

## Art of Olive Green

Towards Art, an Ethics & a Laugh

## Archives

All posts for the month March, 2013

## ROK Manual Espresso Maker Review

Posted by [getraer](#) on [March 25, 2013](#)

Posted in: [Uncategorized](#). Tagged: [BPA](#), [coffee](#), [espresso](#), [review](#). [17 Comments](#)





([https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/img\\_1436.jpg](https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/img_1436.jpg))

**WARNING:** See comments. The plastic parts of this espresso maker contain BPA. I am no longer using mine. H/t to Harry from *Coffee Chap* (<http://gettingtheword.com>) directly from ROK.

Something a little more bobo than usual:

I was given a ROK manual espressomaker for Christmas, and have used it daily since to give an accurate characterization. One of the small amenities I sorely missed during the 13 days of cold blackout after Hurricane Sandy was morning espresso. (We made Turkish coffee on the gas stove.) With the ROK, as long as we still have natural gas and running municipal water, I will be able to drink espresso.

I have a solid background with consumer espresso machines. I broke a Saeco trying to clean the group head (the retaining screw stripped – the end) after 3 years; I burnt out the thermostat on a Francis! Francis! after 5 years and swapped its boiler parts into a 1980s Espresso Cialda after finding the latter in a basement with the filter basket missing. All those machines developed thermostat problems: after a couple of years they couldn't regulate boiler temperature, overheating the water until the espresso was a thin, scorching brew.

Overall, the **ROK makes an excellent espresso**. It is a little more work than an electric pump-driven machine, but the quality and kinetic experience is worth it. But there are a couple of qualifications to my praise.

#### Materials

I used Douulton-filtered water and grounds from a Braun burr grinder. I had to use Starbucks espresso beans because that's all I could get locally after trying illy (disgusting, thin, sour) and Gevalia (sour, thin, revolting) and Fairway's bulk beans (artificial flavor fumes lingering). For years I bought the darkest roast I could get in bulk at Costco, but they stopped carrying anything above a medium Colombian Supremo. I must start ordering online.

#### *Tamping the grounds*

You will note that the included spoon has an ergonomic divot for pressing with your thumb while tamping the grounds. This is because a firmer pack than used with electric machines yields better taste and crema.

#### *Water temperature*

The ROK, into which you must pour boiling water and then press it out with an action like that of a wing corkscrew, won't suffer thermostat failure. But its body is an alloy that loses heat quickly, and requires preheating of everything to get a passable brew. You must fill it to top with boiling water, let it sit a moment, then flush it through the empty basket, preheat the cup with kettle water (not the flush water which has already gotten much cooler), then half-fill the ROK with water for your espresso all in a short period of time. If you do that the espresso will come through **warm, but never quite hot**. Given the predictable failures of machines that cost up to twice as much, that's not a big deal.

#### *Crema*

A review I found (<http://espressounplugged.com/blog/rok-review-josh-munro>) complained about the ROK's crema, and it's true: **crema's not easy to get**. I found it works best when you make the cup, then add ~tablespoon more of boiling water from the kettle and press it through the grounds. The higher ratio of air to water in that second press almost always lends itself to a ready froth.

#### *Construction*

Generally, the construction of the ROK is solid and ingenious. But its **finish will not stay perfect**. This is because steam rises from the chamber where you pour the boiling water. The steam acts on the joint where the aluminum wings are pinned by a bolt that is probably stainless steel, causing galvanic corrosion (<http://aluminumsurface.blogspot.com/2009/04/corrosion-between-anodized-aluminum-and.html>). The finish of the ROK is highly polished and probably anodized, so where this corrosion happens the anodized layer cracks and aluminum oxidation (rust) happens in the cracks. It won't affect its function but as you can see, aesthetic fetishists will be bummed.



([https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/img\\_2060.jpg](https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/img_2060.jpg))  
Galvanic corrosion around the joint.

Another flaw, this one more serious, is the choice of **ridiculous rubber feet** that stick to the bottom. As a metalworker, I can tell you that anodized aluminum is an amazing material. Almost anything (paint, adhesives etc.) will stick to it, much better than it would to raw aluminum. After anodizing and painting aluminum, it can be sealed to prevent anything sticking. So if the base were aluminum, I would have anodized it, stuck the feet on, then sealed it.

But the base must be corrosion-resistant because standing water and coffee residues will sit on it. You can see a seam where it is bolted to the main body. As such it is almost certainly a chrome-plated zinc alloy (which makes me wonder if the entire body is not that, maybe that zinc-aluminum-magnesium-copper alloy I've seen used in jewelry...but the finish-cracking around the joint mentioned above suggests aluminum). The very chroming that strengthened the base's finish made it **too sheer a surface for sticker-feet to cling to**, and one popped off this morning. Since the user presses down with equal force on the two arms, effective use requires that the unit be skid-proof. Eventually all four feet will come off and you'll need to apply a full-bottom adhesive rubber base, covering the "designed in London, made in P.R.C." language—nothing lost.

