

A Unic experience



GLOBAL COFFEE REPORT TAKES A DEEP DIVE INTO THE TECHNICAL FEATURES OF THE NEW TANGO XP SERIES AND THE DESIGN IDENTITY THAT EMBRACES QUALITY, SERVICEABILITY, AND CUSTOMER OBSESSION.

When Unic first presented the Tango XP Duo super automatic espresso machine to the global market at the Specialty Coffee Association in April, visitors noticed two things: the new look of the brand, and on closer inspection, its ‘unique’ technical ability. “People could see that the design was completely different to the previous Tango machine (first launched in 2000). Then, when we started engaging them in conversation, they were intrigued by the changes we’d made and wanted to test one for themselves,” says Jeremy Coquille, Unic Research and Development Manager of Coffee with more than 16 years of new-product experience.

When it came time for Electrolux Professional Group Director of Design, Michele Cadamuro, to create a new look for the Tango XP series, he did so with excitement and a hint of pressure to respect the heritage of the original machine while redeveloping a concept that embraces the company’s forward-thinking identity.

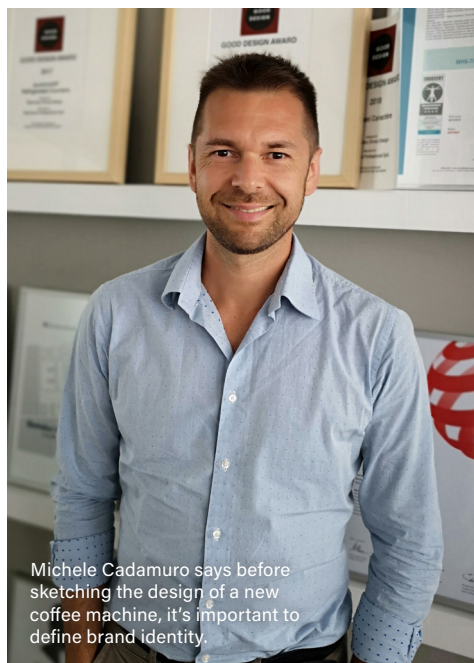
“For a designer, it’s really like opening a box of chocolates to begin with,” he says. “A new design offers a designer a playground of new possibilities and a chance to communicate specific values in a creative way. It was important to evolve the product, not revolutionise it.”

Before pen even touches paper, Cadamuro says it’s important to define the identity of the brand: who you are, where you want to go, and who you want to be. You also need to understand what the customer wants, analyse competitor



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Michele Cadamuro
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Director of Design



Michele Cadamuro says before sketching the design of a new coffee machine, it's important to define brand identity.

products, identify trends, the company vision, design principles, stakeholder needs, and so on.

“It’s a mix of things that go together, and it’s my job to find the connection between all of these things,” he says.

“It was a real challenge to merge modernity with tradition and convey Unic’s French heritage, timelessness, equilibrium, robustness, usability and serviceability, all into the new Tango XP series.”

Cadamuro says ‘human centricity’ is also important so that customers are connected to the product from the beginning, and then via progressive validation during its development.



The design of the Tango XP series embraces functionality, quality and robustness.

“When we say we take the ‘human approach’, it’s about the galaxy of humans with different background needs, purposes, and goals – the owners, the baristas, the roasters, the sales reps, the service technicians, and listening and customising to their needs – that’s the example of human centricity,” Cadamuro says.

With all the preliminary information available, the sketching begins, followed by a prototype and engineering. Unic involved focus groups located in Europe, the United States and Asia to collect as much feedback on the product as possible. More than 1.5 hours was spent with each individual to receive thorough quantitative and qualitative analysis on how the product suited the needs of each culture and tradition.

The result is the mix of the best design inputs from different countries, as well as functionality, quality and robustness across the Tango XP Duo and Tango XP Solo one-group machine.

“The quality we have obtained out of this machine is a result of applying quality principles and methodology in the early stages of development. We really have embraced ‘human centricity’ in the design,” Cadamuro says.

The design of the control panel is deliberately large, “because electronics convey a message of knowledge and intelligence”. The interface displays a continuity of lines and materials with no gaps and rounded edges to embrace a friendly and easy-to-clean surface.

One of the most significant features when looking at the machine, is the coffee spouts, which are designed to be simple and sleek. The hoppers are big, compact, and purposefully transparent.

THE BEATING HEART

One of the guiding principles of Electrolux Professional, is customer obsession, says Ermes Sacchiero, Unic Platform Manager Coffee and Technology.

“It’s this desire to produce the best product for our customer that has driven us to create the perfect machine for the Ho.Re.Ca (hospitality, restaurant, catering) and specialty coffee market,” he says.

Since 2019, when Unic joined Electrolux Professional Group, Sacchiero says the brand has used the

company's longevity and market experience to enhance the quality of its machines and end cup.

"The advantage of having Electrolux Professional Group behind Unic is about competencies, a team that enables us to transfer our methodology and bring us closer to the customer, and world-class manufacturing principles. It's all conveyed in the Tango XP series."

Unic's R&D Manager Coquille says undoubtedly, the most important consideration when designing the technical components of the Tango machines, was upholding quality.

"We decided to use heavy-duty 83-millimetre flat burrs combined with a powerful grinder motor to keep consistency, just like you would see in a high-volume coffee shop," he says.

"We then paired the grinding ability with the ingenious mechanism of the Tango brew group. This unique piece of metal guarantees the stability of water temperature to reach the best consistency in coffee extraction."

