



PROGRESS REPORT:

DEVELOPMENT 2017

Reviewing 12 months of the projects, people, and potential in which we have invested as a means of increasing the Development of coffee quality, across the board and around the world.



QUALITY • SERVICE • EDUCATION • **PROGRESS**

COMMUNITY • **DEVELOPMENT** • ENVIRONMENT

Cover photo and this image taken at
CENFROCAFE, Jaén, Cajamarca, Peru

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Development is an interesting and tricky word, especially in coffee: This industry, with its sticky colonial history, has long struggled with the tension of who knows best, who calls the shots, and what, exactly, is the final arbiter of quality and good taste. As with our other guiding principles in business and in life, we try to think of development—by which we mean improvement, growth, and advancement—in holistic terms. We also recognize that behind every amazing coffee is a whole crowd of people, and we are always grateful to be among such

good company: By collaborating and communicating with one another all along the supply chain, we are able to collect our various expertise and to work together to move specialty coffee forward, from source to science to SPOT offerings.

With this in mind, we wanted to reflect on the quality and stability of the coffees we have purchased lately, as well as take stock of our analytical processes and some of our internal systems for handling, scoring, tracking,

and even selling those coffees. Also included in this idea of Development is the work we do that doesn't necessarily directly relate to green coffee or coffee farming, such as the materials and technology that we utilize, refine, create, and share.

From finding and rewarding the producers who are doing the best work in the world, to investing in and innovating projects at the source where we see the most potential, to improving our technology and

sharing not only the vast amounts of data we have collected but also the context that makes that data useful—we are constantly seeking to develop better information, tastier coffees, and more efficient tools of the trade.

HEADED INTO 2017

Reflection is the necessary first step to improvement: You've got to know where you came from before you know where you're going. We took quick stock of some of our developmental checkpoints over the past two years, and were eager to compare the numbers and achievements with where we've come more recently.

FACTS AND FIGURES: 2016*

- More than **17% of our 2016 inventory** carried one or more certification/s (Fair Trade, organic, Rainforest Alliance)
- We purchased **516 individual microlots**, which represented **26.6% of our inventory**
- **23.9% of coffees** earned an arrival cupping score higher than 86 points
- The average change +/- in cup score between pre-ship and arrival sample overall was **-1.22 points**
- The average change +/- in cup score after 8–9 months storage for SPOT coffees was **-1.05**
- The highest overall cup score awarded by our sensory team was **95.00**
- **Two Best Cup competitions in Colombia** netted large premiums for small producers in Huila and Cauca: **The Huila auction alone contributed \$184,591.74** directly to the producers of the top 30 and special-process lots
- Our sensory analysis department evaluated and recorded water activity (Aw) on **5,594 samples of green coffee**

**figures are from Q4 2015–Q3 2016 unless otherwise noted*

FACTS AND FIGURES: 2017*

- About **16% of our 2017 inventory** carried one or more certification/s (Fair Trade, organic, Rainforest Alliance)
- We purchased **481 individual microlots**, which represented **27.2% of our total inventory**
- As of September 7, **34.7% of coffees** earned an arrival cupping score higher than 86 points
- The average change +/- in cup score between pre-ship and arrival sample overall was **-0.76 points**
- The average change +/- in cup score after 8–9 months storage for SPOT coffees was **-0.77**
- The highest overall cup score awarded by our sensory team was **93.50** (as of October 31)
- **Carmo Best Cup contributed \$221,096.47** directly to the producers of the top 32 lots
- Our sensory analysis department evaluated and recorded water activity (Aw) on **5,500 samples of green coffee**
- In August, the first edition of the **World Specialty-Coffee Maps** was released: Out of the 1,000 maps printed, more than 700 were shipped worldwide

**figures are from Q4 2016–Q3 2017 unless otherwise noted*

DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS 2017

In choosing the parameters that we thought embodied “development,” we wanted to look at investment projects, quality-focused discovery and support work, the longevity of coffee quality, as well as the ways we do things at home, from sensory analysis to data collection to information-sharing and communication.

On the following pages are a few highlights of the year at Cafe Imports, from a development standpoint.



