

# Blandi Coffee Podcast

## All Coffee No Sugar

### with Patrizio Blandi



#### Episode 4: How To Make A Consistent Coffee Even If Your A Novice Part 3 The Brew Equipment

Patrizio Blandi: Welcome to the Blandi Coffee podcast. All coffee, no sugar. I'm your host, Patrizio Blandi. I'm also the owner and coffee roaster for Blandi coffee. Blandicoffee.com is my website. This is the place where you can find more information on ways to improve your coffee and ways is to improve your coffee experience. If you do enjoy the show, please subscribe to the show on iTunes. It only means that you'll be automatically notified when a new episode is available.

This is Episode 4, how to make a consistent coffee even if you are a novice. This is part three. Now I'm going to explain now about the brew equipment.

Before, I get into that and if you just started to listen to my podcast, I'm doing a five-part series. I will quickly give you a recap on the previous couple of episodes. I have already talked about how to find beautiful fresh coffee in episode two and in episode three, I've talked about six key features to look out for when buying a coffee grinder.

If you haven't listened to those episodes, please go back because they are the foundations on how to make a consistent coffee. You can listen to them individually if you want to hone into a specific topic, then you can listen to them but if you want to capture the overall picture, then it's best to listen to them each part, starting with part one.

I'm talking about the brew equipment in this episode. To keep it the same throughout each episode, I'm talking about a brew method in espresso brew method. In these series of episodes, I'm stuck to particular brew method and that is an espresso style brew method. I want to continue this on. As I've explained previously, it doesn't really matter what your brew method is. If you understand the concepts from all five parts, then it doesn't really matter what brew method you use. You're still going to make it consistent coffee and that's the beauty about this series of podcast. ®

If you want to brew espresso coffee in a coffee machine--if you haven't been involved in coffee before, I really suggest that starting off with the coffee machine is not a good idea. I suggest starting off with a stove top or French press. If you just come on the scene of coffee, buying a coffee machine can be overwhelming, it could be frustrating and it needs a lot of work. I truly believe in my opinion it is better start off being simple, using a stove top or a French press.

A French press takes less time to prepare and I think that is a great stepping stone especially if you're coming from the world of instant coffee.

It takes about the same time than making instant coffee. You are getting a fresh brew of coffee. That's the difference. You're going to get taste, you're going to get a different aroma; you're going to go in a different galaxy. It is a good



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stepping stone to come into and if you keep continuing that and your passion does grow, then you can look into going into making espresso coffee by having the espresso coffee machine at home, it can take some time for you to prepare a beverage.

People today are in a hurry and don't have time and espresso coffee machine is time consuming and that can be a lot of work as well.

So really these two different markets or uses for an espresso machine, there is a domestic market and the commercial market. The domestic market is what basically what you use at home and office, those part of environments. The commercial uses are take away shops to cafes, anything that has high volume that's becoming a commercial and where money is traded obviously.

Domestic type coffee machines. It is for home but you still need to know about making coffee. My opinion is you need to be willing to take a course and educate yourself on how to better your skills and how to use the machine. You need to read up on coffee so you can better understand about coffee and how coffee is brewed for you to be serious on making good coffee. You need to have an understanding of the equipment you are using.

Making coffee at home is about convenience. If you are trying to make a coffee before you go to work, if you're like me, you only have ten minutes to get dressed, eat something, have your coffee and get out. In ten minutes it's very hard for you to start an espresso coffee because it might take you ten minutes to get it going then to get the grind happening to dump one shot before you can use it. If you got ten minutes, it's going to take up more time.

If you're using a French press and like I said before, it's going to take as much time to make a instant coffee, it would make an instant coffee. Putting your coffee grounds, put in your hot water, stir it up, wait a couple of minutes, plunge it and you're done.

The time you need to wait for it to brew a little bit, you can go and make a toast, whatever, so, it's a better way of making coffee if you're going to use it for something you need to do in the morning. A coffee machine, if you got more time on a Sunday or when you come home after dinner, you can make your coffee, then that's a good time to make your coffee. You've got a bit more time to spend on it and to make that nice coffee. So you don't have to rush and then you're going to end up making some really bad coffee and you're going to get fed up and you're just going to stop and end up buying coffee from a café.



