

Nespresso citiz machine, launched July 2009

Designers: Antoine and Philippe Cahen

For her 93rd birthday my Granny wanted a new coffee machine. Apart from making coffee the machine had to froth milk, as Granny loves cappuccinos. But as she is almost blind and her hands are crippled with arthritis we could not find a machine that Granny would be able to operate.

Then 3 month ago the new *citiz* machine by De Longhi appeared in the shops. It was a risk but I invested some 300 Euros.

Granny never short of a good idea managed to raise the large lever with her wooden cooking spoon! She had no problem to drop in the Nespresso capsules and then push down with her elbow the oversized lever. The separate milk frother, called aeroccino by the manufacturer, has a large opening that Granny can see and steady the milk with her shaky old hands.

The cerated surface of the aeroccino breaks the light in interesting ways, making the form appear less aggressive and much smaller than its actual size, but above all, it gives Granny a better grip.

Luckily my investment had paid off. And apart from her cappuccinos Granny loved the machine's simple shape that she could clean without help and, to our surprise, Granny even liked the luminous red colour of the machine.

Whether unwittingly or not the designers Philippe and Antoine Cahen have succeeded to design a true **Lifetime Product** for everyday domestic use.

Whilst Granny could operate the machine she could not pronounce or remember its awkward name *citiz*. Having worked in the UK for the past 20 years I suspect it to be an English word but neither I nor my friends can safely say whether it is a verb or a noun and what it could possibly mean!

Sadly, the complicated name *citiz* misfits the compelling clarity of the form. As Antoine says the idea was to produce something very compact. To be very disciplined in the form and to produce a shape with a very strong character.

A fascinating look inside the machine reviews how its slender form explodes with technology crammed in quite miraculously (illustration I).

The development time for *citiz* was only 6 month but to achieve such a successful marriage between design and technology it took 3 years to reach the market with all parts Swiss made.

The original brief was to design a modular system to remove the messy milk frothing from the Nespresso machine into a separate beaker, the aeroccino. The aeroccino idea is truly revolutionary and despite being protected by patent the idea is already being copied worldwide.

The whisk inside the aeroccino is fixed magnetically and the rotation is given by the magnet. The aeroccino itself docks on much like an electric kettle.

Antoine and Philippe sum up their design philosophy with a modest and simple statement: "We do not want to design only style but products that work well on the inside. We hate decoration".

"20 years ago it was obvious that form followed function. Everyone agreed with that." And now Antoine says: "I am not so sure. We wanted to return to this approach. The message is the outside shape is a result of the inside. Like a person, even though sometimes the outside is lying"!

ends.

Gabriele Bramante