

# HOME BARISTA

ISSUE 01

Coffee

Culture

People

Planet

First Edition

hotelchocolat.com

Coffee from the creators of Hotel Chocolat



**The art of the  
flat white, at home**  
The coffee, the milk, the story

**The hardware store**  
Accessories and ceramics  
for a true coffee lifestyle

**Zero to landfill**  
Aluminium pods:  
the passion for change

HOTEL  
**Chocolat.**  
BRITISH CACAO GROWER

# THE CACAO BAR IS OPEN

Velvetised Creams  
Vodka, signature chocolate and cream, velvetised.



hotelchocolat.com/velvetisedcreams

## HOME BARISTA

# In this Issue



6

**6 Meet the family**  
The only coffees you'll ever need.



8

**8 Zero to landfill** *on the cover*  
Meet the trailblazer putting our planet first.

**12 The art of the flat white, at home** *on the cover*  
Tips to create a café-quality cup from our expert baristas.

**28 Hotel Chocolat X Jake Gosling**  
Spotlight on your coffee-drinking playlist from platinum-selling producer, Jake Gosling.

**30 The Flavour Engineers**  
Unabashedly geeky machinery talk from the Podster's co-creators.



12



30

### PRODUCT PROFILE THE PODCYCLER



Every so often a simple invention comes along that blows the mind. A real breakthrough for recycling aluminium pods.

A long-standing global problem could be solved by this little press.

Aluminium pods are a great way to preserve coffee freshness and reduce coffee waste. But it's now 30 years since they were first introduced and yet, unbelievably, an estimated 75% of them are still being tossed into landfill. Although aluminium is one of the easiest earth materials to recycle, it's fiendishly difficult when coffee is stuck to it.

The time is right for The Podcycler to empower every family that uses pods to make them recycle ready, at home.

#### Customer reviews so far

★★★★★

"...very therapeutic and felt good to be recycling properly. I immediately set it to work recycling all the pods... from the other famous coffee brand."

★★★★★

"Just received this and it's so easy to use. All my pods will now be recycled instead of going to landfill. Also my garden will appreciate the coffee grounds."

★★★★★

"Well done Hotel Chocolat – please get this product out there for all to see and give others the option to stop these pods being single-use."



ILLUSTRATION: LUCIA PICERNO

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Megan Roberts** is a writer specialising in travel, adventure, food and nature, often in far-flung corners of the world. She travelled to our Saint Lucian paradise estate for this issue – in the name of research, of course.

**Samantha Beard** is a writer for Hotel Chocolat, has written for harpersbazaar.com and more, and is a published author. She worked across the magazine, and will be forever grateful to The Perfect Pour (p. 12) for revealing the secret to the ideal Iced Mocha...

**Iain Ball** has written for Hotel Chocolat, Vogue India, GQ India and more, and he worked on many of the 'Humans of Hotel Chocolat' pieces for this issue, including Jacquie Turner's insightful and hopeful interview about coffee-growing in Rwanda (p. 24).

**Illustrators Lucia Picerno** (p. 3)

**Matt Murphy** (p. 5)

# Natural rhythms

Hotel Chocolat Co-Founder Angus Thirlwell on why raising and roasting coffee was a natural fit for the chocolatier and cacao grower



For 15 years I turned my head to gaze at the twin coffee bushes either side of our Cacao Seederie entrance every time I walked in. Distinctive dark, glossy leaves and abundant red cherries made them striking, and I gradually noticed more coffee plants

happily growing wild across our Rabot Estate in Saint Lucia. They had been planted long ago and nobody could remember by whom, but they were there and they seemed to like it.

Coffee and chocolate are a complete flavour love match, so of course I started to dream of creating our own coffee blends, too. We already knew about growing cacao beans and roasting them to tease out the best flavours, so why not apply those same skills to coffee?

“Coffee & chocolate are a complete flavour love match”

Around this time, a fellow coffee obsessive, Jo Brett, joined Hotel Chocolat to lead our Saint Lucian enterprise (see her profile, p. 20). The result was immediate caffeination of the idea, and Rabot Estate Coffee was born with an ambition to create unique-tasting brews from top beans across the globe, while bearing the name that honours the original source of our inspiration. As well as applying all Hotel Chocolat has learnt about growing and preparing great-flavour cacao to coffee, we would bring our ethical approach to it too, looking after Mother Nature as well as our other coffee farmers around the world.

We set aside some land at Rabot Estate and planted a grove of coffee seedlings, following the same ‘gentle farming’ organic, bio-diverse approach we insist on for our cacao. In two to three years we’ll start harvesting.

In the meantime, we talked about coffee to our Island Grower partners and discovered there was a lot more of it across Saint Lucia. Hidden from view and semi-wild, it had been an important crop for the island 50 years ago, but since then there had been no market to support the farming.

We were determined to change all that. Soon, pick-up trucks began to arrive at Rabot Estate heaving with ripe, ruby cherries. With the coffee-processing coaching of Malcolm Clear, business partner to one of our other coffee growers, Jacqui Turner (see her profile on p. 24), we successfully sun-dried and de-pulped our first batch of coffee.

Happily, the coffee harvest falls at a different time to cacao’s, so we were able to use our cacao space to set out racks and work the cherries into those gorgeous dried green beans. Three weeks later, they were safely under cover in hessian sacks, ready for roasting. And this was where our flavour expertise really shone through, as we roasted to bring out a deep, chocolatey profile with a flavour that is broodingly powerful with an oak-aged red wine and dark chocolate intensity. Watch this space: we’ll be launching limited editions of these amazing beans.

Just like cacao, coffee beans bring different flavours from different corners of the world. To create our refreshingly simple flavour map, the Strength-O-Meter (see p. 7), we have forged connections with growers that share our values in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India and Rwanda.

By growing and sourcing our coffee with care, and with attention to the same three pillars that have always guided our cacao – Originality, Authenticity, Ethics – we’ve created a family of five blends that we believe will be all the flavours you’ll ever need, because each is so distinctive. We can’t wait for you to discover your new favourite with us.

*With special thanks to Malcolm Clear and Jacqui Turner for sharing some of their coffee secrets so open-heartedly with us.*

ILLUSTRATION: MATT MURPHY



## CACAO TO COFFEE: HOTEL CHOCOLAT'S ADVENTURES IN INNOVATION

1996

We launch the world's first online chocolate store.



1999

We create the UK's first chocolate subscription.



2001

The Extra-Thick Egg is born. (It's still going strong).



2006

We become the only UK chocolate brand to directly invest in ethical cacao farming by buying Rabot Estate, Saint Lucia.



2008

More Cacao, Less Sugar becomes our mantra. We're not afraid to do things differently.



2011

Our first cacao-cuisine restaurant opens, in Saint Lucia. Cacao is a subtle savoury spice and the heart of desserts.



2012

World's first Chocolate Bond launches. Interest paid in chocolate. Full amount paid back in 2018.



2018

The Velvetiser system brings barista-grade drinking chocolate to your home.



2019

Velvetised Creams are bottled: pourable chocolate with vodka and cream.



