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## On The Table #22

### Caffe Espresso At Home—Giotto Machine Review

Dear cyber reader As you are reading this, I can assume that you are driven to have the finest tasting espresso you can prepare at your fingertips. You are seeking quality. But, let's be honest now, doesn't a little (or a lot) of sex appeal in the machine make a difference?

If your like me you need a quality espresso, but a little sizzle helps prepare the mood. Well, have I got good new s for you. The Giotto makes the best espresso of any home machine I have tested and most of the commercial ones too. And it looks like morphing chromium, oozing over your bar. Take a look at the photo of the Giotto below.



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#### The Machine

The group head design is similar to the old E-61 of the Faema but has been re-engineered by the Manufacturer, ECM (Espresso Coffee Machines) of Milano, Italy.

Changes include a re-designed thermo-syphon type of heat exchanger, with a flow control feature built in. As you can surmise, one of the biggest problems facing espresso machine engineers is the effort to control the temperature when different volumes of water are demanded. Additional temperature stabilization efforts include a thick brass endplate for the boiler that serves as a heat sink.

So what we have here is the best effort at producing an espresso machine for the home with professional machine engineering. And, they have succeeded.

#### The Coffee

The shots I brewed were thick and a deep red brown. There was no bitterness, but I was unable to capture all the sugars present in my coffee either. I only ran the machine for a one hour test, ( after a 48 hour warm-up period) and on the balance I think the espresso aficionado will be very pleased with the coffee produced by the Giotto. It certainly beats coffee made by an untrained barista and also is better than the super-automatic machines I have tested.

This machine does have the pump power to extract espresso at a full 9 bars of pressure. The pressure rig I put in the head, (a gauge attached to a porta-filter, there is no pressure gauge on the machine) shot up to 14 bar, against a blind filter, after about 10 seconds. The gradual rise in pump pressure assures a very nice pre-infusion of your espresso coffee. As we have a machine with full pressure and, a professional weight porta-filter, and reasonable temperature stability all of my published professional techniques apply to using the Giotto in your home.

## **The Steamer**

Drawbacks include the steam pressure. It contains just enough power to texture 1/6th of a liter, enough for one cappuccino, of milk in a narrow 1/3rd liter pitcher. Remember, to texture the milk the steamer has to have enough power to spin the entire volume of milk in the pitcher. So, less steam pressure limits the barista to a smaller steamer pitcher. But, steamer recovery is very quick. The steam boiler is easily adjustable with a handy knob on the internal pressure-stat and gives you a range of brewing temperatures and steam pressures to experiment with. I made my test with the pressure set at the half way point in the little green zone on the gauge which is the suggested operating pressure for the machine.

The machine draws water out of a little tank you fill manually. It holds about 2 liters I would guess. Drawing from its own "static-tank" assures the home barista of consistent pump pressure on the coffee. The machine has a tiny drain tray under the group that will need to be emptied after each session with the machine. These internal water supply and drain tray assure that the Giotto is free standing, requiring only a 110 volt electrical circuit to operate. That is a very nice feature for installation into your home, it does not have to be "plumbed in."

## **Accessories**

I am asking the distributor to create a package for my readers that includes a Mazzer Mini grinder/doser, a Vivace 58mm packer, and a 1/3rd liter steam pitcher with each Giotto sold. This gives you the same set-up I would use if I owned the Giotto in my home. For pricing and distribution information please contact Burgess Enterprises at [www.burgessenterprises.net](http://www.burgessenterprises.net) or by telephone at 1.206.763.0255.

**Ciao for now!**

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