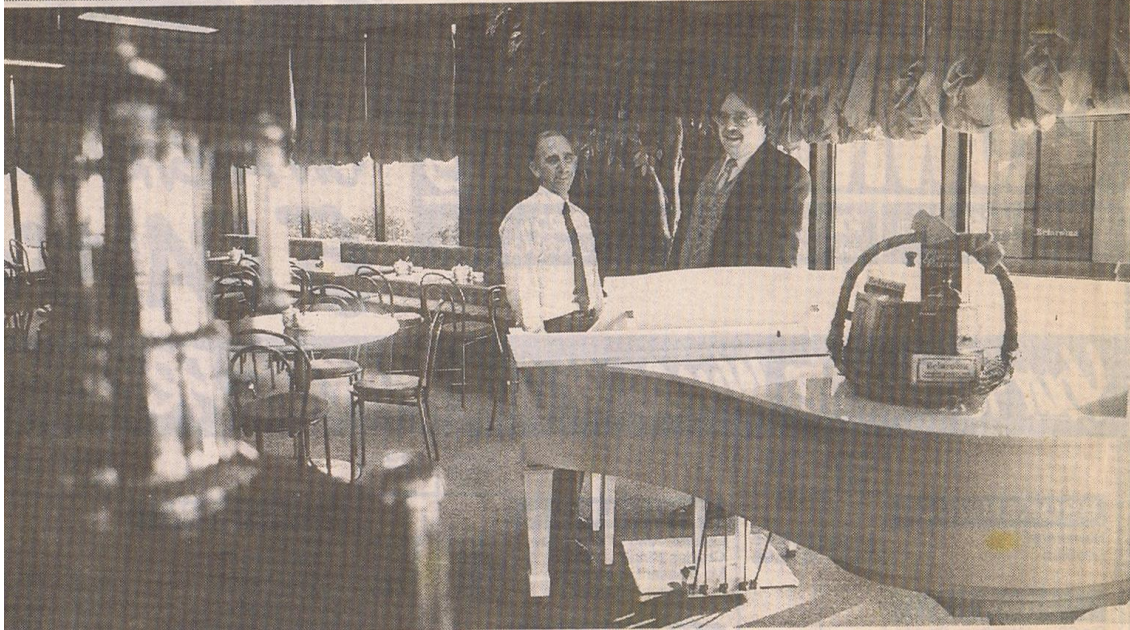
Measuring a combination of tumbling and/or agitated beans and the turbulent air around them is a problem shared by all single chamber roasters whether drum or fluid-bed. *How much of the pseudo-bean temperature do they measure ?*



**For FRESHNESS and REPRODUCIBLE RESULTS there is ONE solution,
the ROLLER ROASTER, the roasting machine with the BUILT-IN EXPERTISE.**

NST 28/8/92

NORTH SHORE SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS



Manager Tony Martin, left, and owner Ian Bersten, right, in the Belaroma cafe at Lindfield, a finalist in the Outstanding Restaurant/Cafe category

Belaroma's bellissimo

HERE'S a hint of Vienna in the coffee-house atmosphere of the Belaroma cafe at Lindfield.

Perhaps that is why it is such a popular meeting place for North Shore people.

Bentwood-style chairs at the tables and balloon curtains at the windows create a simple but effective atmosphere and a pianist plays

grand piano on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings.

But if it is the ambience — and the Belaroma's reputation — that brings them in, it is the food that brings them back.

"We aim to provide good, wholesome food at reasonable prices," manager Tony Martin said.

Warm bagels heaped with pastrami, avocado and melted cheese or

are popular. The blackboard menu offers a fresh daily selection of homemade soup, schnitzel and pastas.

Then there are the desserts — bavaroise, fruit flans or bombe Alaska.

And, of course, there is the famous Belaroma coffee which is why many people enjoy lingering over a cup of short black, flat white or frothy

The cafe is open seven days a week.

During the day, many of the customers are residents and local business people.

On Friday and Saturday evenings, there are the pre and post-theatre crowds and on Sunday evenings after church, the supper crowd.

The Belaroma is at 303 Pacific

I then ventured into cafes, opening a small one in Lindfield on Pacific Highway followed by Macquarie Centre, then a larger one at Lindfield next to the first. I selected four young female graduates from a catering college to run it. Great decision. It was a roaring success. The large coffee shop in Lindfield proved to be a great success. There was light classical music with trios and a white grand piano. It was an attempt to create the best coffee shop south of Vienna. As well as attracting the sort of customers who would appreciate it, it also attracted large numbers of young people who thought they could sit on a free glass of water all night. Helen made the spices for really great pastrami which was cooked on the premises in a smoker which was also used to smoke fresh trout. While the music was Viennese style, the food would have been more at home on the Lower East Side of New York.



The music was often with a trio or just a pianist. The white grand piano is in the background. In retrospect I can hardly believe that I organised such a large menu without having any food training myself.

FROM OUR MORSELEUM

In FRANCE years ago, food was prepared in the MORSELEUM and brought to the table while the guests sang the MORSELLAISE, adding to the enchantment of the food.

BAGELS - All Bagel fillings available on rye bread	
CREAM CHEESE - Plain or herbed	\$3.50
LIPTAUER - A delicious spicy spread of Cream Cheese, Carrandy, Capers, Anchovies, Shallots and Paprika	\$3.50
EGG MAYONNAISE On a Buttered Bagel	\$4.75
REUBEN - Pastrami with Melted Cheese on Sauerkraut	\$6.75
SMOKED TURKEY - Served on Cream Cheese with Cranberry sauce	\$7.95
SMOKED SALMON - Finest quality salmon with Creamed Cheese the Traditional Lox and Bagel	\$3.95
PEANUT BUTTER, HONEY AND BANANA	\$3.50
DATE AND WALNUT - with cream cheese	\$5.95
CHICKEN MAYONNAISE	\$5.95
CHICKEN ANGELIQUE - Sweet, Mild Curry - Superb	\$5.95
PASTRAMI - With cream cheese and a pickle	\$6.75
TURKEY 303 - with avocado and melted cheese	\$6.75
303 SPECIAL - Really hits the spot - Pastrami Avocado and Melted Cheese	\$5.95
SMOKED TROUT - Served with creamed horseradish sauce	\$5.95
HERRING - Danish style - lightly sweet	\$5.95

THE HYMIE SHER KITCHEN - MAIN COURSES

CANINE HORROR - A St Bernard hot dog with Sauerkraut and Potato salad	\$8.95
ST BERNARD PUPS - Little ones with hot Sauerkraut and Potato salad	\$8.50
PASTRAMI (HEAPS) - With hot sauerkraut, green salad, and potato salad	\$7.95
BEEF KNACKWURST - With hot sauerkraut and and potato salad	\$8.50

SGHNITZELS - delicious

WIENER SCHNITZEL - cucumber and potato salad	\$9.95
CHICKEN SCHNITZEL - cucumber and potato salad	\$9.95

FROM OUR TROUTTORIA

SMOKED TROUT - with green beans and potato salad	WHOLE	\$8.95
	FILLETS	\$9.95
SMOKED TROUT - with broccoli and spudlets	WHOLE	\$8.95
	FILLETS	\$9.95

THE HYMIE SHER KITCHEN

Hymie Sher was a highly respected chef from Central Europe, famous for his colourful food, who became a living legend of palette and palate. Hymie Sher Art became another name for food that looked good enough to eat and was. His greatest success was KITSCH LORRAINE and was truly the high point of HYMIE SHER ART DECO. He is remembered for putting Kitsch back in the kitchen where it belonged.

We especially suggest the pastrami which is based on his original recipe and comes in a direct line from the Carnegie Delicatessen in New York through David's in San Francisco. Try also the smoked trout which comes in a direct line from the Snowy Mountains and is smoked right here at Belaroma.

I cannot remember when I first visited the Brasilia espresso machine factory in Retorbido near Milan. It was in their early days and they were just beginning to make their first espresso machines. It must have been the early 1980s. Some years later I returned – they were making a machine that made the E.S.E. paper pods used in Illy and other espresso machines. Old Sr. Rossi showed me the machine and he was blind. I kid you not.