2020

Hello Nutmilk. Staggeringly creamy, unbelievably vegan.



2020

Rabot Estate Coffee locations land in Japan, from Tokyo to Osaka. Photograph: @310\_ryota



2021

Inspired by the wild coffee on our Rabot Estate, we begin to cultivate our own there, too.



# Meet the family

Introducing our coffee blends. Five is enough because, when done right, high-quality coffee should be distinctive enough to make it simple to find your favourite.

### Cashmere

Our most mellow

Comforting notes of crème caramel and freshly baked brioche.

We scoured the globe for beans with the lowest bitterness and the finest caramel accent, then blended them together, with a gentle roast.

### Oh, Hello

Our most lively

Notes of dark chocolate, peaches and blueberry jam. Tangy cranberry flourish.

'Oh, hello,' said James, our coffee expert, when he took his first sip of this alchemic blend. We'd been experimenting for weeks to achieve the liveliest and perkier flavour-flare for our coffee; finally we knew we were there.

### The One

Our timeless classic

Reassuringly deep-tasting, with notes of milk chocolate, caramel, and a finale of warm fruit.

When we cacao roasters set out to create the best coffee, we couldn't help choosing beans with natural chocolate notes for our signature blend.

### The One, decaffeinated

Our classic taste, decaffeinated

All the flavour of our signature brew, The One, with the caffeine naturally soaked out.

The Swiss Water Method® removes 99.9% of caffeine using just water and charcoal filters and no chemicals.

### Rocket

Our turbo-charger

A bold opening of oak, leather and tobacco unfolds into dark chocolate.

Full name, The Rabot Rocket. We took the signature taste of The One and turbo-charged it with extra caffeine and depth by blending in the punch and smoke of premium Robusta beans.

Learn more about the coffee farmers we work with around the world: [hotelchocolat.com/coffeeorigins](http://hotelchocolat.com/coffeeorigins)

### CASHMERE

Our most mellow.

### OH, HELLO

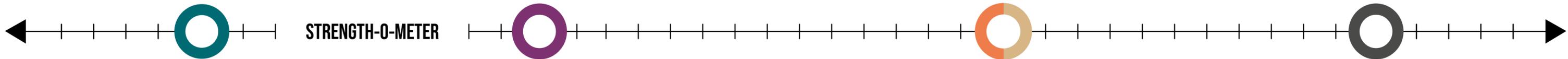
Our most lively.

### THE ONE

Our timeless classic.  
(and The One, decaffeinated)

### ROCKET

Our turbo-charger.



**Coffee myth. Debunked.**  
The darker the roast, the stronger the coffee. This might be true for the taste alone, but it is certainly off the mark regarding the caffeine. The roasting temperatures leave the natural caffeine largely unaffected.

# Sarah Leveridge, Sustainability Pioneer

As Head of Packaging Innovation and Sustainability, Sarah Leveridge is dedicated to putting our planet first – whether that means researching new materials for our packaging, driving a whole new method of recycling your coffee pods or visiting an industrial composter on a hot day...

I've always lived in a house where things are mended. I grew up with a make-do-and-mend approach. We didn't just buy new stuff, we looked at how old stuff could be repaired or repurposed.

I had an inspirational grandmother who lost her husband when my mother was four. Her family were furniture makers. We had a huge amount of furniture that they had made, and if something got damaged it was mended. We didn't want to get rid of it because we had a real emotional attachment to it.

My husband is the same. Our washing machine is 18 years old and has been mended and re-mended four times. I get quite emotionally attached to things. I like to treat things with respect and keep them going as long as I can. Which means my cupboards are quite full!

**If our waste is treated properly, it can become a resource in someone else's hands.** Everything can be recycled. It just needs to get into the right hands to be recycled properly. Over the years, I've become fascinated by the circular economy and how we can drive it forward. For example, aluminium is a metal which is infinitely recyclable – when it's recycled it doesn't lose any of its qualities. About 80% of aluminium packaging that has been put on the market is still in use today. That's absolutely phenomenal. It's a really circular material – a good example of a resource being repurposed and reused.

That's one of the main reasons we switched our Extra-Thick Easter Eggs from the cardboard hatbox style into an iconic tin in 2020. It's a beautiful object, so it can be reused at home, and it can be recycled as well, so it's a win-win.

**Sadly, some material suppliers are mis-selling their 'eco-friendly' packaging.** Packaging materials often come with the promise of being more environmentally friendly, but there's no process for validating these claims in the UK. Lots of smaller companies are falling foul of being told something by materials manufacturers that isn't actually true. For example, I'm doing a little experiment with some bioplastic coffee pods at the moment. The company claims that they'll compost in a little over six weeks in my home compost. Well, mine have been in for eight weeks and they still look exactly like coffee pods. We need to pick away at the promises and not take what salesmen say at face value.

This is why our CEO Angus invested in a sustainable packaging team. Angus and I have done a massive amount of work over the past 18 months so we can be more confident we're choosing the right materials.

**We decided against compostable packaging – after spending a day at a rubbish tip.**

Angus and I visited an industrial composter – not a glamorous experience on a hot day – and asked a lot of questions about compostable packaging. A lot of it is made from bioplastic, which is made with renewables like starch. It's still a polymer, so you can't compost it in your back garden. A lot of people think that if it goes into landfill, it will still decompose, but it won't! It has to be broken down by industrial composters at around 80°C, in very specific conditions. And there just isn't the infrastructure in the UK for this. Only 5% of households currently have access to industrial composters, and even then, the composters strip out packaging because they just can't tell if it's compostable or not.



**In the swim of things:**  
Sarah is a passionate wild swimmer – and sometimes plogger

We had made 'compostable' the first statement on our Planet Pledge to make all our packaging sustainable. But as soon as Angus knew it wasn't going to help, he wasn't afraid to say, 'Right, we're going to take that off'.

