

# These Two Founders Built the ‘Dyson of Water Filters’ – and Hit Eight-Figures in Under a Year

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## Key Takeaways

- A health scare in Keller’s family revealed how limited existing water-filter options were.
- Keller and Carlisle spent three years engineering a system from scratch, prioritizing quality over speed.
- Rorra offers premium water filtration solutions featuring a countertop filter designed to encourage daily use and trust, as well as a filtered showerhead.

When his young daughter’s eczema worsened, Brian Keller tried everything modern parenting prescribes. Nothing worked. Desperate, he replaced the ordinary showerhead in their bathroom with a filtered one. Within a couple of days, his daughter had perfectly clear skin. The speed of the change forced him to go online searching for a reliable filtration system. But what he found surprised him. “Pretty much one plastic product after the next,” he says.

He called his longtime partner, designer and engineer Charlie Carlisle. “I think there’s a pretty big opportunity here to build a business like Dyson in water filtration,” he said. Little did they know they’d spend the next three years building a filtration system piece by piece, rejecting

shortcuts.

The result is Rorra – a science-backed water filtration company offering a countertop unit and filtered showerhead. Both run tap water through a multilayer carbon and media setup designed to reduce chlorine, disinfectant byproducts, PFAS, and 50+ other contaminants. In less than a year on the market, the company has placed over 10,000 drinking-water systems in homes across the country and reached an eight-figure run rate.

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## The problem with tap water

While studying U.S. water infrastructure, the founders discovered some sobering stats. The average tap water pipe is 45 years old, and many are more than a century old. Chlorine and other chemicals, including lead, are in almost all American tap water, including compounds linked to increased risks of kidney and bladder cancer.

But replacing failing pipes across the country would cost more than a trillion dollars and require digging beneath major cities. The solution was to offer a reliable way for people to clean their water at home.

## Built to last and be seen

The founders knew that if people were going to clean their water at home, the system had to be sleek. The flimsy plastic products Keller first saw online weren't cutting it. "Everything we build is designed to last for years. We're not building cheap, consumer products with engineered obsolescence," Keller says.

The Rorra Countertop looks more like a piece of modern kitchen equipment than a filter—medical-grade stainless steel and

sturdy enough to pass for something you'd find in a craft brewery.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the design appeals to male consumers. "Over 50 percent of our customers are male," Keller says. "We didn't even really project that initially." The product suggested something protective and strong, a kind of household sentinel.

For this reason, Keller and Carlisle designed the Rorra Countertop system to live where people could see it. Most filtration devices hide under sinks and get forgotten. They wanted the opposite. "A product that people are going to be proud to put on their countertop," Keller says.

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## A flood of orders

The response came fast and furious, which was good and bad. When the first units shipped, the founders braced for modest demand. Instead, "customer service inquiries went overnight from like a ten a day to hundreds a day. We needed to scale our support team extremely quickly to keep up," Carlisle said.

They ran out of stock for weeks. Delays stretched to two months. But amid the chaos, they chose transparency over panic. "My phone number was on the credit card statements of every single customer," Keller says. When a subscriber called late at night to complain about a charge, he picked up. "I'm the CEO," he would tell them, before walking them through the benefits of the system. The response built a strange form of loyalty.

Popularity has grown organically. Athletes, doctors, and creators bought the product on their own, then reached out.

One of the company's biggest boosts came from partnering with Dr. Andrew Huberman, the Stanford neuroscientist and host of the hugely popular Huberman Lab podcast. "We're definitely seeing a direct uplift in sales and people buying from his landing page," Keller says.

It's votes of confidence like this that prove their strategy was a good one. "It took three years versus probably one year that it could have taken us to launch," says Carlisle. "But there's a lot of benefits to us having something that's truly unique in the space."

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