

BLANDI COFFEE PODCAST

ALL COFFEE NO SUGAR

with Patrizio Blandi



Episode 5: How To Make A Consistent Coffee Even If Your A Novice

Part 4 Milk

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 where you can go and find more information that can help you improve your coffee and improve your coffee experience. So have a little sticky beak because I’m pretty sure you’ll find something there that you will like.

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This is Episode 5: Continuing on with the Theme on How to Make a Consistent Coffee Even if You’re a Novice.

This is now Part 4: Milk. We’re coming towards the end of this mini-series. There is one more part to this mini-series which would be systems. If you’ve been following the series on how to make a consistent coffee, well done.

By the way, I just want to thank you for following me on this journey in this series. If you’re stuck with it, thank you very much and I hope you enjoyed this journey. There is one more final step, and you can be let loose to make your coffee.

It is a very intense series and I think it is a very important series. If you truly believe and have the same passion as what I have about coffee and making a great cup of coffee, then this series is for you.

Please go back to Episode 2, which is Part 1 where I start the series. That’s concentrating on finding the great coffee, the perfect coffee. Then we move on to Part 2: Finding the Perfect Coffee Grinder. Part 3 being looking for that perfect coffee machine that’s going to make you the ultimate coffee. Now, we’re in Part 4. All these series concentrate on the very small things, the basic things that you need to look at that is only 20 percent effort, which is going to give you an exponential output. We’re looking for 80 percent results. But just doing these little things is going to get you the biggest result.

I keep mention little things that’s going to give you the biggest results because they’re overlooked. I would say a major part of the places I go to fail are only on these basic steps. They concentrate on the most complicated and the fanciest things, which will give you very little output.

Making something look nice is not going to make it taste nice. That’s very important. I’m not saying it’s going to look crap, but if you make something look – especially with milk. That is the final step in your brewing process.

The majority of coffee drinks in Australia are milk based. This podcast is worldwide, so I’m guessing that the majority of the coffee drinks, depending on which part of the world you are, will be milk based. Some will be the end of the step when you make a coffee, then your espressos, your ristretto then maybe touching on the macchiato which require a little bit of milk. It requires a little stain of milk put into the coffees.

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This is an important step as well. So if you're making your beverages look pretty with rosette, with latte arts, that is a very hard thing to do. Making that micro foam is very hard. If you just have micro foam and you just pour into your coffee but you make very good milk, you're not burning it. You're not overheating it and you're treating it right, then you're not spoiling the taste.

We got to provide a consistency with our milk as well. Concentrating on these basic steps is better than performing art on the milk, which in my personal opinion is concentrating on those first, then really tapping to those final things of making the final result look nice and present it to your customers.

I also aim this series for domestic purposes. So if you're at home making your milk, it's going to be very hard for you – you're probably not interested in making rosette. You're probably interested in making them an experimental thing – basically when you make a coffee and add milk to your coffee to make it a latte or a cappuccino or flat white at home.

This is very important as well for someone making a coffee beverage at home. I'm sad to say that this part being the milk part is really overlooked by nice baristas in the coffee industry. There is a lot of pressure on giving the coffee out quickly, not wasting milk and sort of bending to customers to needs.

Sometimes, they will ask you for some wild request like making the milk really, really hot. If that's what the customer wants, they're paying – the point is trying to educate them. You can tell them, "personally this is not the best way to be serving you the beverage. But if that's what you like, I got no problem. These are the reasons why."

Basically, always do milk do your milk the same. Froth it a temperature that is exactly the same. So if you do get a request that they want it hotter, then you know what the step is beyond your normal step. If you don't have a standard when you froth your milk on temperature, then it's very hard for you to regulate. So it's your shop. Make it standardised when you froth your milk.

Heat it to specific temperature so that if there's any request that requires you to froth it beyond that step, you can and you know where it should be passed and have far more surpass it. Only do that for specific customers. Don't do that for everyone.

Typically, if one person is asking or saying that the milk is not hot enough, it doesn't mean that the milk is not hot enough. To them, it's not hot enough. Don't change the way you make coffee because of one customer.