I couldn't keep up with the number of Brasilia models and nor could they. I couldn't buy replacement plastic knobs for machines just a few months old. I bought Reneka espresso machines led by Patrick Zimmerman near Strasburg. I got the impression that Italian machines were better looking but that French engineering was more solid. The competition in Italy was so strong that there was a frenzy to introduce new models with very small cosmetic differences. That was an impression then – I am not sure it is true today. I ended up with UNIC machines in Nice, France. Excellent quality and very solid. Jean-Pierre Levy led a solid team and followed Rugby. I watched the research at both companies to make a better coffee. I learned a lot from talking to the research engineers themselves.

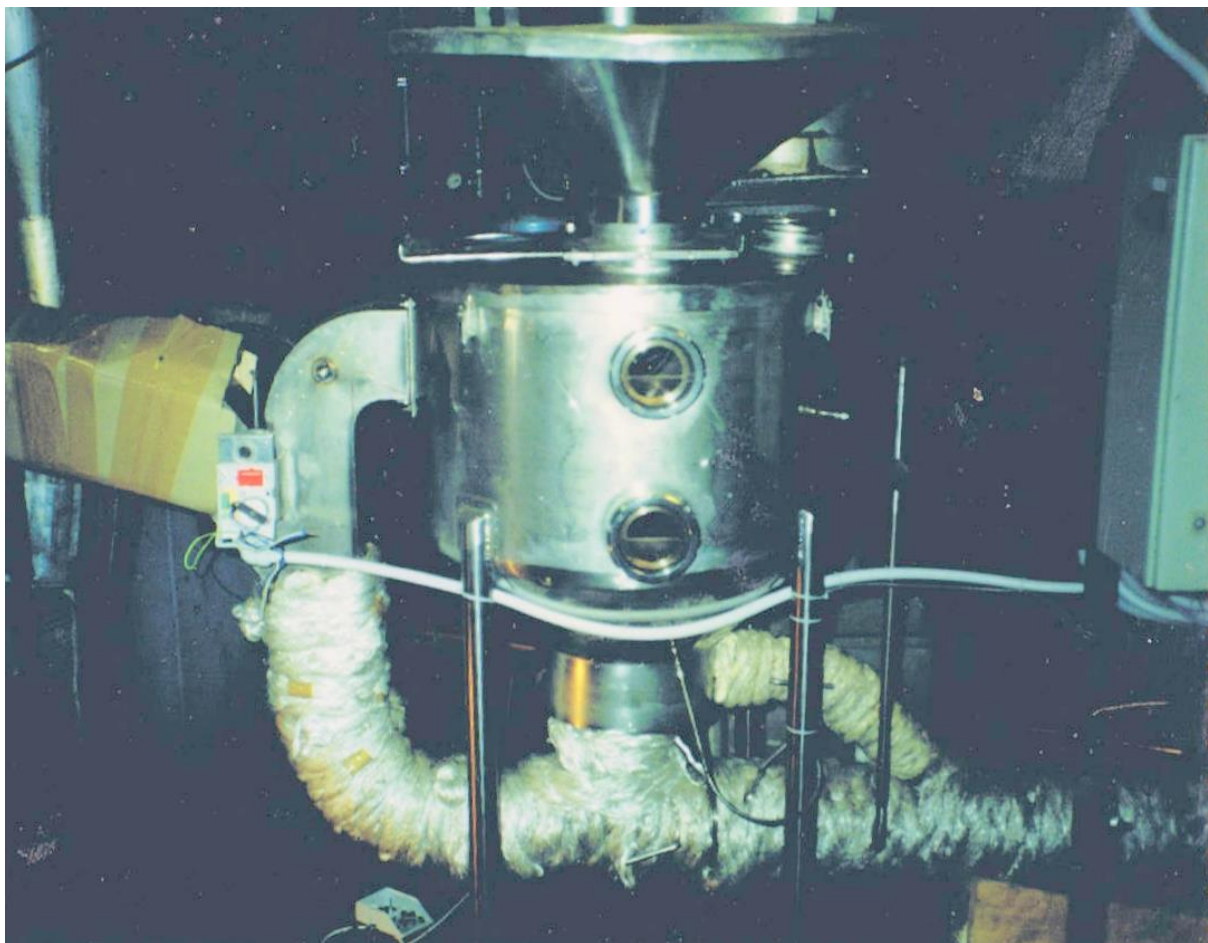
In 1984 the Macquarie shopping Centre opened and I took a coffee shop/cafe there. I had a manager there and every time I rang up to speak to her I was told, "She just stepped out." I found out later that she had another job as well. I think I can truly say that you really have to be dedicated to your business 24 hours a day if you are to keep your employees honest. This is a terrible shame as I always expected the best of everybody and with quite a few I got the worst. I had 14 electric drills stolen from Brookvale plus an Osborne computer. I had a delivery man who stole stock and sold it at the Manly markets. One employee rang in to say he would be late that day. Another employee told me he had been sent to Long Bay Laundry (Long Bay Jail) for a year. The same employee was always disappearing. Every time he disappeared he went to some nearby club and had a drink. He was an alcoholic. A big load

of copper wire was stolen from the yard. Some other very good employees held the business together.

Soon the Dee Why factory was not large enough and I found premises at



Manly Vale.



I built a 30kg horizontal fluid bed roaster which worked very well. It was designed by my friend Don Ebert. The only problem with fluid bed roasters is that they use vast amounts of air which creates a lot of smoke and need a very large afterburner which cost more to run than the roaster.

I remember the saying 'The solution to pollution is dilution'. I never worked out how to dilute the pollution enough.

I bought a Lilla roaster from Brazil which had a built-in afterburner. The roaster was OK but the cooler was very primitive. It was not a good decision. It was later replaced by a Brambatti roaster from Italy which included an enormous after-burner.

The simple fact was that running a business was not exciting. It was not intellectually satisfying at all. If everybody does their job it should run itself but that doesn't happen. I think that to be really successful in business you really have to be obsessed with making money and I wasn't. There were so many more interesting things to do. It is a very sad fact that society judges success by the amount of money you made in your lifetime rather than what good you have done. As time went on I became more and more interested in coffee, coffee as a process, coffee the history and everything to do with coffee. Most of the stuff that was being written in the 60s and 70s was not very informative because I don't think many people understood coffee very well, or if they did, they were not writing about it. They treated coffee as some sort of secret which if you kept it to yourself you could protect your business. I was on a journey of discovery and as I tried to explain it to myself and write down for others to understand, a growing treasure chest of information was being created in a disorganized way. It was time to put it all together and I began to write 'Coffee Floats Tea Sinks' which was a phenomenon that nobody else seems to have noticed and yet it was at the heart of the brewing process for the two different products. This fact determines why coffee pots are tall and teapots short and squat. By this time I had about 1000 antiques for tea and coffee and it took weeks to photograph them all and classify them. It took a lot longer to marshal all the information. Helen, my wife, was an immense help. Her background as a Librarian and Archivist proved immensely valuable.



I brought all the antiques home and built a 900 square feet room on top of my home to store them

1993

I went to Japan to see if there were any interesting products. I discovered the Hario brand and became the Australian agent. I made a second visit to see the company again. It was very unusual. I sat down with the sales manager and the company owner. They brought out a computer printout and stunned me by saying that you have met your target there is nothing further to discuss.