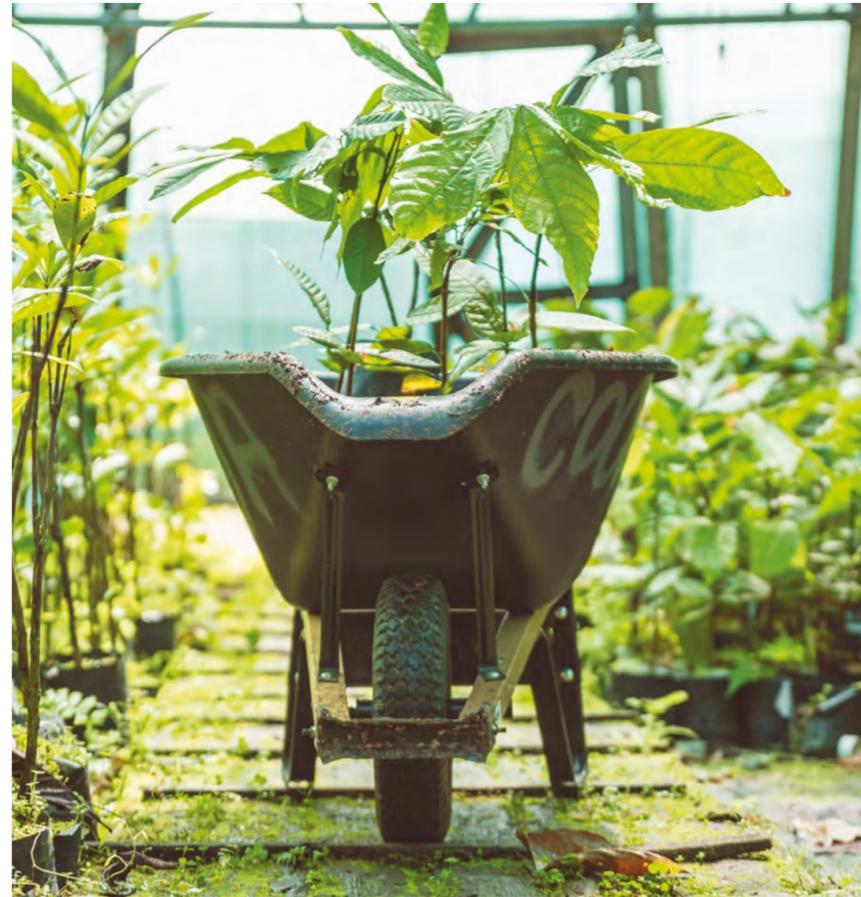
**You can reuse coffee grounds in myriad ways.**

They're packed with minerals like nitrogen and magnesium, making them a turbo-charged fertiliser for plants. Their coarse texture also means they make a great body exfoliator. We use them in our Rabot Coffee Body Scrub – the grounds are combined with salt to lift dead skin cells and gently exfoliate away the day.

Hotel Chocolat was the first luxury brand to join the On-Pack Recycling Labelling scheme. The OPRL is an award-winning non-profit organisation aiming to deliver a simple, consistent and UK-wide recycling message on packaging to help people recycle correctly. They have now given us the authorisation to put our coffee pod recycling advice next to their sign on our packaging. And we've done a huge amount of work with the OPRL to validate this, so we've really driven change. What I'm lobbying for is that every piece of packaging should clearly tell the consumer how they should recycle it.

"I get quite attached to things. I like to treat things with respect and keep them going as long as I can"

HUMANS OF HOTEL CHOCOLAT



Visiting an industrial composter opened our eyes to some of its drawbacks. Our connection to nature drives us to make sustainability a priority.

“We believe in really doing the right thing, not just saying it.”

**I am a passionate wild swimmer. My love of it is something slightly crazy.** It means swimming every month of the year, in temperatures that range from 20°C in the summer to 2°C, with ice on the water. There's something a little bit scary about dipping into open water in just a swimming costume. But the minute I get in, I just feel all my worries disappearing. I just get this Cheshire Cat grin from ear to ear. My head stops feeling jumbled and I can feel the endorphins rushing through me. I feel a complete immersion with nature. You just see things at a different level in the water. You hear the rustling of the reeds and the bullrushes. You could be swimming along at dusk and hear an owl hooting in a tree. It's just quite magical.

I also try and do a bit of plogging, where you pick up rubbish while you're doing exercise. I have a mesh bag on the back of my tow float and if I see a piece of rubbish in the water, I'll put it in my bag and dispose of it properly.

**We're part of a pioneering project – the UK's first local circular economy for plastic.** I have a strong view that if plastic was invented now, it would be classed as a miracle material. But the problem we have in the UK is that we don't have a good infrastructure for our waste, so instead of being

repurposed it just goes into landfill. But it's possible to change that. For example, with our Quail Eggs trays, we've stopped using compostable bagasse packaging and are now using locally sourced, recycled plastic, made just a quarter of a mile from our Huntingdon factory by our supplier Charpak. It's called a 'localised circular economy' because plastic is sourced from Cambridgeshire kerbside recycling bins. Any of our rigid plastic trays that end up in Cambridgeshire recycling bins will get reused by Charpak again and again. Obviously, it's super-cleaned, so it's super-safe for food. The bagasse trays came all the way from China, so the carbon footprint is now far lower.

**Our Planet Pledge is to make all of our packaging recyclable or reusable by 2022.** We're 93% of the way towards this goal, but we're always re-evaluating and upgrading what we do as we find out more. I think I've got an amazing job in that we're not greenwashing. We're really transparent. We're reporting what we're doing – warts and all. And we're always, always looking at how we can improve. We won't switch to a material that doesn't really work just because it might stop some people having a go at us about our use of plastic. We believe in making sure we consider everything. We believe in really doing the right thing, not just saying it.

# THE PODCYCLER™

Zero waste to landfill

Press the coffee from your used pods, make them home-recyclable.



Works with all brands of aluminium pods, including Nespresso®\*

Dishwasher safe and easy to clean

Press ten pods before the chamber is ready to empty

[hotelchocolat.com/podcycler](https://hotelchocolat.com/podcycler)

\*Nespresso® is a registered trademark owned by Société des Produits Nestlé S.A. and that company has not manufactured or endorsed our products.

## COFFEE EXPERTS

## TIPS AND TRICKS

# The perfect pour

How to make your barista-grade coffees at home with a Podster and a Velvetiser.



## THE FLAT WHITE

*Came out of the Australia-New Zealand modern coffee scene as a shorter milky coffee.*

Pour just 140ml milk into a Velvetiser and press start.

Pre-warm cup.

Extract 2 pods on short button.

Pour over the velvetised milk.



## THE CAPPUCCINO

*Straight from the Italian scene. Took off in the 1960s onwards as a softer coffee.*

Pour 140ml milk into Velvetiser and press start.

Pre-warm cup.

Extract 1 pod on short button.

Pour over the velvetised milk. Sprinkle a pinch of Velvetised chocolate flakes on top (Salted Caramel for mellow or 85% for added edge).



## THE AMERICANO

*American soldiers in Italy post-WW2 asked for extra hot water to be added to an espresso to make a longer black coffee.*

Pre-warm cup.

Extract 2 pods on long button.

Top up with a little extra freshly boiled water to taste.

### Top Barista Tips

- Always pre-heat your cups with boiling water, then tip away just before adding your coffee.
- Always flush a little water through your machine, as stale water will be in the pipes.



## THE LATTE

*Developed in Italian coffee culture as a gentle breakfast drink.*

Pour 200ml milk into Velvetiser and press start.

Pre-warm cup.

Extract 1 pod on long button.

Pour over the velvetised milk.



## THE MOCHA

*The chocolatey flavour notes of coffee beans shipped via the Al Mokha port in Yemen gave rise to this name, which then came to mean coffee-chocolate combination drinks.*

Pour 220ml milk into Velvetiser.

Sprinkle in a full single-serve of Velvetised chocolate flakes (35g). We recommend Classic 70%, Milky, Salted Caramel or Hazelnut.

Extract 1 pod on short button into pre-warmed cup.

Pour over the velvetised chocolate and stir to combine coffee through the chocolate.