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If you do start on a stove top or a French press or any other methods like drip coffee and you do get passionate about it, then I suggest, “yeah starting up is costly” so you need to get a good grinder, a good equipment and there’s an up keep of a coffee machine as well. That’s the domestic use of a coffee machine; it is going to take you some time to understand the concept of making an espresso coffee. If you have skills, that’s great because then, you know what’s involved and you know what’s involved in cleaning and maintaining a coffee machine.

For commercial use, this is probably the biggest investment that your business will have to take because to purchase an espresso coffee machine is a very important tool in the part of making consistent coffee. If you buy an espresso coffee machine with the wrong features, it can impact on your business productivity, the quality of the coffee and the overall customer experiences. The coffee making experience can be unpleasant for you and for your customers. If you have the wrong equipment, that’s why I’m going to concentrate on the key features of a coffee machine that’s going to give you the greatest output to making a consistent coffee.

There are a lot of features you can get on a coffee machine these days, but we’re going to look at the feature that’s going to give you the biggest impact for the little amount of money and little amount of effort. If you do buy the wrong equipment, changing your espresso machine because of the wrong decision can be difficult because it is an expensive, it is a huge impact and that’s a very difficult price for you to change your equipment once you bought it.

It’s part of the learning curve, you buy something and over a couple of years, you have to put up with it, work around it, and then when the time comes, you can upgrade it and then you can upgrade it to something a bit more that encaptures the features that you need.

In a commercial environment, the coffee machine is used daily, this machine makes you money, you must invest money and time to look after it. Buying the right coffee machine will help you make a consistent coffee and will make your great espresso coffee; your milk froth that you produce from the coffee machine will be of high quality in caliber. That is one good feature to have by having a good machine. You are going to be prepared to maintain a machine, as I said in episode two, having your own equipment is about taking control of your business and if you have control of your business you can do whatever you want and you can find a new coffee supplier, you can do whatever you want. You’re not restricted by anyone.

By buying your own equipment, you know what you’re getting. You’re doing the research, you’re finding out what’s working in your business, what’s not going to work in your business. You’re going to invest into something that



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is suited for you and for your business. While buying your own equipment, you're going to look after it, you're going to make sure your staff looks after it and you're going to maintain it regularly and you might even have spare parts just in case to avoid any down time of your coffee machine if you're running a business. You buy that equipment, you invest more time to look after it and treat it in way should be treated.

I think you need to ask yourself some questions before you buy an espresso coffee machine. Some questions you need to ask yourself before you buy an espresso coffee machine, what is the main use of the coffee machine, how much volume will you put for the machine, how efficient do you want to be with your coffee machine and your business and what kind of redundancy do you have on the coffee machine if something goes wrong?

In my opinion, I would stick to big name brands, something like, La Marzocco, a Wega, I think depending where you are listening from. Some of these would be a popular brand; some of these might be a rare brand. It's best to ask they are service repairer and ask them what's a common or what parts they keep on hand. They will give you a brand and then you go look for a model to be within your budget.

There are three types of espresso coffee machines, there's a domestic espresso coffee machine, there's a semi-commercial and then there's a commercial grade. Then there is four styles of the espresso coffee machine, there's a manual, a semi-automatic, automatic and super automatic. You can find those different styles of coffee machines in domestic, in a semi-commercial and in your commercial grade coffee machines.

Now in your domestic coffee machines, they are designed to be around home, to be designed for consumers not for a shop or for anything like that. They look at what people average use of coffee machine is, you won't probably not have a water outlet where you can directly connect it to the main, in a domestic home. Some people might have that, some people have building and were allowed for that but generally, not everyone has a main water outlet so you can plug in straight directly to your main water so that will have a reservoir tank inside the coffee machine where you can pour in water and that's your water for brewing and steaming.

Domestic coffee machines, the brew pressure, espresso coffee brews at nine bars, nothing lower, nothing higher. There are coffee machines on the market especially in Australia that they say there are 19 bars, 18 bars, 15 bars. You get all this crazy bars of pressure. At the end of today, it can have that amount of pressure but the brewing pressure cannot be more than nine bars. It doesn't matter what the coffee machine is capable of brewing, it can only



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brew and it's limited to brew at nine bars if you make an espresso coffee. There's also a pod style coffee machine. This is defeating the whole purpose of having a coffee machine.