Cafe Imports Sensory Analysis: Megan Person, right, at Gachatha Coffee Factory, February 2017

Sourcing in Kenya

Securing the best coffees in Kenya can be quite tricky, even for an importing company with 25 years' experience. The competitive market, high prices, and historic difficulty in making direct or long-standing relationships with producers there has inspired us to approach how we buy coffee in Kenya differently. This year, Kenya coffee-sourcing expert Joe Tynan was joined by sensory analysis team member Megan Person, whose keen palate certainly came in handy as the two cupped through more than 50 samples

per day, selecting our microlots and building our new Regional Select offerings. The one-two punch of sourcing and sensory analysis gave us an opportunity to bring in some of the best Kenyan lots we've tasted in recent history—even after a season beset with drought and decreased yield—and we were also able to create promising new relationships with an eye to future stability, as well.



Chalatenango Microlots

The smallest country in Central America, El Salvador has a reputation for the butterscotch-sweet, nutty coffees of Santa Ana, and the Bourbon varieties that grow on the volcanic slopes there. Our senior green-coffee buyer, Piero Cristiani, has bigger (or, well, smaller) ideas for coffee from his home country, and has spearheaded a program that allows him to source tiny but remarkable lots of parchment coffee directly from producers who grow mostly Pacas and Pacamara varieties on an average of

1–2 hectares in the remote area of Chalatenango. (The yields are so small, we actually offer the coffees in 35-kilo *Pequeños* bags, rather than the normal 60-kilo ones.) Sourcing in parchment is a definite risk for us, as for any importer, but buying this way ensures direct negotiation and payment to the producers. This is our second year bringing these small-but-mighty lots to market, and we hope to use the Chalatenango development work as a foundation for a Best Cup-type cupping competition and auction in 2018.



Microlots from Papua New Guinea

Thanks too to Piero's tireless work, 2017–18 will see our first microlots from this Asia Pacific growing country. While PNG often gets mistakenly lumped in with the other (relatively) nearby growing regions of Indonesia, the coffees and the cultures from this nation could not

be more different: The profile in the cup is worlds away (more sweet fruit, less savory-earthly); the coffees are Washed instead of Wet-Hulled; and the incredible social and cultural variations from community to community and tribe to tribe make the

buying and selling of coffee a challenging, more nuanced sort of process all together. Because of the exceptionally small "coffee gardens" the average producer owns here, washing stations are the point of purchase for most of our PNG coffees,

but with Piero's initiation and creativity, he was able to arrange for some special, high-quality day lots from our mill partners, as well as a single-producer microlot that will hopefully be the needle-moving effort for more lot-specific sourcing in years to come.



Luis Arocha (Cafe Imports Green Buyer) with the Carmo Coffees team

Carmo Best Cup

After hosting successful Best Cup competitions and auctions in Colombia, 2017 saw the event's debut in Brazil's Carmo de Minas region. More than 700 samples were sent for vetting in preparation for the competition—rather more than are typically submitted for the Cup of Excellence—and several of the top 30 lots scored more than 90 points from the cupping panel of roasters who traveled to bid

on the final day. From special processes to special prep, variety selection, and several very small farms, this event was about discovery and development, an attempt to raise awareness about and excitement for the incredibly high-quality microlots that are possible from Brazil, despite the country's reputation for lower-value, higher-volume production.

The Year in Colombia:

Sometimes things just don't go as planned, and a difficult harvest cycle in Colombia meant no coffee from some of our oldest friends and most innovative partners in 2016. A season like this is incredibly difficult on small producers—the average farmer in southern Colombia only has about 1.5 hectares of land, roughly 5,000–7,000 coffee trees—and can be disheartening enough to ruin future years. Happily, however, the weather has been more cooperative lately, the port strikes are over (for now), and we are seeing the high-scoring offers we normally expect from producers like Elkin Guzman and the Los Naranjos association, as well as the first microlots from our Women Coffee Producers partner group AMACA. We featured two Colombian coffees as Aces limited-release lots, and have begun exploratory sourcing and cupping in a new-to-us municipality called Inzá, in the Cauca Department. There's also a still top-secret Variety Select project in the works... but if we told you more about it now, we'd have to kill you.