## Croatia Arming Syrian Rebels?

Posted by [getraer](#) on [March 9, 2013](#)

Posted in: Uncategorized. Tagged: Croatia, EU, NATO, rebels, Syria, Turkey. Leave a comment

*Thanks to Tom Watson for helping to bring this to the world's attention. He had this [bad translation of an article \(http://www.tom-watson.co.uk/2013/03/it-looks-like-croatia-is-arming-syrian-rebels-and-now-there-are-allegations-that-the-uk-is-involved-in-a-covert-operation-to-assist-in-weapons-shipments\)](http://www.tom-watson.co.uk/2013/03/it-looks-like-croatia-is-arming-syrian-rebels-and-now-there-are-allegations-that-the-uk-is-involved-in-a-covert-operation-to-assist-in-weapons-shipments) about Croatia arming Syrian rebels up on his site. A friend of mine is Croatian, and she voluntarily re-translated his Google translation because, well, you know how those can be. I've been traveling in Turkey so it's been generally tough to post, but I don't want this to get stale. I'll probably link it or post in comments on his site later.*

### Zagreb became an international center for arms shipments to the Syrian rebels

In the period from the beginning of November last year [2012] until February of this year [2013], a total of 75 civilian cargo planes took off from the Zagreb airport, carrying weapons to Syrian rebels, diplomatic sources told Jutarnji list. The planes were carrying, aside from Croatian weapons, weapons supplied by other European countries, the collection of which was organized by the United States.

According to our sources, the first two to three shipments had been carried out by a Turkish airline, Turkish Cargo, owned by Turkish Airlines, [the subsequent shipments] were then taken over by a Jordanian company, Jordanian International Air Cargo.

Until recently, it was believed—and The New York Times reported— that a Croatian high official had been negotiating, with his U.S. colleagues, to transport Croatia's excess weapons and arms to the Syrian rebels. However, according to reliable diplomatic sources, the arming of Syrian rebels was part of a much broader plan.

[According to the same sources], the American officials enlisted their partners – Croatia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Turkey, in the operation of arming the resistance of the Syrian regime. The United States organized the collection of arms, Saudi Arabia was financing it, and Jordan and Turkey were transporting arms from the Jordanian territory into Syria.

Croatia's role was twofold. It collected the excess of its own weapons—M79 grenade launchers, RPG-22 grenade launchers, RBG-6 multiple grenade launchers and M-60 no-recoil canons— from [Croatian] army warehouses. An unknown quantity of those arms left from Zagreb airport Pleso for Syria, in Turkish A310 aircraft, in early November of last year. However, the United States also organized transport of arms to the Zagreb airport Pleso from several other European countries—Great Britain among them—which was then transported in Jordanian International Cargo planes first to Jordan and then to Syria.

We could say that Zagreb airport Pleso served as an international hub for transport of arms to Syrian rebels. The aircraft used for this transport were A310 and Iljušin 76MF, which leads us to conclude that the 75 flights transported about 3000 tons of various types of weapons and ammunition.

YouTube videos confirm that weapons are being delivered to the Syrian rebels in great quantities. In the videos, rebels show off the new types of weapons they now possess. According to Western media, the transport of those weapons [to Syria] was organized by the United States and Turkey.

Our sources claim that the security of the whole operation of weapons transport from Zagreb's Pleso became compromised when the air traffic control of Bosnia and Herzegovina started inquiring about the sudden increase of Jordanian airline's flights from Zagreb. The sudden increase in frequency of incoming Jordanian cargo planes did not go unnoticed in Pleso either. According to our sources, it is unknown how many of the weapons that were shipped ended up in the hands of the Free Syrian Army, backed by the West, and how many in the hands of various militant jihadist movements. According to some estimates, there are several dozen militant jihadist groups also fighting the Syrian regime.

Judging by the videos recently posted on YouTube, a portion of the arms, believed to have originated in Croatian army warehouses, ended up in the hands of the jihadist movement Ahram al-Sham. This was confirmed by their spokesperson when he said that they [Ahram al-Sham] share their weapons with the Free Syrian Army.

According to some information, the weapons that arrived to Syria through Zagreb, ended up in the hands of the Martyrs of Yarmouk, who, two days ago, kidnapped 20 Filipino members of the U.S. peacekeeping force in Golan Heights. The fact that weapons might end up in the hands of militant groups is what frightens Western politicians the most; which is why the majority of the countries insists that the weapons embargo on Syria remain in force. Croatia supported that embargo; and formally it never broke it by engaging in this operation, because it sold the weapons to Jordan.