## THE ICED MOCHA

*A thoroughly modern drink, requiring the Velvetiser to have been invented to do it right.*

Fill a highball glass with about 6 ice cubes and 120ml of milk.

Fill the Velvetiser with the same amount of milk, 120ml, and a full single-serve of Velvetiser chocolate flakes (35g). We recommend Classic 70%, Milky, Salted Caramel or Hazelnut chocolate.

Extract 1 pod on the short button and pour into the iced milk in the highball glass.

Finally, add the warm velvetised chocolate to the iced milk too and watch the liquids mingle.

### Barista's Tip

If using a steamer for milk, be careful not to scald the flavours, which happens above 70°C. This also impedes digestion as it changes the proteins, and damages the butterfat.

## COFFEE EXPERTS

### THE ICED LATTE

Cooler temperatures suppress flavour, so go big and bold.

Fill a highball glass with about 6 ice cubes and 220ml of milk.

Extract 2 pods on the short button and pour over the iced milk, watch the coffee mingle.



### RABOT MOCHA MARTINI

Created for the launch of Rabot Estate Coffee by our mixologists at the Cacao Bar, on our paradise cacao farm in Saint Lucia. The two beans that rule our world, united in a cocktail.

Extract 1 pod of coffee on short button and set aside to cool.

Fill a cocktail shaker or jug with about 6 ice cubes.

Pour in 100ml of Velvetised Cream alcohol from Hotel Chocolat.

Add 25ml of golden Rum (we like Saint Lucia's Chairman's Reserve, distilled just down the road from our cacao farm).

Add the coffee.

Shake hard and briefly for about 5 seconds.

Quickly strain into a martini glass.

Garnish with a sprinkle of Velvetiser chocolate flakes or grated chocolate.

### THE AFFOGATO

Dramatic and super simple dessert. Go decaf if it's late. Translates as 'drowned' in Italian, literally what happens to the ice cream.

Choose a nice piece of your best glassware.

Add 2 scoops of vanilla ice cream.

Extract 1 pod on short button and pour over whilst still hot.

Warm meets iced. Bitter meets creamy.

### One pod or two?

JAMES DRAKE, COFFEE EXPERT AT RABOT ESTATE COFFEE

"Cashmere is my absolute favourite, taken as an oat milk Flat White with a double pod-shot. I use the long extraction button for the first shot and the short button for the second. I know it looks extravagant but I only have one a day like this! I figure it's still only 1/3 the cost of a coffee shop and I get it exactly how I like it."



ALINA MOSCALIUC, COFFEE EXPERT AT RABOT ESTATE COFFEE

"I've been brewing our signature taste at Rabot Restaurant in Borough Market for 7 years. I must have served 5,000 cups. I think I must be addicted because the taste we are serving, The One, is my favourite pod for home. I take it black, from a single pod on the long extraction button. That way I feel I can have quite a few each day!"



### Coffee myth Debunked.

#### Coffee always dehydrates

Caffeine is a natural diuretic, meaning it stimulates water out from the body. It's true that short coffees can take net hydration from the body, hence the glass of water traditionally offered in Milanese espresso bars. However, in longer coffees, the added water or milk helps balance out the diuretic effect.

### The best dairy or plant milk for coffee

#### DAIRY

Whole milk gives the best foam and texture.

The fresher, the better for foam creation.

#### PLANT

Our top 5. Go 'barista-grade' product versions for best results:

1. Oat
2. Cashew
3. Hazelnut
4. Almond
5. Soya

## VELVETISE YOUR MILK

The Velvetiser was invented to prepare a cloud-like hot chocolate in 2.5 minutes. Flat whites, lattes and cappuccinos too? No problem.

The Velvetiser can also velvetise the milk for your coffee by texturising, whisking and gently heating to the optimum temperature (68°C). All while looking a gorgeous match next to a Podster in your kitchen.

**The Velvetiser x The Podster**  
Your complete barista drinks station



YOUR DRINKS STATION

KITCHEN ESSENTIALS

# The hardware store

Become your own barista. Make velvety drinking chocolate in the Velvetiser and café-quality coffee in the Podster. Serve in signature ceramics.

**Duo of Pod Cups**  
Start your new ritual. Stunning, tactile ceramic cups designed by Royal College of Arts ceramicist Andrew Wicks.



**Petite Podcups**  
Split a velvety drink with your favourite person.



**The Spark**  
The cup to kick-start your day.



**The Chat**  
Designed to keep the conversation (and the coffee) flowing.



Velvetise milk for flat whites and lattes as well as making barista-grade drinking chocolate



**The Velvetiser**  
In-home drinking chocolate system. Imagined by Hotel Chocolat, engineered by Dualit. Available in white, copper or charcoal.



**The Hug**  
Comfort in a cup.



**The Podster**  
In-home coffee system. Imagined by Hotel Chocolat. Engineered by Dualit.

**The Podcycler**  
Zero waste to landfill. Press the coffee from your used pods, make them home-recyclable.



**Aluminium Coffee Pods**  
Available in 5 blends. Fully recyclable with the Podcycler (left).



HUMANS OF HOTEL CHOCOLAT

THE INSPIRING INDIVIDUALS ADVENTURING WITH US

# Just your cup

Your choice of cup says something about what coffee means to you, says ceramicist Andrew Wicks.



**G**raduate of the Royal College of Arts and an award-winning ceramicist, Andrew Wicks' work in hand-thrown pottery has featured in galleries and exhibitions across Europe and the

United States. Andrew's first commercial design project was the creation of our Podcup, inspired by the shape of a cacao pod. Here, Andrew explains the inspirations behind the family of coffee cups he has now sculpted for us, each with its own unique personality.

**I work in a converted cow shed outside Bath.** Angus came to visit my studio with samples of coffee cups that he liked. We talked about their shapes and qualities, how they feel in the hand; the emotions that different shapes can give us, how rounder, heavier shapes can feel more comforting and I started off with these ideas.

**Nature is always the greatest inventor.** It creates the most beautiful things. When you look at the shape of a cacao pod, it's a very pure, oval shape, like the purity of an egg. It's the most beautiful form. I was deeply inspired by the fascinating grooves of the pod and the coffee bean. Coffee has a rich, full flavour, so I wanted full-bodied forms and shapes with a single colour, contrasting rich dark coffee and creamy white ceramic.

