

Your Business Is Our Business!

Salvatore Espresso Systems Brings the Mastery of Italian Coffee to America

By Leanne Cooper Elliott

It's the classic American success story: man from Italy comes to America with very little English skills and even less money; but he had a dream and a will, and that was enough for Salvatore Cisaria to change the face of coffee drinking in America, one perfect espresso at a time.

After immigrating to Los Angeles in 1986 from Ostuni, Italy, the now beloved Italian we know simply as Salvatore, left behind notable fame as a master craftsman to find

In 1989, Salvatore moved to Santa Barbara and opened a showroom, Salvatore of Santa Barbara, where he sold imported espresso machines. For several years he focused mainly on repairing machines in restaurants and coffee bars, until one day he decided to set up a manufacturing facility to produce his own line of espresso machines. By the end of 1993, his first 50 machines were in production and subsequently purchased, which prompted Salvatore to present what he called his Famosa Line to the rest of the country.

for his most discerning clients, he also produces three signature models: the automatic, the semi-automatic and the lever machine for those who want to practice their technique.

Technique is right. Coffee making is a science, especially to an Italian. A perfect espresso, according to Salvatore, starts with high-quality beans, ground in a semi-commercial grinder, and tamped down into what is called a portafilter that's slid into the front of the machine, where the two most important components to exceptional coffee come into play – heat and pressure. Salvatore's machines produce perfect measurements and the result is a smooth, rich shot of espresso with a thick head of crema.

Customer Eric Nadler agrees, "The espresso shot that one can create with this machine is among the best I have ever had anywhere in the world, and that includes most of Northern Italy."

All this quality aside, some of us might be thinking this is great but a little too technical for a morning cup of Joe. For those in doubt, rest assured. Countless Salvatore fans have written in praise of the surprising simplicity that the Salvatore machines afford even the most inexperienced coffee maker.

"In my opinion," said customer Jay Cocks, "Salvatore has 'bridged' the gap for those just starting out, all the way up to the most skilled and experienced barista. With its ease of use, easy learning curve and potential to produce consistent phenomenal espresso, this unit is an exceptional value."

If you're curious, Salvatore welcomes



A custom-design espresso machine.

visitors to his factory. When he's not cutting and molding, he's often found giving tours to fellow coffee enthusiasts. He is tireless in his pursuit for excellence, and it shows in his calm enthusiasm and his patience in explaining why no detail is overlooked. As one customer sums it up,

"The Salvatore is more than just an espresso machine. It is the creation of a man dedicated to the best."

**For information about
Salvatore Espresso Systems, Inc.**
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Visit www.salvatore-espresso.com
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— All Photos By Leanne Cooper-Elliott

Salvatore molds a piece of copper.

a foothold in America. His elegant, simple designs were known throughout Italy, with Fendi, Gucci and Valentino counted among his most notable fans.

In California, however, Salvatore was an unknown. He washed dishes and waited tables in an Italian café until he could find work repairing espresso and pasta machines and other restaurant equipment. In 1988 he started Salvatore Espresso Systems, selling coffee, importing Italian espresso machines and performing repairs.

It was about this time Salvatore realized Americans were becoming much more selective about their coffee and how it's prepared. Watery, drip coffee was out and words like venti latte, cappuccino and macchiato infiltrated our vernacular at an astonishing rate. But still Salvatore realized that few people knew about espresso and espresso machines. Coffee at home was still limited to drip, and if you wanted European-style coffee you had to go downtown to one of the many coffee houses springing up on every corner.

Leaving behind Santa Barbara and the commercial side of espresso machine repair, Salvatore moved his manufacturing to Solvang and opened Salvatore Espresso Systems, Inc., which turned its focus to home-use espresso machines of a quality and craftsmanship that is unrivaled in the U.S. Keeping in line with the technique of the Italian masters that were his mentors, Salvatore makes every machine to order. The entire machine is made of copper, brass, and stainless steel—not a single rubber or plastic part in sight. Every piece his hand cut, molded, soldered and assembled in Salvatore's two-level shop, where spools of copper casing and die cuts are neatly lined on shelves.

"My machines are for real connoisseurs of coffee," Salvatore said. "They are very simple to use, just a few buttons, but they produce espresso that can only otherwise be found in Italy."

Although Salvatore still designs custom machines for coffee bars, and creates elaborate custom in-home machines



Salvatore with his signature automatic espresso machine.