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## NUCOFFEE WORLD TRIP TO ORIGIN

An educational and friendship trip by coffee professionals from southern Minas Gerais

Trip to Origin is one of NUCOFFEE projects that best conveys its vision: To bring Brazilian producers closer to foreign roasters, for a personal and transparent business relationship. With this proposal, the purpose of the initiative is to strengthen an international coffee community, bringing together producers, roasters, baristas, researchers, and other professionals working in the worldwide coffee market.

In June 2010, the fourth edition of the Trip visited the Sul de Minas region, in the southeastern of Brazil, with representatives of US roasters that included: Leopard Forest Coffee, Lucas Roasting,

Nova Roast, Stockton Graham, Williamsburg Coffee & Tea, and the couple Kim and Valerie Jenkins, who have just started their business. One Easy Chair coffee shop representative, two importers, Brasc Coffee and Bodhi Leaf, and two film makers of the independent company Fried Squid Films working on a documentary about coffee were also among the group of 18 persons.

The diversity of participants compared to the first edition organized, shows how the community has grown. The Trip to Origin 2010 was organized by NUCOFFEE in partnership with two other companies, Café Editora and Brasc Coffee. These are professionals from different sectors who have a common goal, which is to promote the Brazilian quality coffee.

### PROGRAM

Visitors were welcomed at the Espaço Café Brasil, the international coffee fair organized every year in São Paulo (SP). They were shown what has been done in the country by representatives of all sectors of the coffee chain: Producers, cooperatives, associations, baristas, and the specialized press.

Also in the capital city of São Paulo they gained insight into how coffee shops see the coffee market. They visited Suplicy Cafés Especiais, Santo Grão Café, where coffees from all regions of Brazil were sampled; and at Octavio Café they interacted with baristas, taking over their roles by pulling their own espressos!

The highlight of the program was visiting producing farms, cupping samples from several Brazilian regions, and participating in roundtables with NUCOFFEE producers. Their destination for this trip was the city of Piumhi (Minas Gerais). The three farms visited, medium and large sized, were Santa Clara, owned by Alberto Proença; Pavão, owned by Flávio Garbin; and Fatura,



Trip to Origin 2010 - Piumhi, southern region of Minas Gerais.

PHOTO COURTESY



PHOTO COURTESY

NUCOFFEE's team in a workshop on Trip to Origin 2010, in Piumhi, southern region of Minas Gerais.

owned by Ramiro Júlio Ferreira. These producers have excelled for the quality of the coffee they produce and their concern for environmental and social sustainability.

The couple Robert and Ildi Revi, from Leopard Forest Coffee, thoroughly enjoyed their first visit to Brazil. Ildi is in charge of roasting and Rob manages their farm in Zimbabwe. As producers they have to overcome the usual struggles, and were surprised with the level of support NUCOFFEE provides to Brazilian farmers. "The farms and the coffee plants are very well organized. We knew that Brazil would be more advanced than Africa, but it is even more sophisticated than we imagined. We visited model-farms, where farmers were very detailed

in describing their work and what they are endeavoring to achieve on certain large fields. NUCOFFEE's program is a great encouragement. We would love to have something like this available in Zimbabwe," he said.

Another interesting point of the Trip was the opportunity to watch the harvesting machines in use, although the guests showed some reservations: "We know that the cost of the manual selective harvest is very high, but producers would get better prices for better quality coffees. We hope they will select some large fields that justify manual harvesting, as the market is prepared to pay a higher profit margin for the extra work and effort involved."

Also in Piumhi, the foreign guests and over 40 Brazilian producers attended a roundtable to present the main projects of the platform and of the partner companies represented. For Juan Gimenez, NUCOFFEE's service manager, each participant will go home with a better understanding of the other end of the chain: "The producers were so excited that they passed business cards around and offered to send you samples," he added jokingly. This is the transparency that NUCOFFEE values.

Robert and Ildi plan to share this information: "We are more motivated to seek specialty coffees in Brasil since we now have a personal connection with your country. When we taste the different coffees, we can picture in our minds all the work that took place before we pour the drink in our cups. This connection with the origin is very important to us roasters and also to the American consumer, so we now have to work hard to convey what we learnt to our clients, providing them with the needed information which they in turn will pass on to the final consumer".

Professionals in this industry establish closer relationships after each trip. This experience, as well as other NUCOFFEE projects have become increasingly more productive because closer interactions develop, people start to speak the same language, knowledge is shared, and a sense of community is created.

## BRAZILIAN REGIONS

# VENDA NOVA DO IMIGRANTE (ESPÍRITO SANTO)

Italian descendents invest in Arabica in the largest Robusta producing state in Brazil

Caliman, Lorenção, Ventoim, Antué, Carnielli – common names of the inhabitants of the Mountains of Espírito Santo region, where Venda Nova do Imigrante is located – are some of the families that founded the city late in the 20th Century. They came from Italy and their interest in coffee growing united them in a city that today is named after their history, translated as The Immigrants New Store.

