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Technivorm MokkaMaster CD

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QuickShot Review rating: 8.7

I've wanted to review a Technivorm for a long, long time - I can remember as far back as three years ago, I visited the [Boyd's booth](#) at the Anaheim SCAA show and gently hinted it would be a good review subject. This past year at the Atlanta SCAA show, I stopped being subtle :) A month later, the machine was in my greedy little paws.

The machine they sent me was the [MoccaMaster CD](#), or "Clement Design" Moccamaster. I have to admit, was a very hesitant first choice. Remember the "holy grail of coffee makers" listed on the intro page? The perfect consumer coffee brewer must do the following:

- Introduce water at the proper (195-204F) temperatures to the bed of ground coffee
- Fully saturate and extract from the bed of ground coffee
- Complete a 10 cup (1250ml) brew in under 8 minutes (which allows for an optimal 4 to 6 minute saturation time for the bulk of the brewed coffee)
- Ensure good even distribution of the brewed coffee in the finishing container
- Keep the coffee fresh after brewing for at least 1 hour.



Right away, the CD model had a major strike against it - a glass carafe with an active heating element. This is not the way to keep coffee fresh. It keeps it hot, but not fresh. Coffee can cook on heating elements built into most machines. The ideal solution we have these days are efficiently built stainless steel vacuum thermal carafes. Some of the Technivorm models, including the [KBTS Models](#) (\$195), or the [Clubline Thermal](#) models (\$205).

So why did I reluctantly agree to the CD model? Well, partially because it's the best looking Technivorm of the bunch, and it is the newest design, both inside and out.

Out of the Box

Technivorms ain't packaged for yer fancy store bought shelving displays, I can tell ya that. :)

Our MokkaMaster CD model came in a nondescript plain white box, albeit one with a handle. No fancy graphics, just a few words on the box about what's inside. That's cool. **What does concern me a tiny bit is that the packaging may not stand up to your standard UPS driver having a bad day - I'd like to see a bit more secure packaging in the main box.** But Boyd's double boxed the shipment, and it did arrive in excellent shape, nary a dent or problem.

Inside the box you'll find things fairly spartan as well: there's the machine of course; a pack of 10 #4 Melitta style filters, another pack of Boyd-supplied filters, and a small manual. Oh, and there's a nifty tag that tells you the machine was hand built and individually tested! That's cool - these machines get the same treatment as \$1000 espresso machines.

Now, I don't mind spartan. In fact, I prefer it. But if Technivorm wants to make it mainstream, they may want to consider jazzing up the graphics a bit, and possibly producing a bit more literature to go with the machine, especially when talking about why it's a SCAA Certified machine. After all,



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Joe and Jane America love the flashy boxes on the shelves at Bed, Bath and Beyond.

Hand Tested

All Technivorms are hand tested before leaving the factory.

As mentioned above, the machine arrived in pristine shape. I gave it a look see, top to bottom.

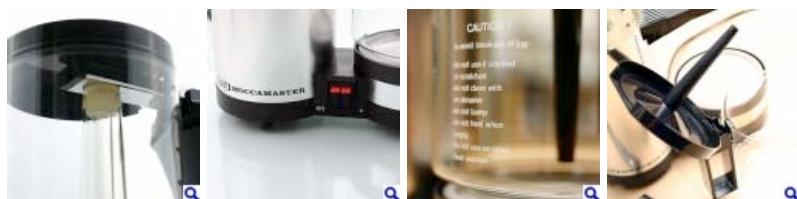
First thing I noted was the metal "bar" that crossed over from a water area to the filter area. It's removable for easy cleaning and well, it's basically a piece of rectangle tube metal with two caps on it, and two holes - water goes in on one side, moves over to the filter side, and falls out.

On the left upper portion of the machine is the water reservoir, with the heating system for the agua directly underneath. The carafe has no measuring marks - they are on the reservoir. Simply fill to your desired amount by noting the very visible markers. You'll also note a central tube running up the middle of the reservoir - this is where the heated water goes up to the rectangle tube bar at the top of the machine. Supposedly, you can see the boiling (bubble) water as it goes up the tube (We'll find out below!)

On the right side, a cone filter holder sits, with a nicely designed "auto stop" spring loaded swing arm underneath - meaning you can remove the carafe to pour a cuppa during the brew (you rich coffee stealer person, you!). Two caps, both cut to manage the rectangular water bar, are supplied for both the reservoir and the filter basket.

As you move down the left side of the machine, it's basically a satin finish stainless steel column - very spiffy looking. In the middle bottom you'll see two switches. One is for brewing, and the other is for turning on or off the heating plate under the carafe.

