

## Overview

Izzo have taken the already excellent Alex and made a dual boiler version called the Duetto. Incredibly, they have kept all the features that people loved about the Alex and the machine is exactly the same size. It should be because it uses the same case. The Duetto arrives well packed (Izzo have improved the packaging and Bella Barista also double box the machines). The build quality remains excellent with high quality (industry standard) components and a lot of care has been taken with assembly. Constructed using heavy gauge mirror finish stainless steel, outside and inside, unlike some machines which use cheaper materials for the inner frame. The Duetto (although not cheap) still comprises excellent value for money.

Dual Boiler machines are often quite complex internally, with a lot of electronic cleverness, Izzo have wisely avoided too much of this, creating a machine that's easy and economical to maintain. The Duetto is simple to operate, a Single On/Off switch and a button to switch the Steam/Hot Water boiler On /Off as desired. There is no need to do anything special to draw steam, hot water or espresso at any time. The Duetto automatically maintains the water level in the boiler as required and if run low on water in the tank the Duetto has a low water alarm in addition to switching itself off as a safety precaution. If you prefer, you can simply flip a lever and plumb it directly into the mains, rather than use the internal tank.

*“simple to operate, a Single On/Off switch and a button to switch the Steam/Hot Water boiler On/Off as desired”*

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At the time of writing, I am currently unaware of any machine with all the features of the Duetto (as standard) at this price point.

The details were correct at the time of writing, but the manufacturer and Bella Barista reserve the right to change the technical specification of the packaging, machines and any accessories supplied with the machine (including quantity and type of accessories supplied)

## Overview -cont.

Some coffee enthusiasts buy second hand commercial machines to make quality beverages at home. They are very large, heavy, need to be plumbed into the mains and have 3-6kw heating elements in 5 litre or larger boilers. The Duetto should give the same quality and durability, without the hassle. The Duetto requires no specialised power supply and is unique in providing a traditional machine with the features it has. It is an excellent machine both for the customer to use and the reseller to support. It will provide years of reliable service with the minimum of maintenance.

*“Comprehensive documentation covering all aspects of operation, routine maintenance and production of espresso based drinks”*

Once in position on the counter the machine looks nice and does not dominate on standard sized work surface. The height of the machine is very convenient and gives room under standard height kitchen cupboards. Even though large, it's still small enough to be positioned in a corner, ideal, especially when located near a sink.



*Well packed inner box, protected by double packing in an larger air-cell filled outer (inset) by Bella Barista*

Bella Barista provides comprehensive documentation covering all aspects of operation, routine maintenance and production of espresso based drinks. A valuable addition to the Italian manufacturers written user guide which in my case was not available as I have the first machine produced.

Even if you are completely new to coffee making and this type of machine, you will have no problem making all those great coffee drinks in a very short time. The Duetto is easy to keep clean, a quick wipe with a damp cloth and a buff with a micro fibre cloth keeps it looking great. More complex tasks, backflushing, group head cleaning etc. are actually very easy to do and explained in the supplied Bella Barista user guide.



*Positioned in the corner of my kitchen*

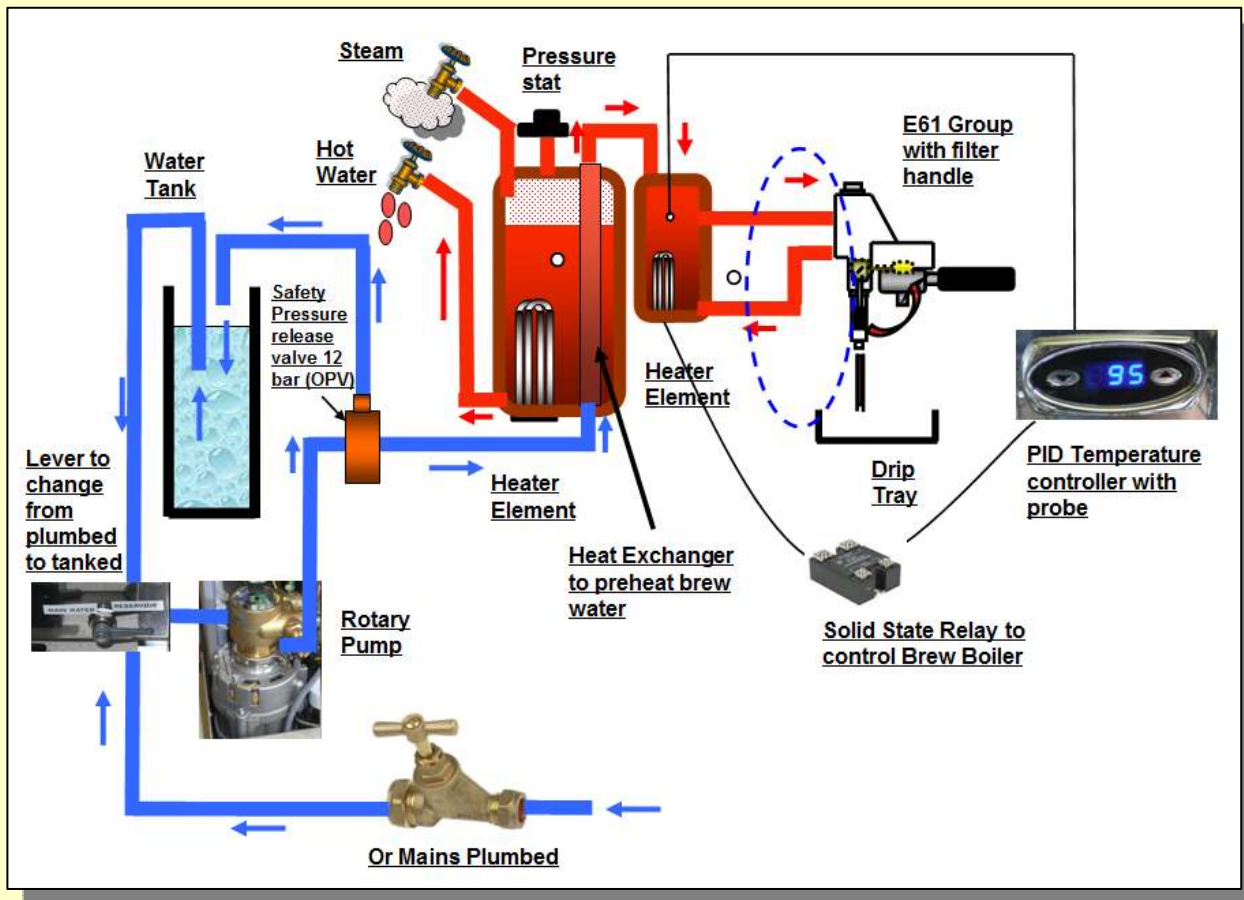
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Bella Barista, Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 1LD

