



ANNUAL CACAO SOURCING TRANSPARENCY REPORT

September 2015

# TAZA CHOCOLATE DIRECT TRADE CERTIFIED CACAO

We are chocolate pioneers.

Taza makes stone ground chocolate that is seriously good and fair for all. From farm to factory, we do things differently. We do things better.

It starts with Taza Direct Trade. We said no to predatory middlemen and abusive labor practices. We created the chocolate industry's first third-party certified Direct Trade cacao sourcing program to ensure quality and transparency for all. We have real, face-to-face relationships with growers who respect the environment and fair labor practices. They provide us with the best organic cacao, and we pay them prices significantly higher than Fair Trade. In fact, you can see exactly what we pay them, right in this report.

Taza Direct Trade means more money for farmers, the best cacao for us, and seriously good chocolate for you.

## OUR DIRECT TRADE PROGRAM



### REAL RELATIONSHIPS

We visit the cacao producers two work with at least once per year. We only buy cacao from growers who ensure fair and humane work practices.



### THE BEST CACAO

We only purchase Certified USDA Organic, non-GMO cacao that meets our high quality standards and is approved by the Taza Tasting Panel for its seriously good flavor.



### MORE MONEY FOR FARMERS

We pay at least \$500 above the market price—a 15-20% premium—and never less than \$2,800 per metric ton for cacao.



### THIRD PARTY CERTIFICATION

To guarantee the integrity of our cacao sourcing program, five Direct Trade claims are verified annually by Quality Certification Services, a USDA-accredited organic certifier based in Gainesville, Florida. The five claims are described on our website: [www.tazachocolate.com](http://www.tazachocolate.com).

## OUR IMPACT in 2015

68



Farmers Benefited

1876

110,587

Cacao Seedlings Planted

Hectares Certified Organic

3490

\$869,000

Paid For Cacao

Metric Tons Of Beans Purchased

223

## CONTRIBUTORS

**KATHLEEN FULTON** Taza's co-founder and Brand Manager. Kathleen brings Taza's products and mission to life with design, illustration, and vision.

**STEPHANIE LARASON** Steph joined Taza in 2007. She leads our research program and shares the Taza story in words and images.

**JESSE LAST** Taza's Cocoa Sourcing Manager. Jesse joined Taza in 2014 and is the author of this year's Transparency Report.

**ALEX WHITMORE** Taza's co-founder and Managing Director. Alex pioneered Taza's Direct Trade Certified Cacao program.

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### Thanks

To the dedicated farmers who provide Taza with exceptional cacao, and the talented cacao processors who bring this cacao to market. To Emily Stone and Maya Granit of the Uncommon Cocoa Group for their commitment to the farmers of Belize and Guatemala. To Patrick Dessources of Root Capital for his expert support in navigating Haiti's cacao sector. To John Frattasi for his excellent photography and videography in Haiti. To Rich Falotico and his logistics team at Atlantic Cocoa who coordinate the shipping of our cacao. To craft chocolate makers across North America, Europe and Australia who work with Taza Chocolate in sourcing from our farmer partners. And above all, to our passionate customers who inspire us to make chocolate that is seriously good and fair for all.

## YEAR IN REVIEW

A decade ago, Taza Chocolate pioneered a new model of sourcing cacao. We bypassed brokers and traveled to the Dominican Republic to meet with cacao producers, hike farms, and ultimately, partner with the cooperative La Red Guaconejo. Five years later, we formalized our sourcing values when we designed and launched the chocolate industry's first third-party certified Direct Trade program.

Taza is still the only Direct Trade Certified chocolate maker, but our sourcing program has grown. We now work with six partners in five countries, and we sourced a record-high 223 metric tons of cacao over the last year. In the process, we managed transitions, built community, and grew our impact on the lives of cacao farmers throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Transitions have occurred both internally and externally. Internally, we hired a full-time Cocoa Sourcing Manager. Taza co-founder Alex Whitmore loves hiking farms and sampling freshly fermented cacao as much as he did ten years ago. However, the demands of leading a growing business meant he needed support on the sourcing front. Taza Chocolate brought on Jesse Last, a fluent Spanish-speaker with years' experience providing loans to agricultural enterprises in Latin America.

External circumstances required Jesse to hit the ground running. Weakened by poor governance and fiscal mismanagement, La Red Guaconejo, our oldest partner, could no longer deliver on its export commitments. Meanwhile, a new opportunity arose just across the Dominican border in Haiti. A new cacao exporting operation called PISA was launching, and it needed a reliable partner to buy its first ever shipment of organic certified, premium cacao. Taza became that buyer.