The reason why you have it is to have fresh coffee. Pod machines don't have fresh coffee, they're pre-packed in capsule and a pre-ground coffee in them. They are not fresh coffee, doesn't matter how well it's sealed whatever. Once you grind it, you got to use it within three minutes. That is the key to having that fresh coffee.

If you work out the amount of coffee, using the capsule, which is roughly about 5 to 5.2, 5.5 grams per capsule, divide that over a thousand grams which is one kilo of coffee, and you times it by each capsule price you're roughly looking at 99 dollars per kilo for your coffee. You are paying 99 dollars a kilo for stale coffee.

If you're happy to drink stale coffee, and pay that sort of money, you go for it but, there is no coffee in the market and you don't need to pay 99 dollars a kilo for coffee. You're paying convenience I agree, you're paying a very high price, and there is lots of ways you can enjoy coffee and be able to enjoy coffee that tastes a million times better than a pot coffee. It doesn't matter what you do unless you're putting in fresh coffee in there, you're not going to get a great tasting coffee.

The other thing with pod style machines, they have creamer enhancers. Although use a bit of robusta coffee in this that when you do brew the coffee, you can see a bit of cream happening so you get that creamer sensation then at the end of the day, in my opinion, it's crap coffee. It's very convenient, I'll give you that, it's a convenient way of making a coffee in the morning, pop in the capsule, bang, you're on your way in making espresso coffee Froths the milk, bang, does everything. It's easy to use for that convenience; you're just getting crap coffee.

With semi commercial coffee machines, there are hybrid, there are machines that's part domestic and part commercial. It's a mixture of both. They built the same way as a commercial machine; they probably used depending on the price range you're getting at. They use the same pumps, what they would in a commercial grade machine, but it's designed around domestic use and that means so it's still have a reservoir tank some of them, some of them will have a feature where you can connect to main lines as well that have that option.

The power supply is limited for domestic use, they take that into account and the foot print of the coffee machine designed to be around typical kitchen. That's a semi-commercial machine; it's taking both worlds into account. It's designed for home by having the commercial features of it, you can make some serious coffee with these machines



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but for a very low volume as well because if it has a reservoir tank, you're limited—how many coffees you can make, that typically one grip handle, it's very rare to have two grip handles in a domestic homes unless you got heaps of money to spend in and afford to have a machine of that expense.

They are generally more expensive than your domestic type espresso coffee machines but cheaper compared to your commercial machines.

The reason for that is one group says it's leaning down to one boiler and stuff like that so it's making one version of what three grip machine would be.

The amount of power that needs to power up so they are specifically designed around that typical home. Features available on a semi-commercials are like I said, you've got a reservoir tank or it can be directly connected to water mains.

Usually one grip of handle, typically on one grip head, built same as a commercial grade machine, has commercial pumps, heavy duty construction, it does have a high power consumption than your domestic but it is limited to your domestic power supply. And in a shredder for example, it's limited to a 10 amp outlet. You still need to clean and maintain the machine as you would a normal coffee machine. This does require some skill, it will make some serious coffee and you will not typically find your precious on this to be more than nine bars. There's no machines in semi-commercial I've seen that they display 19 bars or over or under that they say, this is a coffee machine typically brews at nine pressure, it's accepted to be at that.

So there's no marketing hype around that. This being typically like a commercial grade but for home use, they probably have a bit more start up time, quick start up time as you would in a commercial grade machine. It's for commercial –it is designed around a domestic environment so, it has to cater for people using it at home.

Commercial machines, the design of it is to handle high volumes. It's designed and built to be strong, the pumps they use is to handle the volumes of coffee. I think typically they start at two grips and up, I think four grips is part of being the max. It uses heavy duty pumps, the boilers heavy duty elements, heavy duty switches, heavy duty knobs. It's built to be used every second of the day, it's a piece of equipment to produce money. That's why they are so pricey because the switches they have to use or the electronics behind it have to handle a bit of brutality, pressing buttons constantly



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and it's going to take some weight. It's designed to take some grunt, the power consumption is typically designed to make you money so it's designed to make quick heating.

So it's something there to quickly heat, so it requires a bit more power consumption than your typical semi-commercial, your commercial grade machines. There is smaller lag times for heating up water when your water comes into the system. The elements will absorb a lot of power.

