

«Der Kaffee muss einfach sein» The Coffee Must Simply Be Good

Die Schweiz ist ein Kaffee- und Espresso-Land. Und das zeigt sich nicht nur in der Produktion und im Handel. Über die letzten Jahre hinweg haben sich mehrere Unternehmen spezialisiert auf Espresso-Maschinen und haben sich etabliert, indem sie fantastischen Kaffee versprechen.



Bild: Christian Bauleier/Keystone

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When asked if they can still enjoy coffee, Dorothea and Marco Tschümperlin smile. „Only in very few places,” they admit. „Honestly, after a fine meal, a bad coffee just ruins the experience. They know what good coffee is, as Dorothea and Marco Tschümperlin developed the premium Gilda espresso machine in 2012. The machine is manufactured in the city of Lucerne. Price tag: 3,995 Swiss francs. The idea arose from the need to create a machine that heats up quickly, is energy-efficient, and, most importantly, „consistently produces really good coffee, time and time again.“

Scene change: Where SBB trains are used to be serviced in Zurich, the air is now heavy with the smell of coffee. „That’s not us, actually,” says Moritz Güttinger, pointing to the other side of the corridor, „but Vicafé’s roastery.“ Güttinger is the CEO and founder of Zurich-based coffee machine manufacturer Zuriga. Since 2016, the company has been producing espresso machines locally, starting at 1,800 Swiss francs. Like Gilda, they are labeled „Made in Switzerland,” sustainable, and efficient. Güttinger, a trained environmental engineer,



Die minimalistische Zuriga in der Version ohne Dampfzange. Bild: zvg

began his interest in coffee for a simple reason: „The coffee at home was just not good, even though I spent several hundred francs on a machine.“

A Coffee-Loving Nation Back in the canton of Lucerne, Marco Sangermano, co-founder of the Kriens-based startup Unica Coffee, initially wanted to create a machine solely for himself to finally enjoy better coffee. It was only later suggested to him that he could market the espresso machine as well. The startup was founded two years ago, and now the „first machine with flow control and filling“—control over the water flow—is being manufactured in Switzerland and offered for around 7,500 Swiss francs. 7500 Franken angeboten. Sowohl bei Gilda als mit Gilda, Zuriga, und Unica, the same question arises: What does one get for such a high price? For many Swiss people, starting the day is much easier with a good cup of coffee. On average, one cup turns into three, placing Switzerland among the top globally with approximately 1,050 coffees consumed per person per year.

However, opinions differ on how coffee should be enjoyed. After George Clooney first popularized the iconic slogan „Nespresso. What else?“, in 2006, capsule machines suddenly appeared in many households. They remain highly popular, with the Nestlé subsidiary promoting them as offering „the perfect espresso experience“ and highlighting the advantage that the coffee is always consistent. Fans of Café Crème, which is particularly popular in Switzerland, often prefer a fully automatic machine from Jura, while purists favor the well-known Bialetti moka pot. Experten sind sich jedoch weitestgehend einig: Wenn es um Geschmack geht, sind es die Espressomaschinen—und nicht die Kapselmaschinen. „Espresso machines—commonly referred to as piston or lever machines—lead the pack. Of course, there are significant differences among these machines as well. The most affordable models for private households start at around 150 Swiss francs. Upwards, the price range is virtually unlimited, increasing with the device’s functionality.

Quality Over Price

„The problem with machines costing 150 francs?“ asks Moritz Güttinger of Zuriga rhetorically. „They also feel like 150 francs.“ The build quality is poor, the machine itself doesn’t last very long, and expensive repairs are usually not worth it. With its sleek stainless-steel casing, Zuriga takes a stand against this and promises:

The machine is repairable and practically indestructible. „Our machines are built to require as little maintenance as possible. Many of the very first machines from 2017 are still in daily use today—completely without repairs or servicing.“

Revisions of the machines are carried out in the former SBB workshop in Zurich and only there. This is not necessarily convenient, as a reader of our newspaper noted. For example, if a resident of Lucerne wants to bring their machine in for servicing, they first have to transport the heavy device to an Altstetten—or pay for expensive shipping. Und liegt darin, dass Zuriga die Vermarktung und den One reason for this is that Zuriga handles its own marketing and distribution, having opted against working with intermediaries. The machine is exclusively available through the online shop or the five company-owned stores, with only one of these located in Switzerland (Zurich). „This is also what makes us so attractive in terms of pricing,” says Güttinger. And he has a point when you compare models. If a machine is to be high-quality, it will quickly cost over 1,000 francs—and it’s often a foreign-made product.

