

ROASTMASTER'S REPORT

Home Coffee Brewing, Post A.D.

by Nate Hrobak

My initiation into the coffee drinking world occurred early in life by way of pre-ground, commercial grade, automatic drip coffee. With a healthy dose of cream and sugar to soften the blow, I was ready to twitch for hours. I maintained that level of coffee appreciation well into my twenties. Then, one day, change came in the form of a loud, hot, steam-spewing beast of an espresso machine under the control of an individual who could be best described as "Alternative." I ordered and tentatively sipped the proffered shot of espresso; flavors here-to-fore unrecognized by me and my automatic drip exploded on my palate, creating a veritable fireworks show of nuance. A new world of possibility spread wide in front of me. There was more to coffee than I thought; all that was required was a little finesse.

My interest soon grew into hobby, and hobby became obsession. I loved the glass, metal and ceramic sculptures that had been designed with the explicit intent of brewing a cup of coffee. Antique percolators, depression era pour-over pots, single cup brewers, modern vacuum brewers and stove top espresso pots were all welcome in my house. Water, fire and coffee were united in alchemic frenzies of discovery. I have learned to brew the very simple cold press: coffee grounds and cold water, twelve hours later, heaven in a cup, and I still strive to master the complex world of home espresso brewing. I regale my friends with the stories of my adventures in brewing and will often give a spontaneous demo of my newest gadget. Some people say that I should cut down a bit, but I tell them that I can quit any time I want, and right now I just don't want to, so I continue.

My automatic drip machine collects dust in a forgotten corner, forlorn and dejected in the shadow of my mighty espresso machine, but I'll not forget my humble beginnings. Were it not for that little pot that could, I

never would have tried coffee, and my recent age of discovery would have been spent doing who knows what. So, on the occasional warm spring morning, when I miss the gurgle and puff of my friend the auto-drip, I reenact the age old ritual of preparing a pot of coffee, and am reminded of a simpler, if less-flavorful, time in the not-so-distant past.



Raking the coffee while it dries on the patio is a critical step in the progression from tree to cup.

Your Roastmaster's Report Team:

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fresh · subtly floral · bright
Perennial
SPRING BLEND™ 2009



Green Coffee Freshness at Caribou Coffee

by Justin Walker

The subject of green coffee freshness often comes up in my conversations with customers and coffee house employees. There are two key questions: how much do we have in inventory and how long does it last?

We store our green coffee in a partially temperature-controlled warehouse. We do not heat the warehouse in winter, nor cool it in the summer. Our warehouse averages 50° F during the winter and 80° F during the peak of summer. Newly harvested green coffee usually has a moisture content of 12% to 14%. Knowing how fast a coffee will dry out during different times of the year and constantly tasting what we already own to monitor these changes is our way of ensuring that only the best quality green coffee goes into each and every batch that we roast.

For example, new Colombian coffees arrived this February with moisture content of 13%. Over the course of the next eight weeks the coffee will dry to 11%. This moisture loss can result in the coffee's vibrant flavors becoming more muted. Also there will be a loss in coffee weight that will average 1.10 lb per coffee bag. Over a very short period of time this could translate into hundreds of pounds lost due to evaporation!



A picture perfect example of coffee that's ready to be picked.

As a coffee dries out, its flavor characteristics go through many subtle changes, and if it gets too dry or sits too long, the result could be detrimental to the finished product. In short, we track each and every pound of every lot of coffee from the day it arrives at our dock, until the last date of expiration on its roasted status in our stores.



High grown arabicas line the mountains in the Huehuetenango region of Guatemala.

We keep an average 6 to 8 week supply of green coffee on hand. This relatively short-term inventory ensures that we are constantly rotating our coffee using a first in first out (FIFO) inventory system. Strict inventory rotation, accurate tracking and weekly inventory counts are just a part of how we guarantee that each coffee type is used in the order of which it was received. All of this means you will have a fresh, consistent, excellent cup of Caribou Coffee, each and every time.

Freshen Up For Spring

by Brian Aliffi

Coffee is a crucial component of winter, like a good friend who calls you up, "Hey, get off the couch and come out into the world" during the long, frigid evenings of hibernation. Coffee brings you to life after you've left the comfy confines of your bed in the morning. Its presence is reassuring when that smiling face across the counter hands you a full cup of warm, rich satisfaction; knowledge that the day will, in fact, be just fine.

Coffee, constant friend it is, has layers, much like a surly, lovable ogre, once you look beyond the veneer of how it's been roasted. Amid the many blends and origins that comprise our boon companion there are flavors adding complexity to the cup. Like apples or tomatoes, you'll find that different coffees are at their peak at different times of year. Harvest of these new crops have been in full swing during our winter months and are arriving daily in our warehouse. So, on the cusp of spring's entry is when we like to feature our Perennial Blend, a celebration of the freshness of the season.

Coffees from around the world, one from each major producing region, come together creating an herbal and floral bouquet in the cup. Papua New Guinea lays a creamy foundation with pleasant, fresh garden-herb aromatics. Ethiopia adds that sparkle to the cup, shining like a warm ray of sun through a crack in the blinds. Guatemala opens the coffee, like a flower at dawn, with gentle jasmine notes and drops a hint of sweet vanilla in the finish to bring it all together. Perennial is our tribute to the change of the season using the best that coffee has to offer right now. Reunite with your friends and usher in a new season of growth and promise.