Features you get on a commercial grade, there's tons and tons but the main feature I like to talk about are the ones that will give you the biggest results and they are, each group head will have its own boiler. The steamer to froth your milk will have its own boiler. If you got a three group head, it will have three boilers, one for each one then one for the steamer.

A coffee machine that has individual boilers for each group head, you can individually control the temperatures on those group heads. They are the features that you look out for if you have a boutique coffee shop and you do serve simple origin coffees and they might be brewing it at different temperatures instead of 95, you might have to bring it down to 91 or 89.

Having that functionality to individually adjust the temperatures on the boilers is a great thing to have. Some coffee machines that are higher ends in the market have its own water pump. Typically you have one pump pumping out the three heads, but in your top end machines, they'll have one pump per group head and that's giving you access to bevel to control the pressure and have a constant pressure over each head.

If you have one pump controlling over three heads, you might have that drop in pressure because you are going to feed three heads. That's the difference, if you have one pump; it's dedicated to that group head and the great thing about having individual boilers and individual pumps, its redundancy. If you have a coffee shop, you can't afford to have your machine stop. Say if one pump does go which it's a machine, it's mechanical, things tend to break and you got to accept that as being part of the whole that it will break down.

So you got to accept that and having three pumps, it gives you the flexibility to shut down one group head and to use the other two group heads until you get that one fixed. If you do have a machine that has only one pump and it does go, it shuts down completely. That's what you should be looking out for. It does cost more money but you can look at the end of the day. You can lose more than that extra money that you need to pay for to have that feature in one day



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if it breaks down. Design, water stability, pressure stability and temperature stability, they are the things I was talking about. So, they are some features that you will see in commercial machines.

Styles of espresso machines, you have the manual, semi-automatic, automatic, super automatic. The difference between these machines are: manual machines, they were the machines when it first began, they were truly hands on machine. It did require a really high level of skill to use these machines. There are two types of manual machines that are direct lever machines and your spring piston lever machines.

The thing with these machines, very hard to repeat that's why you need a very high level of skill to be able to use a machine. The other reason why you can't repeat the same brew is because the springs that you're using there as time goes, the amount of tension on those springs will reduce and having that consistency will go, heat on the springs might produced at different type of brew when it first time it starts up colder spring, not much heat on it might produce more tension. It gives you a different brew set.

Depending on temperatures, when you use it, how often you haven't use it can all vary your brew set. It is a very manual machine, and it's a very hard to repeat the same coffee time after time. The way you can notice between a direct lever machine or a spring piston lever machine, you can usually tell a direct lever machine by the position of the lever at rest. The piston machines, usually elevated in the resting positions and the direct lever machines rest the lever at a down position.

This manual machine, there is another version of it and it's the bees knees of the machines today and it's come off the age today. It's given birth to these new high end pressure performing machines. And I think they have a few people that have gone back to realise that there was a good thing about these machines and a bad thing and only there are bad things to give you, these new pressure performing machines.

With these new machines, you can adjust the pressure at different times of it at the extraction process. You can adjust the pressure of the extraction at different times of the brewing cycle, the way you can repeat this is some machines have a program where you do it once and it can repeat it, if it isn't manual, you don't have that automatic system, you can repeat it by the weight and the time.

So, you will start off the brew cycle, you will increase the pressure to three bars of pressure. That will pre-infuse the grounds and wet the grounds and you keep it there for about five seconds then you will slowly increase that to nine



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bars a pressure, keep it there for about ten seconds then slowly reduce that back to three bars a pressure. Keep it there for five seconds and then for the last five seconds, taper back down to zero pressure and shut it down.

That is one example of how you can do it. It all can vary on top of being what you're trying to achieve out of the coffee machine so these new pressure performing machines are the business, they do give you a great coffee shot, unbelievable. I've tried one, it's beautiful, very expensive coffee machines, but you need to be very experienced, you need to understand the brewing cycle.

Once you understand that and have the experience, to be able to operate in a high volume under those conditions of producing a coffee with those adjustability throughout the brewing cycle, does require a high level of experience and understanding.

Then you have your semi-automatic machines. Semi-automatic is initiated manually by pressing a button, and is shut off manually by pressing the button again or it could be a switch. You can move the switch to the on position, and then shut it down when you finish the shot by manually pushing down on the switch and shutting it off.