Unic's Tango dual infusion chamber brew group is a patented design that has received several recognitions in past years. It replicates all the steps done by a barista in combination with the mechanism of the two independent pistons. This is a result of the internal intelligence of the algorithm. It is able to tamp the coffee, and calibrate the volume and pressure of the infusion chambers.

There is free space inside the piston to allow the coffee to expand during the pre-infusion. Coquille says this free space can be adjusted through the software.

"Just like a traditional machine, we have strong temperature control over the coffee boiler and the coffee group to maintain the perfect temperature. All Tango XP components and technical solutions enable you to reproduce the gestures of a skilled barista, to perform the perfect coffee extraction," Coquille says.

The Tango XP Duo produces up to 440 espresso cups per hour, delivered simultaneously via the two independent pistons. The Tango Solo is an evolution model that features a new single piston.

The Tango XP series also manages the delivery of milk-based drinks thanks to the one-step integrated pump system, an advanced milk system that delivers hot and cold foam and milk. It also alters the density or texture of foam by playing with air injection via the speed of the pump through user-customised settings or specific parameters.

Coquille notes a big advantage of this system is its indirect heating, with no water or steam injected inside the milk. The result is a higher-quality milk foam without alterations to its texture.

Beyond the one-step is another optional addition called Steamair, which features a temperature probe inside the stainless-steel steam wand to monitor temperature. This is suited to venues adapting to a range of dairy alternative products.

To accompany the technical ability of the Tango XP Series is a strong devotion to accessibility.

Via a user-friendly 10-inch interface, operators can select the desired beverage, set up default beverages, and change parameters such as the temperature of the drink.

"It's very easy to customise and configurate, and just as easy to clean the machine thanks to simple prompts and instructions," Coquille says.

"It was also important that we ensure the machine set-up was as easy as possible. Each machine can have up to three grinders, and each can be configured to accommodate different beans and their different profiles. We can also share profiles and parameters across different Tango XP machines easily thanks to a USB solution."

Serviceability was also highly considered. The machine's modular concept allows all electronic components to be located on the left side of the machine, and hydraulics on the right. Even the front panel can be lifted so a technician can access all internal components during service and regular preventative maintenance checks.

"We have done lots of work on serviceability. Due to the Tango XP's modular design, we can easily add or remove a grinder, and have designed the boiler using stainless steel material so it's easy to remove or replace," Coquille says.

The Tango XP Solo one-group machine maintains all the same features and functional heart of Unic machines in a contained footprint.

Both machines feature components that are stainless steel, aluminium and brass-coated, which Coquille notes are more expensive than plastic, but more durable and allow for temperature stability.

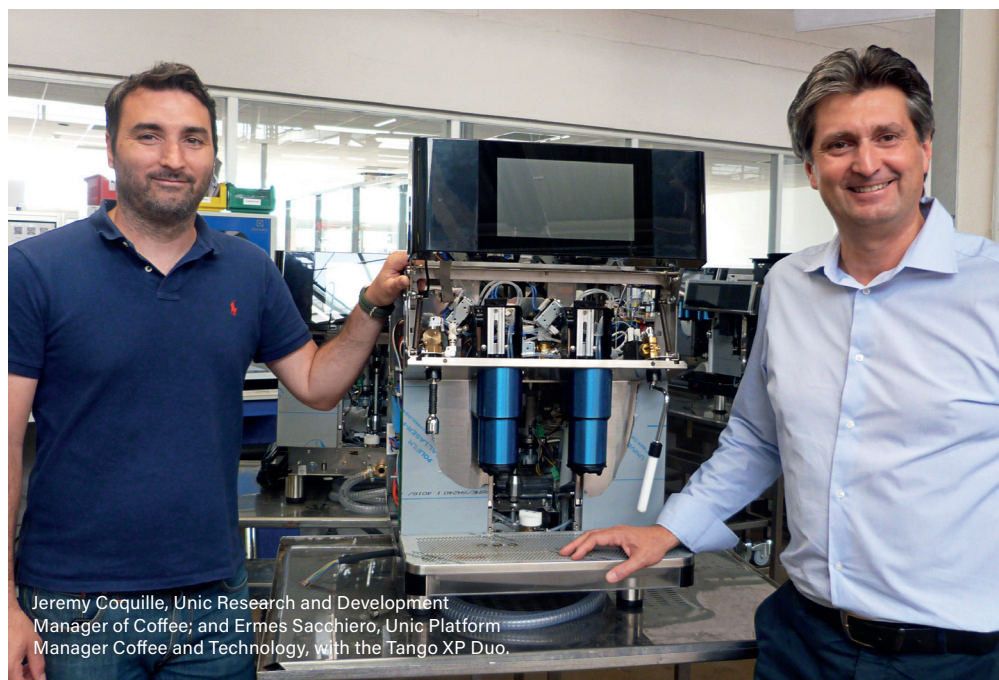
The overall machine weight has been reduced by 30 per cent compared to the original Tango model.

"When you think about the automotive industry, if you weigh a car of 20 years ago and an equivalent car of today, you'll find a huge difference in weight. We have reduced a lot of different things that weren't sustainable. The result is a product that's robust and light, which are all key elements and ingredients of quality. This is what we want our customers to appreciate," Sacchiero says.

"What's satisfying for me is when someone walks past our Tango XP machine, stops to see it, and gets involved. That's exactly what we want them to do."

The full Tango XP series will be presented at Host Milan in October 2023. **GCR**

For more information, visit www.unic-espresso.com/en/



Jeremy Coquille, Unic Research and Development Manager of Coffee; and Ermes Sacchiero, Unic Platform Manager Coffee and Technology, with the Tango XP Duo.