A second major theme this year has been community and the growing connections between our sourcing partners. In late 2014, we hosted the owners of ÖKO Caribe, Adriano and Gualberto, at our factory in Somerville, MA. In the summer of 2015, three of the original Maya Mountain Cacao staff, Anna, Deon, and Gabriel, traveled from Belize to join our summer BBQ and meet the customers who enjoy their cacao in the 77% Belize Bar. We also facilitated visits between our partners for the first time, enlisting the fermentation and drying expertise of ÖKO Caribe's Gualberto in order to support improvement at the Alto Beni Cacao Company's cacao processing operation in Bolivia.

Finally, this year we had a greater impact on cacao producers' livelihoods than ever before. Our partners' continued growth, coupled with our new relationship with PISA, meant that we purchased cacao from a total of 1,876 small-scale farmers, nearly double the number with whom we partnered in the previous year. These producers, 434 of whom are female, serve as responsible environmental stewards of 3,490 hectares of organic-certified land, 32% more than last year.

Of course, the number of farmers reached is only part of the equation—the type and depth of impact matters as well. For this reason, we are proud that in the nascent cacao markets of Belize, Bolivia, Guatemala and Haiti, our partners raised the local market price, paying farmers more for improved quality cacao. In Belize and Bolivia, we sold tens of thousands of cacao seedlings at subsidized prices in order to increase long-term productivity and farmer income. And in Haiti, we provided cacao farmers with their first-ever access to the US organic chocolate market.

As we look forward to our next year of sourcing, we are excited to strengthen our youngest supply chains such as Bolivia, grow our nascent relationships as in Haiti, and further build the sense of community enjoyed by all our partners, new and old alike.

Sincerely,



Jesse Last  
Taza Chocolate's Cocoa Sourcing Manager



Alex Whitmore  
Taza Chocolate's Co-founder & Managing Director

Taza Cocoa Sourcing Manager Jesse Last and Managing Director Alex Whitmore at the Citadelle Laferrière, a World Heritage Site and symbol of Haiti's independence.

Photo by John Frattasi



## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

### ÖKO CARIBE | LA RED GUACONEJO | FINCA ELVESIA

#### ÖKO CARIBE

The rain navigates the cacao canopy and falls gently to the forest floor. Our five member team—Adriano and Gualberto of ÖKO Caribe, two experienced Dominican farmers, and I—give thanks. The last eight weeks have seen drought conditions throughout the Dominican Republic. As a result, the pods on the trees are smaller and the fruit inside drier. But because Gualberto and Adriano are cacao fermentation experts with over 30 years combined experience, they adapt and still produce an exceptional product. And, it could have been far worse. If the drought had begun a month or so earlier, it would have killed the cacao tree blossoms that grow into pods. The result would have been a serious bean shortage in the country, and potentially for Taza Chocolate as well.

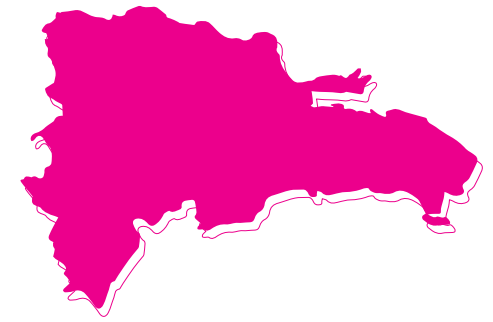
For several years now, Taza has been increasing its purchases of ÖKO Caribe cacao. The company's high-quality beans, coupled with Adriano and Gualberto's strong farmer relationships, make ÖKO an ideal partner. In 2015, we purchased 90.3 metric tons of ÖKO cacao, a full 40.5% of our total. Our larger purchases have allowed the company to invest in growth. Besides a new fermentation facility, Adriano and Gualberto have begun construction on a small chocolate factory! The nascent but growing Dominican chocolate market is an opportunity for the entrepreneurs to add more value to their already impressive operation.

After our day in the field, Gualberto invites everyone to his house for a BBQ. Adriano and Gualberto's families are gracious hosts, and we share stories, laughs, and a delicious combination of Dominican and Bolivian (Gualberto's native home) cuisine. At the end of the night, I notice that my host has nearly a dozen Taza Chocolate bars prominently displayed on his kitchen mantle. It is a wonderful symbol of the close relationship between Taza Chocolate and ÖKO Caribe.

