



RWANDA FT COOCAMU FARMER – GROUP 2 LOT 6 GRAINPRO

Notes: KUMQUAT, EUCALIPTUS, SAGE, CAKE, DENSE, SWEET

ORIGIN INFORMATION

Grower 396 smallholder farmers organized around the Cocomu cooperative.
Variety Red bourbon
Region Rutsiro District, Rwanda Harvest March-May
Altitude 1,600-2,000 masl
Soil Sandy loam
Process Fully washed and dried on raised beds
Certifications: Fair Trade

BACKGROUND DETAILS

Considered small compared to other East African coffee producing countries, Rwanda's coffee has an important history and terroir entirely unique to the rest of the continent.

Brief History

Coffee was originally forced upon remote communities by the Belgians as a colony-funding cash crop. The Belgians distributed varieties cultivated by the French on Ile de Bourbon (now Reunion Island, near Madagascar) but had so little invested in coffee's success that they immediately allowed production to decline through lack of investment in national infrastructure, as well as the farmers who grew it. As a result, the sector suffered near total obscurity in the coffee world from Rwanda's independence in 1962 until the period of rebuilding following the country's devastating civil war and astonishingly tragic genocide in 1994.

Coffee Today in Rwanda

Rwanda's former cash crop, however, roared to international buyer attention in the late 2000's thanks to one of East Africa's most successful coffee



interventions, the Partnership for Enhancing Agriculture in Rwanda Through Linkages (PEARL). PEARL was a sweeping infrastructure and education investment targeting large regions of Rwanda whose coffee was for the most part processed poorly at home and exported with little traceability.

The program, designed and led by the University of Michigan, Texas A&M and a host of Rwandan organizations, vastly increased processing hygiene by building washing stations. It also organized remote and under-resourced smallholders into cooperative businesses capable of specialty partnerships.

Flavor Profile

Perhaps most significantly for the long term, it took the legacy bourbon genetics buried in abandon and polished them anew to the amazement of coffee drinkers everywhere. The snappy acidity, stone fruit flavors, and fragrant herbaceousness found in Rwanda's coffee is still completely unique to bourbon produced anywhere else in the entire world.

This particular lot was produced at a washing station in the Rutsiro District run by the Cocomu cooperative, which was established in 2010 to help local coffee farmers in the Musasa Sector have access to a closer washing station where they could sell their harvested cherries. The bulk of production comes from small family owned farms where coffee is cultivated on just a few acres of land intercropped with soy beans. Access to a modern washing station gives producers the option to deliver cherries rather than bear the expense and risk of processing themselves.

Processing Detail

Processing at the Cocomu washing station includes hand sorting and floating cherries to remove damaged or underdeveloped coffee. Next, cherries are depulped and fermented for 18 hours without water. Once the dry fermentation is complete the parchment is soaked in fresh water between 18-24 hours to halt fermentation and stabilize the moisture content of the batch. After the soak, the parchment is washed once again, this time in grading channels—long shallow concrete channels with water flowing through—which allows the parchment to naturally separate by density. From here, each separate density grade is moved to pre-drying tables to be hand-sorted for imperfections and gently dried to the touch. After the hand-sort is complete, the parchment is then moved to fully-exposed drying tables to finish drying, a process that takes between 14-21 days depending on the climate..