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NUCOFFEE WORLD

NEW Q GRADERS ARE ACCREDITED TO RATE BRAZILIAN COFFEE

NUCOFFEE invests in the certification of judges in order to adopt international standards



The Certified Q Trainer Mané Alves and the cuppers.

With the development of Brazil's coffee market in the early 90's, came the concern to also advance the professional training of those who work in the industry. A thorough knowledge of the beverage attributes became crucial to allow for transparency in business transactions, and to further the enhanced marketing of quality coffees.

For this reason, cuppers who rate both the sensory attributes and defects of the beverage need to have common points of reference to be used by producers and roasters worldwide at the time of the purchase, and based on the same grading criteria.

Developed by the Coffee Quality Institute (CQI), and based on the classification system of the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA), the rigorous Q Grader judge accreditation provides cuppers with a certification to grade coffees worldwide. "The accreditation ensures the necessary credibility for the parties involved in the business transaction because the assessment follows internationally accepted standards", said Daniel Friedlander, Marketing Manager of NUCOFFEE.

With that in mind, and also concerned with providing its partners greater business opportunities, NUCOFFEE sponsored two Q Grader training courses by CQI in Brazil during the months of May and June of 2010. "There were few cuppers with this accreditation in Brazil up to the beginning of this year. So we decided to act and change this scenario", informed Friedlander.

Out of the 32 cuppers – NUCOFFEE partners representing professionals from cooperatives and warehouses, all working with quality control, and also cuppers of the G Quality program that grades and provides assistance to these professionals – 26 passed and earned their certification.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

However, to earn this prestigious accreditation they must work very hard. NUCOFFEE offered preliminary training to applicants that included three weeks of introductory classes. When the CQI team arrived in Brazil, represented by Alexandra Katona and

the Certified Q Trainer Mané Alves, Brazilian cuppers had a five days immersion course at the Sul de Minas Coffee Excellence Center (Centro de Excelência de Café do Sul de Minas), in Machado (Minas Gerais), a lab certified by the SCAA to conduct the exam.

The exams include 22 sensory tests and one written test with 100 questions. In order to assess the olfactory skills of cuppers, a sophisticated aroma recognition kit called Le Nez du Café is used, consisting of small vials, like a perfume vial, with aromas identified in the beverage such as walnut, chocolate, and honey. Also tested are tasting skills, roasting techniques, and their knowledge of organic acids. Applicants must also be able to recognize the different international origins in the cup.

Since 2004, the Portuguese Mané Alves who has certified about one hundred cuppers per year in the world was surprised with the high level of the Brazilian professionals who were assessed. “In general, Brazilians are good coffee tasters. How difficult these tests depend a great deal on the tasting skills of each individual, as well as on their previous cupping experience.”

According to Mané Alves, the CQI is working to bring coffee to a higher level: “Without certified cuppers it would be impossible to implement the ‘Q’ process, which guarantees the quality of the coffees tasted according to this system. ‘Q’ for quality is diametrically opposed to ‘C’ for commodity.”

For Juan Gimenez, NUCOFFEE Service Manager, participants have already taken a further step in their professional categories and will be able to better identify high quality microlots both for their employers and NUCOFFEE. “They are more qualified to identify coffee attributes. Some graders would taste samples and classify them as having a fermented characteristic, which is considered an undesirable attribute, when this could be an interesting acidity, unknown to them. They would end up undervaluing a coffee with attributes that should actually be valued”, he says.

Because the exam is very hard and essentially practical, classes are small. NUCOFFEE believes the demand for Q Graders exists in Brazil and plans to continue supporting the CQI. “We want to contribute and make this a sustainable process. We have already succeeded in increasing the number of Q Graders in Brazil, but we can achieve even better results,” Friedlander explained.

For more information, go to www.scaa.org, www.coffeeinstitute.org

BRAZILIAN REGIONS

CERRADO MINEIRO

The most central Region of the Minas Gerais State produces coffees with a smooth and sweet taste

Covering about 2 million km², the Brazilian Cerrado is known as the national savanna. But it is not acknowledged by its biodiversity alone. The Cerrado produces high quality coffees, known for their sweet and mild, chocolaty aroma, low acidity and moderate body – and for this reason it is widely used in blends.

Coffee plantations in the region had a late start, only after the 60’s and 70’s, by farmers from the state of Paraná who wanted to get away from frosty winters. At first, the land was considered as not suitable for coffee, the soil was inadequate and the climate too arid. By using the liming management practice (which corrects the low pH of the soil) and irrigation, a large-scale crop became feasible.