#### LA RED GUACONEJO

2015 was the first year in nearly a decade that Taza Chocolate did not purchase beans from La Red Guaconejo. The issue was not quality—this cooperative of small-scale farmers has always produced a good bean. Rather, the problem is reliability. Since 2011, the organization has been dealing with poor governance and financial planning, and as a result, has become heavily indebted and at least at the moment, operationally defunct.

During my visit, the eight cooperative members who attend do their best to explain why we should resume our partnership. Don Carlos shares the history of La Red and Taza Chocolate, smiling as he recounts the first time he met Alex, or "Ale" as he is affectionately called. Frank explains La Red's strategy for repaying its debts and clearing its name. And Angel guarantees more financial oversight and safeguards. Unfortunately, Alex has heard these promises before, and little has changed. As I think ahead to 2016, I feel torn: La Red Guaconejo is made up of good men and women—farmers with limited land and education doing their best to get ahead in life. But if they cannot be a reliable partner, are their good intentions enough?



#### KEY FACTS

ANNUAL VOLUME PRODUCED

**68,021** MT

PERCENT OF POPULATION WORKING IN AGRICULTURE

**14.8%**

AGRICULTURE AS PERCENT OF ECONOMY (GDP): **6.3%**

GDP PER PERSON: **\$13,000**

PERCENT OF POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE: **41%**

FLAVOR NOTES

Cherry, blueberry and banana, bright acidity.



Upper left: A Dominican cacao farmer removes fruit-covered cacao beans from the pod.  
*Photo by Jesse Last*

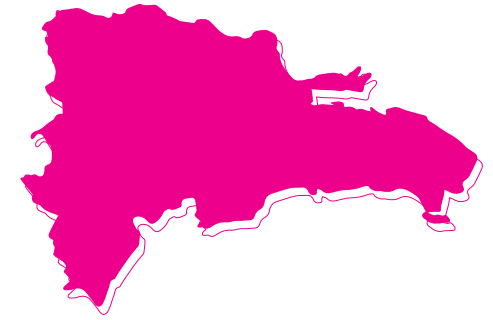
Upper right: Adriano and Jesse stand together beside ÖKO Caribe's expertly crafted, wooden fermentation boxes.  
*Photo by Gualberto Acebey Torrejon*

Bottom: One of La Red's drying tunnels lies in disrepair.  
*Photo by Jesse Last*



## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ÖKO CARIBE | FINCA ELVESIA | LA RED GUACONEJO



### FINCA ELVESIA

Entering Finca Elvesia is like passing into an alternate universe—a peaceful, beautiful cosmos of cacao trees sprouting red, orange, yellow and green pods of every shape and size. The 100+ hectare farm is, in the words of a local expert, a kind of botanical garden, filled with cacao genetics brought from Venezuela, Ecuador, Trinidad and other countries since the Dominican Republic’s earliest cocoa-growing days in the early 1600’s. As the farm manager Samuel and I walk through the well-pruned cacao trees, I imagine that little has changed since the estate’s founding by a Swiss family centuries ago.

Indeed, consistency is one of Finca Elvesia’s most attractive attributes. Year after year, Samuel and his team—many of them Haitians for whom the farm represents a stable livelihood—work together to deliver a bean defined by delicious, fruity acidity over a deep chocolate base. 2015 was no exception—Taza Chocolate received 50.4 metric tons of Finca Elvesia’s cacao, all of it delivered on time and with the same obvious care as in years past.

Samuel and I leave the cacao orchards and enter the fermentation area. Workers move cacao from one wooden box to another to ensure an even ferment. Thinking of Taza Chocolate’s new efforts to source Haitian cacao, I ask the men where they are from. “Haiti,” they respond, shyly. “Well,” I confide, “in less than a month, I will be traveling to Haiti to buy a container of organic, premium cacao!” Joy mixed with surprise lights up the men’s faces. One laborer, David, is so excited that he insists we exchange phone numbers. I’m not sure whether or not we will reconnect, but when Alex and I leave for Haiti a week later, I think of David and the pride in his eyes.

### KEY FACTS

ANNUAL VOLUME PRODUCED

**68,021** MT

PERCENT OF POPULATION WORKING IN AGRICULTURE

**14.8%**

AGRICULTURE AS PERCENT OF ECONOMY (GDP): **6.3%**

GDP PER PERSON: **\$13,000**

PERCENT OF POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE: **41%**

FLAVOR NOTES  
Cherry, blueberry and banana, bright acidity.