Tel: 01933 273275

e-mail: [claudettep@towability.com](mailto:claudettep@towability.com)

## How it works



The cold/hot water (steam) pathways shown in blue/red respectively. A lever is simply moved should mains plumbing be desired and the machine can be returned to tanked operation in a few seconds.

The sensitive thermostat is located in the water of the brew boiler; its temperature is controlled by a proportional-integral-derivative controller (PID controller). A PID controller uses three separate parameters; the Proportional, Integral and Derivative values. These determine the level of reaction to any the large temp change, a correction factor that is applied the nearer we get to the desired value and damping to reduce over/undershoots, or oscillation around a setpoint. The rapid on/off switching of the brew boiler, due to the PID, is controlled by a 25AMP solid state switch, these have a very fast switching time which aids temperature control.

The E61 group is warmed by a very efficient thermosyphon, specifically taken from a point about 25% from the top of the brew boiler (preventing problems seen in some twin boiler machines). Lifting the lever starts the pumping of brew water, lowering the lever stops the pump and additionally releases the pressure (all 140 psi of it) from the group, so you can remove the filter handle safely, (the excess water goes into the drip tray when pressure is released)

Cold water in the brew circuit is preheated via a custom heat exchanger within the 1.8l Steam/HW boiler, allowing the smaller 0.8l brew boiler to maintain a very stable temperature. Coffee brew water for the group comes directly from this temperature controlled brew boiler

The pump keeps the Steam/HW boiler about 60% filled with water that is heated and kept at a pressure of 1.4 bar The temperature of this water is above boiling point and has an area of steam above (similar to a pressure cooker).

Steam: The pipe for the steam wand is at the top of the boiler (in the steam area) as the steam tap is opened, steam is forced through the steam pipe and as the pressure drops more of the water instantly flashes to steam, giving a continuous supply.

Hot Water: The pipe for the hot water tap is submerged below the waterline in the boiler. As the hot water tap is opened, steam pressure forces the hot water from the boiler through the pipe and out of the hot water outlet.  
Coffee Brew Water

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Bella Barista, Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 1LD

Tel: 01933 273275 e-mail: [claudettep@towability.com](mailto:claudettep@towability.com)

# Inside the Duetto – Is it complicated?

It's easy to glance at the Duetto and think nothing has changed, the only real external differences between it and a standard Alex MKII, is the addition of a digital temperature indicator and the dials and lights are in a slightly different place. A close inspection inside reveals just how special this machine is.

Extremely high Internal build quality, traditional construction using heavy gauge copper tube and brazed fittings, with great attention to detail. Components are well positioned, neatly assembled; all cables are well away from hot spots and comprehensively tied to avoid movement.

Some internal shots below, all the quality names, Sirai, MA-TER, Gicar, and a nice view of boilers, how they got it all in there (wow!)



