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THE HAND PROVES MIGHTIER THAN THE MACHINE

Consumers are rejecting machine-produced items when buying everyday products in favour of handmade

When it comes to food, drinks and clothing, Britons prefer handmade items that have been uniquely crafted by skilled specialists believing them to be of a higher quality than machine made equivalents.

According to an independent nationwide study commissioned by Costa Coffee, a third of consumers admitted they were now buying more handmade items than a year ago with 40% saying they would be happy to spend more for handmade goods despite difficult financial times. A quarter of these people said they would even spend up to 20% more.

Key Findings:

- Only 10% of people said they'd rather buy machine made items than those handmade by a skilled, experienced person.
- 60% of people believe handmade items will be of a higher quality, and when it comes to food and drink will taste better.
- Almost half (46%) of Brits prefer handmade items to machine-made equivalents because they are unique and have a personal touch
- 60% of respondents appreciate that more time and care is taken over making handmade items.
- In terms of coffee 47% of respondents say it tastes better when prepared by hand, by a skilled barista, compared to just 11% who are happy to settle for machine-produced drinks.
- Over half (51%) of people said they believed consumer goods to generally be of poorer quality now compared to the past

Following previous independent research this year which found that seven out of ten coffee lovers prefer Costa cappuccino to its competitors, Costa has commissioned this new study to find out more about UK consumer preferences, specifically focusing on the value people place on how everyday items are made.

Every single cup of coffee sold in Costa coffee shops is made by hand using traditional Italian manufactured espresso machines that rely heavily on the skill of highly trained baristas to control the entire process from bean grinding to milk frothing. This personal

touch ensures Costa produces the best tasting and quality product possible, bespoke for each customer. Many of Costa's competitors by contrast use 'Super Automatic' machines that fully automate the whole process with staff involvement limited to the pushing of a button.

The research was commissioned by Costa in conjunction with craft guru and TV personality Danielle Proud and independent academic, Helen Carnac. A full report will be available at www.costa.co.uk on Thursday 1st October.

Commenting on the research findings, Danielle Proud said:

'There is a real trend in the UK for quality, hand-made items, whether they be unique furnishings or a quality cup of coffee. People have a huge range of choice of products to buy, however what's clear is that they enjoy the choice but want something that is bespoke for them, that reflects their taste and even their personality.'

Helen Carnac, who has written a report for Costa based on the findings, said:

"Handmade items not only are bespoke and individual to the person they're made for, they also give people the opportunity to engage more with the ingredients that they are made from and to understand more about their history and the process that goes into making them. Despite the recession, the research identifies that people search out quality, unique products rather than those made in automated 'factory line' type of process"

Gennaro Pelliccia, Master of Coffee at Costa said:

"Costa's heritage and history and care in handmaking speaks for itself: as a company we still operate from the same Roastery in Lambeth, South London, that was set up by the Costa brothers in 1971. Great coffee cannot be made from a machine alone. Coffee making is an art and our baristas are highly trained and take pride in personally hand-making every single cup of coffee to order for our customers, unlike some of our competitors whose coffee is machine-made. And the best bit about it is we do not charge any extra for this hand-made touch."

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About Costa:

Costa was founded by Italian brothers Sergio and Bruno Costa in 1971.

Costa's in-store baristas are all coached in the art of coffee making at the company's unique Costa Coffee Academy based at its own roastery in Lambeth, London.

Costa Coffee was the first UK coffee shop chain to commit sourcing Rainforest Alliance Certified Coffee.

Costa set up a registered charity (no.327489) in 2006 called 'The Costa Foundation' to help the communities within the countries from which Costa sources its coffee beans. The Costa Foundation has now built and runs 12 schools, with more planned.