### FIVE REASONS TO LOVE DOMINICAN CACAO

1. The country is the largest producer of cacao in the Caribbean.
2. So much of it is organic—approximately 25%.
3. Nearly 35,000 Dominican families grow cacao.
4. The basketful of fruit flavors cannot be beat.
5. Most Taza Chocolate is made with it!

Upper left: A horse and her colt soak in the peacefulness of Finca Elvesia.  
Photo by Jesse Last

Lower left: Fermenting beans heat up as naturally occurring sugars break down.  
Photo by Jesse Last

Lower right: Taza’s trio of single-origin stone ground Dominican bars: 60%, 70%, and 80%.  
Photo by Stephanie Larason



## BOLIVIA

### ALTO BENI CACAO COMPANY

Don Modesto and his family serve chicken, plantains, potatoes, vegetables and rice for Alex's and my visit—the very best they have to offer. Life is humble in this cacao farming community. Unpaved roads, single room houses made of weathered wood, and third and fourth-hand clothing reveal the challenges of making a living growing cacao outside of Palos Blancos, Bolivia.

Yet building a supply chain that benefits cacao farmers is also challenging, and nowhere is this more apparent than in Bolivia. Several years ago, Taza Chocolate and its local partner, Invalsa Coffee, joined together to form a new cacao processing and export company called Alto Beni Cacao Company. Since then, the going has been rough.

Poor harvests and variable quality resulted in a situation where we did not have a sufficient supply of beans to produce one of our most popular products, the Bolivian 87% Stone Ground Bar, for months (although it is now thankfully back). Everyone at Taza Chocolate, from our production crew to our sales team to our customer service staff, felt the frustration, and we know our loyal customers did too.

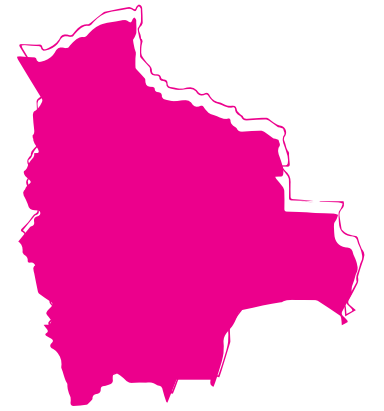
For this reason, it was critical that Alex and I travel to Bolivia for our first Direct Trade visit of 2015. During our time with the Alto Beni Cacao Company, we experienced real progress. The team had recently completed a facility consisting of fermentation boxes, solar drying beds, and a clean, dry storage room. All together, it can now process over 100 MT of cacao per season, more than enough to keep our 87% Bolivian bar in steady supply moving forward.

The team was also coming together, with Mery, a Bolivian agronomist with years of farmer-outreach experience, promoted to General Manager. With Mery running the operation, we felt things moving in the right direction. Still, the Alto Beni Cacao Company needed the guidance of an expert in cacao fermentation and drying. Fortunately, we did not have to look far. Gualberto Acebey, one of the co-owners of ÖKO Caribe, fit the bill.

Gualberto returns home to Bolivia once a year, and in February, he agreed to support the Alto Beni Cacao Company in exchange for travel costs. Gualberto's six days with the company proved invaluable, as he identified multiple opportunities to improve the operation. Since his visit, Mery and her team have realized these opportunities and more, and the teamwork displayed demonstrates the shared commitment of our Direct Trade community to building a cacao sector that is seriously good and fair for all.

#### FIVE MEMBERS OF THE ALTO BENI CACAO COMPANY TEAM

1. Mery manages the team, engaging local communities and overseeing operations.
2. Germán cares for the seedling nursery and advises producers on agricultural practices.
3. Elva is responsible for quality control of cacao fermentation and drying.
4. Maria Esther helps to coordinate logistics, including the complicated export process.
5. Jorge oversees the entire operation, bringing years of experience in Bolivian coffee to the country's nascent cocoa sector.



#### KEY FACTS

ANNUAL VOLUME PRODUCED

**4950** MT

PERCENT OF POPULATION WORKING IN AGRICULTURE

**32%**

AGRICULTURE AS PERCENT OF ECONOMY (GDP): **13.1%**

GDP PER PERSON: **\$6,200**

PERCENT OF POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE: **45%**

FLAVOR NOTES

Brownie, earthy, legumes.