„Everyone Should Be Able to Operate the Machine“

Gilda is also manufactured in Switzerland and is designed to be fully repairable, but it costs significantly more at nearly 4,000 Swiss francs. How is this price justified? The founders

point to the heating system and the high-quality materials. The machine features two boilers—one for coffee and another for steam, which requires a higher temperature. These complex systems are much more expensive to produce than classic single-boiler models, such as Zuriga’s entry-level machine. Marco Tschümperlin explains, „With Gilda, we have developed the most energy-efficient and fastest dual-boiler machine.“

The machine is indeed expensive, admits Dorothea Tschümperlin. However, she frames it more as an investment than as a simple household appliance. „A Gilda really lasts a long time,” she promises. Moreover, the clientele is very diverse. The founders recount, for example, a story about a student who saved money for two years to finally afford the machine.

Unlike Zuriga or Gilda, the Kriens-based startup Unica has incorporated extensive artificial intelligence into its machine, which is another factor contributing to the high price. According to Sangermano, about 50% of buyers are private customers. However, the machine is far more powerful, built exclusively with professional-grade components, and can easily be used in restaurants.



Das preisgekrönte Design der Gilda ist seit Gründung unverändert. Bild: zvg

Many other machines in the gastronomy sector cost significantly more—and offer less. Thanks to the AI, users receive immediate feedback on grind size and flow rate after each coffee extraction, enabling even beginners to make excellent coffee.

Both Tschümperlin and Güttinger share the goal of making coffee preparation as simple as possible. Their respective machines are stripped down to the essential functions, so you don’t need to be a coffee enthusiast to enjoy a good espresso. Happy in the Es-Nische zu trinken.

Marco Tschümperlin of Gilda doesn’t believe there is too much competition in the market for locally produced espresso machines. „We complement each other well—with other market players. Each of them has found their own niche,” he says.

What unites all these companies is a focus on healthy, steady growth rather than rapid expansion. As Tschümperlin notes, producing twice as many machines all at once might compromise the quality they aim to maintain. And on this point, they are all uncompromising. Or, as Zuriga CEO Güttinger puts it: „The coffee just has to be good. Every single time.“

Biogen baut in Baar erneut ab – 95 Stellen betroffen

Pharma Der Medikamentenhersteller Biogen muss sich weiter verschlanken. Erneut trifft es den Hauptsitz des US-Konzerns in Baar. Im Rahmen eines strategischen Gutachtens habe man «die Ausrichtung von zwei Abteilungen bewertet», heisst es in einer Stellungnahme. Konkret geht es um die Bereiche Biosimilars und

Pharma. Letzterer bleibe eigenständig, werde aber effizienter aufgestellt, erklärt eine Sprecherin auf Nachfrage. Biosimilars hingegen werde aufgelöst und in die globale Filialstruktur integriert. Biogen ist unter anderem in den USA, Europa sowie Japan vertreten. Der 1978 in Genf gegründete Konzern forscht in der

Neurologie und entwickelt Wirkstoffe gegen schwere degenerative Krankheiten wie Alzheimer oder Multiple Sklerose (MS). Die Schweiz, wo Biogen auch über eine Fabrik im solothurnischen Luterbach verfügt, bildet nach den USA den grössten Standort des Konzerns. Solothurn ist laut der Sprecherin von den jet-

zigen Massnahmen nicht betroffen. In Baar werden derweil insgesamt 95 Stellen überprüft. Ein «beträchtlicher Teil» davon soll in neuen Funktionen weiterbeschäftigt werden. Wie viele gehen müssen, ist zurzeit noch unklar. Das Konsultationsverfahren sei kürzlich abgeschlossen worden, führt die Sprecherin aus. Die letz-

ten Gespräche mit den Angestellten habe man am Donnerstag geführt. Es gebe einen Sozialplan. Nun sei es an den Mitarbeitenden, zu entscheiden, ob sie das Angebot annehmen. Die kantonalen Behörden seien informiert. Biogen kämpft seit längerem mit wachsenden Einnahmen im Kerngeschäft: der Vermark-

tung von Therapien gegen MS. Bereits im Vorjahr hatte der Konzern 1000 von weltweit rund 8700 Stellen gestrichen. Nach der neuesten Umstrukturierung sollen in Baar noch etwas mehr als 400 und schweizweit über 900 Angestellte verbleiben.

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