*Somehow they got it all in, incredible!*



*Brazed joints nice and neat with superb quality wiring.*

*New custom made boilers made, very thick copper, nice quality.*

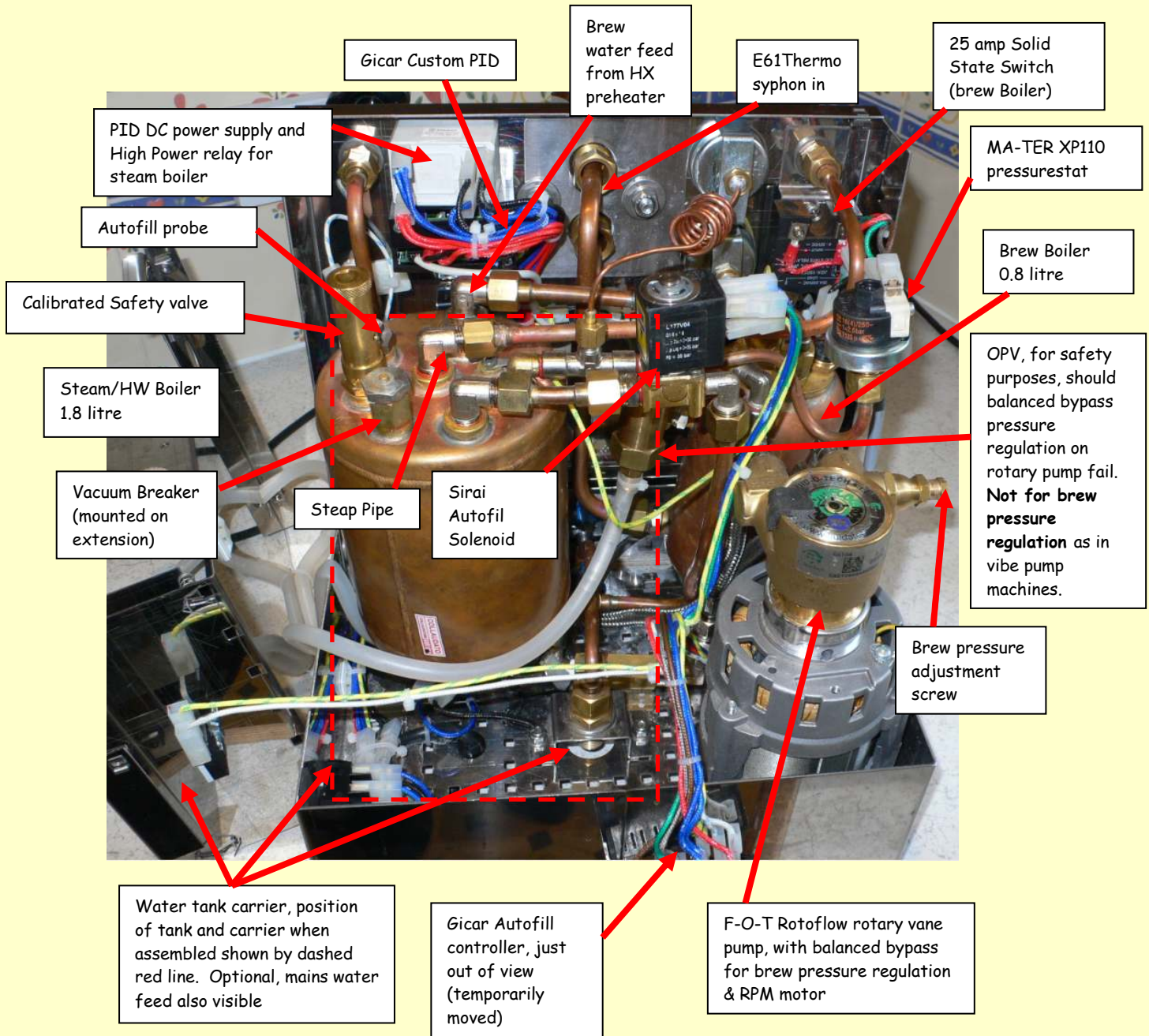


*The rotary pump and powerhouse of a motor, plus a good view of the nicely made 0.8l brew boiler. Please ignore the grey lead; it's my own modification to test switching the steam boiler independently*



*On the left the Gicar PID and heavy duty relay, on the right the Solid state switch*

# Inside the Duetto - A detailed tour



**Both Boilers have resettable limit stats**, but you can't really see them in this picture, the Steam/HW boiler has one on the bottom and the Brew boiler has one on the top. Above is almost a total strip down for access and can be achieved in a few minutes. Many components can be reached simply by removing the cover under the cup tray a 60 second job with 4 screws. Easy Access to the internals has always been a good feature of Izzo machines and the Duetto is no different. Inside is a high quality traditional copper pipe and brazed

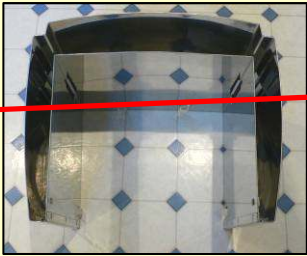
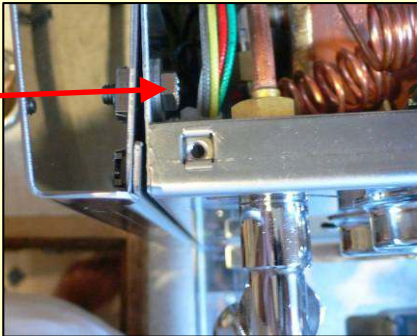
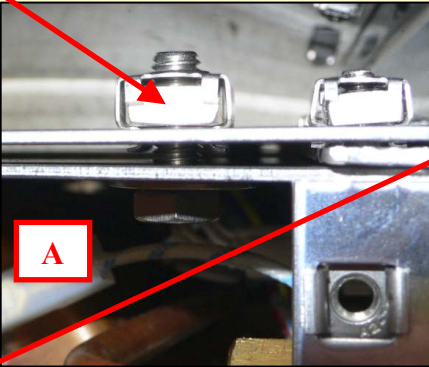
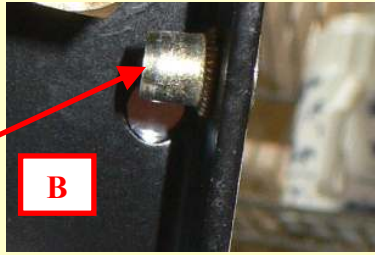
fitting construction. I would have liked to see boiler drain holes for descaling, but these would have been impractical, as there would not have been space underneath to drain them without spilling descaler everywhere.

Maintenance is very easy, descaling is detailed in the Bella Barista User Guide and is possible without having to remove the case.

## Key features – Simple or special?

- Ability to change brew temperature at the touch of a button
- No cooling flush required
- Good quality standard 58mm portafilters
- Commercial Rotary Pump specially fitted to reduce vibration and noise
- Separate brew and boiler pressure gauges
- Ball Joint steam and water arms
- Drip tray drain system for plumbed operation and drain hose supplied
- Plumbed Mains/Internal Tank operation selected with the flip of a lever, also makes descaling a plumbed machine far simpler.
- Fully stainless steel construction, inside and out
- Brew Boiler can be independently turned off
- Redesigned drip tray and cup rack, drip tray can be removed without removing cup rack
- Gicar custom PID Temperature control. P, I & D parameters can be modified, offset can be programmed (can display C or F)
- Brew Water Preheat via custom HX specifically designed for the Duetto
- Steam/Hot Water boiler can be turned off to save energy
- Solid state switching of Brew Boiler heating element
- Improved Vacuum Breaker Valve (mounted on extension tube to improve operation)
- Neat brazing and traditional internal construction
- Very powerful steamer

