
WILKINSON
STAINLESS STEEL BLADE
BLADE
THE FINEST EDGE

MS. WILKINSON — THE STEEL LADY

Whenever there were a few free days or during the summer holidays, my father would take me with him to visit his customers. They were always kind, welcoming people, and I ate as much as I possibly could.

I remember one particular occasion when we were taken to a café for a coffee. They asked me what I wanted.

“A pear juice, please.”

The bartender handed me a small bottle.

I drank it in a few seconds and then waited for my pear juice.

My eyes had already locked onto the one-liter bottle behind the counter.

At first, the customer thought I was joking.

Then he decided to indulge me.

By the end of it, he was completely astonished.

During that same week, my father visited several customers who, at some point in their business lives, had struggled to obtain Gillette products. Convinced that consumers would never notice, they had decided to buy Wilkinson products instead.

The confusion was understandable.

After all, Wilkinson also sold blades and shaving systems.

The problem appeared when consumers purchased Wilkinson refills and, ten minutes later, returned to the store because their razor could not attach to that particular system.

They would simply repeat the same request:

“Gillette.”

Some retailers became so frustrated that they even attempted to return Wilkinson products directly to Gillette's headquarters in Milan.

The matter was assigned to my father.

And that was when I saw him at work.

The first person to acknowledge Wilkinson's quality was my father himself.

He would openly say that Wilkinson produced excellent products: real steel, sharp and durable, often lasting longer than average.

Then he invented what became known as the Frega Offer.

“Buy five Gillette products, mixed however you like, and the retailer will give you one pack of traditional Wilkinson blades — the ones with the crossed swords — as a gift.”

The idea worked perfectly.

The retailer cleared old stock from the warehouse.

The retailer generated cash.

The retailer solved an inventory problem.

And Aunt Wilkinson continued to be distributed.

One day I asked my father why he did it.

“What advantage do you get from helping them?” I said.

He smiled.

“Nando, remember this:

the sun rises for everyone in the morning.”

Goodbye, Dad. — Ferdinando