Croatia proved itself a reliable partner of the U.S. in this whole story. Washington played a crucial role in Croatia's accession, first to NATO, and now to the European Union. Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Defense has been greatly aiding the Croatian Army in Afghanistan and securing free transport of our soldiers to the ISAF mission. Therefore, it is perfectly clear that Croatia, as a faithful ally, accepted the American request to participate in the operation of weapons transport to Syria.

## Treble Army – Lullabomb (w/ lyrics)

Posted by *getraer* on *March 8, 2013*

Posted in: Culture crit, Engaged art. Tagged: Afghanistan, hiphop, Iraq, war. 3 Comments

*I can't believe these brothers were based in Arizona. I know how that place can make you this het up.*

*The album version of this tune does not include audio of these creepy vids that only enhance the impact of this colonial critique. Nov '13 UPDATE: Sese himself, the man behind Treble Army, has responded with the lyrics, so I have moved my occasionally-wonky transcription to the comments for archives' sake. (I wonder if this gambit will work for other tunes?)*

*Sese's flow is breakneck, choppy and freely accordions between languid and deep-sea compressed. Yet he chuckles in this interview with True Skool Radio (<http://bit.ly/10qLF2r>) that on TA's new album **Amierdaca**, he has better control of his flow than in previous efforts. Yao.*





My city never sleeps  
 In tha distance do I hear soprano sax or drone attacks?  
 Night vision sensor beeps  
 Target locked, Darpa profits, phosphorus bombs, carnage is common  
 Helicopters like I'm walkin' in 'Nam  
 New widows every week  
 In tha mirror it's civilian casualty, collateral damage or enemy combatant?  
 No choice but carry munitions, I'm forced to Yankee resistance  
 'Cause protest/prayer don't lessen extraordinary rendition  
 ...Imprisoned Guantanamo Bay, sensory deprivation, swimming in waterboarding  
 Innocents slaughtered all week, minimum media coverage  
 Pillage and rape tha people, B-52 Bomber's foreplay  
 Dreams: relatives skeletons weapons discharged to stomach  
 Open my eyes Obama increased tha Defense Department budget  
 They said freedom/democracy that's when tha nightmares came  
 Shock and awe Iraq version Disney Electric Light Parade

Lullabye, Lullabomb, hear tha cry of tha young  
 New insurgent Tossin', turnin, Kabul burnin',  
 Insomnia certain. Shoot first, mom!  
 Uncle Tom wants troop surges

Babies born deformed experiments gone wrong  
 According to warlords their cause is right  
 Lethal chemicals breathed by fetal specimens  
 Each and every pregnancy we gon' mourn tonight  
 Bodies twisted like tha penmanship's calligraphy  
 Voiceless victims of violence 'cause limbs are where their lips should be  
 Oil rigs become private, mercenaries majority  
 Torture prisons hide, takin' pictures of inmate strip routines  
 Your country tis of the-f-t, Liberty let's see  
 If my missile heat headrest feels like your M16  
 You left it on an uninvolved civilian  
 Mustache, brown skin, turban cost our children  
 Y'all extremists REAL terrorists evil equals intent to  
 KILL for Lockheed CEO elites that you'll never meet at their  
 GRILL Peel caps of poor people ain't seen a meal since your last congressional  
 SEAL, bullets are sleeping pills

Lullabye, Lullabomb, hear tha cry of tha young  
 New insurgent Tossin', turnin, Kabul burnin',  
 Insomnia certain. Shoot first, mom!  
 Uncle Tom wants troop surges

I see tha Brown & Black soldiers, how they treat 'em awful  
 Gang raped and mutilated, like Lavena Johnson  
 Tha Spanish speakers fight for citizenship  
 While tha Black ones think that white folks is interested they enlist!

Poverty good recruit, laugh at Black skinned armor  
Brown is bulletproof, Africannon fodder  
How they make it to tha front lines of tha gun deployment?  
Same way they at tha front lines of tha unemployment!  
Sergeant cuttin corners think we won't take P.O.W.'s  
Recruit amongst tha coloreds like tha Viet Cong accustomed to  
Convince 'em we got common cause 'til Uncle Sam's inaudible  
We allies in tha struggle, suffocate commanding officers!  
Our war memorials would need a poet laureate to write  
Each freedom fighter and innocent bystander daughter/son  
'Cause this notorious empire strikes with gory lust  
Tha red, white and blue's in tha sights of new Afghani warriors

DIVIDE & Conquer won't work this time (Peace is a language that they don't understand)  
Divide and conquer won't work this time (Tell peaceful protest 2 tha terrorist on my land)

This is a parent's story FROM  
Occupied territories GUN  
By my side ready loaded HUNG  
Cyanide necklace never die lonely!  
Palestine, Lebanon surprise! America & Israel thought genocide was single-side only!