

Would I Still Recommend It?

A calm, honest summary after 100 roasts on the Gene Café CBR-301 — based on personal use and observation.

MY ANSWER

Yes — but to the right person, and with clearer expectations. After 100 roasts, including a heater failure, a repair, and a recalibration, I would still recommend the Gene Café CBR-301. It is capable of making genuinely good coffee in meaningful home batches. But it is best understood as a practical home roaster with its own logic — not as a miniature profile machine.

✓ Best suited to

- Home roasters wanting practical 250–300 g batches
- Those who prefer light-to-medium or medium roast styles
- Curious, patient learners who want enough feedback to improve
- People happy to build a stable process and repeat it
- Anyone who wants enjoyable roasting, not a second job

⚠ Be cautious if

- You want to mod the machine or connect Artisan
- You expect Artisan-style roast profiling from the app
- You want to intervene and tweak throughout every roast
- You're looking for a pseudo-commercial micro drum roaster
- You want a machine that feels obvious from the first few roasts

THE KEY DISTINCTION

The app is genuinely useful — especially the overlay function for comparing roasts — but it does not make this a true profile machine. The CBR-301 is a home roaster with its own rhythm and signals. Once you stop trying to make it into something else, it becomes considerably easier to work with.

What I learned after 100 roasts

- The 250–300 g batch range is a real strength — enough to drink, share, and learn from
- Batch size, start temperature, total roast time, and weight loss mattered most
- First crack is useful when clear, but not the only control point to watch
- The app is best used for review and comparison — especially overlays — not as proof of full roast control
- The heater failure was frustrating — but it taught me to understand the actual machine in front of me, not an assumed version of it
- Repeatable results are possible once the machine is understood — that is the real standard
- The machine rewards observation and patience more than constant adjustment

What I'd do differently from roast one

- Record the boring things immediately: batch size, start temperature, total roast time, weight loss, cup result
- Not chase first crack as the primary signal from the start
- Not assume the app graph was telling me more than it actually was
- Treat the machine as its own thing earlier — not as a small profile roaster
- Expect a learning curve, and budget a few roasts as reference points rather than favourites
- Trust weight loss and total roast time sooner — they turned out to be the most reliable anchors

"After all the confusion, the repair, the recalibration, and the slightly ridiculous number of notes — I still want to roast on it. I still want to know what the next batch will do. That is not a bad thing to be able to say after 100 roasts."

Based entirely on personal use and observation. Not an official Gene Café document. Your experience may differ.