Now, this is the final step to making your beverage. So if you're making espresso or ristretto or macchiato, after the shot, it's pretty much this. It's stop. But if you're making a milk-based beverage, then this is the final step. So if you followed the series and you've made that perfect shot, you need to follow on the consistency and that quality beyond that shot. That's in the milk process. This is the final step before the customer receives the beverage.

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As I said before, a lot of concentration is put on how good the froth looks or the micro foam you created or how pretty you can make the beverage look to your customers with rosette and hearts. That's not going to make the taste better or make the milk not burnt. It's going to give you a visual satisfaction not taste wise.

You should be instead focused on delivering an unchanged milk flavour and froth to an optimal temperature for your customers. It doesn't matter how good it looks to your customers. You can destroy it by making the milk incorrectly. That's something I really want to knock down in the series that milk is a very delicate product. It could make people sick if you don't treat it well. You can burn the milk if you don't froth it to the right temperature or if you froth it beyond a certain temperature and reusing milk that's being frothed all ready.

The things I want to talk to you about here are the insights, the basic steps that people should be following. If you walk into a café, I'm saying about 80 percent of the cafes out there don't follow these steps. If you do, you will knock them out of the park. People walk into a café and see you carrying out these steps, you will freak them out because this is something that not many people do.

Overheating the milk because a customer's been is telling you that milk's is not hot enough and you want to froth the milk – say, you can't make everyone happy don't change your system. You shouldn't be changing your system. You need to froth the milk at the appropriate temperatures so that the milk doesn't curdle. It doesn't give you a burnt taste, also the way you handle the milk as well so that you don't make people sick.

When you froth milk for a takeaway cup, the jugs are pretty much suited for your takeaway cups and your ceramic cups that you use for sitting inn or people dining inn. Those jugs are pretty much close to those cup sizes. So you only need to add the milk to use a milk jug appropriately for your cup size. So that amount of milk is enough to fill up the cup.

Just saying they ask you for three quarters of a cup full, you still use the same amount of milk as a full cup. You froth it the same way so you get it up to a certain temperature. Usually that temperature, you can start by using a gauge or you can use by touch. That will give you the temperature where it should be froth. That temperature is pretty accurate.

Once you get into that optimal temperature, you pour it into the cup. You fill it up three quarters full, and what do you do with the remaining milk? A lot of people what they do is add new milk to it and re froth it. That's a no-no.

When you add new milk, you're going to spoil it. So if you make one bag coffee and the milk's burnt, by adding warm milk to that jug, you're just going to keep tainting the milk flavour. That's going to taint the milk beverage that you're going to give to your customers.

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Part 4 Milk

So it's very important that you froth your milk to a certain temperature, you chuck away the remaining milk. They've paid for a full cup of milk. It's not cheaper because they're getting three quarters full. They're still paying for the full price. What you do is you chuck out that remaining milk, you rinse the jug. The important thing is you rinse it so the jug is clean. There's no residue left over of dry milk, any heated milk in there.

You could rinse the jug with a jug rinser and you add your new milk. A lot of things I see as well is that some coffee shop places are not busiest sometimes, so what they do is the remaining milk, they leave it in the jug and they put it into a cold food display or into the freezers below so they can reuse that later on.

If you're trying to reduce cost, that's one way. If you're trying to reduce your customer base, that's another way as well. It's very important. It's so basic that people have paid for that milk. You're not wasting milk. It is a waste when you say you didn't chuck down in the sink, but it's not a waste. It's an investment because if you froth that milk away, there's a customer in front of you and you're frothing milk and you serve someone and you chuck that milk away and you rinse that jug in front of them and the jug looks clean, they don't have that residue on top of the jugs, it looks ugly and it looks sickly. Is that a word? I don't know but it should be a word because it's really, really bad.