Located in the largest state producing Robusta coffee, Venda Nova is known for investing in the Arabica coffee, in the natural and pulped natural form. The bean is known for its full body, medium to high acidity, with sweet and complex aromas.

According to the National Supply Company (Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento - Conab) an agency that reports to the Ministry of Agriculture, the 2010 harvest of the state should produce 11 million processed coffee bags, where 2,887 (26.17%) will be Arabica, 10.9% more than the previous harvest of 2,603 bags.

Entities such as the Instituto Capixaba de Pesquisa, Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural (Incaper) have launched campaigns to promote coffee quality in the region, introducing improvement techniques such as the processing of pulped naturals, good sustainable and commercial practices, which have helped these small family-run producers to get established in this competitive market.



Descendant of Italians works on his coffee yard in Venda Nova do Imigrante.

PHOTO ÉRICO HILLER/CAFÉ EDITORA

The beauty of the Espírito Santo Mountains cannot go unnoticed. Most people who live there saw an opportunity in the agritourism business and, between harvests, make products such as cheese, sausages, jams, honey and even grape and jabuticaba fruit wines.

## COFFEE AND CULTURE

# ESPRESSO ORIGINS

Italians have their own way to drink coffee



ILLUSTRATION PAULA RÚPOLO/CAFÉ EDITORA

If you live in Italy, you can get good espressos in any small street corner shop. And there are no social differences. An espresso served at the central station costs the same as the one served in the posh downtown area. What changes is the scenario: the hustle and bustle of a train station, and the utmost Italian luxury at an Emporio Armani boutique.

But those going to Italy must know a few insider hints to avoid any confusion. If you order a *latte macchiato*, you will get a huge cup, bigger than a beer mug, very white, with one drop of coffee. If you choose a *caffè macchiato*, you will be served an espresso, in a demitasse, covered with milk foam.

If you order just a *caffè*, you will get a very short one. In Brazil, very few experts know the real espresso, which is not more than a small shot. This is the usual quantity served in Italy, even for those who make it at home with their own machines. The *ristretto*, in turn, is an even smaller and more concentrated serving.

But espresso is served at a bar. At home, it is a moka, which in Brazil is called the Italian coffeemaker. There is no filtered coffee like the Brazilian, using a paper strainer. They call it American coffee, although ours is stronger.

According to some Italians, however, the real national coffeemaker, even older than the moka, that produces the best coffee, is the Neapolitan coffeemaker originally from Naples. The moka replaced it during the 20th Century. The name comes from Mokha, the Red Sea port on the Yemen coast, a coffee reference of the coffee market in the 15th Century.

The Neapolitan coffeemaker design is similar to the moka, but instead of having boiling water being forced upwards, it has to be turned to allow the water to go down to the lower compartment. This is a more time-consuming and complex procedure: the right coffee must be used, found in speciality roasting shops, the tip of the pot must be covered to preserve the aroma, and one must be careful not to get burned... For these reasons it has been replaced by the more traditional moka coffeemaker.

## COFFEE AROUND THE WORLD

# MILK AND STEAMING

The importance of the right choice and preparation to optimize the value of an espresso

There is a large variety of milks – soy, rice, whole, powder, UHT (Ultra Heat Treated), skim milk – and each kind requires special care when processed.

However, there are some crucial points shared by all: the milk must be very cold in order to be steamed. This is because steaming consists of the expansion of the proteins added to the melted fat, with more diluted lactose, resulting in a creamy milk with enhanced sweetness.

In order for the process to work, there must be a minimum temperature change. With that, proteins absorb the air and expand. In addition to using cold and good quality milk, it is also important to have a good steamer (with good temperature and pressure controls), an experienced barista, and the pitcher.

Michael Phillips, an American World Barista Championship winner, describes the process as follows: “I start steaming with very cold milk and the pitcher as cold as possible. I pour the milk and start steaming while it is being poured. It is important to introduce a little bit of air into the milk before it gets hot. The longer you take to submerge the tip of the steamer, the more likely it will produce a thick cream, which is harder to pour. With the tip of the steamer close to the surface of the milk, I add small quantities of air to avoid big bubbles. After having introduced enough air (doubling the amount of the milk), I submerge the steamer further down and end with rotating movements, creating a bit of a swirl. This avoids the cream separating from the milk. I estimate the pitcher temperature, stop steaming and before pouring into the cup, I tap the pitcher on the counter to shake out the small bubbles.”

Another item that must be taken into consideration is the coffeemaker settings, that need to have the ideal pressure between 1,4 and 2 bar, and the steam temperature at 257 °F (125 °C). After steamed, the milk temperature must be between 167 and 176 °F (75 a 80 °C), because above 185 °F (85 °C) proteins will expand more than needed. The experienced barista feels the temperature by touching the pitcher, but novices must practice using a thermometer.

With the UHT milk, which is treated at temperatures above 300 °F (149 °C) and preserved with chemical stabilizers, many nutrients are lost, and while it interferes with good steaming it does not make it impossible. Even powder milk can be steamed, although it is not very tasty. Everything depends on the barista's creativity.



PHOTO BRUNO FERNANDES/CAFÉ EDITORA