I found another product there – the best tea maker I had ever seen up to that point. It was the Akechi tea maker which had a cylindrical funnel filter using extremely fine nylon mesh as the filter. The design was excellent, the colors were good and I wanted to import them. I could speak a little Japanese but not much. I asked an American to ring the company and tell them that I wanted to come and visit them. They said, “Don’t come, don’t come” but I knew I had to go. I took the bullet train to Nagoya and then two more trains to Himi, finally arriving at the factory. They were not happy that I had arrived and phoned for their export agent to come. We all sat down and discussed the product. When I asked the export price of each product the agent told me the price in English, but I could understand the number in Japanese. The price they were giving me in Yen was simply 15% on top. The next couple of times that they gave a price in Japanese, I calculated in my head very quickly the price they would give me in English. When they realised that I could understand what they were saying, they changed the way that they spoke the numbers so that I could not understand. It didn’t make any difference. It was an excellent product



I spent a lot of time in Europe trying to get information about patents from Italy, France, Germany, England and the United States. In Italy I went to the patent office in Rome but they couldn’t tell me very much – they wanted the number of the patent. When I asked how I could find the number of the patent I was told that they were all written in the book. Where was the book? ‘Sorry, it’s been stolen and we can’t tell you’. I took the train up to Munich to Zweibruckestrasse where the German patent office was and there I could find the numbers for the Italian patents. I went back to Rome and got photocopies

of all the patents relating to Italian espresso machines. Some Italian companies did not even know or have their own original patents.

I went to Paris to the *Bibliothèque Nationale* and copied down the numbers of all the patents about coffee that I wanted to see. Then I went 70 km north of Paris to Compiègne where all the French patents were kept in an atomic bomb proof structure. The man in charge was a *huissier* –the French guards. He brought up hundreds of patents and I sat there for a couple of days reading the old handwritten French script with great difficulty and making very brief notes about each patent so that I could know which ones to come back for and examine in great detail. Each patent in the early days was accompanied by colourful drawings and I came back to photograph many of them. They initially said that I had to use the official photographer and asked me for the numbers of the patents. I said it was around 200 and when they heard the number, they said I could do it myself. It would have tied up their photographer for weeks. Many of them had not been seen for over 100 years by anybody. Then I went back to the Munich patent office and read all the German patents. Then to London where I was able to check the English patents and then to New York for the American ones. I was lucky that I could speak French, German, Italian and Spanish as well as English. It took months to assemble all the information and finally get it into the form of a book. I wanted the book printed in Adelaide so that it could be a completely Australian product. The reviews were very good.

At the coffee fair in Milan in the 1990s I saw a lot of coffee roasters but I was most impressed with the Brambatti roaster and decided to buy it. I'm sure that Brambatti used my purchase as a selling point in Australia as so many other roasters were later to buy the same brand. I installed the state of the art Brambatti at the Manly Vale factory, the first one to arrive in Australia.



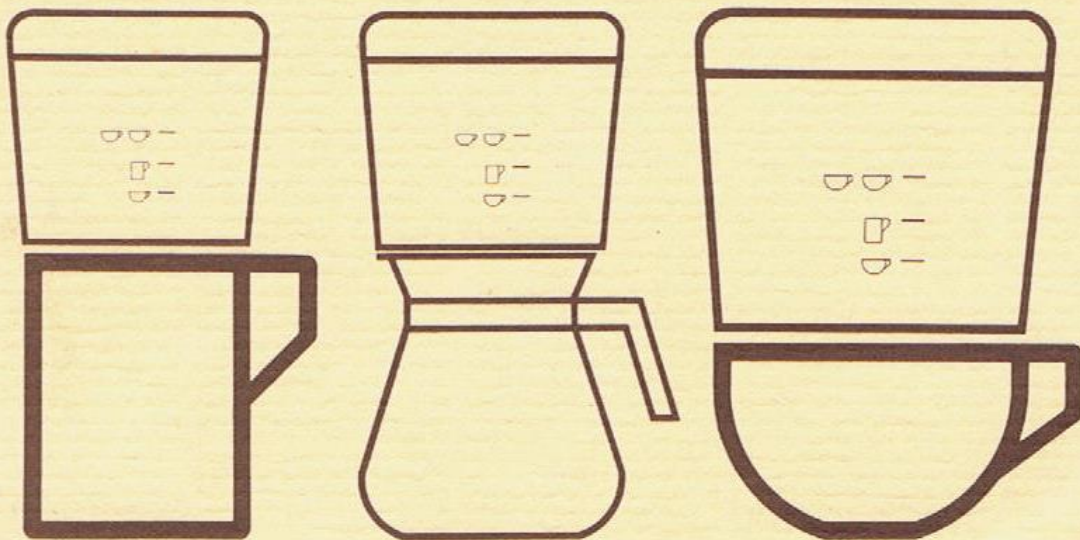
I spent a lot of time at exhibitions in Australia trying to sell coffee. I remember talking to Tony Williams who had started “BB’s Coffee & Bake” and I convinced him to change brands. He later started Retail Food Group. All the time I had spent reading and talking about coffee enabled me to be able to make my own assessments about everything to do with coffee and tea. It seemed to me that everybody else was making their decisions based on opinions of others who likely were just passing on somebody else’s opinion. They could not think and analyse anything. They claimed to be passionate about coffee but in most cases they were just passionate about making money. They knew the consuming public loved to hear the word passionate and would do anything to make a sale.

True Brew Filter

For Coffee or Tea

Belaroma

No filter papers needed
Stainless Steel mesh filter

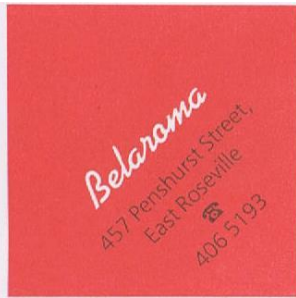


The True Brew Filter was one of my first inventions. It worked well to make 1-3 cups of tea or coffee and had a small hole in the base to control the water flow and the brewing time.

It needed a small round stainless steel sieve to be inserted in the base. I bought a small manual plastics moulding machine and made the sieves myself.



True Brew Sieve



Open: Monday — Friday from 9am to 5pm;
Saturday from 8.30am to 12.30pm
(Also in Lindfield, North Ryde and Castlecrag)

It is the exuberant enthusiasm of Ian Bersten, the owner of Belaroma, that has created this tea and coffee lovers' Mecca. The Belaroma Trading Company started out in 1968 at the small Roseville shop. Ian did all his own roasting, blending, grinding and tasting, gradually developing the Belaroma style. Today large quantities of coffee are roasted at his Manly Vale factory and supplied daily to Belaroma coffee shops and other outlets. The coffee roaster at the Roseville shop, however, still keeps turning under the watchful eye of George Kepper, an independent coffee consultant with 50 years experience. The Roseville shop also displays part of the extraordinary collection of coffee and tea memorabilia that Ian has collected over the years. There are coffee roasters and grinders, tea caddies, more than 200 coffee pots and a library of books on tea and coffee, dating back to 1680.

Ian Bersten will tell you that the only way to make a good cup of coffee is to use the best beans, and Belaroma does just that. They offer 12 different pure coffees and coffee blends created from roasting and blending top quality Arabica beans, bought directly from the major world producers. When tasting beans from auction, developing a new coffee style or carrying out quality control, Ian and George use a small sample roaster which roasts a few ounces of beans at a time. The pure beans or a blend are ground and infused, they note the fragrance, aroma, body, acidity, aftertaste and character of the brew and so refine the style they are trying to create.

Belaroma also cater for the tea connoisseur, offering 30 different loose leaf teas, with the finest from Darjeeling, Assam and selected tea gardens in Sri Lanka. Belaroma's flavoured teas are another speciality, flavoured with leaves, peel, berries and flowers, the range of 12 includes spiced orange, mango, and blackcurrant - all wonderfully fragrant.

The Belaroma staff will help you choose a style to suit your taste and at Lindfield, Ryde and Castlecrag you can sit and enjoy many of the coffees and teas available in the adjoining coffee lounges.

George Kepper and the jovial Ian Bersten - coffee lovers with zeal.



From a newspaper publication about the best in Sydney.

Plunger or French Press coffee makers were all the rage as Bodum with a wide range of fashion colors, dominated the market. I thought plunger coffee was weak. I analysed the problem to be that the coffee floated and that it needed to be agitated. I invented the Imm-pressure-sieve which allowed you agitate the immersed grounds. My analysis was wrong. The coarse grounds

produced a lot of colour and not much flavour.

