

# Roasting refinement

*Beanscene* talks with Artisti Coffee Roasters Founder Luke Floyd about his decision to select and upgrade to an IMF 30-kilogram coffee roaster and blender.



Artisti Coffee Roasters uses an IMF 30-kilogram hot air roaster.

Six years ago, Luke Floyd of Artisti Coffee Roasters faced the same dilemma roasters experience when transitioning from life as a small business to a medium or large-scale operator with expansion needs: stick with the same roaster or upgrade in size.

Luke came to the realisation he had quickly outgrown his 10-kilogram roaster and it was time to shop around.

“It really was quite daunting going in search of a new roaster as there were so many considerations to be made,” Luke says.

However, after months of research and consideration, Luke decided the best roaster for Artisti Coffee Roasters would be an IMF 30-kilogram hot air roaster paired with a 120-kilogram post blender.

“It was like going from driving a Datsun 180b to a Ferrari supercar. The upgrade was huge. I’d say we were early adopters of the technology and haven’t looked back since

we started using the equipment four years ago. Now, you won’t see me using any other brand other than IMF,” Luke says.

His decision came down to five key considerations: size, price, quality, control, and performance.

“At the time of purchase, we were looking at installing a roaster and blender into a smaller facility than where we are currently located, so size was a major factor,” says Luke.

“In the end, we eventually decided to move into larger premises, so we had more room for green bean storage, and therefore size wasn’t overly important. However, the whole roasting plant only takes up six by three metres in floor space, so we still have plenty of room for future growth due to the compact size of the IMF plant.”

Luke says it was also important that his roasting plant had an afterburner, destoner, loader and blender for his preference of post-blending. His decision was made easier

knowing the IMF plant incorporates all these elements in one compact unit.

“It arrives fully assembled, so the cost of installation was minimal,” he says.

“We like roasting individual origins and being able to assess them, and the 120-kilogram post blender allows you to isolate the bean and has the flexibility we wanted.

“The 120-kilogram blender is also very compact and sits right next to the roaster. The coffee is automatically loaded from the destoner straight into the blender. As it turned out, the IMF was significantly lower in cost than many other options when considering all the add-on equipment and installation costs. Some alternate options meant having to pay for an installation team to fly out from Europe for two weeks.”

Manufacturing quality is also extremely important to Luke. Being located in the regional town of Coffs Coast in New South Wales, he says Artisti Coffee Roasters has

limited access to qualified tradespeople for back-up support compared to city-based roasters. As such, it was important that the equipment was reliable and consistent to minimise breakdowns.

“The IMF is built in Italy and the craftsmanship is absolutely superb. Before making our decision, I spoke to a number of IMF owners in Australia and they all had nothing but praise for the equipment,” Luke says.

He says IMF Australian agent Will Notaras, who is the Managing Director of Roastquip, has always been readily available to fulfil his needs when it comes to the roasting equipment.

“The installation and support from Will is second to none. He always answers his phone and has been there for back-up support whenever we’ve needed it, which hasn’t been too often mind you. Will has years of knowledge with roasting equipment and has sold IMF plants across Australia and New Zealand,” Luke says.

Control was another key requirement for Luke when choosing a roaster. He wanted the ability to use automation and manually override any parameter in real time. The roaster also had to have accurate temperature stability.

“The IMF [roaster] ticks all the boxes. It has one degree accuracy in temperature control, and up to 50 parameters that can be altered per profile with up to 1000 profiles which can be stored,” says Luke.

The rate of rise can also be easily changed at any time during the roast.

“Once you understand how to set each parameter, you can then let the roaster do all the work including loading, roasting, cooling, destoning and blending fully automatically. The operator can also be packing coffee while roasting, which is a huge labour saving,” Luke says, noting that the IMF roaster also comes with an oversize cooling tray which indicates that IMF is



The roaster saves Artisti Coffee Roasters at least 30 per cent in gas consumption.

in-tune and thinking of ways to make a roaster’s life easier.

IMF roasters use only one burner chamber that sits to the side of the roaster. As the coffee is roasted, emissions leave the drum via a steel duct into the burner chamber to incinerate and purify the hot air. Some of the clean heat in the burner chamber, which would otherwise be released into the atmosphere, is re-circulated via a stainless-steel duct back into the drum. Ambient air is mixed into the duct electronically to reduce the heat to the required temperature to heat the beans for roasting, and the cycle starts again.

“This saves us a minimum 30 per cent in gas consumption, which is a huge cost saving, especially in the current economic situation where gas and electricity prices are increasing substantially,” Luke says.

IMF uses its exclusive Vortex and Equaliser roasting technology to roast the

coffee with precision and consistency.

“The Vortex system mixes ambient air into the hot airstream before it enters the roaster via an electronically operated modulating valve, so the air is already at the correct temperature before it enters the drum giving consistently uniform temperature of the hot airstream through the entire roasting process on every roast,” Luke says.

“The Equaliser ensures the same volume of air enters into the roaster. This feature delivers equal volumes of hot air both inside and surrounding the perforated alloy drum surface, giving even heat distribution across the entire surface of the coffee beans, and eliminating any temperature fluctuations inside the drum. Temperature and air volumes can be adjusted according to the coffee blend or single origin via the PLC touchscreen.”

At IMF’s headquarters in Italy, sustainable initiatives are also front of mind. The IMF factory receives 25 per cent of its electricity from solar panels on the roof. Roastquip Director Will Notaras says further upgrades to reduce greenhouse gases is a priority for the factory, as is its continuous research and development on all product lines. He says climate change is “everyone’s responsibility”.

“Not only does the IMF roaster reduce greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, but it also saves roasting companies enormous amounts of money in energy costs, so it’s a win-win situation,” he says.

“When it comes to environmental sustainability, it’s Roastquip’s and IMF’s main focus, with a primary target to continually reduce our carbon footprint.” **B**

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