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The invention of the boiling-water tap
(which is taking the world by storm)

*With quotes by Henri Peteri,
the inventor of the boiling-water tap.*

When engineer Henri Peteri was working on the development of instant soup for an international food company thirty-five years ago, he realised that soup would never be 'instant' without boiling water on tap. From that moment on he was captivated by this idea. He left the company he was working for and - working out of the cellar in his own home - started developing an appliance that would dispense boiling water instantly.

1970



1970

It was in London that I experienced a decisive moment in my life. I remember it very clearly – it was at Unilever's head office in Blackfriars. Lipton had decided to make instant soup. Put a little airtight bag of powder in a cup, pour on boiling water, and before you know it, you have a cup of delicious soup. Well, we'd been going on about all kinds of things for over half an hour. The question was whether we would be allowed to call it 'instant'. But nobody said how instant 'instant' was.

1970

*And so I asked: How long does it take for the powder to dissolve? Finally I got an answer: It takes five seconds to rehydrate 95%. I got a strange feeling in my stomach: five seconds!! And you need to pour on water that takes five minutes to boil? In one of those kettles with a spout? That's crazy! Why don't we have boiling water on tap? I could see it before my eyes and thought, that can't be too difficult. That's simple mechanical engineering, and I know enough about that.
(Henri Peteri)*

Despite his immense drive, he didn't manage to get any further than the prototype stage after several years of hard work. The appliance was hard to sell and broke down regularly.

I didn't get very far at the time, and after three years

I had no money left. (Henri Peteri)

1970-1973



1970 The first, original prototype.



1973 The first tap (made of foam).



*In the early 1970s I actually sold some Quookers to friends and acquaintances.
(Henri Peteri)*

The users of the prototypes were extremely enthusiastic. Those who had a Quooker could no longer do without it.



1973-1975

In the 1970s, I had finally designed a series of tanks grey tanks which we sometimes sprayed orange, the They were real prototypes – something to prove something (Henri Peteri)

1970-1979

made of plastic pipe – small bent tap with that red cap. works.



1971 Table model. One of the first boiling-water appliances.



After he had taken out his seventh mortgage on his home, the financial resources he needed to work on his invention had been depleted. Henri Peteri was forced to discontinue his project and go back to earning a living for his family.

I had applied for a patent. It was a bit of a descriptive patent. I didn't initially get the patent because the idea wasn't interesting enough, not special enough. But a higher court ruled that I really was the first in the world to have invented a tap with boiling water at 100°C. (Henri Peteri)

1978



After graduating as a lawyer, his son, Niels, put on a lab coat and disappeared into the cellar for five years. The idea was turned into a product and the Quooker was born.

*But things only really got moving when Niels came in on the project. He was always doing things, I talked. Together we started all over again, full time. Niels worked in the cellar, and so did I, from time to time. He removed the wall from the ping pong room and turned it into an office – a carpet on the floor, a lick of paint. We sat at opposite ends of the room, at the same type of desks – Rotterdam Police desks.
(Henri Peteri)*

1985



92



97



98

05



The Quooker Basic was launched in 1992. This was the first in a series of taps designed by Niels Peteri. The Classic followed in 1997, the Design in 1998 and the Modern in 2005. They were all designed at a workbench rather than a drawing board. And it shows in their strong form-follows-function look: large aerator and thin spout.

1992



Reinforced with his son Walter, also a law graduate, the product was launched commercially.

And then, of course, Walter joined us on 1 February 1993. At the time we felt that we really needed to develop the commercial side of the business. Niels sounded him out over a glass of beer in the pub, and it was settled within no time. I think this step meant a 50% drop in his salary, but that year Quooker sales doubled. (Henri Peteri)

1993



In December 1995 they bought a building on Staalstraat in Ridderkerk, even though the business was still making a loss. The adjacent buildings were purchased in 1998, 2001, 2002 and 2006 (including the mattress factory, which was turned into a production hall). And so, the Quooker continued to grow.

We bought the Staalstraat premises on 1 December 1995 and moved during the Christmas holidays. The world was covered in snow. Again, it was all very amateurish. A trailer sagging under the weight of the plate press machine... (Henri Peteri)

1995



The Quooker VAQ was launched in 2000. VAQ denotes the tank's revolutionary high-vacuum insulation. This insulation technology makes the Quooker highly energy-efficient and compact, so that it can be easily fitted even in kitchens that have drawer units.

In my imagination, the tank had to be vacuum-insulated all. (For example, vacuum insulation is also used for nitrogen, a substance that needs good insulation to keep was no easy job – which might be the reason why no-one always be a tricky process... (Henri Peteri)

2000

from the start. I'm a physicist, after the industrial storage of liquid it at 200°C). But in practice it else has ever succeeded. It will



2000 PRO3-VAQ. The first vacuum-insulated tank.



The year 2000 was a kind of turning point – that's when we first started making a profit. Yes, we fooled ourselves into thinking that we were making a profit at an early stage, but we weren't actually doing so. If you don't count any costs and depreciation whatsoever and have really strange salaries, you won't lose money in terms of cash flow. But we didn't start making a real profit until a few years ago and the business is now booming. We began exporting in 2009 with a couple of fantastic Danes who are successfully selling Quookers in Scandinavia. (Henri Peteri)

2004

For the introduction of the boiling-water tap in the UK, we made a series of pictures showing only the tap and its uses against a black background. No kitchen setting, just huge white clouds of steam. From the moment Stephen joined us, sales doubled each year.

Things were somewhat tougher going in the UK. But after the usual teething problems, we now have a young man who knows the kitchen business inside out and who promises to be just what we need. (Henri Peteri)

2005

**THROW
AWAY
YOUR
KETTLE.**

The Quooker COMBI was introduced in 2006. The first model, designed in 1976, looked like a big metal box. The model launched on the market in 2006 is 60% smaller than a kitchen boiler. More than half the Quookers now sold in the Netherlands are COMBIs.

2006



1976 The first COMBI prototype.



Henri Peteri died in 2007. During the last years of his life, he kept a low profile in the family business. What he considered to be his greatest achievement was that the three of them (Walter, Niels and himself) had worked so well together.

If there's anything I've learned in the past thirty years, it's that nothing is more conservative than a household. It also took a while for the vacuum cleaner to catch on, but now no-one could do without it. (Henri Peteri)

2007



In 2009 Quooker won the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award.

The company showed guts by launching a product on the market that was completely new and for which a demand still had to be created. Like their father, the Peteri brothers from Rotterdam remained steadfast in their faith in the success formula, and persevered. The Quooker has become an appliance no luxury kitchen can do without and sales are growing fast, both nationally and internationally. The company is on top of Research and Development, which showed during a company visit and is reflected in the improvements to the products.

Many prototypes, designs, setbacks, doubts and technical changes later, we now produce tens of thousands of Quookers per year, we have more than a thousand dealers, our sales are doubling every two years and we are based in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, the UK, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, France and Switzerland.

2010





The future?

Innovation, improvement, internationalisation. Developing, building and rebuilding.

Winning awards, growing, recruiting new people. Conquering the world with this unique product we are all extremely proud of.

And always holding onto the feeling that we are not there yet, because this is only the beginning... (Niels Peteri)

2011 >

*And suddenly it all fell into place. When I
hit upon the idea, it made me feel all warm
inside and had me captivated... I was going to
make a tap that dispensed boiling water!
(Henri Peteri)*