THE **immm-press-sieve**™

TWO STAGE PLUNGER*

Stage 1
PRESS DOWN LID AND
LARGE HOLE FILTER

Stage 2
PRESS DOWN
FINE FILTER

Labels: FINE FILTER, LARGE HOLE FILTER, CLOSE FITTING LID

The Plunger or French Press was invented in France in the 1850's but never really caught on until re-invented in the 1930's in Italy. The first plungers were metal bodies with metal filters and made a passable cup of coffee. Later models with glass bodies and plastic and metal mesh filters have become very popular. There has been very little study to establish whether they make good or bad coffee and under what conditions they perform better. The coffee brewed in a plunger conforms in every respect with coffee brewed in other devices – the water temperature should be 92-96 degrees Celsius or 197-205 degrees Fahrenheit. The brewing time should vary with the coarseness of the coffee grounds – for very fine grind as short as two minutes and around five minutes for coarser ground coffee.

In terms of making a really good cup of coffee, the plunger has not always been a great success although most users seem happy with the results. In many cases the coffee has been weaker in the cup than expected and also not as hot as expected. There are some simple reasons for these occurrences. The first is that the temperature of the water has not been hot enough. Boiling water from an electric kettle is often below the minimum brewing temperature even before pouring into the plunger. If the plunger has not been pre-heated, there is an immediate drop in the brewing temperature. The coffee floats in a bed on top of the water and does not deliver a proper extraction. Even more of a problem is that many consumers do not wait for the brewing to take place, judging the colour to be sufficient indication of the strength. The net effect of this misuse has been an underbrewed coffee which is not very hot after it is poured into a cold cup or mug.

The **TWO STAGE PLUNGER** has been designed to overcome most of these objections. It can be used as a conventional plunger where the water is poured from a kettle over the grounds. In this case the lower filter acts to steep and stir the grounds. The fine filter is pushed down at the appropriate time. The resultant cup of coffee will be improved over normal plunger coffee in that the steeping and stirring of the grounds is assured.

The **TWO STAGE PLUNGER** allows coffee to be made in a microwave oven. The glass/plastic body is placed in the microwave oven and the water boiled. The oven will indirectly heat the plunger body and keep the brewing temperature around the desired level. The coffee is spooned onto the water and floats dry. The lower filter is forced through the grounds (Stage 1) as the lid is placed on the glass body and causes the coffee to stir and steep. Then after the correct brewing time the fine filter is pushed down (Stage 2). The result is that coffee brewed with hotter water and held at a hotter temperature, (provided the brewing time is correct) the results in the 'IMMM-PRESS-SIEVE' will be better. This is again due to the hotter water, the improved steeping and stirring, the better brewing temperature and the hotter serving temperature.

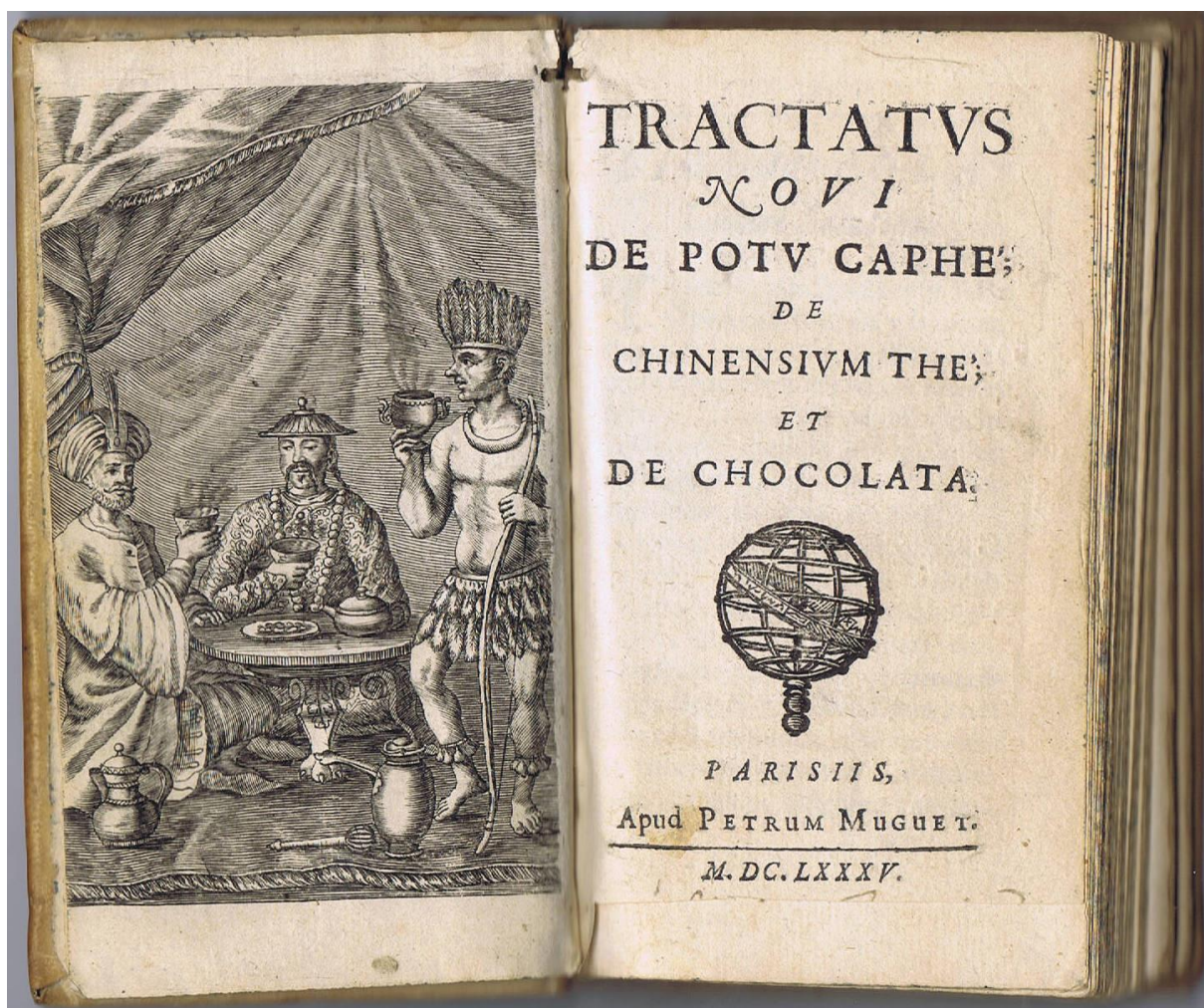
KNOB MUST BE IN DOWN POSITION WHEN LID IS REMOVED FROM POT.

Water from the hot water tap will give faster heating in the microwave oven.

I liked things that were technologically advanced and I was an early adopter. Even though I had no technical training I picked up on technology quickly. I installed an electronic accounting machine from East Germany and it used some sort of magnetic cards. It was the early days of computers and I bought a Redstone PC with an accounting program. This was soon supplanted

by a much more powerful machine which I bought from DataMax in Manly run by a very nice Chinese couple.

Then followed a coffee shop at the ABC in Ultimo and another at Castlecrag. I was getting stretched thin and relying on others. If their judgment was bad I took the haircut and they just walked away, in most cases without even apologizing. People took no responsibility for their decisions. I can understand why large companies monitor the activities of the staff very closely and even so they sometimes face bad disasters. I must have been lucky – everything went well in the end even though there were some hiccoughs.



My library The oldest book in my library about coffee and tea and chocolate, printed in 1685 at the house of Peter Muguet in Paris in Latin. I have more than 300/400 of the earliest books and pamphlets and they give me a lot of pleasure. I still collect.

A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE BELAROMA EMPIRE

BELAROMA began about seventeen years ago in Roseville when an energetic young Australian was searching for a means of self employment. An interest in drinking coffee developed into a passion for finding the best beans in the world, bringing them back to his small dark shop for roasting by George Keppel and selling the result to his friends and relations. It is a reflection on Ian Bersten's inspiration when the same people still visit the dark dusty shop, many now from a distance away, to buy his coffee beans and say there is no better flavour in Australia.