The activation of the switches will engage or disengage the pump. The temperature is controlled automatically, the pump is automatically turned on, when you press the switch, and is shut off when you turn it off. You decide when to turn the pump on, and when to turn the pump off.

Automatic machines is initiated manually and it is automatically shut off at a preset volume of water. It shuts off at a preset volume of water and it is selected and programmed by the buttons on your coffee machines. There are single shots, or double shots, your long blacks; you can program all those features onto the machine. You are controlling and you are programming the volume of water going through the coffee machine. That's how it knows when to shut off. It looks for a particular volume of water.

Super automatic, I would not say it's the bees knees, but its more razzle-dazzle machines. It does grind, it does dose, it does temp, it's a razzle-dazzle machine. Grinds the coffee bean for you, it will dose it for you, then it will temper it, it will brew it, and then eject, it will eject the spent puck, and it's done. It automatically does the whole process for you.

There is a boot-in coffee grinder. These things are harder to adjust to get to the appropriate setting and if you do get it to the best setting you can, it does vary throughout the day, and readjusting that can be difficult. They're more preset for a convenient place where you can set up this machine, leave it there for an office or for a service station,



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where someone can just press the button, makes the coffee, and you're on your way. It has a built-in milk frother and the things I see with these machines is maintaining and looking after the machines, cleaning the grinder impossible but not impossible but harder to do.

Cleaning the pipelines for the milk frother; because you just put your milk bottle there, it sucks out the milk whatever it needs to froth the milk. If you don't clean that and maintain, if you don't sterilize the pipelines, then you're going to have a problem. It can make people sick, and that's what I've found when I've tried to have a coffee through these machines in a place where there's high volume. People don't have time to clean the pipes. They just sit there and keep filling up a tank, while they keep on putting the bottles there and having that someone cleaning that machine, I've never seen it.

Now power supply for these machines, power supply. Your domestic machines are more catered for around your domestic home. So they'll be low powered coffee machine. If you go to your semi-commercial, then they will start off at your peak for your domestic use, and they'll go up from that. So you might have to have a dedicated line on your semi-commercial coffee machines. In your commercial machines, it'll have to have its own power supply and these machines can take a fair bit of power. You have a choice of single phase, free phase power.

Depending on your installation, if you're building, feeding off a new place, then you cannot cater for this but if you have an existing coffee machine and you do upgrade, you must look at what you currently have at the moment and feeding with that, or you might have to get an electrician to give you a different line. In your commercial machines, you have a steamer, this can be controlled by foot pedal, or it can be controlled by a knob.

What features you can have on a coffee machine besides the main features of the coffee machines; these are a bit more to a convenience. If you can afford to get them, get them. They can make your life a little bit more easier.

A steamer, you can have a coffee machine that has the foot pedal. So instead of turning a knob, and if you are at high volumes, turning the knob all the time can be uncomfortable. And if you have a foot pedal, the good thing about is you put your foot on, it turns on, take your put off, it turns off. So you have that instant on and off, which is a great feature to have.

Cup warmers. Cup warmers are good to have because it prepares the cup for an espresso shot, to be set at a preset temperature. It gives you a longer time to have your creamer. Typically you see cups pointing down. If you do have a



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cup warmer, it produces heat so you will have to point the cups facing up. So you have the bottom on the machine and you do that because one, if you do that its warming the bottom part of the cup. That's where the beverage will go, your coffee shot, your brew, will go on the bottom of the coffee cup.

If you point them facing down, you're warming up the lips of the coffee cup. It will eventually dissipate the heat throughout the cup, but you are giving the main heat onto the rim of the coffee cup. Its better if you point them up; and the heat that's produced from the cup warmer will keep the dust off the cups. That's only working; it keeps the dust away, only when the cup warmer is switched on or when the coffee machine's on. When the coffee machine's switched off, the radiation of the heat will not keep the dust of the cups because the heat is moving up side, and there's nothing that can fall onto the cups. So that's why you point the cups, and put the cups onto the cup warmers.

The other thing is the grip heads. You've got a lot of things that are on the market now, and it's like pre-infusion. The pre-infusion on the grip head is for a couple of seconds before it starts the brew cycle. It pushes the water at a lower pressure; it won't have enough pressure to push the water through the coffee grounds, and to produce a beverage. Just enough pressure to wet the grounds and stay there and then the machine will activate the pump at the operating pressure of nine bars and that's where you'll get the coffee to start off and make your brew.