### Key features

Item/Description	Picture	Comments
<p>The double skinned external case, giving cool walls. The machine takes a bit longer to strip down now because of the addition of steel retaining bolts at the top of the case...giving a more secure fit and eliminating a point of vibration on the old Alex MK I. (these should only be tight enough to spring the case and frame together, not too tight as you will deform the metal)</p>		
<p>I have not mentioned this before and I should have done. In image A shows the standard threaded insert on Izzo Machines. They comprise a spring clipped cage with a square stainless steel machine nut, to accept the stainless steel machine screws/bolts. The cage is easily clipped out should ever the machine nut need replacing. They can be tightened incredibly hard and not strip or spin in the socket and have never given any trouble, unlike the type of fittings used in B.</p> <p>B shows the standard fitment on most prosumer machines. A simple grip riveted, threaded insert applied using pressure. If over tightened the grip can be broken and they spin in place, making screw removal difficult or impossible (even drilling out the fitting is not easy because, it can spin!), not easily replaced by consumers</p>		 <p>The fittings in "A" really are nice from an engineering point of view; the fittings in "B" are adequate, but cheap.</p>

Excellent routing of internal cables and pipes, avoiding hot spots and areas of vibration scuffing. I've come to expect this on Izzo machines

New Custom copper boilers (very thick). All screwed fittings on brass holders either brazed to tank or on brass endplates (brew boiler)

High quality internal components, but limiting the use of "clever electronics" means **the Duetto can be placed on a cheap standard mains timer to switch on/off as required**

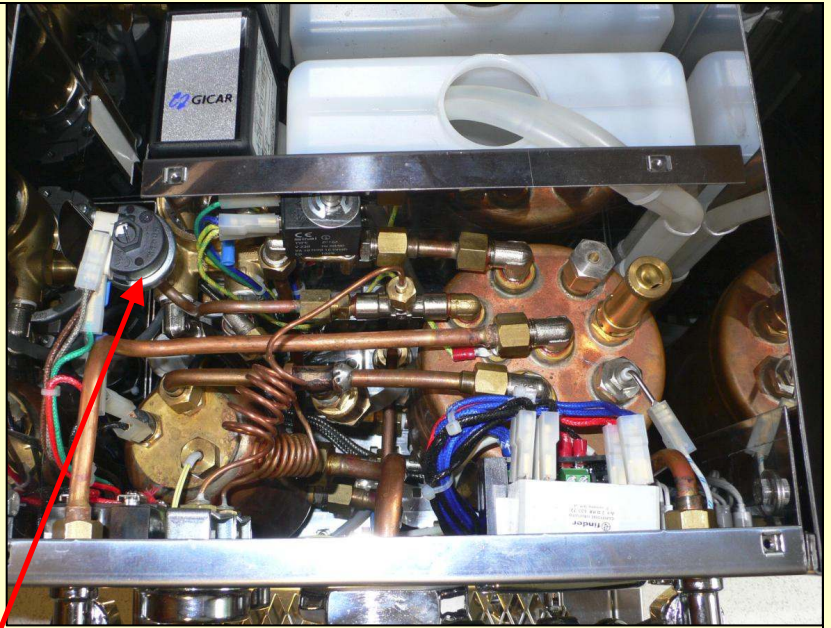
All components very accessible. This makes servicing quick and easy. There are large removable access plates on the underside of the machine as well.

Wiring all braided and high quality

Steel braided high pressure pipe

Very accessible pressurestat that is not too sensitive to adjust. This makes pressure adjustment extremely easy and can be adjusted via an access hole without removing case.

Rotary pump with large RPM motor, so replacement shouldn't be necessary very often in the Domestic environment. If the pump is ever fails, it is relatively cheap and very easy to replace..



Rotary pump is now vertical & rubber mounted, which reduces vibration considerably and allowed the twin boilers to be fitted in the same case.

Steam boiler is an ample 1.8 litres and because steaming is now decoupled from brewing unlike HX machines, steam pressure can, be adjusted to whatever level required, enabling the perfect preparation of milk-based drinks.

**The brew water is pre-heated through a specially designed custom pre-heat HX system in the steam boiler.** Steam pressure can be run at 1.4 bar with no risk of overheating the brew water due to superheated water from the HX. Commercial confidentiality means I can't detail how it works.

The 1.8l vertical boiler coupled with 1450W ((approx) heating element makes it a steaming monster. For fun I tried the Izzo Pompeii commercial 4 hole tip and some water.

180 ml from 5C to 65C in 15 seconds

360 ml from 5C to 65C in 28 seconds



The drip tray is large and holds a respectable 1.7 litres or more, but is best emptied at around 1.4litres.

The tray can now be removed simply by sliding out from under the cup rack.

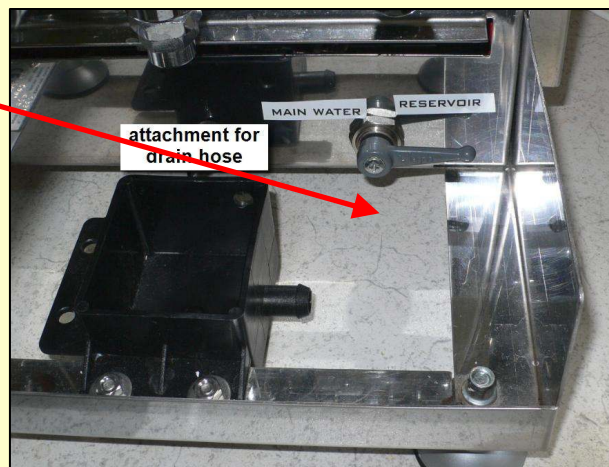
Izzo now use a rubber grommet to seal the drain hole at the base of the drip tray, which is great as it gives a much cleaner look and no longer catches in the lip of the drain tray..