On the right side of the machine sits the carafe and it's heating plate and slot in stand. The carafe features Technivorm's unique brew distribution tube - a tube that goes from the lid right to near the bottom of the carafe. This is designed to "stir" up the brewed coffee as it enters the carafe. As the coffee in the carafe cools slightly, all the new coffee introduced during the brew circulates through a slow-motion conductive heat process. Very nifty. In other carafes, the continually brewed coffee stays near the top of the liquid mass, requiring a good stir at the end of the brew to fully mix up the coffee.



Water Chamber

Water Chamber's spout attaches to a horizontal travel bar at top.

Switches

Two switches - on / off switch, and an "extra juice" heating switch (more on that below).

No measurements, but

Warning labels on the carafe.

Mix Spout

The unique mixing "spout" built into the Technivorm lid.

The machine draws a lot of power - 1475W for both the water heater and hot plate, drawing over 13 amps of power. Vrrrrrrroooooooooom. It weighs in at ?????????? and sits 15 inches tall - tall for a coffee maker, but still fine for most kitchen counter cabinetry.

The finish on the machine is exquisite - brushed, satin finish stainless steel, black trim, some polished steel parts, and glass and a slightly yellow plastic for the reservoir.

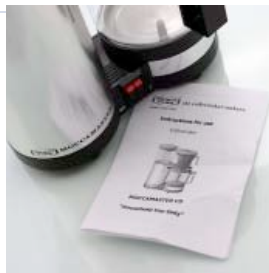
The machine is made in Holland (how many things do you own that are manufactured in Holland!) and as mentioned in the preview, they are all handbuilt and individually tested before they ship.

First Use of the Technivorm MokkaMaster CD

Normally I say "read the manual" here, and yes, I'm still saying it, but I take issue with some things in the MokkaMaster's rather super-spartan manual.

I guess the first thing that had me shaking my head a bit: "For 10 cups, use 5 or 6 spoons of coffee". Wuah? The golden rule in coffee making is one measured tablespoon per "cup" (or about 120ml) of water. The MokkaMaster can brew 1250ml of coffee (that's the measurement of water at the "10 cup" mark) which means 10 tablespoons of ground coffee. Not five or six.

The second thing that jumped out at me is that the second switch on the machine - the one I assumed was to turn the hot plate on or off. Not quite. The hot plate gets very hot when the machine is working. If you flip that switch, you activate "extra" hot. Even hotter. Bake, baybee, bake! The manual says "Always switch the hotplate to the + or extra hot position" Sigh.



But I always follow the rules first, so after doing a few water-only brews to flush out the machine and prep it for my first brew, I set up a 10 cup brew, using 5.5 "spoons" of coffee, and turned the hot plate on to the "super duper" hot position.

As a bonus, I decided to leave the coffee sitting on the super duper hot plate for an extra 30 minutes (even though the manual makes sense at one point, by telling me to drink the coffee quickly).

The result? Baked, weak and bitter coffee. And I used super quality beans from our coffee supplier, **Intelligentsia Coffee Roasters** (I used the capable Fair Trade Organic Mira Flor from Nicaragua - a coffee that, two hours before this test brew, blew my socks off in a vac pot).

K, note to Boyds: Re-write the manual. And put some meat into it. Correct the bad spelling and grammarey, do more than photocopy it for distribution (or at least use a colour photocopier), jazz it up a bit, and get someone who knows both the machines and quality coffee to research, proof and edit the thing. A little effort goes a long way. Where's the talk up about the SCAA's certification? Where's the detailed talk about how to achieve quality brewed coffee? Where's the photos of a good extraction vs. a poor one? And what the heck does "one spoon" mean?

Using the MoccaMaster CD by Technivorm

Once I started using the MoccaMaster "my way", things got a lot better. Here's the way I used:

1. Preheat the glass carafe.
2. Only brew 10 cups (1250ml), never less unless absolutely lonely.
3. Use one rounded tablespoon of medium grind, super fresh (and fresh ground) quality coffee per "cup" brewed
4. Use Melitta #4 "Flavourpore" filters, or better yet, **a Swiss Gold #4 filter**
5. Use only fresh, filtered and cold water to brew.
6. Grind literally seconds before you plan on brewing.
7. Leave that bloody "super extra hot switch" off.
8. Have a 1litre (or bigger) stainless steel carafe, preheated with hot water, ready to go as soon as the brewing is done.
9. Activate the brew switch as soon as all is in place.



Active!

Knowing the water is boiling is never an issue with a Technivorm.

