



EL SALVADOR LA HONDURITA

LOCATION: Chalatenango

ELEVATION: 1,700 – 1,750 meters

HARVESTED: December-January '18

VARIETY: Pacas & Bourbon

FLAVOR NOTES: Inside the plum was a cherry. Inside the cherry was a kumquat. Inside the kumquat was the seed of a magic chrysanthemum.

Second-generation farm-holder Jose Arnulfo “Fito” Montiel Recinos has big ambitions for his little farm. Fito imagines a day when Finca la Hondurita is known throughout the specialty coffee world. We’re glad to say that we knew him when... and by “when,” we mean: now.

Here’s what’s happening now. Fito takes a hand in every element of his coffee. He personally oversees picking, sorting, and milling, and ensures that depulping and washing occur immediately.

“Hondurita” is not only the name of the farm. It’s also the on-site mini-mill--where he personally directs fermentation and sun-drying.

“Hondurita” is also the name of the 19-acre private nature reserve that Fito established in the unfarmed mountainside. That’s great news for the local toucans and other local birdlife, as well as the insanely cute white-nosed coati that scamper and hang around.

So Fito is well on his way to making Hondurita a big name. Not bad for a guy who is still working the land he was born on. And it’s a great step forward for his community of growers and farm-workers in Chalatenango... yet another name that you’re going to be seeing a lot more of, real soon.

VARIETY: Pacamara

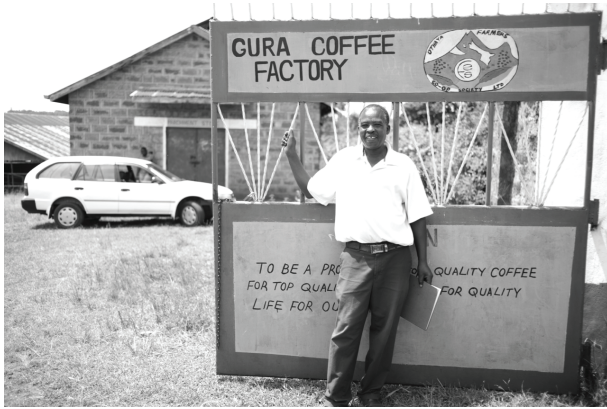
FLAVOR NOTES: The supermoon is a navel orange: round and complete, among citrus stars.

Fito was born on this remote patch of land, a thirty-minute drive off the main road. Of course, that only became a half-hour drive recently; for most of Fito’s life, he and his family hauled their coffee down to the road on mules and wagons.

The dirt road isn’t the only sign of progress since Fito took over from his parents. He planted the farm’s first patch of Pacamara almost two decades ago. Back then, he was just curious about the odd-looking big bean; however, he soon learned that specialty varieties could help attract specialty buyers, and bring specialty bonuses.

The Pacamara plant alone doesn’t guarantee success. It takes a special producer like Fito. He decided early on to invest his profits right back into Finca la Hondurita--hence the new road, the expensive fertilizer, and the quality-based wages for his pickers.

When we visited this winter, Fito told us that he’s now earning 60% more per pound than he did in 2002. That hardly makes him wealthy, but it does mean that he actually breaks even on his harvests. Considering the care Fito puts into his Pacamara, and the joy his coffees bring us, we’re glad to be a part of this.



KENYA GURA

LOCATION: Nyeri
ELEVATION: 1,700 – 1,750 meters
VARIETY: SL 28 & SL 34
HARVESTED: January '18

FLAVOR NOTES: Manic Panic ruled the 1980s with “Plum Passion” and “Strawberry Stiletto.” Now it’s back, with new color, “Untamed Tamarind!”

Back before Four Barrel, before Third Wave Coffee, before the 21-year-olds at the bar were born; there were huge Kenyan coffee co-ops. The Othaya Cooperative Society was one of these. These huge organizations owned buildings, restaurants, hotels, and gas stations.

In the 1980s, most of the huge co-op societies broke up. Othaya, however, remained somewhat intact. It still encompasses 17 wet mills across Nyeri. Among the smaller sub-co-ops still associated with Othaya are two of our favorites: Kamoini and Gura.

Gura draws upon the expertise and resources of their larger umbrella society of Othaya. For instance, Othaya maintains a quality control lab and a small staff in Nyeri City. That helps market Gura coffee to buyers--especially buyers without the inclination to drive into the country for hours a day to visit smaller co-ops (like Gura).

We, on the other hand, are always happy to visit the members of Gura. When they were considering major overhauls on their mills in 2017, we stood together in the sunset, sharing photos of coffee-drying beds from around the world. It was a trans-continental nerd-fest, to put it mildly.

It’s not that we think our way is better for everyone. We don’t. And it’s not that all of the old mega-societies should have stayed together. For the most part, we’re glad they didn’t. But in this one case, the case of the Gura co-op within the Othaya Society, we like things exactly the way they are.



KENYA SAWA SAWA

LOCATION: Nyeri
ELEVATION: 1,800 - 1,850 meters
VARIETY: SL 28
HARVESTED: January ‘18

FLAVOR NOTES: Sawa Sawa is a multi-paradigm coffee--imperative with bright acidity, functional like a pomegranate, and reflective like a ruby.

When we met Samuel Babu Kimani’s family four years ago, we couldn’t believe our good luck. Here was an intellectually vigorous yet genuinely kind young family, dedicated to carving their own way. And the coffee? One of a kind.

Only two years into our relationship, Samuel passed away. Through their grieving, his young family carried on with their shared dream of a small, family-run farm and mill for exceptional coffees.

We may be separated by an ocean, and by sometimes-squabbling governments; nonetheless, we’re part of the same project. Producers like the Kimani family are a big part of why we at Four Barrel do what we do.

So we had personal reasons for visiting Ms. Kimani last year. We also had business to do. First, we ensured she got included in all our talks with her exporter. She has the right to know what we’re paying her exporter for her coffee, and how long of a delay to expect between their cheque cashing... and hers arriving.

Sawa Sawa remains a unique and incredible coffee. We remain serious about making sure the Kimani family gets what they deserve for their hard work. That’s what relationship coffee means to us.



JAVA CIMANONG

LOCATION: Ciwidey, Indonesia
ELEVATION: 1,200 - 1,600 meters
VARIETY: Ateng, Djember & Typica
HARVESTED: May-June ‘18

FLAVOR NOTES: The teen detectives gave the cobwebs a quick taste. “Yep, it’s just cotton candy,” they agreed. “And the magic orb is just a big sweet orange!”

You are not the kind of roaster who would normally enjoy a coffee like this at this time of the day. But here you are, and you cannot say that the taste is entirely unpleasant.

A vaguely Javanese flavor mingles with cotton candy and late-season oranges. The air sparks with little tracers of acidity, like flecks of tangerine zest in a Coachella sunrise. This is not a typical Indonesian coffee.

You ask yourself: Where are those dirty tints of wet wood? Where are the musty results of the twentieth century, that Javanese wet-hulling process that causes moldy bumper-ness? You will need to taste some more.

Standing behind the hundred-year-old four-barrel sample roaster, your mind drifts. It drifts to steep slopes of volcanic soil on Mount Tambak Ruyung. To the crystalline hot springs situated among century-old plantations. To Java.

You lean over the cupping table and taste. The first sip glides past your lips. Your brain feels like it is trying to find a way out of your skull. You will have to go slowly. You will have to learn everything all over again.