From the beginning and for seventeen years, and probably in the future, cynics have doubted the wisdom of the Berstens' ventures. In every case they have had to admit, by the visible results, that they were wrong. From the corner shop in Penshurst Street to the largest shopping centre in Sydney was the first step. The coffee merchant used all his instincts to discover the needs of the shoppers and all his wits to decide the location and appearance of his first coffee bar.

From the old dark traditional store with museum pieces as equipment, to bright yellow tables and chairs with top of the range coffee makers was a giant step. However, very wisely, he retained two vital things which have ensured his success. One was to continue selling the original beans and teas and the various types of hardware for producing the best flavour in these beverages. The other was to keep the relationship with his customers as personal and friendly as it always had been.

This is very easy as long as you and your immediate family are the sole dispensers of the goods and services. It is more difficult, and at times it proved impossible, when others are employed and are expected to have the same attitude. What tales could be told of life behind the counter! The strained relationships, the adventures and intrigues, the jealousies and rivalries of the dozens of employees who worked in a four foot wide corridor for up to nine hours a day must have fascinated or infuriated thousands of customers during the first few years of the first Belaroma shop!

Ian will never be content with sitting back once a project has been completed. The concept and planning for him is the driving force for his fertile imagination. Ambition and financial gain are not as important as the challenge of a new situation. Towards the end of 1987 he owned four successful coffee houses, all with individual characteristics, the latest with a white grand piano, as well as the original Roseville shop, which had not changed at all in seventeen years.

Christine Lees 1988

Christine Lees wrote this unsolicited letter. It is perspicacious.

Coffee Floats Tea Sinks - my first book

It was time to put it all together and finish 'Coffee Floats Tea Sinks' which was a phenomenon that nobody else seems to have noticed and yet it was at the heart of the brewing process for the two different products.

COFFEE FLOATS TEA SINKS

Through History and Technology
to a Complete Understanding



The Frustrating Mechanics of a Cup of Joe

By Charles Perry

It's a simple process, but it's a complex one. The coffee-making process is a delicate balance of science and art. From the selection of beans to the final cup, every step is crucial. The process involves roasting, grinding, and brewing. The French press is a popular method, but it has its own set of challenges. The coffee grounds can be difficult to filter, and the coffee can become bitter if over-extracted. The science of coffee is still being explored, and new technologies are being developed to improve the process. The coffee industry is a multi-billion dollar business, and it's constantly evolving. The coffee lover's quest for the perfect cup is a never-ending one.

Art of the Cup

Historian Ian Bersten knows that there's no such thing as a simple pot of coffee. In our quest for the perfect cup, we've endured rust-coated beans, exploding percolators and a vacuum pot that tried to boil an egg along with the morning joe.

By CHARLES PERRY — H34

"The coffee business has made an art form of raising barriers to information. Roasters try to keep you out. They don't really understand what they're doing themselves."

"Coffee is everybody's whipping boy. Nobody says anything about the caffeine in tea or aspirin or cocoa—and we think cocoa is a drink to give children."

"There's a wider range of coffee quality in the U.S. than any other country. You have percolated lunch counter swill and exquisite espresso coffees."

Two page spread in LA Times 1994 with text below

http://articles.latimes.com/1994-02-03/food/fo-18405_1_coffee-maker
http://articles.latimes.com/1994-02-03/food/fo-18405_1_coffee-maker/2
http://articles.latimes.com/1994-02-03/food/fo-18405_1_coffee-maker/3

Book Review:
Coffee Floats. Tea Sinks

My first impression of Coffee Floats. Tea Sinks was to reject the title as being unusually strange. I kept finding myself referring to the book as Coffee Floats. Tea Stinks. This was a flippant response to a title that did not fall gently on the ear. I had, in fact, not read the book yet. I have now, and I'm here to tell you that immediately upon fin-

ishing this issue of *Tea & Coffee* you are to pick up the phone and order up a copy for your coffee and tea library.

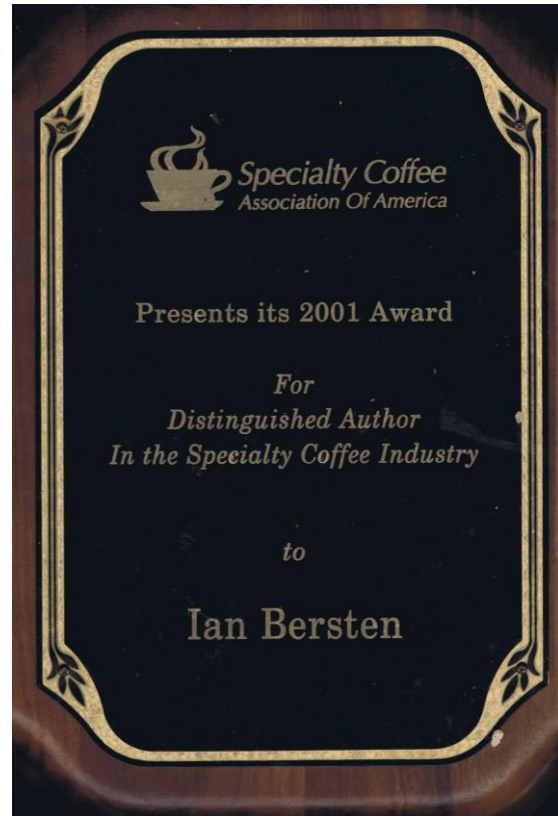
The title refers to a basic difference in the two beverages that explains the reason why tea pots are short and squat with their spout on the top while early coffee pots were tall with their spouts emanating from the bottom. Funny, but I had never thought about it before. And that's the great strength of Coffee Floats. It makes you think about coffee and tea from new vantage points and perspectives.

Profusely illustrated with appropriate color photographs throughout, and a commentary that is both well written and easy to read, this book is a delight to sit with from beginning to end. It is an ideal coffee-table book, as it is a pleasure to browse through.

Book Review by Donald Schoenholt in Tea and Coffee Trade Journal



Author of *Coffee Floats Tea Sinks, and Coffee, Sex & Health*, Ian Bersten (left), receives recognition as "Distinguished Author" from Dan Cox of Coffee Enterprises.



Miami, 2001

In Emmerich, Germany I visited the Probat Company and their coffee museum. I met the original owner of the Probat Company, Herr von Gimborn, who was amazed that I could write my book. His comment brought back memories of a beautiful German girl, whom I was teaching English to at the Berlitz School in Munich in 1961, who informed me that there was no culture at all in Australia. Oh dear. He took me to lunch and I had asparagus. It was nothing like Australian asparagus but thick large white stalks with a totally different flavour. In the next town in Holland they had a friendly coffee factory which utilized all the advances of the Probat factory. The attention to detail was incredible.

I began to get the impression that in Europe, the emphasis was on engineering and product quality while in the USA the emphasis was on marketing.

Somewhere along the line I met Enrico Maltoni who has the most complete collection of Italian espresso machines – an amazing devotion to collecting. I visited him in Forlimpopoli, near Bologna as his collection was growing. My

best memories are of the sweetest grapes I have ever tasted, growing in his garden. Amazing.



The shop window in 1993 – we sold an enormous range of products



Helen in the shop -1993

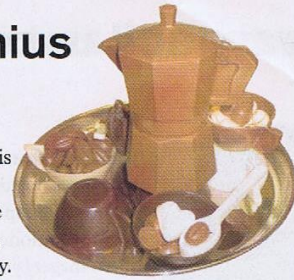
I have been a chocolate lover all my life and in a moment when I was at a loose end I decided to look into the chocolate industry. I went to some major chocolate fairs in France, Germany and the USA to learn more. I should have had the wisdom to call it quits at 66 but I felt an inner urge to take the jump and I opened a shop in Willoughby. The quality of the product was good – I bought chocolate made in Spain from cocoa liquor made in Holland. Spain was the country where cocoa was introduced from Mexico by the Conquistadores. They had a strong tradition and make very good dark chocolate. The best products we made were wasabi flavoured chocolate and a very Australian flavour, lemon myrtle which was extraordinary. We won a couple of Bronze medals at the Royal Easter Show. This demonstrated that people enjoyed Cadbury's milk chocolate which was very sweet and had hardly any chocolate flavour.