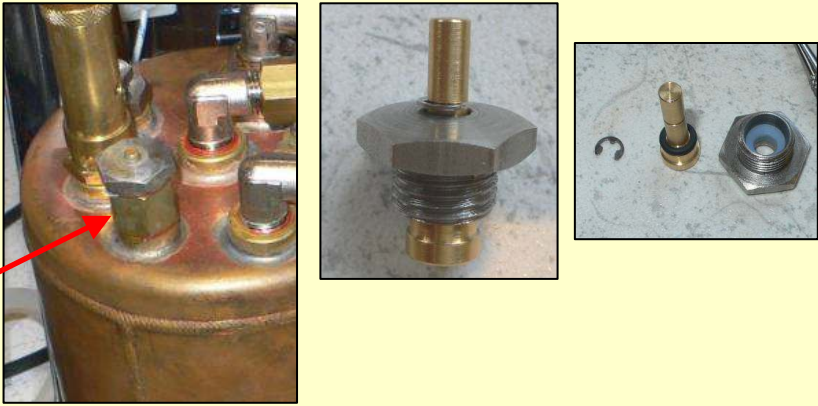



The second picture shows the drain attachment to which the supplied drain hose is fitted (some mains fill only machines do not come with this as standard).

The ability to flip a switch to move mains to tanked operation is great. Very handy during descaling, or if the machine is to be moved to a non plumbed location.

The mains water hose and the drain hose can be detached from the machine if it's not plumbed in, to keep things looking tidy.



<p>Nice large cup warming tray. You can get plenty of cups on there, definitely no lack of space.</p>		<p>There are no finger holes as on the cup tray. This should be addressed by Izzo with the addition of a couple of lifting "knobs" placed at either side of the tray as used on the Vivi.</p>
<p>The Alex is heavy, at least 30 kg. If you will need to pull it out from under any kitchen cupboards to fill it, it can be hard with those grippy rubber feet.</p> <p><b>The feet are height adjustable!</b></p>		<p>Problem solved for a few pounds. Stick 4 of these little felt pads on the feet and it slides about with one hand!</p> <p>Alternatively use Teflon "glide pads" and you can slide it around with 1 finger!</p>
<p>The Duetto uses a larger hole steam tip (shown on right, to the Alex MKII (left). The steaming power of the Duetto makes the larger 2 hole tip very effective and <b>I did try a 4 hole Izzo Pompeii commercial tip on the machine which also worked very well (steaming monster would be the correct term)</b>. I think which steam tip you prefer will be a personal preference, but you have plenty of choice (single, double small, double large, 4 hole).</p> <p><b>Standard Tip heating times for Water</b></p> <p>180 ml from 5C to 65C in 18 seconds 360 ml from 5C to 65C in 30 seconds</p>		<p>I still think the single hole steam tip also works well, but now can be purchased and considered an accessory, rather than a necessity.</p> <p>Note: The Duetto will steam <b>very</b> quickly with a commercial 4 hole Izzo Pompeii tip, however it should be remembered that tip is designed for a 4 litre boiler!, so for volumes of milk above 460ml, it's best to use the standard 2 hole tip to maintain steam pressure.</p>
<p>The vacuum breaker valve on the Duetto</p> <p>I took one apart to have a closer look and as you can see, it's a very simple device. Pressure in the boiler pushes the brass pin with the silicon O ring onto the nylon seating and seals the boiler as it comes up to steam.</p> <p>The extension tube can be clearly seen on the boiler (plus a conservative water level) helps for a more positive closure and less water splash as it closes.</p>		
<p>I like the balljoint mounted steam and hot water arms</p> <p>Separate brew pressure and steam boiler pressure gauges, the brew pressure gauge facilitates the easy check and adjustment of pump pressure....In the case of a rotary pumped machine, approx 9 bar</p> <p>The badge is a disappointment, it will also gradually slide down and eventually fall off (although I will have removed it long before that)!</p> <p>I hope that soon Izzo develop a nicer badge that's permanently fixed on.</p>		

**Gicar PID unit, specifically built for Coffee machines and this variant specifically built for Izzo.**

I love the 2 simple buttons allowing all functions to be programmed, yet keeping it very simple to operate.

Values that can be adjusted in addition to the brew temperature,, assuming your dealer permits it (**although I don't recommend the machine is left unattended until you know an adjustment is sound**) are:

**Proportional** - the gain of the controller, size of response within the proportional band to get back to the desired temperature, large values can cause overshoots, small values can make the controller slow to get back to the setpoint

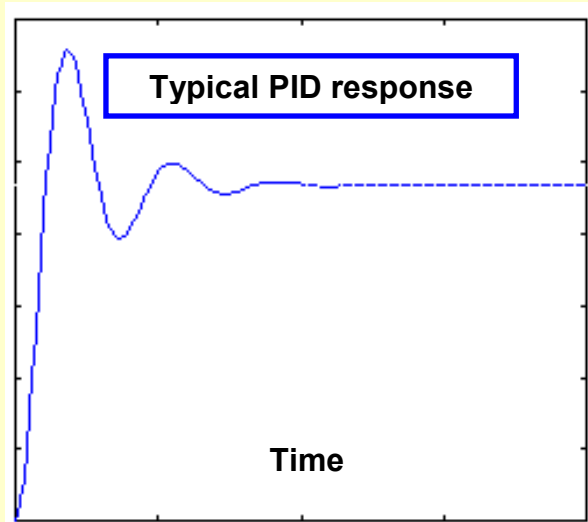
**Integral** - an algorithm that moves the system towards a smaller and smaller deviation from the setpoint over time, values too large cause "hunting" around the setpoint

**Derivative** - best thought of as damping, not allowing the controller to respond to change so quickly, has little effect on the setpoint value, only when temp changes are detected. Values too large here can cause the system to become **very** unstable.