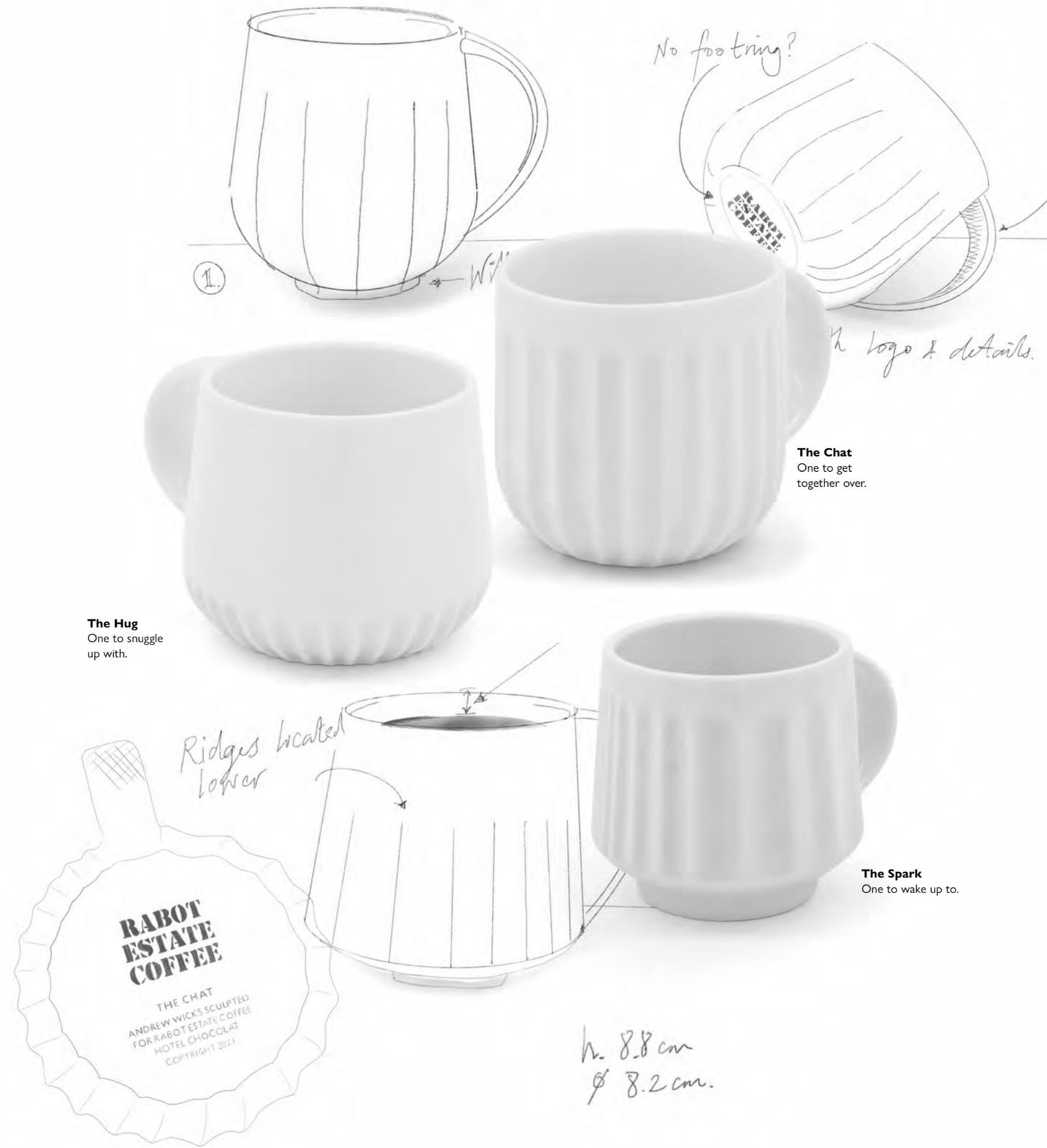
**Cups can be quite intimate objects.** I've always been interested in how we interact with them. When you put hot liquid into ceramics, it warms up an object that you then cradle in your hands. It's very tactile. You can be quite

unaware how connected you are to what you're holding. And then there's that moment you put the cup to your lips. There aren't many things you do that with. It's very personal, isn't it?

**How you feel about a cup depends on your relationship with coffee.** Angus' original brief was for one cup, so I made 28 different versions to give him a choice. But as he began showing them to people, he discovered that how they felt about the shapes really depended on how they feel about coffee and what it means to them, and this could change with their mood or the time of day. Some people like the idea of coffee waking them up, making them feel bright and sparky. Some people like something warmer, more comforting and curvaceous. And others are really drawn to something they could imagine meeting and talking with friends over. These became the Spark, the Hug, and the Chat.

"There's that moment you put the cup to your lips... It's very personal, isn't it?"

**I wanted the cups to each have their own character.** I started with sketches of rounded forms, straight-sided forms, more curvaceous forms. Then it came from throwing them and shaping them, from physically handling them in your hand. But something happens when you're really concentrating your whole body and mind on creating these pieces. That's when the magic stuff happens.



**The Chat**  
One to get together over.

**The Hug**  
One to snuggle up with.

**The Spark**  
One to wake up to.

## HUMANS OF HOTEL CHOCOLAT

## THE INSPIRING INDIVIDUALS ADVENTURING WITH US

# From Manhattan to Mother Nature

Jo Brett is at the helm of Hotel Chocolat Saint Lucia, where she champions ethical, sustainable cacao and coffee farming on our estate and across the island. Jo was previously the US President of Pret A Manger and brings a wealth of knowledge to our foray into coffee-growing, leading our 140-acre Rabot Estate into a bold new era.

I was with Pret in New York for five years and I would get my energy from the buzz of a coffee shop. I love the human connections made there, from the baristas to the customers, through the daily ritual of coffee. I like the noise, the hustle and bustle: the machines grinding the beans and steaming the milk, the banging of the milk jugs and the baristas calling down the line. I was stimulated by the snippets of customer conversations and background music as I worked. Now, my energy comes from somewhere quite different: Mother Nature – the flora and fauna, the silence, the rain, and the birdsong.

“Are the farmers and the plants happy and in tune with one another?”

In my role, I'd obsess about the customer experience. I was always asking 'How happy is the barista?' because I knew that if the barista was happy, the customer experience would be a happier one. Now, I'm completely immersed at the other end of the chain. In both cases, it's all about removing friction. In Manhattan, I'd think about queues and all the things that might spoil the couple of minutes you spent getting your coffee. Now I'm thinking about the grower. Are the farmers and the plant happy and in tune with one another? The connection between the farmer and the plant here is as strong as the connection between the customer and the barista in a coffee shop.