Cafe Imports senior green-coffee buyer Piero Cristiani (left) at CENFROCAFE, Jaén, Cajamarca, Peru

Peru, Peru, Peru

Our love affair with Peru has been going strong for over a decade, but in recent years we've expanded our sourcing efforts in search of the super special, exceptional-quality microlots we have long known simply must exist among the remote slopes of Cajamarca in the northern highlands. Not only have we formed and are nurturing new partnerships with producers and exporters who are as quality-obsessed as we are, but we've also been thrilled to participate

in the first-ever Peru Cup of Excellence Program, at which Piero was an international judge, and in which several longtime producing partners took top honors. Cafe Imports placed a winning bid on the sixth-place coffee, from our longtime producer-partner Filadelpo Córdova Mejia and his farm Finca Ecológica Agua Colorada; The coffee bid out at \$49.60 per pound in the auction.



Matt Brown, Cafe Imports U.S. sales-representative



Simone König, Cafe Imports Europe sales representative



Claudia Bellinzoni, Cafe Imports green-coffee buyer

Addition to the Sourcing Team

In the fall of 2017, we were happy to welcome Claudia Bellinzoni as a green-coffee buyer, with a focus on growing our presence and relationships in Africa. Claudia is Q-grader certified; trilingual in Italian, Spanish, and English (with a little Swahili); and has extensive experience in sourcing and trading, along with quality control. Claudia is based out of the Cafe Imports Europe office in Berlin, and with her expertise, intelligence, and friendly personality, we look forward to engaging

more fully with our existing producer and exporter relationships, as well as discovering and developing new ones. Her first sourcing trip as a member of the green team was to Ethiopia for two weeks in November/December with head of sourcing and resident Ethiopia expert Jason Long.



Megan Person, Cafe Imports Sensory Analysis

Science and Sensory

The sensory analysis department based in our U.S. office continues to conduct some of the most cutting-edge research in specialty coffee anywhere, and their almost single-minded pursuit of accuracy and excellence has resulted in advancements in quality and efficiency that are leaps-and-bounds ahead of what should be humanly possible for a two-person team. Sensory analysis director Ian Freithem is juggling projects in water-activity analysis (Aw), optical evaluation of green coffee, lexical advancements, and cupping-standards improvements, among countless other things. Megan Person, continues to hone the efficiency of our cupping process from sample receipt to roasting to cupping to data logging, and has shaved nearly four full days from our turnaround time on samples—breakneck speed!

LOOKING AHEAD

The drive that inspires us to constantly seek better coffee, better science, better systems, and stronger relationships means that we are always willing to take a moment to applaud accomplishments, but then by the next beat we are up on our feet again, boots laced and ready to push forward toward new challenges. Here is a short selection of what we're looking forward to in 2018.

More and better microlots: New regions, new partners, stronger old partnerships, new projects, new experiments—new and improved everything, across the board. In addition to sourcing efforts, we're also extending this to shipping and storage improvements, investigating protocol that will help us cut down on transportation slow-downs, and researching ways to maintain coffee stability both in transit and in storage through both freight alternatives and packaging material.

Continued data collection and analysis: With the addition of optical-analysis technology, we will be able to identify and catalog defects with incredible precision, and to report back to origin with significant data about coffee quality that will help make improvements all along the chain of supply.

Special press projects: In addition to further additions and improvements to the World Specialty-Coffee Maps, Cafe Imports' creative director Andy Reiland also intends to break out individual countries of origin, and to offer in-kind updates to our Coffee Variety Tree and Harvest Calendar.

cafeimports.com, v4.0: A fresh look, more robust search function, and dynamic original content and educational materials are coming down the pike. Be on the lookout for updates from us about when to hit that "refresh" button to see the functional, friendly, and informative new website we have in the works.

We welcome your feedback, questions, and comments about the progress we've made and the work we have to do: Feel free to e-mail us at progress@cafeimports.com with any suggestions or concerns you may have, or to become part of the efforts we are planning in the coming year.

World Specialty-Coffee Maps, First Edition

Self-taught cartographer and in-house creative director Andy Reiland designed and released a comprehensive (and beautiful, we don't mind saying) global map depicting 26 of the world's most significant coffee-producing countries, with special emphasis on places from which Cafe Imports currently sources green. The map—which took Andy years in R&D—is a comprehensive visual delight, with details regarding ideal coffee-growing elevation and color-coded microregions within the greater political borders. The first limited-edition printing was quickly claimed, and a second run of the maps is now available to order through our new webstore:

cafeimports.com/store