Upper left: A farmer displays the boxes she uses to collect cacao.  
Photo by Jesse Last

Lower left: Taza's 87% dark single-origin Bolivian bar.  
Photo by Stephanie Larason

Upper right: The "Route of Death" that takes us to the Alto Beni region.  
Photo by Jesse Last

Right middle: Alex provides instruction on cacao drying best practices.  
Photo by Jesse Last

Lower right: Jesse, Alex and the Alto Beni Cacao Co. team.  
Photo by Alto Beni Cacao Co.



## BELIZE MAYA MOUNTAIN CACAO

It is the final day of Taza Chocolate Week, and twenty-seven chocolate fanatics sweat under the Belizean sun, planting cacao trees to commemorate our time together. I finish digging and place my tree into the ground. Don Armando, a farmer and our guide, brings me a bucket of water to pour around the base of the plant. It's a small act, but it feels good to be part of an effort that Taza Chocolate pioneered years ago and that has grown into a symbol of Direct Trade and the craft chocolate industry.

Expertly shepherded by Taza Chocolate hosts Suhayl Ramirez and Cara Peterson, our group spent seven days hiking across farms, swimming through caves, and making our own chocolate. Attendees—ranging from chocolate retailers to committed consumers—stayed at the Cotton Tree Lodge, an eco-resort on the grounds of Maya Mountain's fermentation facility and warehouse. Together, we learned about local culture, sustainable farming, and Maya Mountain's role in revitalizing the region's cacao sector.

Only six years before, when Alex first visited Belize, this cacao industry was struggling. The only buyer in town required producers to ferment, dry and transport cacao beans themselves. Alex and his business partners, Jeff Pzena and Emily Stone, envisioned a new way of doing business. By building a centralized fermentation and drying facility and traveling to producers' farms to buy their beans, cacao quality could be improved while the burden on farmers could be reduced.

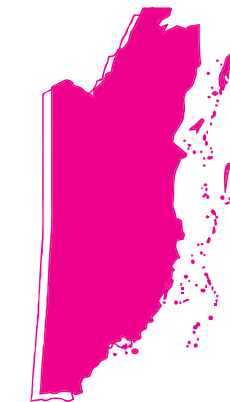
Emily and her local staff led by Gabriel Pop worked tirelessly to mobilize farmers. Each year, additional producers of Mopan and K'ekchi Maya descent joined the company's grower network. And for good reason—Maya Mountain Cacao continuously innovated new services to offer farmers, from Kiva-sponsored microloans to subsidized cacao seedlings that would improve yields.

Under Emily's direction and with the support of new local manager Maya Granit, Maya Mountain reached new highs in 2014. The company purchased beans from over 300 families who steward over 1,175 hectares of certified organic land. It sold and distributed 58,998 seedlings at \$1.00 per seedling and disbursed \$133,625 in affordable microloans to 187 farmers. And, as a result of price increases, combined with yield improvements and farm expansions, average annual family income increased by 92%!

This year, Taza Chocolate used several metric tons of Maya Mountain Cacao for our delicious single-origin 77% Belize Bar. While multiple chocolate makers have joined Taza in using these wonderful beans, we are proud of our role as a key investor and the original chocolate company to have pioneered this origin.

### FOUR AWESOME ADVENTURES AT TAZA CHOCOLATE WEEK

1. Navigate the jungle and descend into the river hidden within Blue Creek Cave.
2. Hike the beautiful cacao orchards of the Xibun River Estate Farm, formerly owned by Hershey and now run by Maya Mountain Cacao.
3. Transform dried corn into handcrafted tortillas under the tutelage of Mayan elder Mrs. Bo.
4. Jump 20+ feet from the cliffs beside the Rio Blanco Waterfall. Or watch others do it.



### KEY FACTS

ANNUAL VOLUME PRODUCED

**66** MT

PERCENT OF POPULATION WORKING IN AGRICULTURE

**10.2%**

AGRICULTURE AS PERCENT OF ECONOMY (GDP): **13.1%**

GDP PER PERSON: **\$8,100**

PERCENT OF POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE: **41%**

FLAVOR NOTES

Raisin, plum and pineapple, slight nuttiness.