February 2005

Chocolate genius

Melissa-Jo Sherman

The day Ian Bersten opened his Willoughby chocolate shop was the first day he actually made chocolate. Sound crazy? Perhaps, but this man is anything but crazy.



Before delving into chocolate, Bersten was in the coffee business for 36 years. Think Belaroma, Roseville. An established and well-respected player, he's published two books on coffee and is working on his third, a look at the myths and charlatans of the coffee industry.

With problems in the coffee world on his mind, Bersten was looking around and as chance would have it a friend in Turin introduced him to European chocolate. "It was like I'd never had [chocolate] in my life... it was just like another planet," he says.

And so, with characteristic zeal and curiosity, Bersten spent three years travelling and researching the right technology and know-how before launching 'The Chocolate Genie' on Penshurst Street some 18 months ago.

"By the end of the first day what I knew theoretically had been put into practice, and I knew there was no problem."

No problem is an understatement. Bersten's chocolates are delicious. From plain dark chocolate to cinnamon to ginger coated to the most popular, lemon myrtle, the flavours are rich and distinctive. Especially his latest creation, wasabi chocolate.

"My standards are very strict," he explains. "Number one, the recognition factor. Can you recognise what you are eating with your eyes closed? The second one is do you like it, yes or no? And that's a personal choice. There are no other criteria that can be checked."

When you first enter The Chocolate Genie, have some time up your sleeve. Most likely Bersten will be the one to greet you. Before you know it you are sampling chocolates, learning why and how cocoa percentages matter, and being regaled with jokes and intriguing historical trivia. Bersten may dart out back briefly, only to re-emerge excitedly with a new taste he's developing (and a telltale smudge of chocolate by his mouth).

"If somebody comes to me and says 'I'll give you \$1,000 to make it [your chocolate] better' I'd say sorry, I can't make it better, I can only make it different," he says.

Educated at North Sydney Boys' High, economist, coffee aficionado, father of three and soon-to-be grandfather, avid reader, comedian, history buff, and now chocolatier - Bersten lives life with contagious enthusiasm.

His next step? "To commercialise. What's the point of having all these great products if nobody knows about them?" At the moment though he's concentrating on chocolates for Valentine's Day, featuring Romeo and Juliet. Chocolate with passion - just the thing for February 14.

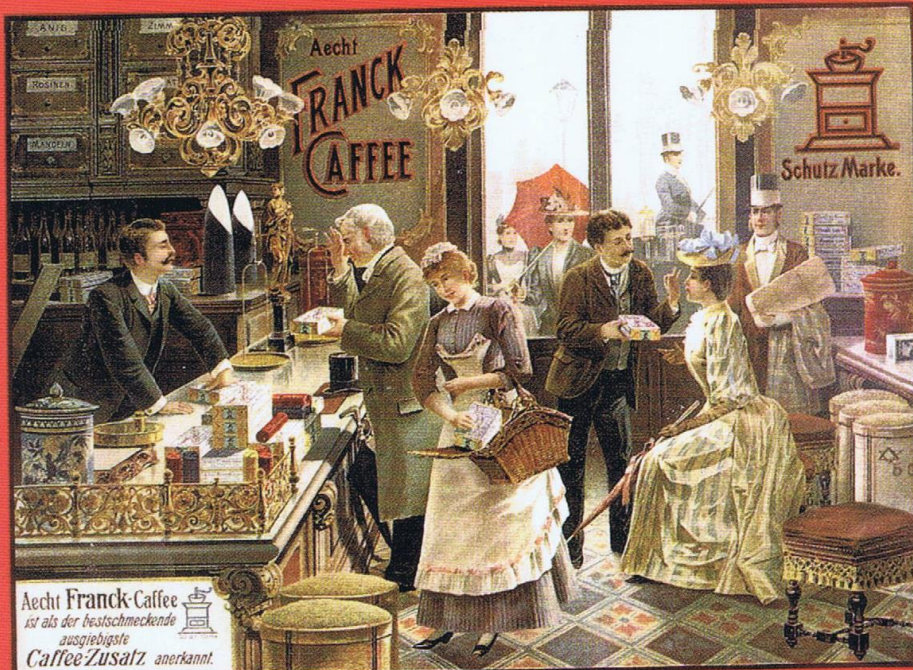
Chocolate Genie is tucked back at Shop 8, 303 Penshurst Street, Willoughby.



I published my first book, 'Coffee Floats, Tea Sinks' in 1994, followed by 'Coffee, Sex and Health' in 1999, then I wrote 'Tea, how tradition stood in the way of the perfect cup' in 2009 and have since written 'Coffee and Tea, Perceptions and Illusions', which is available as an eBook on Amazon.com.

Coffee, Sex & Health

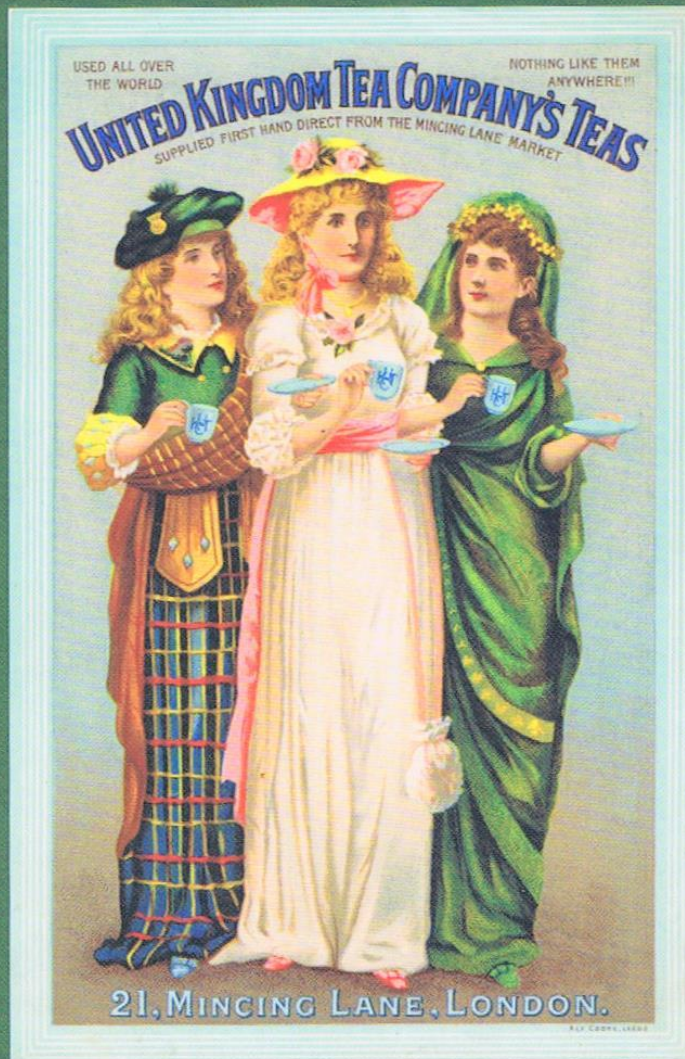
A history of anti-coffee crusaders and sexual hysteria