If the customers see you rinse that jug and it's clean, they will talk about it. It's very important. It's not just about frothing milk, it's handling the milk, too – how your milk is treated when it's delivered. How long has it been at room temperature? When you take out the milk jug and put on top of your bench to start frothing milk and then you start getting a slow period, what do you do with that milk? Do you leave it on a bench or do you put it back in the freezer?

So you got to try to keep the milk as close to the cold temperature so that the milk is cool. When you froth the milk a cool level, you get that nice firm micro foam. If the milk is hot, you're starting to degrade the milk and leaving it a room temperature. Like I said, milk is delicate so if you keep putting the milk into variable temperatures, then you're going to start destroying the milk.

So if you're getting your deliveries, say two or three hours earlier than when you come into your café, and then it sits there for two or three hours before someone racks up to the site to open up the shop and put them into the cool room, then you've let that milk slowly degrade for two or three hours.

Then you put it back into a cool room and then you try to bring it back up to an optimal cool temperature. What you do is you take it out again when you're making your beverage and then you leave it on the bench. It takes you half an hour here, half an hour there if it's not busy. You're slowly degrading the milk.

So like I said, it is a very delicate product and it is affected by change of temperature. It requires proper sanitation of the equipment that is used when you froth your milk and proper storage and handling. How long the milk is delivered and how long it has to stay at room temperature before storing in a fridge?

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If the milk jug is rinsed every time, you froth new milk. Do you dispense the leftover milk? Do you reheat any leftover milk? How hot is the milk when you froth it? Overheating the milk would give you a burnt taste. If the milk curdles because you overheat it, it's one cause when the milk curdles. It can also be the coffee that you use. It's usually in the more soya style milk that you're going to get curdling.

Frothing the milk correctly at the right temperatures – it could be the coffee that you're using that could have a bit too much acidity. The best thing we can do here is have on your bench a milk jug rinser.

This can be bought from your local parts supplier or someone that sells spare parts for your coffee machine or a place where they sold coffee industry cups or coffee grinders or your blend coffee machine. They'll have a milk jug rinser. They cost around \$300, roughly.

This would be quick way to rinse your jugs in that commercial environment. You can have that in your home as well, but it does require to have a means of pressured water connected to it. You can buy this either flush mounted or surface mounted.

Flush mounted means that you cut out the bench and it sits flush with the bench. A surface mounted means it sits on top of your bench. It can be repositioned or it could be fixed. Either way you can suit the situation you're in. So if you have a bench like a granite or marble, you don't want to really cut away any part of your bench, it's going to degrade the strength of your bench.

In any way, the best thing to do is buy a surface mounted one. You probably need to drill a hole to divide a drainage point and to connect your main water to it. So that's something also to look at when you buy this. You need to be connecting water to this milk jug rinser.

When you get your jug, you tip it outside down and there's this little spray. When you push down on it, it sprays water into your jug. It sprays at this heart pressure rate, cleans out your jug and any residue on your jug as well. If you do that consistently with every milk that you produce, then that jug will be always in pristine condition.

Heating up your milk correctly – you can do this by starting with buying a thermometer. These thermometers are designed for milk temperatures. So there would be a setting on the thermometer. There would be red mark to indicate that's the temperature the milk should be at. That's usually around 60 to 70 mark. Sixty-five in between is probably the ideal temperature. I'm talking about degrees Celsius.

You can use that to start you off. Then I suggest you use one hand to hold the milk jug handle, so you can hold the milk jug. Then with the other hand, you turn on the steamer on your coffee machine and then place the palm of your second hand onto the front of the milk jug.

Then as you're frothing the milk, you'll see the temperature slowly increase. Then you see the temperature on your gauge increase as well. So when you get into that 65 degrees Celsius, you'll feel that heat. Usually the heat is uncomfortable to have your hand on that jug. So it's fine to switch that off.

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By the time you switch that off, it should be around the 65 to 70 degrees. That's a good way to sense start getting that feel for heat with your hand. So then later on, what you can do is you leave that thermometer and then you fill only to froth your milk.