**Display in F or C**

**Offset** – The difference between the displayed temperature, and the actual brew boiler temperature. This reflecting the true temperature of the water hitting the coffee

e.g. You might need a boiler temperature of 105C to get water at 95C from the group, setting your offset to 10, will **allow the PID to display 95C, even though the brew boiler is really at 105C.**



The PID simply tries to adjust the temperature over time as shown below, each time the system is disturbed a similar, but less dramatic process takes place

A PID helps get your temperature where you want it, in a short time, with minimal overshoot, and with little error, but of course, with compromises, hence the ability to adjust P, I, & D values

**Note: The PID and it's sensitive "in boiler" thermostat, allows you to see all the changes going on in the brew boiler, unlike some other machines I reviewed, which either do not display overshoots beyond the temperature you have set, or don't display anything at all.**

The all important rating plate, visible when the drip tray is removed.

My unit was made in May 2008 and is currently the only unit produced, production of other units should be completed week ending 6<sup>th</sup> June 08.

**Production of other units was only partially completed, to allow any critical changes required as a result of this review to be incorporated into the machines. Izzo do NOT want early adopters, to become beta testers.**



**The ability to turn off the Steam/HW boiler is also far more valuable than you might at first think. This is good for 2 reasons.**

- It saves energy
- You do not leave, the machine at high internal temperatures for extended periods in the home environment, this makes your machines internal components last longer.

There is a minor performance penalty (capacity) for straight shots without pre-heat, but not a problem and well worth working around.

The powerful heating element allows the 1.8l Steam Boiler to be up to pressure in less about 6 minutes from cold. Then you can steam or draw hot water again. Marvellous if you do not make milk based drinks all the time. If you want an Americano, simply boil a kettle in 1 minute rather than keep a 1.8 litre steam boiler running.

If the steam boiler has been used within the last hour or two, the time to come up to temperature is substantially reduced (a few minutes). **The brew boiler alone only uses about 40W per hour to keep warm.**

I have become used to the feet of the Alex now, but I have seen a home lathe machined Aluminium foot for the machine, made to almost the same pattern and I thought they looked great. Izzo have taken the comments on board about better looking feet, but I don't know when, or if they will do something about it.

Unlike some machines though, at least they are height adjustable!

The machines all come equipped with a standard UK 3 pin plug, if being supplied into the UK, again some manufacturers do not supply this with their machines

Supplied accessories include

The hoses you need for the mains water and waste connections.

2 x portafilters holders with single basket, double basket and blind filter.

Currently for Bella Barista customers a wooden handled metal based tamper, rather than those cheap plastic ones

**Bella Barista customers should also find an 8.0 mm thick group gasket in there, I felt these fitted better and Izzo will soon be supplying machines with 8 mm group gaskets (instead of 8.5), but until then Bella Barista will include one free with your machine**



Simply lift off the cup warmer tray to refill the internal water tank, or plumb into the mains....the choice is yours



Both Brew Boiler and Steam Boiler have resettable limit stats on the top and bottom of the boiler respectively

## Using the Duetto

The Duetto is a twin boiler machine, so the usual surfing and cooling flushes required with an HX machine are unnecessary. The Duetto maintains the brew boiler at the optimum temperature (whatever you decide to set) for espresso extraction. I did not find flushing to be that necessary although the physicist in me wants to flush 15–20ml before the first shot in a series, in case the water in the ducts of the E61 leading up to the coffee was a bit cool.

## Espresso

It's simple, fill the portafilter, tamp and lift the lever and then lower it again when you have the required amount of coffee, the Duetto does the rest. It makes consistently great espressos and easily maintains the temperature during the pour as the brew boiler of 0.8l has a fairly large thermal mass. Domestic or light commercial volumes of espresso one after another will be absolutely no problem with this machine.

## Pressure Settings & Steam Production

The use of a simple pressurestat, means that the **Steam Pressure can be altered if desired** (raised or lowered). I felt no need to do this and found 1.35 to 1.4 to be an ideal setting for my use of the machine

The Duetto has powerful steam and I don't believe you will be disappointed. It takes a little while to get used to steaming, especially with smaller quantities of milk, which will steam in around 15 seconds, to steam 500ml of milk would take around 30–40 seconds

## Hot Water

It is nice to have really hot water on tap, recovery time after drawing hot water for an Americano is very fast. Although I always say for regular hot water production at home, a kettle is a sensible option to consider and saves

having to have the main steam and hot water boiler on all the time. If you do have the steam boiler on another option is to simply steam a cup of water for your americano, a process that takes less than 30 seconds.

*..fill the portafilter, tamp and lift the lever.....the machine does the rest*

## The E61 Group

The E61 group is not only beautiful, but proven in service for over 40 years. It makes superb coffee with good thermal stability and built in progressive infusion. An industry standard and very easily serviced (as are many of the components in the machine), so parts such as, pumps, gaskets, shower screens, filter holders, filter holder handles etc. are all a standard size and readily available from multiple suppliers. This also means that the pricing of these spares is highly competitive.



## Design Considerations

This is the first time I have been able to include such a section, mainly because I was asked for some input to the design process. Izzo wanted to design a machine that was traditional in approach and yet provide most of the capabilities expected of a twin boiler machine without pricing it out of most peoples reach.

Various areas were considered with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, as I had reviewed a number of twin boiler offerings in the past. These had good ideas and areas that could be improved.