Why should you do some of the above? Well, 1) you should always have your receptacle preheated. For 2), these machines were best designed to brew at their max capacity - brewing with less means you're fudging on the equipment's design somewhat. For 3), do I really have to explain the importance of quality, fresh brewed coffee?.

For 4), the Melitta Flavourpore design allows more coffee oils to drop into the brew - normal paper (like the ones in the box with the machine) trap too much of these. Gold plated filters, like SwissGold, are even better. For 5), water makes up 98% or so of the brew - why not use the best?. For 7), do I have to explain that one? Okay, I will. Actively heating brewed coffee is extremely bad for the quality of the cup. It burns off the delicate aromas and introduces more and more bitters.

For 8), I truly believe the best way to have brewed (non espresso) coffee in large volumes is by maintaining it in an efficiently designed steel vacuum thermal carafe. It keeps the coffee hot, without actively heating it. If you want to keep coffee around for an hour, this is the only way to go.

So what was the result? The result was pretty fine brewed coffee. I really enjoyed that first cup of Mina Flor; but it still wasn't as good as the vac pot comparison from the morning. I had to delve more into this.

Operation of the MoccaMaster - The Good Stuff

As I continued to test the MoccaMaster over a period of three weeks, I got to find a lot about the machine I liked. Here's some of the highlights.

Temperatures

I guess the most important thing is the temperatures - all the claims by Technivorm and the SCAA's testing are true - this is a 200F+ brewer. I ran the fluke on it in five separate tests, under a variety of conditions (hot water to start, cold water to start, cold draft hitting the machine, etc). Here's the averages, from the time I flipped the brew switch (note, water doesn't start entering the filter area until around 55seconds or so, and the first "with water" measurements are a ramp up).



Ahh heaven

Check this bad boy's temperatures out.

Temperature Averages, Moccamaster

	Start	30 sec	1 min	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30
<u>Fahrenheit</u>	83.7	83.5	110	170.2	198.4	201.3	202.5	203.1	203.7	202.4	201.2	200.9	199.2	199.5	196.8	194.7
<u>Celsius</u>	28.8	28.6	43.4	76.8	94.1	94.8	95.1	95.4	94.7	94.0	93.9	93.4	92.7	93.1	92.2	90.4

The machine peaked at 203.7F (95.4C) max, and by the time the real saturation of the ground coffee began at about 2 minutes in, the temperature was at near 200F.

The brewing time was also very good. I measured an average of 6 minutes, 25 seconds from the time the brew switch is flipped on, to the time the water heating ended (a low "click" is audible). The last drips of coffee leave the filter at 7 minutes, 12 seconds after commencing the brew. With the 1 minute or so "wait" for brewing to commence and the lag at the end, this machine does a full 10 cup saturation brew over a period of 5.5 minutes - a great progressive saturation time overall.

Carafe Design

The innovative "Mixing Lid" design (as Technivorm describes it) really does a good job of eliminating the stirring a filter drip brewer normally requires. Since most consumers never think to do this, it introduces one more automation that improves the cup of coffee. This is a definite plus. I think Technivorm owns a patent on this, and if they do, good for them.



Aesthetics, Maintenance, and Noise

I think this is a great looking machine, easily the "prettiest" in the Technivorm lineup. The company has long since been accused of making ugly machines, but this one definitely does not live up to that questionable reputation. It looks great, it's easy to clean. It appeals to the tech geek but also to the neat and tidy person. It just plain looks great on the counter.

I like the fact that there's no timers on the machine, and it has an auto-off ability. Timers are even worse than glass carafes on heating elements. They influence people to use stale coffee when brewing.

Cleaning is easy, even easier than many auto drip coffee makers. The entire filter assembly can be removed for easy cleaning in the sink, or in the dishwasher (though there's no indication in the manual if the filter assembly is dishwasher safe or not - it may not be - the seals on the bottom might have their life shortened by dishwasher use). The machine wipes down nicely, and overall, clean up is a snap. Even the carafe is easy to clean, with a wide open lid that allows even big mitts like my hands to get inside to clean thoroughly.

On the noise front, this is easily the quietest brewer I've ever used. It's even more quiet than the Capresso MT500 (our head to head machine below, and our previous "quiet brewer champion"). I think the reservoir design does much to dampen any heating noises in the machine - the column of heated, bubbling water rises up in a tube in the middle of the reservoir (and there's a double insulation thing happening, with an outer tube, and an inner tube). You can barely tell this thing is brewing when it's own - the only noise is the muted drip in the filter basket. Even the carafe's noise level is quiet, thanks to the "mixing lid" tube that pushes water down into the brewed coffee, instead of falling on top of it.

