



LA GOLONDRINA

Popayan, Colombia

Certified Organic



POPAYAN, COLOMBIA

REGION

POPAYAN, CAUCA, COLOMBIA

VARIETIES

CATURRA, CATUAI, BOURBON, TYPICA

ELEVATION

1500-2000 M

HARVEST

MARCH-JUNE

CUPPING NOTES

CARAMEL, CHOCOLATE, BLACK CHERRY; FULL-BODIED WININESS

Since the 1960s, Colombia has managed to run a spectacularly successful campaign to market its coffee. By creating consistent, homogenous qualities of coffee (like the ubiquitous Colombia Supremo) and the symbolic coffee farmer Juan Valdez as the country's mascot, "Colombia" has almost become synonymous with "coffee."

There is a problem with homogenization, however. Mixing coffees together on a large scale requires that processors blend the great with the not-so-great in order to create, well, average coffee. In Colombia, where the majority of coffee is grown on tiny family-run farms, the problem is this: a coffee of magnificent, sublime quality grown by a farmer dedicated to his craft is often mixed with the coffee of a neighboring farm, which may not produce coffee of the same quality. The resulting blend is a compromise, and sadly, great coffees from great farmers get lost in the process. We don't like that sort of compromise.



And so, when we met Alejandro Cadena and Giancarlo Gianetti—two Colombians who dedicate themselves to finding and protecting small lots of great coffee grown in the mountainous region of Cauca—we knew we had new partners in our search for great new Colombian coffees. A plan emerged: Alejandro and Giancarlo would search Cauca for farmers willing to make the strong commitment to quality we needed, and would immediately send samples from potentially great farms to our Durham cupping room for analysis. If the coffee met our standards, we would purchase the lot from the small farmer who offered it at many times the local price.



In this way, we were able to create a strong incentive for these talented farmers to supply us directly rather than sell it to the local mass-market buyers for homogenization and export. We also offered another premium: if the coffee scored over 92 points on our 100-point scale, we would separate the coffee as a "micro-lot," reward the farmer with almost double the price, and offer it as a special farm-specific lot to our customers. Finally, at the end of the harvest, we would host a special luncheon and awards ceremony where we could personally thank and recognize each of the farmers who sold us coffee for their hard work and exceptional production quality.

We decided to name the project "La Golondrina," or "The Swallow," because, in Latin American culture, the swallow is a symbol of communication between people separated by distance and borders. The swallow crosses borders easily and carries messages of goodwill between friends, no matter how far away. Also, the swallow returns every year, just as we plan to return to Cauca every year to visit our partners there.

What a program! The cupping work was hard; we had to make our way through dozens of samples to find the greatest ones for La Golondrina. In the end, we found a number of great coffees that we can't wait to share with you.

It was one of the most thrilling moments of my coffee career to attend the awards luncheon for the Golondrina farmers and give each of them a t-shirt created especially for the occasion. Handing out the top awards was even more thrilling, and the highlight of the day came when I handed the prize for top score to Juan Carlos Guampe of the Guarabamba Indian tribe, who said, "Thank you for believing in my people."



Peter Giuliano, Director of Coffee



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