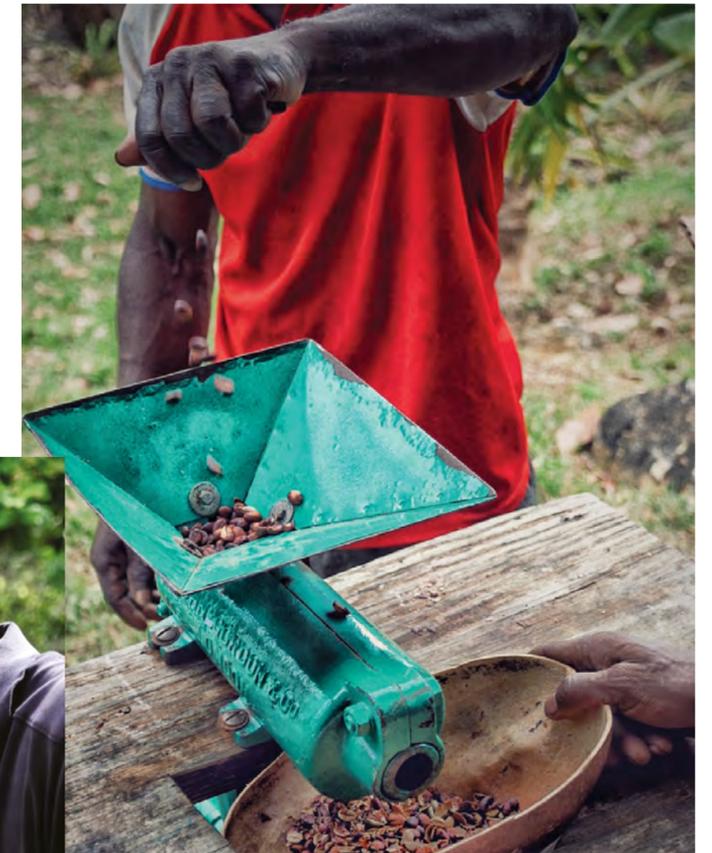
In New York, convenience is king, and it's the same in Saint Lucia. I learned this from Jerry, one of our veteran cacao growers. We live on a small island but a one-hour drive here feels much longer, like driving from London to Manchester. Every week, one of the farmers in the local community would collect everyone's harvests and make the long and winding drive down to us. So we thought: well, we can come to you. Now we collect the farmers' cacao and coffee beans from a collection point that's convenient for them. Convenient payment is key too. So we also deliver their payment cheques a week later, on a Thursday so they can access their money for the weekend.



**Do what you love:**  
Jo Brett on our Rabot Estate, Saint Lucia, home to Rabot Hotel and the new Project Chocolat experience



**Bean there:**  
At home with one of our Island Growers, Roderick Clarke, on his Estate in Micoud, Saint Lucia.



PHOTOGRAPHY: MEGAN ROBERTS

“Lucians have a deep respect for Mother Nature and an affinity for plants and growing”

There are only a handful of coffee shops on the island. My favourite is in the north, a two-hour drive away, so my coffee-drinking habits have had to adapt. I brought a few months' supply of what I like with me because I wasn't sure what I'd be able to get here, but then I tried some coffee grown by one of our Island Growers, Roderick. It was really good, with a strong chocolate note and red-wine intensity. Now, we've started buying coffee cherries from cacao growers across the island, and we've just planted over 500 coffee plants on our Rabot Estate. The plants are almost a few feet tall now and sit in our coffee cote, which we call 'bois nef', because it means 'young' or 'new forest'. I've nearly finished my supply from New York, but now I'm really not worried!

Roderick kindly lent us his machinery and we've begun to process the harvested cherries, right through to roasting the beans in our ovens. At Hotel Chocolat we are obsessed with flavour. To help understand Saint Lucian coffee flavour better, we are testing the different growers' beans to help us develop the perfect Island Growers' blend. I'm really curious to see how the taste profiles may differ.

Our long-term aim is to be part of Saint Lucia's coffee renaissance. We're now on a journey as coffee growers as well as cacao growers. We've just started that adventure. Centuries ago, there were seven million coffee trees in Saint Lucia, even more than there were cacao trees. Now, there are very few. We're going to try and help rejuvenate the coffee industry in the same way we've helped revive Saint Lucian cacao: sustainably and ethically, one grower at a time.

Lucians have a deep respect for Mother Nature and an affinity for plants and growing. Island life has made me look to nature to recharge. It's where I get my energy from now. In New York there isn't much green space and that was the one thing I did miss, but I found the city an exhilarating place to be. Now I enjoy walking along the beach and swimming in the sea. I live on top of a mountain ridge in a rainforest and when I step outside, I'm immersed in a wonderfully chaotic jumble of vines, trees and plants. I love walking there and appreciating all the things that grow. That's given me a deeper happiness.

THE SIGNATURE BREW

HOW DO YOU TAKE YOURS?

# Something's brewing

Our signature Rabot Estate Coffee blend, The One, is poured daily in our cafés from Covent Garden to Edinburgh and New York to Tokyo – and now in your home. Come behind the scenes with our baristas to find out how the experts take their coffee, and how it makes the world go round...



**Mark** from Milton Keynes, England

Customers come from the other side of the shopping arcade, past all the big coffee chains, just for our blend. It's an easy coffee to recommend, and it complements our hot chocolates perfectly with its creamy, punchy flavour.

I drink The One as an espresso because I like to taste the full blend with no distractions of sugar or milk. Its earthy and tangy aroma are quintessential characteristics of a full-bodied coffee.



**Zoe** from Edinburgh, Scotland

A coffee before my shift is the perfect way to start the day! I love the Rabot Estate Coffee, it has been very well considered and the beans have been curated to pair beautifully with chocolate.

I've been working at Hotel Chocolat for just over 4 years and I love everything about it. Most recently I've been supporting our new store in Edinburgh, St James, by training up their team on our café offering.



**Keith** from Belfast, Northern Ireland

I've worked for Hotel Chocolat for 9 years, but only recently joined the City Hall Hotel to work in the café. I am a huge coffee person, so this brought a new ray of excitement to the job, and I've enjoyed discussing the new blends with our guests.

I like to keep my coffee simple, usually just an Americano or filter, to really let the flavours of the coffee shine. The arrival of Rabot Estate Coffee has been a real highlight. My favourite is the Oh, Hello. I enjoy its vibrant, floral character which opens as it cools.



**Victoria** from Glasgow, Scotland

I enjoy serving our guests their morning pick-me-up. It's such an essential part of my own day, and I'm glad I can be the one to give that same happiness to others.

I like to drink my coffee sweet and strong, but my favourite coffee to pour is a flat white. It's so nice to give people a wee heart on their coffee to make them smile.



**Ash** from New York, USA

While it is becoming more common in the US generally, I love the fact we serve our customers a great flat white and give them a real Aussie coffee experience (as an Australian, we'll claim the flat white).

Personally, I like to drink a light roast, single origin - especially an Ethiopian coffee.



**Naomi** from Rabot Estate, Saint Lucia

I most like the culture surrounding coffee, and the aroma of it. It brings back memories from my younger years when I'd watch my grandmother grind her coffee in a pestle and mortar, then put it into a local coffee percolator that filled the home with a wonderful, rich smell.

I enjoy a nice, strong, black cup of coffee which highlights the flavour tones, and arouses my senses. It helps me start my day!



**Harry** from Dublin, Ireland

The best part about serving our coffee is the interaction with the guests and the friendship you form with our regulars.

For a while, a flat white was my go-to coffee, even with an extra shot on busy days, but recently I've found myself enjoying a latte with two sugars to satisfy my sweet tooth.



**Holly** from Cardiff, Wales

I enjoy hearing about our guests' busy days when they come into store needing a coffee boost! I also love the versatility that we offer to meet the needs of every guest, and how pleasantly surprised they are when they taste how different and flavoursome the coffee is.

I like to have my coffee as a strong espresso in the morning. The rich authentic flavour gives me a pick-up for the day. Another favourite of mine is a coconut-milk Americano for something lighter in the afternoon.

