

# TEA & COFFEE

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## JAPAN

*Dawn of a New,  
Vibrant Coffee Nation*

• **Special Report: Vietnam**  
*Part II in a Five-Part Series*

• **Japanese Teas:**  
*Unique, Delicate,  
Yet Highly  
Flavorful*

• **Monday Morning Quarterback:**  
*Reforming Insurance*

by it.” One can only hope that Jackman’s success continues, and that he transforms his product line into the widely successful charity endeavor Paul Newman achieved with the “Newman’s Own” line.

—Nanette Eldridge

### Processing: An Art and a Science

It’s often the roasters and baristas who get the acclaim for being the artists in the coffee chain, but processing demands managing just as many variables, and processors are continuing to prove that their work is as much an art as it is a science.

Coffees are often classed into categories of “washed,” “natural” and “semi washed,” for convenience of sale, but in reality processing involves a range of techniques that defy these discrete labels, particularly in the case of pulped naturals. Small-batch roasters and the consumers they serve are finding more to love about the complex flavor profiles of these ‘in-between’ coffees, so processors are honing the art of producing them. Pulped naturals significantly differentiate themselves from naturals in that they represent a spectrum of flavor that can be manipulated through percent of mucilage left on the beans, fermentation (or not), drying method and speed, and period of rest before shipment.

Because the response to Central American “honey” coffee in particular has been overwhelmingly positive, processors are experimenting with ways of unlocking the possibilities of this flavor spectrum by constantly tweaking the degrees of depulping, washing, fermentation, and drying. They’re also testing which varieties best lend themselves to the honey process, and the results can vary from farm to farm based on influences of factors like soil and interplanted species.

One Panamanian processor roughly depulped a test lot (with large pieces of the



cherry still clinging to the bean) then left it under a plastic sheet to ferment for one to two days so the condensation could fix the honey layer. The result was an attractively intense caramel flavor, but the fermented sugars caused the drying coffee to glue itself together in clumps. “This stuff, yes, is difficult to hull. Sometimes we have to whack it with a tree trunk just to get it unstuck. And then we have to watch that it doesn’t get jammed in the huller.” He also commented that, “you should run a mill like a lab, trying this, trying that— just to see what you can do.” Processing itself is a process of constant observation and reevaluation.

New experiments in processing also mean that existing machinery doesn’t unanimously fit the bill anymore, leaving processors to continue their artistic endeavors of close monitoring and trial and error alongside the tried and true.—RN

### National Coffee Association Launches Science and Law Symposium

The National Coffee Association (NCA), New York, has created a pre-convention educational program dedicated to the examination of an issue that weighs heavily on the industry—the rapidly growing chal-

lenges presented by legal and regulatory actions based on scientific knowledge and inquiry. The new symposium, *Coffee at the Crossroads of Science and Law*, will debut on Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup>. The half-day, stand-alone symposium, which unites prominent industry scientists and attorneys, precedes the opening of the NCA’s 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention in San Francisco.

“Each year, the NCA aligns the industry’s leading challenges and opportunities with targeted Convention programming, delivering maximum industry value and utility,” said Robert F. Nelson, NCA president and CEO. “For 2013, that meant demystifying the complex conflation of law and science that is creating a new dimension of legal and regulatory woes. It also meant devoting special attention to developments and solutions in sustainability to further industry support for an equitable supply chain that ensures producing populations, including women, can be sustained economically, environmentally, and socially through coffee production.”

*Coffee at the Crossroads of Science and Law* will cover challenges arising from California’s Proposition 65 and its application across a growing litany of heat-formed

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