Operation of the MoccaMaster - the Not So Good Stuff

There's a lot to like about the Technivorm MoccaMaster, but there were also things I had issues with. Let's start with the obvious.

Carafe and Hot Plate

Other than timers on coffee brewers, there's nothing I dislike more than heating plates on these kinds of machines. They only serve one purpose - to keep things hot. Unfortunately, they end up baking and ruining the coffee, and they do so very quickly. If the MoccaMaster ever comes in a thermal carafe version, it would be so much better. For now, invest in a good thermal carafe to transfer your coffee into, after the brew is complete.

Saturation of the Ground Coffee

This is a more unknown flaw in the Technivorm's design, and one that makes me wonder just how valid (or worthy) the SCAA's "certification program" for auto drip coffee brewers really is.

The machine's distribution pattern of the hot water over the bed of coffee, in a word, sucks. It's just a straight drip or fall. No spraying pattern, no full saturation of the entire diameter of the filter area. Just drip drip drip into the middle of the basket.



This isn't good. Not all coffee in the basket is saturated properly. I've seen

coffee on the sides of the basket that is barely wet. If you followed the manual's instructions to brew with only "5 or 6 spoons of coffee", it's even worse - no wonder that first cup was so weak.

Full saturation of the bed of ground coffee is absolutely crucial when quality counts in a progressive saturating brewing method, which almost all auto drip coffee makers use. There's a reason why vac pots brew such a great cup - not only do they brew with near-perfect temperatures, but they also brew with full and total saturation of the grounds (as does press pots). Commercial auto drip coffee makers (and more and more consumer models) feature a showerhead or multi-hole pattern design to distribute brewing water more efficiently over the bed of coffee. Technivorm doesn't. This is a design flaw that needs to be fixed if they really want to be the "holy grail" of auto drip coffee makers. And the SCAA needs to look at their certifying program a bit better too :)

That said, this is an easy thing for the user to overcome. You can do it in one, two or a combination of two ways.

- Don't put the carafe under the filter assembly right away during the start of brewing. This will fill up the filter (be VERY careful you don't overflow it - remove its lid to observe), and help the coffee become more fully saturated.
- Stir the coffee in the filter assembly - use a chopstick. I do. :)

Conclusions

You know, I hate ending the main part of any review on a bad note, and truth be told, the good in the Technivorm MoccaMaster CD really does outweigh any bad.

The fact is, this is a quality coffee brewing system. Built rock solid (I have no concerns whatsoever about the quality of build and workmanship of the product), it was able to handle a marathon session of twelve brewed pots, back to back, during one particular testing session.



Yes, there's some niggles for me. My biggest concern is tied between the lack of a good dispersion pattern for the "showerhead" (in quotes because it doesn't have what could be called a showerhead), and the glass carafe and heating plate. But you can easily fix that latter problem by picking one of the thermal carafe Technivorms instead - they all brew using the same high quality water temperature control systems.

There's a lot to like: The Technivorm MoccaMaster CD looks good. It delivers almost perfect water temperatures to the filter basket. I had the unique Mixer Lid design that self-stirs the coffee as it is brewed. It is by far the quietest coffee maker I've ever tested. It brews the 10 cup pot in what I consider a near-perfect time. It's easy to clean up, and as mentioned above, it's built rock solid.

Do I recommend the Technivorm? Yes I do. In side by side brewing tests, this machine sometimes outperformed our previous "quality leader" machine, the Capresso MT500*. I would like to see the MoccaMaster come out with a thermal carafe version, and this may be in the works. And also remember - I'm extremely picky - while I get bothered by heating plates and glass carafes, 98% of consumers couldn't care less about that option; heck, some of our readers even prefer a hot plate, glass carafe setup.

As for a rating, I'd rate the Technivorm MoccaMaster CD 8 out of 10, garnering a "recommended" status. The thermal carafe models would eek out a 9 out of 10, garnering "highly recommended."



The Technivorm lineup is available from **Boyd's Coffee**. The tested model has an MSRP of \$189, and the price range for Technivorms from Boyds is between \$170 and \$210 as of this writing.

*The Technivorm's brewed coffee slightly edged out the Capresso MT500 on taste quality under the following use conditions: stir the slurry in the filter basket at the 2 minute mark, no stir of the brewed

Water just falls straight down into the filter basket.



No Mixing

The lack of water dispersion means you can end up with a lot of undersaturated ground coffee.

coffee in the carafes, removal of carafe from machine as soon as the brew was completed, pouring first cup at the 8 minute mark after brewing commenced).

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