Upper left: Alex with his old friend, cacao farmer Eladio Pop.  
Photo by Cara Peterson

Lower left: Jesse performs a cut test to ensure quality fermentation.  
Photo by Cara Peterson

Upper right: Harvest season means piles of colorful pods in the cacao fields.  
Photo by Cara Peterson

Middle right: Being a chocolate-maker has its perks.  
Photo by Cara Peterson

Lower right: Taza's 77% dark single-origin Belizean bar.  
Photo by Stephanie Larason



## GUATEMALA CACAO VERAPAZ

Guatemala produces 1,500 metric tonnes of cacao each year. By comparison, the world's largest cacao producer, Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa, grows 1,730,000 metric tonnes per year, over 1000x times as much. With so little grown at home, Guatemalans import cacao from Ecuador and elsewhere in order to satisfy a sweet tooth developed over centuries of consumption.

As early as 1900 BC, Maya peoples in modern day Guatemala were brewing cacao beverages, mixing in vanilla, chile and other types of spices that we still use today to flavor Taza Chocolate. The Maya used cacao on special occasions, such as during marriage ceremonies when the bride and groom would exchange hot chocolate. The Aztecs inherited the Maya passion for cacao, and by the time Spanish Conquistador Hernan Cortez received his first cup of chocolate from the Aztec ruler Moctezuma in 1519, cacao had been adopted as a form of currency throughout the region.

While still popular in Guatemala, cacao no longer holds the same value it once did. In fact, Guatemalan cacao farmers often live in poverty, selling their production at low prices to intermediaries who in turn sell to domestic industrial chocolate processors. For most Guatemalan farmers, the concept of exporting high quality cacao for a fair price is a foreign one.

Since April of 2014, Cacao Verapaz has been working to change this. Founded by Emily Stone and co-investors Taza Chocolate and Lake Champlain Chocolates, the company works with farmer associations and independent farmers in Alta Verapaz, a lush region in northern Guatemala. Like Maya Mountain, Cacao Verapaz provides farmers with technical assistance to improve cacao quality, and with market linkages to premium chocolate makers in the United States.

Unlike in Belize, however, there is no certified organic cacao in Guatemala, at least not yet. During our visit this year, Alex and I visit one farmer, Roins Sagastume, who is interested in becoming organic. Middle-aged with a round face and mischievous eyes, Roins leads us through his expansive farm filled with trees sprouting deep red pods filled with extra large beans.

Roins already uses many agricultural best practices such as organic fertilization and intercropping in order to reduce the spread of pests and disease. As a result, his trees are incredibly productive, and when we finish our hike and sit down over bowls of steaming soup, Alex reflects that he has never seen organic production at this level. Roins eyes twinkle, "So, you will pay an extra good price for my cacao then, yes?" If his organic certification goes according to plan, we will do just that, and become the first chocolate company to use organic Guatemalan cacao.

### THREE STEPS TO START-UP CACAO VERAPAZ

1. Navigate Guatemalan bureaucracy to create a formal cacao company.
2. Manage quality across hundreds of farms spread throughout the country.
3. Convince farmers to pioneer organic cacao production in Guatemala.



### KEY FACTS

ANNUAL VOLUME PRODUCED

**1,500** MT

PERCENT OF POPULATION WORKING IN AGRICULTURE

**38%**

AGRICULTURE AS PERCENT OF ECONOMY (GDP): **13.3%**

GDP PER PERSON: **\$7,500**

PERCENT OF POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE: **54%**

FLAVOR NOTES

Dried fruits, biscuits, espresso.



Upper left: Alex helps a community in the Lachua region repair old equipment.  
Photo by Jesse Last

Lower left: Roins Sagastume proudly shows off his new set of fermentation boxes.  
Photo by Alex Whitmore

Lower right: A community leader reviews Taza's 2014 Transparency Report.  
Photo by Jesse Last





## HAITI

### PISA

When Pierre speaks, his long fingers dance through the air and his dark eyes sparkle. As a Haitian cacao farmer, he has seen hard days. “We used to leave the cacao pods on the trees to rot,” he says. “Or, we would cut them down to feed to the farm animals.” At the time, it was not worth his effort to dry and transport the cacao. The dominant buyer in the region advertised one price but paid farmers a lesser one, no matter the bean’s quality.

Only a few hundred miles away, across the border in the Dominican Republic, farmers harvest all the pods they can find. A highly evolved cacao market with multiple buyers means higher prices for farmers, many of whom grow organic cacao for specialty markets abroad. While the Dominican Republic exports approximately 70,000 MT of cacao, Haiti ships about 4,500 MT, most of it sold at a heavy discount to the world market price.

