

THE ROASTAIRE. A REVOLUTION FOR THE BEANS

by Adrienne Dyer

What does your daily cup of coffee have to do with your carbon footprint? Plenty, according to local roaster extraordinaire Jim Townley. Together with partners Jaromir Friedrich and Raymond Lemaire, Townley has invented a new machine that conquers the environmental costs of traditional, gas-fired coffee roasting methods, without sacrificing the flavour of artisan coffee. Their invention, the Roastaire, is the first significant innovation in roasting technology in 100 years.

The Roastaire's patented closed-loop system, which captures and recycles heat energy, is 20 times more energy efficient than a traditional roaster, and creates 85 per cent less emissions. Scaled up to the 477 million pounds of coffee roasted annually in Canada, that translates into the power consumed by 12,000 homes, and the CO₂ emissions from 30,000 cars.

Townley, who roasts small batches of artisan quality coffee daily for his Fresh Cup Roastery Café in Saanichton, now wants to take his invention across Canada and beyond. The Roastaire's compact size, consistent results and quick learning curve make it ideal for urban café owners who want to distinguish themselves with unique in-house blends roasted 'just in time' for optimum freshness.

Townley says the Roastaire provides a unique opportunity for grocery stores to stock freshly roasted coffee beans for sale alongside baked goods and other fresh items. It's an opportunity Fresh St. Market was quick to jump on. Using the Roastaire, Fresh St. now roasts coffee beans onsite three days a week at their Surrey and West Van locations.

The Roastaire allows café owners to roast coffee without upsetting the neighbors with the emissions, says co-founder Jim Townley. So it's entirely possible to roast coffee on the ground floor of a condo building.