### What we did get

- *It needed to occupy exactly the same very high quality Alex stainless steel case and frame, but still have everything, **nothing left out!***
- *No big ticket maintenance items, fancy electronics kept to the minimum required, easy and cheap to maintain.*
- ***Can be placed on a simple cheap mains timer, to come on 20 minutes before you need a coffee in the morning and off at night. No special accessory purchase required.***
- ***Brew water preheat, but not as crude as a simple heat exchanger, and tuneable if need be for the future.** A brew boiler large enough to still give stability when the Steam boiler is switched off (but with changes to recovery times). The benefits of preheat are obvious when used and **surprisingly, some machines with smaller brew boilers don't have this feature!***
- *It has been said (**I am not sure I agree**) that a very large brew boiler (bigger than 1 litre) is a bad thing and the water isn't fresh. **For other reasons, the Duetto boiler is 0.8l, a good balance between being a little small or so large that it has too much thermal inertia. It's a little larger than the single boiler on the E61 based Isomac Zaffiro (single boiler machine).***
- *No vibration pump just to save space, needed a nice quiet commercial rotary pump*

- *An E61 group, they look nice they work well and just because the design is old, does not mean it's not good. It's easily serviced; parts & accessories are readily available. It also has a built in progressive pre-infusion.*
- *PID (Proportional Integral Derivative) temperature control of brew water.*
- *ON/Off independently switchable brew boiler*
- *Internal Tank or Mains plumbed switchable by the flip of a lever*
- ***Steam/Hot Water boiler able to be switched off independently.***
- *Traditional construction internally*
- *Easy and fast access to the internals of the machine*
- *Factory fitted drain kit, and all hoses, included, no aftermarket purchase.*

*A proper redesign, building on the good and improving what needs improving. The Duetto has been planned, **not put together from a common parts bin because it was the cheapest way...that's not the Izzo way.***

### What we didn't get:

- *PID display/control to 0.1C. I asked for it, because I think there is a marketing need, not an actual need for such control. I realise this will be debated!*
- *Insulated steam boiler, but it does not take long to insulate it and is highly recommended. **Insulating the brew boiler is not recommended***
- *Nice Metal Badge, permanently affixed*
- *Any change to the feet*
- *Solid state relay for the steam boiler*

## Brew Temperature

On the internet, there are discussions about ideal brew temperatures for espresso and varying them for different coffees. Some machines costing many thousands of pounds can (apparently) control absolute brew temperatures down to fractions of a degree. I am sure they must be very good, but of course, there is usually the law of diminishing returns to consider and the cost of parts for very specialist machines made in very small quantities.

I do not know what difference fractions of a degree make in the cup...when there are so other many variables, roast, grind, extraction speed, water quality, etc. The Duetto has the capability to control brew temperature in 1 degree increments, and up to now I have not really made very much of this. I have also not talked about specific brew temperatures. This is because for me the actual, specific brew temperature vs. the display value is not that important, as long as that difference is consistent. It is just a number, although the PID has an easily adjusted Offset, allowing you to tune the display temperature to closely match the actual brew temperature (it's pretty close at the factory presets), but might vary fractionally from machine to machine.

I do care about some specific things with regard to brew temperature though:

- Can I adjust the machine to work in the entire range of; slightly too hot, or too cold for any coffee
- Will the machine maintain a stable brew temperature during the shot
- Is the recovery time OK
- Is it repeatable (assuming grind tamp and dose are the same)

The test Duetto had absolutely no problem fulfilling these requirements and it seemed very stable during the shot (with my measuring

equipment). The true test though is in the cup, if the taste is good then it is OK, too bitter or too sour, reduce or raise the temperature by 1 degree and try it again. The next time you roast a batch of the same coffee, or buy it ready roasted, the same temperature may not give the same results. I think that focussing too much on Duetto's capabilities in the area of absolute temperatures and worrying about 10ths of a degree to fine tune brew temperature (especially with so many other variables) is doing the machine a disservice and missing the point. To make great coffee you need a good machine, but you also need, good quality (correctly roasted) fresh beans, a clean machine, decent water and a good grinder.

You may not adjust the temperature very much, but you can when you need to. The adjustment covers a large, range much larger than that considered acceptable for making espresso. Temperature stability is good during the shot and there is sufficient thermal mass to ensure this happens.

Temperature adjustment is simply a press of the left hand PID button to put you into temp adjustment mode and then press up or down to set the desired temperature. A PID with only 2 buttons makes things quite simple. However all important PID parameters are adjustable (P, I and D values, plus offset and C or F display.)

With the Duetto, your concerns should not be getting the right brew temperature or stability during the shot. Do not worry about repeatability; if you grind and tamp the same way each time, it produces consistent results. The Izzo designers have taken care of all this for you, far better to worry about important things, like the coffee and the grinder.

For me, it is important that a machine is easy to use, works quietly and competently, day after day. I'm interested in drinking great coffee, not playing around with a machine .... The Duetto is great....because I don't have to think about it!

## Final Thoughts – so what’s the bottom line!

The Duetto had mainly, internal changes to become a twin boiler machine. This was not simply a cheap way of getting a twin boiler machine to market, it challenged the designers to get it all in the same space **and the same high quality stainless steel case and frame (no plastic or painted steel)**. Although a complete redesign internally, it looks very similar to the existing MKII Alex. The front panel is a little cleaner, with the on off switch at the side and a PID visible. It has not been designed in a hurry, a proof of concept was made around Christmas and then reviewed and redesigned, it’s a well thought out machine.

*“The Duetto can produce awesome espresso shots, that were at least as good as, or better than other twin boiler machines I have reviewed*

The large Steam/Hot Water boiler means plenty of steam and good thermal stability for preheat of brew water. It’s big, of course, but, if you want a machine of this spec with an onboard water tank, **I don’t believe anyone else has squeezed so much into a package of this size!**

The use of a Rotary pump instead of the more usual Vibration pump is an outstanding idea, you really feel like your getting your moneys worth. If ever the rotary pump fails it’s a surprisingly cheap part and easy to fit.

## Vibration Pump Vs Rotary

I think Rotary pumps make a better shot, many might disagree. One thing that no one can disagree with though is: **“rotary pumps sound cool”** ...they do, honest. The rotary in the Duetto is also very, very quiet, **almost** as quiet as a Vivaldi S1. It’s not AS quiet, because the case, and drip tray is all steel, not steel and plastic.

## Anything you would change?

It would have been nice to get some of the things we didn’t get, but none of these small items detract from the use of the machine and some would have increased the cost.