The primary differences between Haitian and Dominican cacao involve post-harvest bean handling and market structure. Haitian producers have lacked the experience and capacity to properly ferment and dry the beans as the Dominicans know to do. Meanwhile, the monopoly power of a few large buyers in Haiti has meant limited competition relative to the Dominican Republic, and lower prices.

Produits Des Iles SA (PISA) is a new cacao processor and exporter in Haiti’s north. An established coffee company, PISA decided last year to expand into cacao to introduce improved fermentation and drying practices, and real competition, into the market. When Alex and I first visited Haiti in October, 2014, farmer recruitment and organic certification had yet to begin. The fermentation process was a work in progress, and wild grass grew where drying tunnels would be built. Still, we recognized the attributes of a good Direct Trade partner. The PISA team—Chiquito, Aline and Max—was committed to paying high prices for high quality cacao. They knew the community and the leaders they would need to engage. Aline gave up her city apartment and moved to the second floor of the processing facility’s office to oversee operations 24/7.

During our next visit in June, 2015, we saw incredible progress. Max had recruited 1,326 small scale farmers, and 878 hectares of land had been certified organic. Chiquito and Aline had refined the fermentation process, and two beautiful drying tunnels glistened brightly beneath the sun. Alex and I entered PISA’s clean, cool warehouse and saw hundred of bags of cacao piled high, just days away from becoming the first organic-certified Haitian cacao to enter the US, via Taza.

Soon, this delicious Haitian cacao will be in our chocolate. Given their similar taste profiles, we will roast and grind Haitian and Dominican beans together. We will also create a single-origin Haitian bar to celebrate the delicious fruit and deep chocolate flavors of the beans.

Back in Haiti, PISA has already made a difference in Pierre’s life. He now harvests all of his cacao rather than leave it on the tree or feed it to the animals. He is paid nearly double what he received in the past, and he is excited to plant more trees. “Cacao,” he explains, “is a crop of the future.” Taza Chocolate’s partnership with PISA has just begun, but Direct Trade is already infusing hope and pride into Haitian farmers’ lives.

#### FOUR FACTS ABOUT HAITI’S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

1. Over 38% of Haitians work in agriculture (in the US, this number is less than 1%).
2. There are over 1 million farms in Haiti; 94% are family-run.
3. The country’s biggest crops by volume are cane sugar, cassava, maize and yam.
4. Growing Haitian prosperity depends on a strong and sustainable agricultural sector.



#### KEY FACTS

ANNUAL VOLUME PRODUCED

**4,500** MT

PERCENT OF POPULATION WORKING IN AGRICULTURE

**38.1%**

AGRICULTURE AS PERCENT OF ECONOMY (GDP): **24.7%**

GDP PER PERSON: **\$1,800**

PERCENT OF POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE: **58.5%**

FLAVOR NOTES

Fig, tart cherry, roasted nuts.



Upper left: Alex and our Haitian partners share a laugh.

Photo by John Frattasi

Lower left: Gilbert Gonzales (L) and Max Vieux (R) of PISA flank Alex and Jesse as the team walks back from the cacao drying station.

Photo by John Frattasi

Lower right: An expert farmer collecting cacao.