If your milk does curdle, have a look at the temperature. Put the thermometer in there and have a look at the temperature that you heat it up to. If it's above 70 degrees, then you're going to no go zone with milk. That's when you start to burn it. If you're starting to use soya and you go by those temperatures, milk can curdle.

Storage and handling of milk is important as well. How the milk is delivered and left on location should be looked at. I've personally seen milk delivered the night before and left in front of the café at room temperature.

So if you got a really hot day and that milk heats up, you could start destroying the milk. Milk is delivered a couple of hours earlier because milk may have a very early run. Sometimes, cafes don't open – probably, the earliest is 6 a.m. If the milk is being delivered at 3 a.m., then you're having the milk sit there for two to three hours before someone actually puts that milk.

It doesn't really mean that if someone arrives there, they're going to put the milk into the cold room right away unless they're really pedantic and they do that.

I think looking at your delivery is very important. Try to adjust the delivery. As soon as you receive it, you put it into a cold room. Another thing is handling the milk. So when you pull out a new container of milk to use it for frothing your milk, put in on the bench, feel busy. You'll go through that too later on milk pretty quickly. But if it does get quiet, I suggest putting that milk back into the cold room or back into the freezer below your bench.

So have a freezer below your bench just for milk is very important. When it does get quiet, check that milk back into the fridge so you keep it at an optimal temperature. If you lay it on the bench, it's a really hot day, then you're going to start degrading the milk. It's something you don't want because milk is really, really delicate.

It's a dairy product so if you leave it out to room temperature, it does spoil the milk. Every customer is different. What I can suggest for you to do when you are frothing milk for your customers, do it one way only. If a customer comes up to you and say that the milk is too hot, it's not hot enough, then adjust it appropriately only for that customer.

Make sure you remember that customer so when he comes back in or she comes back in, remember this person wants it hotter than I usually do it. If you do it hotter and you give it to the customer, they will love you because you remembered. You could easily adjust for those customers if you have a standard heating process.

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Don't change your methods because of one customer's complaint. If you are a busy café and you're busy and you're saying that you can't rinse jugs every time a customer comes in, that's untrue. I tell you because if you have a milk jug rinser right next to you, all you need to do is dump the milk, which the milk jug rinser has it drained. You tip it upside down, the milk comes out. Press down on the milk jug rinser, it automatically rinses your jug. That's going to take you no more than two or three seconds – say, five seconds max.

I'm pretty sure if you invest five seconds extra, I'm pretty sure your customers will appreciate. The beverage is going to take 10 seconds or 30 seconds more because you're cleaning the jug and giving them absolutely the most outstanding amount of effort to put into your beverage. They'll appreciate that.

Then I'm willing to wait to extra 30 seconds because you're rinsing the jug. If they say that, they won't complain about why it's taking so long. There is an investment of say \$300 plus the cost added into your installation they have in your original shop or you can factor in designing a new shop.

Buy your jugs appropriately to have a jug suited for your eight ounce and have a jug suited for your 12 ounce. Then if you want you can buy a jug for two beverages and then more than that. If you have one customer come in, you've got to froth milk for one customer and you got a big jug. You're going to waste a lot of milk.

If you have different size jugs for your different cups, then you can – if you have one customer and it's an eight ounce cup, you use your eight ounce jug that's going to make that appropriate milk for the cup size.

Using different milk jugs to suit your takeaway cup – if you have jugs that's going to suit your sitting customers, then you're not wasting milk. Milk jugs are designed for the cups. Just tip on the milk jugs. You probably need to get two versions of it. If you really want to be efficient, you put tabs on those. Put a blue one for your normal milk and a pink for your light milk. For your soya milk, have a different colour as well.

The reason for that is if you got to froth different milk. If you're making full cream milk, like soya milk as well, if you don't have these tabs on your milk jug handles, you can get confused on what's what when you place that on the bench.

If you're really busy, you might not be paying attention. You'd be putting those jugs down and then you don't know what's what. So a tip is buy three versions of your milk jugs. Usually, in a typical café, you have three jugs. You have your eight ounce. You have your 12 ounce, and you have a bigger jug that suits for two cups.