## Will you upgrade your Alex MK I to the Duetto?

*Yes, in a heartbeat...they will never pry this machine from my fingers!*

**The Duetto can produce awesome espresso shots**, that were at least as good as, or better than other twin boiler machines I have reviewed. I think the combination of, temperature control, temperature stability, rotary pump and the fabulous E61 group working together that makes the difference (plus great coffee of course).

*Far better to have the money and design time spent on the inside, rather than the outside*

I have reviewed many machines, each time I was happy to return to my Izzo Alex MK1. In the case of the Duetto, I have enjoyed it enormously. It is a machine that will sell on its strengths. Do the comparisons with other similar machines, read carefully what’s said in this review and remember it was designed with the benefit of hindsight, using or improving where possible on current ideas. **No other comparatively priced machine on the market currently, has ALL the Duetto’s features as standard.**

People might expect something that doesn’t look like an Alex for the extra money and *“announces”* its differences. Far better to have the money and design time spent on the inside, rather than the outside. It is not a cheap machine, but you will have it a very long time. There could have been compromises, but it would not have been the same machine. Simplicity, quality, elegance of design and the ease of maintenance that accompanies this are important features. For me it’s the end of a journey, it meets my needs and I don’t feel the need to upgrade again.

*“If you are looking in the £1000 category for espresso machines, it’s worth seriously considering stretching the budget a little more to move to the Duetto.”*

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Bella Barista, Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 1LD

Tel: 01933 273275

e-mail: [claudettep@towability.com](mailto:claudettep@towability.com)

<u><b>Specifications</b></u>	
<b>Height-Width - Depth:</b>	<b>H420 x W360 x D430 mm</b>
<b>Weight:</b>	32 kg approx
<b>Voltage &amp; Power (approx):</b>	220 V-50Hz, 2550W max (1150W in steam off mode) 1450-1500W steam 1000W Brew 100-150W Pump
<b>Temperature control</b>	PID for Brew boiler (to solid state relay) Adjustable Pressurestat for Steam Boiler
<b>Water Tank :</b>	2.4 litres, removable with low water sensor/ mains plumbed option (switchable)
<b>Twin Boilers</b>	1.8 litre Steam/HW, 0.8 litre dedicated brew boiler
<b>Pump Type:</b>	<b>Commercial Rotary Pump</b>
<b>Group Head:</b>	1 (E61 type), (manual lever action)
<b>2 Filter Handle(s )</b>	for 1 or 2 cups, Internal Diameter 58 mm, removable drip tray, cup warmer
<b>Construction/Finish:</b>	Heavy Gauge Polished Stainless Steel case and internal frame
<b>Water/Steam</b>	Hot water on demand. Steam on demand (ball joint mounted) Steam Boiler can be switched On/Off as required
<b>Boilers</b>	Copper with brass end brew boiler. Heavy gauge Copper steam/HW boiler
<b>2 Manometer Gauges:</b>	Measures Boiler & Brew pressure

## Final Note

This review has been unusual because it was for the only fully constructed Duetto, to allow feedback from the review process to influence the final production machines. **Izzo and Bella Barista did not want early adopters to become beta testers...that was my role.** The delay in completing construction of the first batch of machines was to incorporate changes that were believed essential to ensure a high quality product. Bella Barista asked me to be particularly tough when reviewing the Duetto, they in turn have been tough on Izzo during the review process to deal with any major areas before launch. Some key issues were simple, others more difficult to address, but addressed they have been (otherwise they would have been mentioned in this review).

*One example is the ability to switch the steam boiler off and on, it was a nonsense not to have it from day 1.....so ALL machines produced (except for mine) will have this as a standard feature.*

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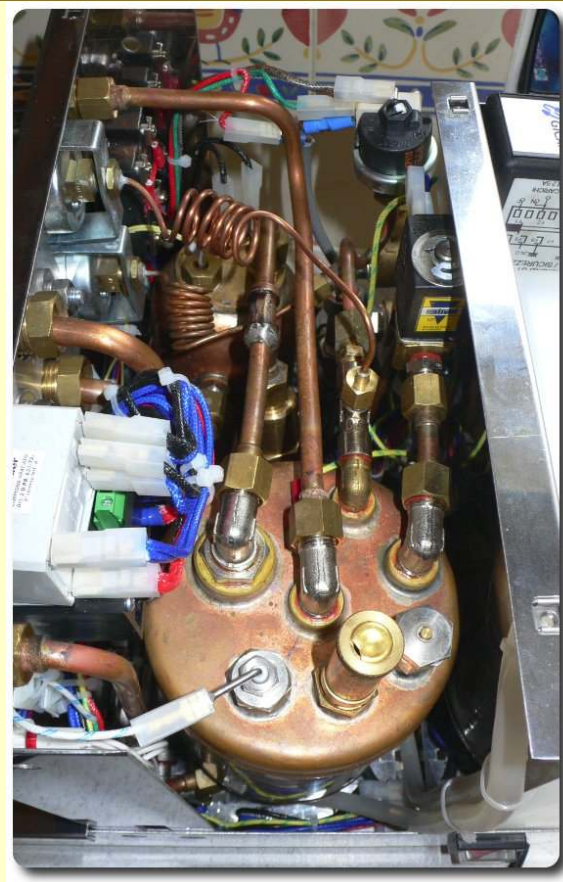
Bella Barista, Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 1LD

Tel: **01933 273275** e-mail: [claudettep@towability.com](mailto:claudettep@towability.com)

## Gallery - A few pictures of the Izzo Alex Duetto



*At the sharp end of the machine!*



*A coffee powerhouse*



*All the gauges you could want*



*The commercial rotary pump and RPM motor*



*The fabulous & beautiful E61 group*

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Tel: 01933 273275

e-mail: [claudettep@towability.com](mailto:claudettep@towability.com)