**Colin** from London, England

My favourite thing about our coffee is the chocolatey notes running through the blend, which make it perfect as a pairing with our 85% dark chocolate batons. There is nothing better for a quick pick-me-up during a busy shift.



**Yuri-san** from Aichi Togo, Japan

I like best communicating with my customers about their choice of coffee because it's what motivates them on that day and at that time.

I spend my time drinking coffee slowly, changing the type of coffee according to my mood on that day, and making it hot or iced according to the temperature.



**Yoon-san** from Narita, Japan

I like recommending chocolates that go well with our coffee and going beyond the in-store journey to allow people to enjoy the Hotel Chocolat experience at home too.

Ever since I was little, my parents loved coffee. Every day, the house was filled with the smell of coffee. I loved the house with so many smiling faces. Now that I am a dad, I am making my family smile through coffee, too.



**Coffee myth.**

**Debunked.**

**Having a mid-afternoon coffee will cause insomnia**

Our livers process caffeine in 4-7 hours, so a 3pm brew should be completely gone by the time you're heading up the stairs.

# A new leaf: coffee as community

Jacque Turner is an exceptional woman. One of the founders of Kinini, a coffee-growing cooperative made up primarily of widows from the 1994 Rwandan genocide, she is a key member of the International Women's Coffee Association (IWCA) and has been instrumental in empowering and supporting displaced Rwandan widows.

**M**y idea was to help people who were affected by the Rwandan genocide. The people in my parents' village thought their lives had come to an end. They had no hope. So, in 2008, we started a charity to give clean water and build a medical centre, a school and a community centre where people can come and express their feelings. We called it 'A New Beginning'. People started to see hope in their lives again. Just having decent buildings in their village helped motivate them, and they started to better themselves. I don't think you can achieve anything if you don't have someone to support you morally and emotionally. You need someone to say, 'Yes, you're good – go for it!' When we started the coffee, we didn't have a clue what we were doing. We went into coffee-growing



“It wasn't about the money, it was about the people”

because we wanted the charity to become self-sustaining instead of having to keep asking for money from the UK. Some people asked us, 'How can you pay the farmers to take care of your coffee plants for three years and then buy your own cherries from them?' But we knew it was the right thing to do. It wasn't about the money, it was about the people.

Eighty-five per cent of our coffee farmers are women. They didn't trust us to begin with. They thought that we were trying to take away their land. We had to earn their trust. So instead of coming in as big investors, we built a relationship with them. We talked with them, shared local food, danced with them. I gave them a feeling of security from my heart. When you share a story similar to theirs, they understand. And they saw that we really did pay them every month. Now their children are at school. They have medical insurance.

Before, we used to take them clothes and shoes. Now people can go to the market and buy what they need for themselves. We have over a thousand farmers working with us, and it's always expanding.

**Until I was 10 years old, I thought I was Ugandan.**

The kids in my secondary school bullied me because I looked different. I was skinny and fair-skinned. They used to tell me that my parents should have had 'two children instead of one' because I was so tall. When I went home on my holiday, I asked my mum and dad why they were saying this and why we were different. 'Who am I? Where are we from?' And so, my dad sat me down and told me the whole story about Rwanda.

My parents were chased out of Rwanda in 1959. They lived in Uganda for 30 years because they were Tutsi. At the time, the president said there was nowhere for our parents to come back to because the country was

“Jacque's coffee is now amongst the highest rated coffees I get to grade every harvest. What they have achieved in Kinini is one of the exemplars of the coffee world, spanning benefits for the community, the planet and coffee aficionados”

Jamie Treby, Q-Grader, D.R. Wakefield, London

HUMANS OF HOTEL CHOCOLAT



**Clockwise, from bottom left:** Coffee cherries growing in Kinini. Bagged coffee in parchment, ready for quality checks. Sorting the beans.

“If I don’t help people, I don’t feel complete”

‘too small’. My brothers and sisters wanted to go and free Rwanda. My brothers were in the Rwandan Patriotic Front. The war began on October 1st, 1990. I lost four brothers in the fighting. At the time, my younger brother said he was going back to school. He said to me, ‘I’ll see you in the holidays.’ But he went and joined the army. He was only 15. I never saw him again. He was my good friend.

I went to Rwanda for the first time in May 1995. The genocide had just happened, and my parents had been resettled there by the government. But I didn’t know where. I was living on my own in Kampala and there was no way for us to get in touch. I knew I had to go and find them, because they had nobody to support them. I got on the bus and told the driver, ‘I don’t know where I’m going, but when I tell you to stop, please stop.’ After about eight hours, he said, ‘We’ve reached Rwanda. Do you want to get off?’ And I said, ‘No, keep going.’ I didn’t know what I was doing, but I put myself in God’s hands. I got off after three or four stops in the middle of nowhere. I walked up to a little shop with my bags, and sitting outside it was my uncle. It was a miracle. When he saw me, he fell down and started crying. I found out where my parents were the next day.

You can’t find anyone in Rwanda who wasn’t affected by the genocide. We were all touched by it. My mother lost

seven children. She lost her siblings in Rwanda as well. You can see that she is still traumatised by it. You will never heal from something like that. You can forgive, but it’s always in the back of your mind. In the village where we started the charity, a lot of the widows and orphans are of the men who did the killing – but we give equal treatment to everyone. Being bitter and twisted all the time can only affect you. You can’t dwell on this bitterness. You have to live together. You have to find a way to move forward

God provides for me, I provide for those who can’t provide for themselves. That’s my motto. If I don’t help people, I don’t feel complete. I like giving. And the coffee is doing that for me at the moment. I’m giving to the farmers, and that’s so satisfying to me.

One thing I’m so proud of is that we’ve ended up with a good-quality coffee. That’s something I can just thank God for. The acidity is brilliant. It’s well-balanced with flavours of chocolate and all sorts of fruits. Right from the beginning, people were telling us, ‘Your coffee’s great!’ When you know you have a good product, you can talk from your heart. I think people respect that. We’ve got a reputation now, and demand is everywhere. But we’re staying honest. We’ll keep to our origins and keep telling our story.

*With special thanks to Malcolm Clear for all his support. Taste Jacquie’s coffee in The One and The Rocket.*

OUR RECYCLE AT HOME PODS

# The anatomy of a pod

It’s the little things that add up to the finest flavour (and the best solution for our planet). Here’s exactly what to look for when choosing your new favourite coffee pods.

**GOOD BEFORE**

**High-pressure nitrogen**  
Inert gas vital for keeping your coffee super-fresh.

**Fuller extraction, fuller flavours**  
Designed for a longer extraction, up to twice as long as regular pods. This teases out more of the flavour notes.

**The Drum Test**  
The foil layer should be as taut as a drum, otherwise air gets in, oxidising your coffee and impairing its flavour.

**GOOD AFTER**

**100% recyclable aluminium**  
Aluminium is infinitely recyclable. The Podcycler makes that happen from your own kitchen. Alternative ‘compostable’ pods sound good in theory but unfortunately in practice need industrial composting techniques and a robust route to them that works from your kerbside, which sadly is not the case across the U.K.

