



INTELLIGENTSIA
DIRECT TRADE

ZIRIKANA RWANDA

presented by:
GEOFF WATTS

VICE PRESIDENT / GREEN COFFEE BUYER

DIRECT TRADE PARTNERS

Nyarusiza / Bufcafe

REGION

Nyamagabe, Southern Province

CULTIVAR

Bourbon

ELEVATION

1750 - 2000 m.a.s.l.

HARVEST

April - June 2016

BERGAMOT • PEAR • ALMOND

RIGHT: Ultra-clean parchment resting before being moved to the drying beds.

BOTTOM: The rolling hills of Nyamagabe dotted with tiny farm plots.



Rwanda is a country with a fascinating and altogether unique coffee story. Before 2001, it produced no specialty coffee at all. Zero. Most specialty buyers and coffee drinkers didn't even know that Rwanda grew coffee. Planting coffee there was mostly a losing proposition, as the limited volume of coffee coming out of the country was sold at below-market discounts to large traders and commercial coffee sellers who used it as filler for their blends.

Fast-forward 15 years and there is an entirely new reality in Rwanda. The country is producing some of the cleanest coffee in all of Africa and is a hot ticket in the specialty market. Producers in Rwanda are getting better prices than many well-known and historically successful Central American growers, and Rwandan coffee has established itself as one of the most consistent sources of quality on the continent.

Much has been made in the media over the last decade about the way in which Rwanda has remade itself

and emerged as a model for economic progress in East Africa. Even in a country as full of incredible stories of reinvention and development progress as Rwanda, our partner Bufcafe is a real standout.

In 2003, Epiphanie Mukashyaka opened a small coffee washing station called Remera with help from PEARL, the legendary project that catalyzed the emergence of the Rwandan specialty coffee sector. Since then, her business has grown tremendously, more than doubling its volume and building a second station in nearby Nyarusiza to increase capacity and provide service to more farmers. Over the past 10 years, Buf has become one of the most awarded coffee producers in the country, and has parlayed that success into relationships with some of the best coffee companies in the industry.

Today, Epiphanie's son Samuel runs the operations, searching relentlessly for ways to improve. He's constantly tinkering, and we can see evidence of his commitment to quality everywhere we look. Two years ago he built a gigantic shaded raised bed drying system to

better protect Buf's fragile coffees from overexposure to sun and heat. This season he invested in a new dry mill so that he and his team can directly manage coffee preparation for export. And he's recently hired some of the best young cuppers in the business to handle quality control and lot separations.

Years ago we chose to name this coffee Zirikana (a Kinyarwandan word meaning "show your commitment") because that's what this whole coffee gig is all about. Commitment, of course, works both ways. We ask the farmers we work with to show a continuing commitment to advancing cup quality and preserving the natural environment. And when they deliver better coffee to us--coffee as good as this year's Rwanda Zirikana lot--we deliver higher prices to them.

The time is now to reward real quality with real premiums, and to show producers that coffee farming can indeed be a profitable and sustainable endeavor. When mutual commitments like these can be forged and maintained, the future of coffee begins to look a lot brighter for everyone!