Temperature stability is a good feature. It provides a constant temperature on each group head. It's electronically controlled and it saturates the grip heads so the grip heads—there's a circulation in the grip head that continually keeps that grip head at a particular temperature, and the water in that grip head is at a particular temperature. So when you turn on that brew cycle, you will get that temperature that you desire, straight off the bat. And that's what temperature stability, constantly circulating around the head. So there are no cold spots or hot spots. It continually moves around so keeping that temperature stable.

Another good feature to have is for tall cups. In Australia we have 8 ounces and 12 ounces, and some places that have 16 ounce. My opinion is you should have 8 ounce and 12 ounce. Nothing more if you're going to serve a coffee beverage, like a latte or a cappuccino. If you're going to serve anything higher that 12 ounces, then it's more like a milk beverage. Then it's flavoured milk. So you can have a coffee flavoured milk. It's no longer a coffee. Its flavoured milk so stick to those two cup sizes, I think that's the ideal because you're there to drink a coffee, not to drink milk. If you want to drink milk, you order milk that has coffee flavour in it. So when you look for a coffee machine, look for something that can cater for those cup sizes that you're going to use, so 8 ounces and your 12 ounces.



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Another feature to look for is the ability to change the grip handles, and have grip handles that can handle different size baskets. So you can adjust those baskets for the coffee you're going to use. You're single origins or your blends, or your decaffeinated coffee. What I believe is a good way to find your coffee machine is to ask your service provider. The people that service coffee machines; ask them "what is the most stocked parts you have, the most common machines that you service." Don't ask one, ask a couple of service providers. That will give you a range of coffee machine brands that you can keep an eye out for. The reason for it, down time.

The longer it takes for your machine to get up and running again, you're going to lose money. Every second counts. Having parts available is very important. Having a machine that has very hard to get certain parts; or parts that are not common, they have to order them in, that is down time for you. And that means you're not making money or you have to cater by borrowing a coffee machine from someone until that machine is fixed.

Borrowing coffee machines, my belief is own your own equipment. It is expensive, and there are people out there that are stuck with coffee suppliers that supply them with a coffee machine. Getting out of those contracts; or getting out of that situation can be hard. My belief is get out of that situation as quickly as possible. Own the equipment. It's easy for me to say cash flow can be a problem but there are ways. There are ways that you can get out and own your equipment.

There are companies out there, designed for hospitality industry that will give you money on a rental arrangement. You can rent equipment, and you can buy it out after say a year or two years. You can do it that way so you don't have to use your cash to buy the equipment. You can pay it off at instalments. It does cost you a little bit more, but at the end of the day, using your cash flow to completely get rid of your cash flow. You can use them to get you the machine, and then at the end, you only have to pay half or something like that. There are finance companies that you can save up. There are ways that you can get out of it. If you really want to get out of it, you'll find a way. It's anything, if you really put your mind into it, you can get out of that.

Action steps. If you are locked up in a contract from your coffee supplier, take some steps towards owning your own equipment. If you are taking steps to buy a coffee machine or to get your own coffee machine, look at the equipment you've got, look at the power supply you've got. Ask an electrician to come in and quote you up what's it going to cost you so you know what your expenses are, and where you stand. There is a bit of information there for you to absorb.



## Blandi Coffee

Master The Way You Make Coffee

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# Blandi Coffee Podcast

## All Coffee No Sugar

with Patrizio Blandi



### Episode 4: How To Make A Consistent Coffee Even If Your A Novice Part 3 The Brew Equipment

So I believe that's the most important features to have in a coffee machine that gives you an understanding of what to look out for in a coffee machine. I've given you these things to look out for if you are looking to buy a coffee machine, on what key features are going to give you great results. There is a lot there for you to absorb, and a lot for you to research on. I'm going to leave it there; they are the main features for a coffee machine.

I really want to thank you for listening to the show. If you have enjoyed the show, and if you believe it has helped you in any way, if you reviewed the show in iTunes and give it a five star review, it makes it more accessible to more people. It will go up in the ranks, and more people will be able to access all these information like you have. Thank you very much, thank you for joining me, and please enjoy your coffee, Bye.

[END OF RECORDING]



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