**Coffee grounds**  
With a neutral pH after brewing, grounds are a valuable nutrient for your garden soil. Just fork in as fertiliser or add to your compost.

**Recyclable paper gasket**  
Totally recyclable paper. Many pods use glue which has to be removed at high temperature, making recovery of the aluminium carbon-heavy and difficult. Not ours.

MADE FOR YOU

# Hotel Chocolat X Jake Gosling



The multi-platinum music producer and songwriter has worked with Ed Sheeran, Lady Gaga and more – and on three new Hotel Chocolat Spotify playlists, dedicated to new talent and designed to pair with your new favourite coffee. Here, he gives us the inside track...



Search Hotel Chocolat on Spotify



## CASHMERE

Gentle tunes, mellow tastes.



### Fergus

“Fergus has a voice that literally feel like cashmere on the skin. His laid-back grooves and clever lyrics make the perfect companion.”



## THE ONE

Harmonious sounds, balanced flavours.

### Jake recommends



### NUUXS

“The silkiest tones and lyrics, whilst her beats provide the most wonderful boost for any occasion.”



## OH, HELLO

Tastes to wake you.  
Music to get you on your feet.



### Zac Pajak

“Zac’s upbeat and zesty vibe is both exhilarating and uplifting. If you need a bit of pep, Zac is the guy.”

### MUSIC-O-METER



LAI D BACK

BIT OF BOTH

LIVELY



### Eli Gosling

“Eli’s subtle yet evocative sound takes the listener on a journey that correlates perfectly with the Cashmere flavour.”



### Lauren Dejey

“The multiple layers within her sound almost mimic the taste sensation you go through when drinking your favourite brew.”



### Teddy Bee

“Teddy Bee is almost playful in her approach. Her songs give you an instant boost with the feel-good factor.”

COFFEE & CHOCOLATE

# Coffee’s best friends

“A little bit of chocolate makes all coffee taste better...” It’s a secret that professional coffee tasters know to be true – and who are we to argue? Here are some of our best pairings from the Hotel Chocolat recipe library.



### The Macaron

With your mouth warmed by coffee, the crisp shells will yield to the soft crème interior.



### Serious Dark Fix

This praline-rich selection will melt in the mouth and has the cacao punch to balance coffee depth.



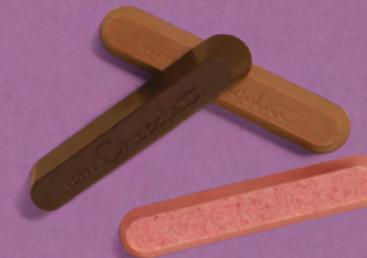
### The 10-second dunking biscuit

Will hold its texture for the full 10, enough time to become fully infused with your coffee.



### Biscuits of the Gods: Chocolat Pillows

Plump pillows of chocolate atop a crispy biscuit base.



### The Baton

Exactly eight grams. Precisely dippable, meltable and snappable.



### Unbelievably Vegan

All the creaminess of the best latte or flat white, in chocolate made without milk. Elevates pralines, caramels, fruities – and coffee.

HUMANS OF HOTEL CHOCOLAT

# The Flavour Engineers

Hotel Chocolat's Angus Thirlwell and Dualit's Alex Gort-Barten share the inside story of teaming up once more to create the Podster.



**Angus** We found the perfect flavour for your coffee in a bowl. Dualit had to capture it in a pod. The first thing was finding the beans we wanted. We cupped beans in small batches, grinding them up, letting them settle in hot water and then drinking, until we found the ideal taste profiles we wanted. We then had to replicate it all on a much bigger scale, meticulously working with the Dualit team to recapture that original flavour in pods.

**Alex** The pods do all the work of a professional barista in 18 to 30 seconds. All you have to do is enjoy the result. So much of the flavour depends on the density of the beans and making sure you've got precisely the right grind and water pressure. That's why cafés spend so much on training their baristas. Our pods take all of that work and put it into the hands of our engineers and Hotel Chocolat to bring the experience home. I call it 'flavour engineering'. There's virtually no oxygen inside a pod, which means it's always bursting with freshness.

**Angus** We didn't want to do a coffee machine unless we could make the pods zero-to-landfill. We'd been interested for a long time in creating an in-home barista coffee system, but we kept hitting this problem of how to make sure the pods didn't go to landfill. It was so disappointing that, after 30 years, the coffee pod industry still hadn't found a good solution. That's why the Podcycler truly is a game changer. We made sure we could include one free with every Podster.



**Alex** The Podcycler unlocks the huge potential of coffee pods as a waste resource. Coffee pods are made with coffee and aluminium. The moment you separate them, you go from having six grams of landfill waste to one gram of infinitely recyclable aluminium and five grams of biodegradable coffee grounds. The Podcycler puts the power to make pods zero-to-landfill into everyone's hands. And people just absolutely love using it, especially kids. It's therapeutic. It just makes you feel good.

"When you feel the Podster handle, it's exactly the same material, diameter and engraved finish as the Velvetiser handle, drilled out of a solid piece of aluminium" Alex

**Angus** Dualit is an obsessive business. (It takes one to know one.) Like us, they're borderline bonkers about their area of expertise. Developing the Velvetiser together was an incredibly intensive project; creating the Podster was the same. We brought our flavour expertise, and they brought their design engineering talent. It was an exciting and inspiring experience to be a part of a small group of people with different talents, absolutely focused, with real energy behind them. Together we hope we've created a daily coffee ritual that everyone can enjoy; a moment where everything just comes together perfectly.

# EARN CHOCOLATE REWARDS WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE

Become a home barista – effortlessly – with two subscription services dedicated to delivering café-quality drinks to the comfort of your kitchen.

Choose one or combine both to receive maximum chocolate rewards.



Rabot Estate Coffee

Velvetiser Drinking Chocolate

For every tenth unit\* of coffee and/or drinking chocolate you receive as part of your subscription, we'll send you a £15\*\* reward to spend at Hotel Chocolat.



Join today: [hotelchocolat.com/subscriptions](https://hotelchocolat.com/subscriptions)

\*One Subscription Unit: One box of Velvetiser single-serves • Two 250g drinking chocolate pouches • One box of 60 coffee pods • Four 225g bags of coffee beans.  
\*\*Your £15 reward will be delivered via email and can be redeemed at [hotelchocolat.com](https://hotelchocolat.com) or in-app. See full terms and conditions at [hotelchocolat.com/terms](https://hotelchocolat.com/terms)



# CHECK INTO PARADISE.

Rabot Estate comprises hotel, 14 luxury eco-lodges, open-air restaurant, bar, spa and the new Project Chocolat chocolate experience. Among our rainforest cacao farm you'll reconnect with nature, prioritising wellness and sustainability.

For more information or to book please visit:  
[hotelchocolat.com/rabothotel](https://hotelchocolat.com/rabothotel)  
email: [reservations@thehotelchocolat.com](mailto:reservations@thehotelchocolat.com)  
or call: +1 758 459 7973



**RABOT  
HOTEL**  
SAINT LUCIA  
FROM HOTEL CHOCOLAT