PHOTO GABRIEL BOIERAS/CAFÉ EDITORA

Today, Minas Gerais production is estimated at 23 million bags, of which 5 million are from the Cerrado region, whose high productivity yields 31.22 bags per hectare.

At an average altitude of 800 meters, and the predominant farming of Arabica, Mundo Novo and Catuaí coffees, the main producing cities of the region are Aimorés, Araguari, Araxá, Coromandel, Indianópolis, Monte Carmelo, Patrocínio, and São Gotardo.

In 2005, the Cerrado Mineiro coffee was the first Brazilian coffee to be certified by the Geographic Denomination of its micro-region. This label mainly indicates the terroir where coffee was produced in that location, under typical geographic and climate conditions, creating an identity for a specific product. The Cerrado Coffee Growers Federation (Federação dos Cafeicultores do Cerrado - Caccer) includes 55 municipalities and has become a reference for the other quality coffee producing regions of Brazil. However, in order to become a member of Caccer the coffee produced must have a grade of 75 or higher according to the classification system of the Specialty Coffee Association of America.

José Augusto Rizental, Caccer's superintendent and NUCOFFEE partner talk about the initiative "NUCOFFEE is a project totally new to coffee, they're breaking a lot of paradigms and are clarifying the coffee chain and connecting growers to roasters, an amazing benefit that everybody wins. Everybody knows the history of the coffee produced and who produced it, this is what new consumers want. No doubts, that it is a model that brings recognition to growers and to everybody that participates in this sustainable partnership.

COFFEE AROUND THE WORLD

WATER AND COFFEE IN HARMONY

To each his own cup, the right choice maximizes the flavor of both beverages

PHOTO GUILHERME GOMES/CAFÉ EDITORA



Pure water characteristics have always been very straightforward: tasteless, odorless, and colorless. While color is a matter of refinement, the first two have proven otherwise. Depending on the origin of the aquifer that can yield water to springs or wells, and of its physiochemical composition, water can have a perceptible, welcome flavor and odor upon tasting.

Up to the end of the eighteenth century, because mineral water was rich in sodium bicarbonate it was considered medicinal. Starting in 1800 it was bottled and conquered the world. Nowadays its use goes beyond therapeutic and refreshing purposes. It is sold at the grocery stores as a gourmet product under

over 200 brands, offering the options of carbonated (natural or artificial carbonation) or non-carbonated.

In order to be considered a premium spring, the origin must be certified and the environment around it preserved. It must contain at least 120 mg of bicarbonate and be constantly checked for factors that can affect its characteristics. The label must provide data accessible to the consumer and, of course, the water must be digestive and hydrating.

COUNTLESS POSSIBILITIES

Combined with coffee, water rinses the sense of taste for the arrival of the beverage and maximizes its attributes, whether positive or negative, if a poor choice is made. Before joining them however, one must know the six technical features when tasting gourmet waters.

First, pay attention to how clear the water is, the size of the bubbles and how long they last in the cup. Then try to smell the likely citric, ocean and mountain aromas. Taste it for the acidity of minerals, its creamy, sweet, salty, and bitter features that can also be present. Feel the body, the balance of the beverage and finally the aftertaste.

With coffee, both carbonated and non-carbonated water can add value to the flavor experience in the combination. In order to sense the coffee nuances one should drink sparkling water beforehand to sensitize the taste buds. But it is also consumed after drinking coffee, bringing about new sensory discoveries. Ideally, the consumer should try several options to find the one that is most pleasant.

INNOVATION

COFFEE-BASED COSMETICS

Researches confirm antioxidant and antiaging properties of the coffee bean

The quest for differentiation has always been one of the challenges faced by the cosmetics industry. The Brazilian consumer market has shown a great potential for this industry. In 2009 alone, the country consumed over 1.5 million tons of beauty products, a 25% growth since 2004. This justifies the on-going investment of research companies looking for new raw materials.

Data from the US Department of Agriculture show that the green coffee oil is the most potent vegetal antioxidant presently known. It is also known that in addition to its caffeine, the oil is a powerful photoprotector, anti-inflammatory and antiaging product.

Cosmetics companies that are here and are betting on the active principles of the grain have already started to mark their presence in the market. They use the Arabica coffee, mostly the green bean since it has the highest concentration of the antioxidants. The oil or coffee extract, and even the coffee flower are used to make soaps, bath oils, hydrating and therapeutic creams, hair products, etc. This is the case of the Brazilian company, Kapeh.

Other companies that use coffee as a raw material can also resort to the technology of the industries that have specifically developed this active principle.



PHOTO PAULA FÚFULO/CAFÉ EDITORA