

BETTER COFFEE • BETTER WORLD COFFEE CONNOISSEURSHIP

with



CAN COFFEE BE PERFECT?

Even before it meets my lips, I am looking for signs of perfection in a cup of illy. They appear in tiny details, in the frothy crema atop an espresso and in the thousands of aromas that the illy blend gathers in a demitasse. True perfection may be an impossible dream, but that does not deter me from its pursuit. The perfect coffee is my mission, my passion and my obsession. So, peering into a cup of illy, I must ask myself: How can this be better?

My grandfather Francesco Illy was the first to ask this question. It led him to establish illycaffè in Trieste, Italy, in 1933, and inspired him to invent the modern method for making high-pressure espresso, the silky, complex and aromatic drink we know today. It led us to craft a singular illy blend of nine highest-order Arabica beans, ensuring a consistency and balance

that surpasses what can be found from a single source. For 82 years, a succession of Illy family has embraced and advanced the pursuit of perfection, using the best technology at the points of growing, sorting, roasting, packaging and brewing in order to make coffee for lovers of goodness and beauty around the world.

How can this be even better?

At illy, we pioneered the idea that a perfect cup of coffee needs to go beyond pleasing the palate. We believe it should build a better world. Since 1991, we purchase our coffee directly from the hands of growers. Illy selects the growers we work with based on the quality of their beans, then cultivates personal and exclusive relationships so that every cent we spend, and every bean we buy, contributes to a greater good. These farmers live

and work in the remote cradles of coffee—Columbia, Costa Rica, Brazil, India. Here, the best of nature and humanity come together to give the precious coffee bean a meaningful life. By practicing responsible business from grower to trader to roaster, coffee is our conduit for improving the lives of 25 million families in over 70 countries.

Like fine wine, illy is not a beverage, but an elixir of happiness. The perfect coffee engages the senses and satisfies the soul. It is a dream that should be savored and shared. The taste of illy is my delicious dream—for a world that is fair, beautiful and good, where the aroma of coffee is a symbol of harmony.

—Andrea Illy

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FARM TO CUP PIONEER

The mountains of Brazil are not an easy place to grow coffee. Farming on steep slopes, at an altitude of 1,250 meters, makes the use of modern machinery impossible. Here, every bean is touched by human hands, much the way my great-grandfather harvested and selected coffee when he arrived in this place from Portugal over a century ago. Even then, he realized that these slow-maturing beans held a promise of perfection. To grow this coffee is a special calling, passed down to me through generations.

In 1999, I saw a poster that would change my life. The poster was put there by illycaffè, a coffee buyer I had never heard of, requesting coffee samples to compete for the Brazil Quality Award for Espresso Coffee. I took a sample of my beans to the city of Varginha, to a famous coffee taster who could properly prepare them for submission.

He thought I was crazy, telling me that illycaffè will not be impressed with a small farmer in the south of Minas Gerais. I sent my coffee anyway, hoping another person would appreciate its excellence.

Dr. Ernesto Illy was that man. He had the idea that fine coffee is too beautiful to be traded like oil or iron, that it is deserving of respect and should pass directly from grower to buyer with a handshake. Our common belief in the potential of Brazil and its coffee marked the beginning of a partnership—and a friendship—that binds our families today. Helping my farm to achieve quality, while attaining environmental and social sustainability, enables more than 100 people to live and thrive here. There is nothing that distributes pleasure and prosperity around the world more effectively than coffee. You might think of coffee as a delicious beverage. Here, coffee is life.

Right now, I am preparing my sixteenth harvest for illy, with my best effort destined for Trieste, Italy, and the illy blend. My Brazilian mountain coffee will bestow body, sweetness and balance as it mingles with beans purchased from growers across four continents. Inside each can of illy reside the best efforts of many people, each contributing in their own way to the shared goal of the most perfect possible coffee. In the growers, shippers, roasters, blenders and consumers of illy, I am joined by a family of others like me, people who will not let something as small as a mountain stand in the way of a better coffee, a better world.

—Adolfo Henrique Vieira Ferreira

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Adolfo Henrique Vieira Ferreira, fourth-generation coffee grower, seven-time national finalist for the Ernesto Illy Quality Award for Espresso Coffee, and elected Sustainable Supplier of the Year in 2010.



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PERFECT PREPARATION

When you select a fine wine, its beauty is revealed simply by opening the bottle. But the coffee beans you purchase are not ready to drink. In many ways, they are as far removed from brewed coffee as grapes are from a glass of wine. With coffee, proper service amounts to much more than just etiquette. The coffee preparer, or barista, is an integral partner in the creation of the beverage. So, when you prepare your own coffee, you must become an active participant in the pursuit of perfection.

Completing the perfect cup of coffee is a responsibility I take very seriously. I believe we owe it to the farmers, roasters and blenders who labor to bring us this precious bean to reveal its great potential of aromas and flavors. The tools of my trade are many — a variety of grinders and scales, filters and machines. But the proper preparation of coffee is a challenge to be embraced by all people of taste, and becomes

very easy with practice. Nobody frets over cooking pasta, but at some point you learned to measure the pasta and to boil it for 12 minutes. Not 15 minutes. Not 8 minutes. A rhapsody of flavor like that found in fine coffee deserves at least the effort you would give to your pasta. And, it is as easy as learning and sticking to a formula.

Of course, no amount of good intention can make a great cup of coffee from inferior beans. Before we can even consider things like grind, water quality and brewing method, we must first concern ourselves with the quality and freshness of the beans. The unique pressurization of illy does not just preserve the integrity of the beans, but actually improves their aromas and flavors in the can, much the way fine wine can develop inside the bottle under the optimal conditions. By starting with illy, I am always assured a miraculous coffee is within my reach.

America has emerged from a dark age of coffee — where the coffee was black, bitter, hot and cheap. Now, the American consumer knows that coffee comes from a fruit, a product of nature that through careful cultivation, blending and roasting can achieve complexity and balance. As a master barista, I have studied everything there is to know about coffee, from farming to preparation. Now, I want to share that information with those who desire it. When someone uses your advice to do something better, it creates happiness — not just in coffee, but also in life. To confidently prepare a cup of illy, is to make your own happiness.

—Giorgio Milos

TKTK Perfect your coffee preparation technique with the help of illy master barista, Giorgio Milos.

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Giorgio Milos—
Master Barista, illycaffè S.p.A