In Australia, what I really suggest, if you're in any parts of the world, is concentrate on those two sizes, I believe that eight ounce is a perfect size for a milk-based coffee. A 12 ounce is when you want to a larger size. I know there are bigger sizes like 16 ounce, 24 ounce and so on. But when you go beyond 12 ounces, it's no longer a coffee beverage. It's more a milk-based beverage with a coffee flavour in it.

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I truly really believe in this. If you want to stand out in a coffee shop environment, I believe that you should only stick with two sizes with coffee. I can totally relate to why milk-based beverages are more common is because you want to be able to enjoy the coffee more and to enjoy a little bit longer than the essential black.

Eight ounce and 12 ounce is the ultimate way on making coffee. If you get beyond that, I'm not saying you should be serving it, but you're serving it under a different environment. If you can really optimise to say your eight ounce and 12 ounce cup sizes for a café, for your milk-based beverages, I think that's the ideal way to go about having a café.

If someone does require something larger, it caters for that. But as a standardised thing in your shop, have only eight ounce and 12 ounce. Their purpose only is for coffee. Like I said, anything beyond 12 ounces is a lot of milk. I know you put extra shots in the milk and that's fine, but you are consuming a lot of milk.

Everyone has different standards for who you are, eight ounce and 12 ounce. If someone else requests it, then cater for that. You need to sort of stand for something not cater for everyone. You can't cater for everyone all the time, but if someone does request something and it has bacon and eggs, then you just need to cater for that.

You just say, "No problem. I can give you a bacon roll without the eggs." You do the same things, remove the eggs. Same thing. If someone requests, "Do you have a bigger version of this?" You said, "We don't usually stock it but I can make something up for you." That's the best way you make them happy.

People walking into the shop, they know that you have two sizes anyway. This is pretty much it for the milk. This is not rocket science. It's very basic but these basic things absorb it. It actually starts for you to take go out there and buy your temperature gauge and see when you're frothing milk.

Invest money into milk jugs that suit these cup sizes and buy the different versions. Put those tabs on it. You can buy it in different colours. You can buy a blue one. You can buy a pink one. You can buy a yellow one.

You know your blue ones are your full cream. Your pink one is your light. Then you can go yellow for your soya or your almond milk, whatever you use. Then invest money into a milk jug rinser. Buy one. Get it installed. If you don't have one all ready, I suggest get that. That's very important.

That alone, if you do buy that, you're going to increase your quality output by at least 50 percent by rinsing your jugs, cleaning out the jugs, chuck out the milk, change the delivery of your milk. If it's been delivered too early, find another appropriate time. Contact your milk delivery person and say to them, "I want to get it closer to six o'clock," if that's when you open up or at seven o'clock, at least someone's in there.

As soon as they get the delivery, they put it inside. I'm pretty sure, if you're buying a lot of milk from this person, they will cater to that request. Another action step that you can take, go out. Take your family out. Enjoy yourself. Go for a coffee in a number of café shop, locally or further out from your local place.

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Part 4 Milk

Go and see what they do. Have a look. Observe. Do they rinse the jug or do they heat the milk again?

I'm pretty sure if you start observing this, you'll see the patterns that they don't follow the basic steps. I've seen it in a lot of shops I'm going to. A milk jug rinser is not a common thing to have. If you do have it, you're going to outdo your local coffee shops around you. You're going to outdo them, and you will knock them out at the park for sure.

There are some action steps you can take, and I really hope that this episode really fine tunes into how important milk is and getting it correctly and looking after that milk as well. I want to say thank you. Thanks for listening to the show. I hope you enjoy the show.

If you believe this show has helped you in any way – if you review the show on iTunes and give it a five star rating if it's deserved, you will only make it more visible to people. So I just hope you would make it more visible to someone. It's going to help more people. That's the aim of this podcast is to help as many people as possible, people like you that are really passionate about making your coffee better and enjoying coffee much more.

So thank you for joining me on this episode, and I hope to see you on the next one. So bye for me and enjoy your coffee.

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