

SUMMER 2004 NEWSLETTER

MERCHANTS OF GREEN COFFEE - WHAT'S NEW!

Two projects bloomed over the spring at Merchants of Green Coffee - Cubano Coffee Conservation Program and Earth Day Coffee.

In recognition of prior environmental achievements, Merchants of Green Coffee and World Wildlife Fund received a grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to launch a new green initiative, Cubano Coffee Conservation Program. The purpose of the program is to educate Canadian coffee drinkers about the environmental implications of their choices when buying coffee, and thus to promote the consumption of sustainable Cuban coffee. Cuba is home to some of the world's most biologically diverse and threatened eco-regions. Its rainforests are botanical jewels – perfect for producing organic shade grown coffee. The sale of Cubano coffee encourages Cuban farmers to integrate conservation into their long term development plans. For more information visit our website.



Earth Day Coffee is a new responsible alternative for coffee drinkers. Developed by Merchants of Green Coffee for Earth Day Canada, Earth Day Coffee is a premium blend of three distinctive coffees from Africa, Latin America and Asia. 50% of all profits go directly to support Earth Day activities across Canada. In the month of April, Earth Day Coffee was available at a variety of environmental events, in a select group of restaurants and at Mountain Equipment Coop. To order Earth Day Coffee for your home, office or special event, go to earthday.ca.

COFFEE SCHOOL– COFFEE TASTING (“CUPPING”)



Like wine, coffee picks up unique taste characteristics from its geography - soil, water, air, flora - and by the way it is processed into green beans. The two main taste sensations are acidity and body. Acidity referring to the sweet tingling sensation on the tongue. Body referring to the weight of the coffee as it rests on the tongue - the mouth feel. Body and acidity vary depending on country of origin: Africans (high acidity/low body); South Asian (low acidity/high body); Latin American (mid-body/mid-acidity). Coffee tastes (or flavours) are characterized by: (1) fragrance & aroma, (2) taste & nose, (3) aftertaste. A great coffee will score high on all of the following:

Fragrance & Aroma: Fragrance reveals the nature of a coffee beans taste - floral, spicy, etc. It is evaluated by vigorously sniffing/smelling a sample of ground coffee. The intensity of the fragrance reveals the freshness of the sample. Aroma is examined by taking long deep sniffs of freshly brewed coffee. It reveals the aromatic character of the coffee – fruity, herbal, nut-like, etc.

Taste & Nose: Taste is examined by forcefully slurping brewed coffee into your mouth. This brisk aspiration spreads the fluid over the entire surface of the tongue, allowing all of the sensory nerve endings to simultaneously respond to sweet, salt, sour or bitter. Nose is examined at that same time as taste. Aspirating coffee over the tongue also aerates it, which causes a portion of the organic compounds to change into gases, which are then drawn into the nasal cavity. The nose tends to reveal flavours like caramel, malt, brown sugar, etc.

Aftertaste: The aftertaste (or finish) is the last impression the coffee leaves with you - flavours such as chocolate, smoke, or tobacco. The finish can be clean and crisp, smooth and lingering, etc.

Summer Classes:

Coffee School classes are held at our Coffee Shop. Classes run from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm. (including question and answer period). Space is limited. Please RSVP by email or telephone.

- July 10th, 2004: Coffee Roasting 101
- August 14th, 2004: Coffee Cupping (\$10 fee applies; class limit of 20 people; special coffee sampled)
- September 11th, 2004: Sustainable Coffee 101

COFFEE SHOP

Feature Product: French Press

Also known as the “plunger” or “press pot”, the French Press uses the “steeping” method to brew coffee. It was invented over 100 years ago. The most popular manufacturer of the French Press today is Bodum. We carry a better alternative – a high quality “no name” pot made from stainless steel, not glass or plastic. It is the best French Press ever – retains heat, easy to wash, and is virtually indestructible.



A medium/coarse grind works best for the French Press. The correct water temperature for brewing is 95°C-98°C (just off the boil). Pour the water directly into the French Press over the coffee grounds. If the coffee foams-up (and it will if its fresh!), give it a stir, and then put the lid on the pot (this will help maintain your water temperature). After 2 to 3 minutes, press the plunger down to filter out the grounds. You may encounter resistance, in which case reverse your plunger just a bit, and then push it back down (repeat if necessary). Once the plunger is down, you’re good to go. Coffee brewed in a French Press is characteristically rich with a “silt-like” sediment that adds “big” body to the coffee drinking experience. Enjoy!

Tip: Always brew your coffee strong (6 to 10 grams per 8 ounces of water). You can dilute coffee to taste with hot water, but you can never recover flavour from a weak brew.



Feature Coffee: Costa Rica 100% Sustainable

Merchants of Green Coffee is proud to offer the world’s only Certified Sustainable Coffee from Costa Rica. It is grown by a cooperative of 500 farmers (called Cooperativa Montes De Oro) at 3,600 feet above sea level in the Central Cordillera mountain range near Miramar.

This coffee is processed with the world’s first solar powered coffee dryers – invented by our partner and friends at the MesoAmerican Development Institute. It is certified fair trade, organic, shade grown, and 100% sustainable. It is the “champagne” of coffees: smooth and buttery, with medium body and acidity, hints of honey, berry and citrus, and a crisp clean finish. *This degree of certification is only available from Merchants of Green Coffee via the Government of Canada’s Environmental Choice Program.*



COFFEE MARKET UPDATE - PACKAGING AND PRESERVING FRESH

You may have seen recent TV ads by the world’s largest coffee companies boasting of new advances made in packaging to coffee drinkers? Back in the 1950’s, these same giants gave us metal canisters, vacuum bricks, and instant coffee. By the 1970’s, coffee quality had sunk so low hat it sparked the re-birth in the specialty coffee industry in the 1980’s.



This is what industrial coffee advertisements are saying today:

- 1) Aromaseal Canister (a plastic can with re-sealable plastic lid) - “The Aromaseal Canister has several unique features that help bring that fresh Mountain Grown aroma to you morning after morning” ... “same great taste time after time”.
- 2) Fresh Seal™ (foil bags with a pinhole) – “With the unique Fresh Seal™ valve, you may no longer hear a “hiss” when you open the can, but what you do get is coffee packed at the peak of freshness. Our freshest coffee ever.”

Labeling and marketing reflect the values of the company making or selling a product. The word 'fresh' has become far too easy to use and abuse. The three keys to making a perfect cup of coffee are (1) Quality Green Beans, (2) a Fresh Roast, and (3) Proper Brewing. There is only one definition of freshness. For coffee to be fresh and best, it must be consumed within 5 days of roasting, 3 hours of grinding, and 15 minutes of brewing. The proof is in the cup - fresh coffee tastes better - packaging cannot preserve freshness. Refuse to buy into misinformation. Tell your friends about fresh coffee and encourage others to vote for quality with their dollar.