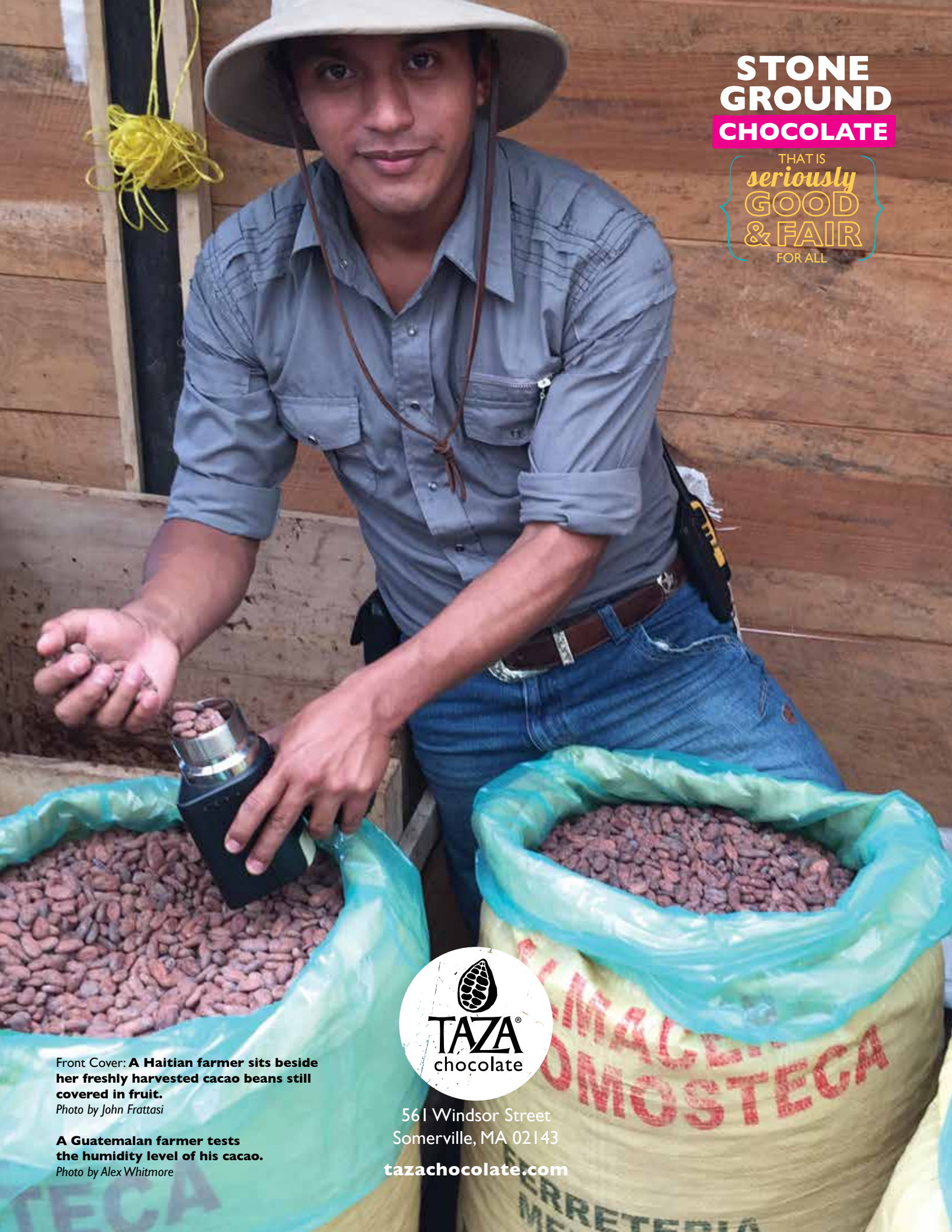
Photo by John Frattasi

# CACAO SOURCE INFORMATION

	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC			BELIZE	GUATEMALA	BOLIVIA	HAITI
	LA RED GUACONEJO	FINCA ELVESIA	ÖKO CARIBE	MAYA MOUNTAIN CACAO	CACAO VERAPAZ	ALTO BENI CACAO CO.	PISA
<b>Purchased Since</b>	May 2007	January 2010	May 2013	July 2011	July 2014	September 2010	June 2015
<b>Most Recent Visit</b>	May 2015	May 2015	May 2015	March 2015	April 2015	February 2015	June 2015
<b>Visit Made By</b>	Jesse Last	Jesse Last	Jesse Last	Jesse Last, Cara Peterson, Suhayl Ramirez, & Alex Whitmore	Jesse Last & Alex Whitmore	Jesse Last & Alex Whitmore	Jesse Last & Alex Whitmore
<b>Most Recent Price Per Ton</b>	NA	\$3346	\$3406	\$5600	\$5600	\$5200	\$3560
<b>Tons Purchased Past 12 Months</b>	0	50.4	90.3	9.02	9.96	38	25.2
<b>Fermentation Rate Cut Test Score</b>	NA	97%	97%	96%	86%	98%	88%
<b>Percent of Total Cacao Purchased in the Past 12 Months</b>	0%	22.6%	40.5%	4.0%	4.5%	17.0%	11.3%
<b>Shipment Method</b>	NA	Sea Freight	Sea Freight	Sea Freight	Sea Freight	Sea Freight	Sea Freight

# STONE GROUND CHOCOLATE

THAT IS  
*seriously*  
GOOD  
& FAIR  
FOR ALL



Front Cover: **A Haitian farmer sits beside her freshly harvested cacao beans still covered in fruit.**

*Photo by John Frattasi*

**A Guatemalan farmer tests the humidity level of his cacao.**

*Photo by Alex Whitmore*



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