

July 2023



Dear Club Members,

If you are a drinker of anything other than instant coffee the name Melitta might be one that feels familiar, but in a way you can't quite place. . .

Melitta is a company founded in 1908 that started out making coffee filters, but now makes many other things relating to the brewing of coffee. The founder of the company was Melitta Benz, born 150 years ago in 1873. She founded the company after being granted a patent for the first coffee filter in 1908.

Like all good inventions, the origins of her creation began in the kitchen. She took blotting paper from her sons school notebook, punched some small holes in an old tin, put the blotting paper inside and suspended it in over a cup. When she added grand coffee and poured hot water over it the water dripped through, creating a tasty cup of coffee that didn't have any gritty ground, and was easy to clean up afterwards. Prior to this the percolators of the day tended to overbrew the coffee, espresso style machines often left grounds in the coffee and linen filters were awkward to clean.

From it's small start, with the company address listed as the Bentz family flat in Dresden Germany, the company survived both World Wars, and now employs over 3000 people worldwide. In most locations there's still a photo of the woman whose invention started the company, the firm is still run by the same family.

Business was something that Melitta would have known well. Her father was a book publisher, and her grandparents ran a brewery. The first employees were her husband (who left his job as a department manager in a department store) and their two sons, and they made the first filters at their kitchen table. After struggling to survive World War I due to paper and coffee shortages, the business continued to grow. In 1928 eighty workers were needed in a double shift system to meet demand. In 1929 the company moved to new headquarters in Minden, which is still where the company is based.

Shortly after Melitta handed her leadership role over to her husband and son Horst, but remained involved in the business, with a particular focus on worker welfare. She created the Melitta Aid system, increasing vacation days from 6 to 15 days a year, and reducing the working week to 5 days in length.

She died aged 77 in 1950, her grandchildren now run the company.

The Eider in your blend isn't from ducks, instead it's one of the names given to the German Whiteheaded Mutton sheep. These sheep live in the north of Germany, on the marshy farmland next to the north sea. Their wool is crimped and durable with a lovely bounce.

Happy Spinning

Katie

Fibre Content- In case your parcel is missing the label

25% Eider

32.5% Corriedale

25% Bamboo Rayon

12.5% Peduncle Silk

Further Reading-

https://www.dpma.de/english/our_office/publications/ingeniouswomen/110jahrekafeefilter/index.html

https://www.melitta.com/melitta_journey_through_time_en.html

<https://www.europeana.eu/en/blog/melitta-bentz-the-woman-who-invented-the-coffee-filter>

<https://www.melitta-group.com/en/Melitta-Bentz-150-years-Inventors-Heart-4409.html>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=if_2LNV5axA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Xa8-loliPU>

<https://nwyarns.com/blogs/northwest-yarns/know-your-fiber-eider-wool>