

BRAZIL
AGUA PRETA
SINGLE-ORIGIN ESPRESSO

DIRECT TRADE PARTNER Bourbon Specialty Coffee smallholder project	ELEVATION 900-950 m
REGION Espírito Santo	HARVEST June-December 2018
CULTIVAR Iapar, Catuai, Catucaí, Yellow Caturra	LOOK FOR Brown Sugar, Tangerine, Honey



The first time we tasted samples from the state of Espírito Santo, we knew the region was special. The best samples had crisp flavors and pronounced acidity, traits that are rare in Brazilian coffee. That cupping kicked off four years of visits and work to understand the region and figure out how best to partner with smallholder producers there.

Espírito Santo is perhaps best known as a global juggernaut in the production of Robusta coffee. But deep in the state are several mountainous regions that are home to thousands of small-scale Arabica coffee farms less than 20 hectares in size. These farms are nearly all family affairs with multiple generations living on the farm and working the land. In most cases, the coffee trees are well tended, each farm has its own wet mill, and the coffees are dried in covered drying beds.

Historically, these farmers have lacked access to specialty coffee buyers who pay differentiated prices. Instead, they have sold their coffee to local middlemen who create low quality blends for the national market. Over the past four years, we have been working with our partner, Bourbon Specialty Coffee, to change the way coffee is bought and sold in this region. Farmers are becoming accustomed to lot separation, sensory evaluation and scoring of lots,

identifying processing methods that produce higher quality coffee, and we even had a producer attend our Extraordinary Coffee Workshop in Bolivia last year.

This multi-year investment lies at the heart of Intelligentsia's Direct Trade model. We are not only hunting for the best lots each year, we are developing personal relationships with farmers and creating financial incentives so that they want to focus on high-quality coffee. This past year we established fixed prices for the Espírito Santo producers based on the quality of their lots. The excitement was overwhelming. With our model farmers can control their financial future by investing the time and effort to produce higher quality coffees if they so choose. And with the commodity price for coffee at a near record low farmers (especially small family farms) need to focus on quality if they want to thrive.

While this project is still in its nascent stages, we increased the amount of coffee that we purchased from Espírito Santo threefold last year. Included in those purchases are eight stunning lots for our Agua Preta Single-Origin Espresso release. These represent the best of Espírito Santo and Brazil. The eight farmers who produced these stunning coffees fit the family farming paradigm found in the mountains of Espírito Santo.



James T. McLaughlin, Jr.
CEO and President
Green Coffee Buyer for Brazil

