

Italian espresso is a small cup of concentrated brew prepared on request by extraction of ground roasted coffee beans, with hot water under pressure for a defined short time.

The range of the parameters is:

Ground coffee portion 6.5 ± 1.5 g

Water temperature 90 ± 5 °C

Inlet water pressure 9 ± 2 bar

The requisite conditions to make a good cup of espresso will be reviewed in detail in the following chapters.

1.8 CONCLUSIONS

We have seen how varied and complex the concept of quality is and how difficult it is to use it as an objective measure, particularly in the case of the espresso. We have, however, understood that the espresso lives almost solely on the pleasure it gives consumers. Therefore, if the number of lovers is to be maintained and increased, it is necessary to seek the means of continually improving its quality, meaning its degree of excellence. In the following chapters we will try to outline this road to improvement, setting out everything that is known so far about the quality of the espresso.

This becomes a stage on the road to improving the quality of the world-wide production of coffee brewed worldwide, which, as the resounding success of gourmet coffee has shown in the Anglo-Saxon world, can lead to a significant increase in consumption. This may result in an important contribution to rebalancing re-equilibrating of the supply and demand of coffee, thus improving the precarious financial and social situation the producer countries find themselves in.

Wine has travelled a similar road very successfully and, besides providing pleasure to consumers, has achieved a significant rise in the value of overall production. This has resulted in a segmentation of the market where no one in the world is any longer surprised by the fact that the price of a bottle can range over several orders of magnitude. Consequently, there has been a general increase in the well-being and satisfaction of those along the whole chain. This road was not easy and involved an almost 'manic' search for excellence, the specialization of the distribution networks and education of the consumers.