Ian Bersten

TEA

HOW TRADITION STOOD IN
THE WAY OF THE PERFECT CUP



IAN BERSTEN



IAN BERSTEN

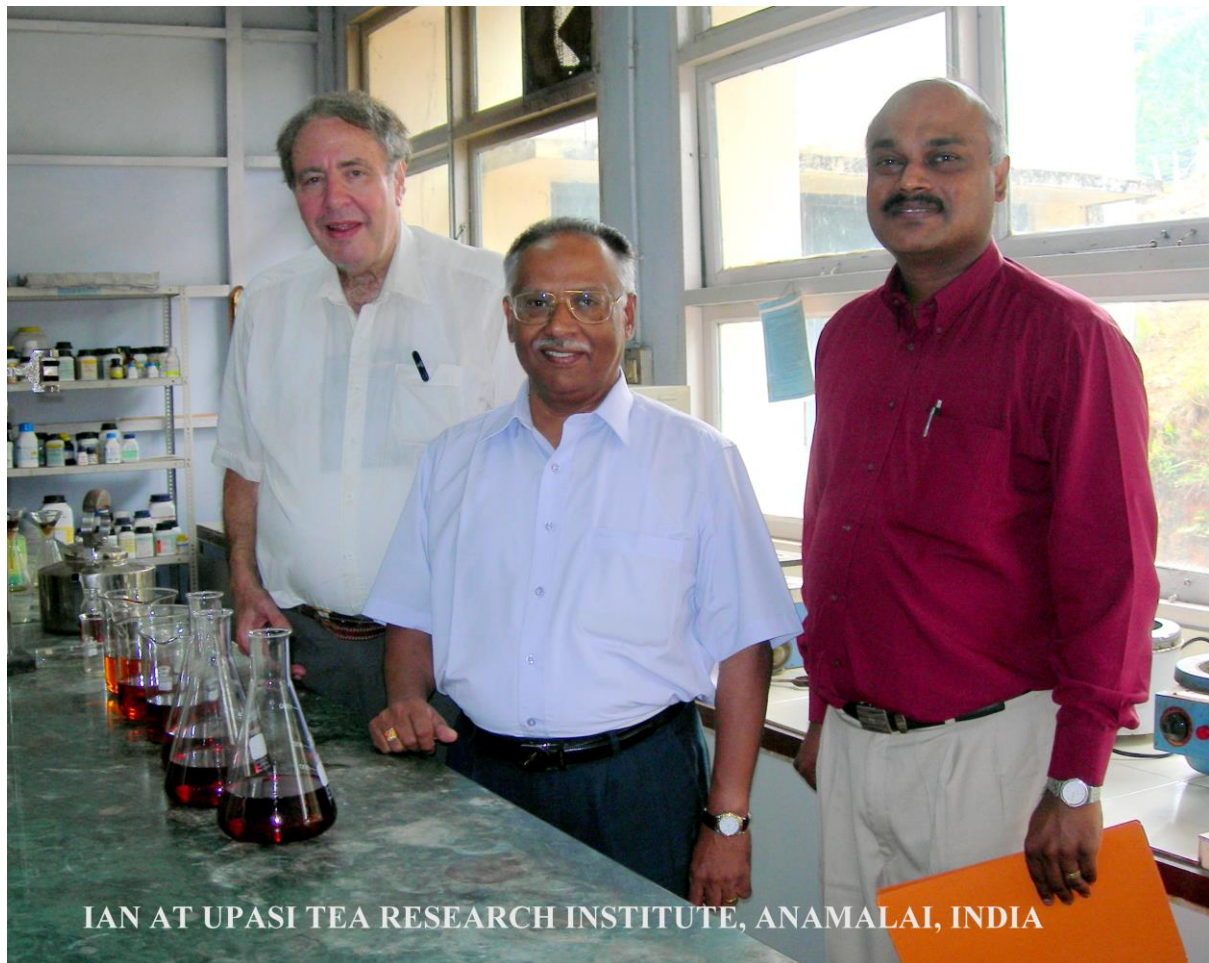
COFFEE

&

TEA

**PERCEPTIONS AND
ILLUSIONS**

Tea



Research from UPASI proved that tea vacuum packed 24 hours after manufacture had 15% increased flavour levels and remained fresh for a very long time.

It was only by accident that I discovered some key factors about the tea leaf. I was aware that you make a much better cup of tea when you take the tea out of the teabag and brewed in an open cup. The turbulence allows the tea particles to be surrounded by boiling water and not be restricted in the teabag. One day I wanted a cup of tea but there was no tea in the house, only some sample teabags which had been left in the letterbox a few days before. I opened up a teabag and poured the tea into a small Chinese tea filter with very fine stainless steel mesh and poured boiling water over it. It was obvious immediately that the extract was extremely dark. I poured for a few seconds and then diluted the extract to make a fully flavoured cup of tea. This idea was

incorporated into the invention of the Tea-Cha filter which I called the Teacher's Pet. It made excellent tea but could not make coffee at all.



TEA-CHA FILTER Tea-Cha filter **over a pot** – pour boiling water over fannings or finely

ground tea, make a concentrate and then dilute.

For this reason I developed the Chaicoffski which would make both tea and coffee - it was a cylindrical filter made of 60 Micron stainless steel mesh which sat on the bottom of the cup. When boiling water was poured over it, the particles swirled around in the turbulence getting maximum exposure to the hot water and the flavour was released in less than 30 seconds. Bitterness came afterwards. It was the best way to make a good, strong cup of tea.

The idea ran into a lot of opposition from those people in the industry promoting large leaf tea which mainly came from China, purchased by private treaty and therefore available for massive mark-ups compared to the small leaf teas which came from the Indian, Sri Lanka, Kenyan, Malawi and Indonesia tea auctions where anybody could see what the auction price was. It was, as I described it, a dispute between the Tearists and Teatricals who found the extrinsics much more important than the intrinsics.

Basudeb Banerjee, Chairman of the Indian Tea Board, told me in Kolkata, 'You are a problem. You make better tea with small leaf tea than we can, and we want to sell large leaf tea.'

The other thing that I discovered is that you can make a much better cup of tea with the teabag by putting the teabag into a plastic tea spoon and pouring boiling water slowly over the teabag. This means that the brewing temperature

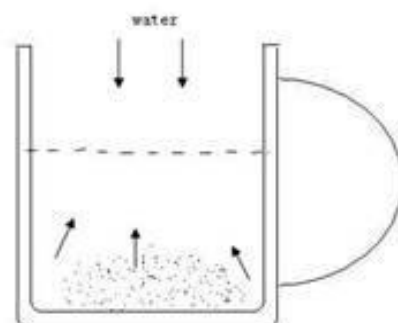
is much higher than when you put the teabag into a cup filled with hot water which may drop as much as 20°C in a flash.

I discovered that tea leaves stale from the outside and the interior remains fresh. This means that the large size tea leaves which are stale can be made fresh by grinding them in a spice grinder and releasing the surface of the fresh particles to be extracted by the water. This is easily proved scientifically.

It is an established scientific fact that tea flavour increases 15% and remains fresh for a very long time if the tea is vacuum packed straight after manufacture. Hardly any tea pack like this is available retail anywhere.

I discovered some important facts about filters and how they work.

From the development of the Tea-Cha followed the Chaicoffski which had several advantages – it was a single stage brewer and the tea was made in the cup or mug with a lot of turbulence. It could be used to make coffee as well.



1 FILTER SITTING ON BASE AND TOUCHING SIDES

The Chaicoffski sat on the base of the mug and the water reflected up creating turbulence and perfect brewing conditions. When the filter is **suspended** in the cup or mug the pressure of the water contacts for tea or coffee particles and the water runs through the side walls of the filter above the tea or coffee meaning that there is a reduced extraction. It is most important to sit in the filter on the base of the mug so that there is turbulence.

The important part of the coffee story is those perceptions which caused the coffee to be liked or disliked. These include all those factors that change the perception of the coffee. If the core of the coffee itself is considered to be more or less fixed, we can regard the extrinsic considerations as modifying the core. An example of this might be that when you go into a coffee shop you get an immediate positive feeling from either the descriptions in the menu, the decoration, the appearance of the espresso machine or the coffee brewer, the welcome from the staff and the total ambience, including the presence of your friends and the general buzz of the shop. In other words, it is the interaction of the extrinsic with the intrinsic which determines whether you will enjoy your cup of coffee.

If the coffee is bad and the extrinsics good, then the coffee may be good

If the coffee is good and the extrinsics good, then the coffee will be good

If the coffee is bad and the extrinsics bad, then the coffee will be bad

If the coffee is good and the extrinsics bad, then the coffee will be bad

If it was simply the need for a caffeine hit and addiction, then coffee consumption would never have declined as it did in the US in the post-World War II period. The conscious switch from real tea to teabags meant reduced caffeine. The only conclusion is that it is all the pleasant associations with coffee and tea which give us a buzz and to which we are addicted. This applies to tea as well.

Coffee knowledge.

It would be nice to think that I had changed something in my lifetime but I doubt it. Modern coffee knowledge starts more or less with the publication of 'All About Coffee' by Ukers in 1922 and 1935. It was put together by a team of correspondents who I don't think had any particular expertise in coffee. Later the Pan-American Coffee Bureau put out some scientific pamphlets but the information often related to electric percolators which have little relevance today. The Germans were promoting the Melitta filter paper method with a brewing time of 7-9 minutes, the best that was available. Italy was promoting the Bialetti stovetop method. Much of the information that has come out since derived from manufacturers of equipment trying to impress customers with the unique characteristics of their own manufactures. This was picked up uncritically by coffee roasters and others trying to impress customers with the level of their own knowledge and thereby claiming expertise for whatever they were selling. I think it is true to say that there is a mountain of information available for coffee lovers, which is based more on opinion than scientific facts. Ideas about the importance of turbulence were not to become popular until much later.

This is not exactly a situation welcoming new ideas that challenge old ones and even the coffee associations that should have had the expertise to evaluate were restricted in many cases by the commercial interests of their members. This is not an unusual situation in the commercial world of the 21st century in respect of most industries. It is for this reason that I say that few of my ideas have had any influence. I shall enumerate some of my ideas which have not been received well.

Only a few coffee experts can really taste coffee properly. The masses do not have the ability to evaluate the intrinsic characteristics of a coffee and are in fact much more reliant on the extrinsics – the external factors at the time of drinking the coffee such as the surroundings of the coffee shop, the attractiveness and smile of the serving person, the quality of the serving vessel, be it paper, plastic, tin, enamel, ceramic, porcelain et cetera. All these and many other factors will influence the flavour of the coffee. Music can change the coffee from bitter to non-bitter.

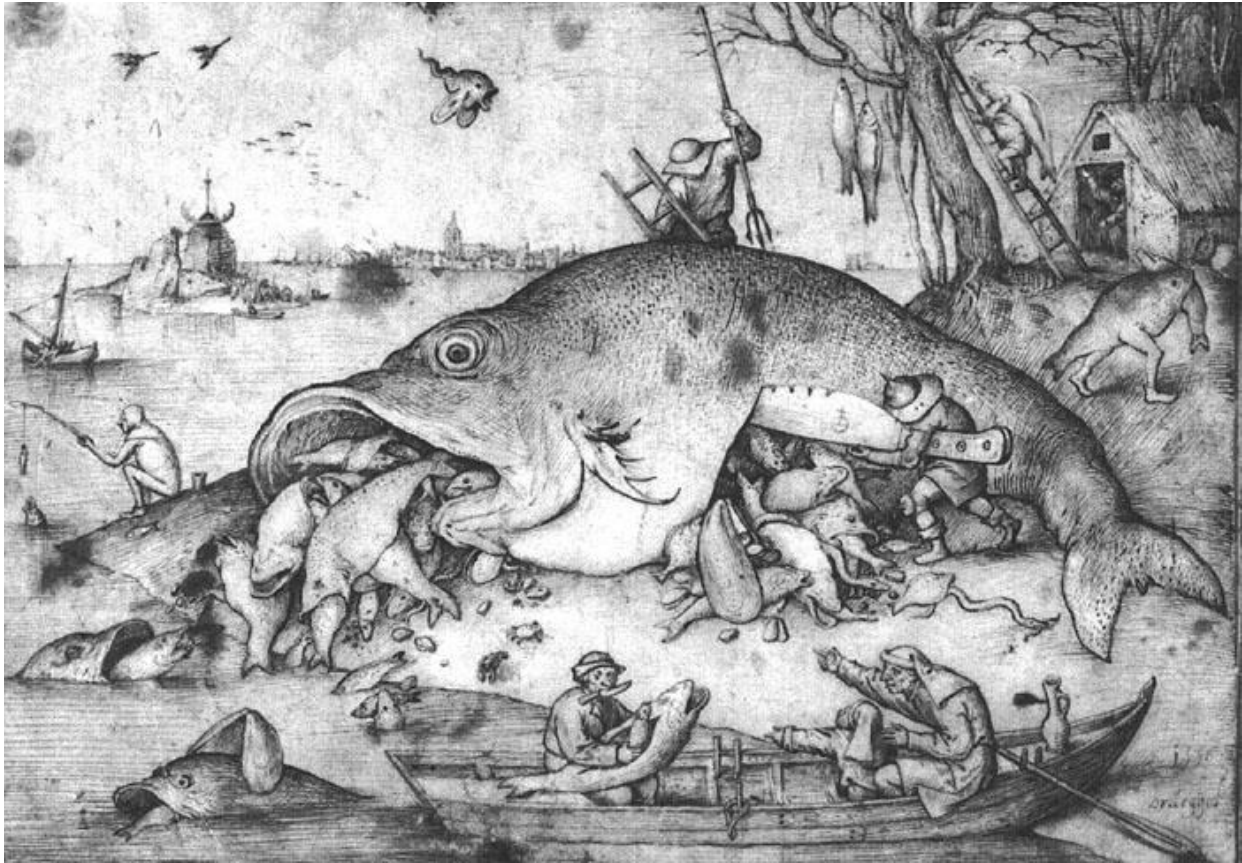
The longest existing canard of about coffee is that bitterness is caused by extended brewing time and temperature is over boiling point. It is easily demonstrable that coffee can be dropped into boiling water for a few seconds and not become bitter. In fact it is impossible to make coffee bitter in any way except by applying heat to the brewed coffee. You can pour boiling water over coffee grounds and leave them for 24 hours and they do not become bitter. If coffee is brewed in an espresso machine and becomes bitter, it is because the coffee has been too finely ground or too tightly packed to allow the water to pass through, and water boils as a result. If it passes through the heat exchanger to slowly it will arrive on the coffee at a temperature over 100° see.

The plunger or French press which is very popular makes coffee that looks strong but when the recommended coarse particles are served and the finest particles removed the resultant brew is very pale. It is the fine particles that give the colour to the brew and the idea that the coffee is fully flavoured.

This leads to the conclusion that grind size is very important. The flavour of coffee is proportional to the surface area of the particle, not to the claim that it is the time taken to brew. Large coffee particles will never make a strong cup of coffee because the water does not penetrate the surface very far and leaves the internal part under brewed. The conclusion out of this is that coffee ground to espresso fineness can be brewed for 30 seconds in boiling water and give you really good flavour.

The debate still rages whether coffee should be stored at room temperature or in the refrigerator or freezer. Scientifically there is no doubt that the lower the temperature, the lower the oxidation and hence the better the freshness of the coffee. I have no idea why coffee specialists believe that different rules of science apply to coffee.

The debate still rages whether coffee should be drunk straight after roasting or left for some time for the flavour to develop. I often drink coffee that has just been roasted minutes before and I am not aware of any improvement by leaving it for some time. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and if somebody thinks that the coffee tastes better some days later then so be it. It is simply a matter of personal preference with as far as I know no scientific backing to it.



Big Fish Eat Little Fish – Pieter Breughel the Elder.

This cartoon from the early years of Capitalism was prophetic in foreshadowing how big companies swallow little ones. The big growth in the coffee industry started in the 1960s and 70s as enthusiastic entrepreneurs applied every fibre of their being to start ventures, some of which grew and some didn't. In time they were either bought out or taken over by bean counters and skilled management who had more love for profits than coffee. They were not there when coffee skills were learnt by practice and instead have to read what others say to maintain and grow the business. Their businesses are locked into the equipment that has been bought and they are trapped with agencies that are no longer popular and they have to repeat information that is no longer true, relevant or informative. They don't want to keep up to date because it might destroy their image.

And so the coffee world goes onJohn Kenneth Galbraith: The conventional view serves to protect us from the painful job of thinking.