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The Ins and Outs of Organics: **Demystifying Production**



- **Profile: F. Gaviña & Sons**
- **Mexico Targets Local Consumption**
- **Containerization:**
The Rise & Fall of the NY Waterfront
- **Special Report: Vietnam**
Part IV in a Five-Part Series
- **Origin Highlight: Guatemala Part II**

Road Teas, Sungarden Tea, Teas Etc., TeaSource, Walters Bay and Yogic Chai.

NATC Cupping Coordinator Mo Sardella of The G.S. Haly Company, said, “Beyond the top two or three performing teas in each category, there appears to be some room for industry improvement with regard to sourcing higher quality teas that accurately represent the classic standards. However, given the variable quality available from ‘source’ during last year’s production, mainly due to abnormal weather conditions, it is understandable why some of the teas in the competition did not exceed the judges’ expectations for these classic types.” Sardella added, “As the NATC continues to evolve, it will be interesting to see how tea-quality improves in the industry, and which companies find the most success utilizing the NATC as a vehicle for demonstrating and celebrating their quality-focused sourcing and blending point of view for consumers.”

In addition to the award-winning teas, NATC awarded the first-ever Judge’s Choice Award to Mountain Tea Company of Cerritos, Calif., for its Imperial Pearl Oolong Tea. “Mountain Tea Company entered the NATC with a dark oolong that did not quite fit our specifications for that category,” said Kim Jage, director of marketing and sales for NATC. “However, it was an exceptionally high-quality beautiful tea, worthy of distinction, so the impressed judges decided to create a new award.”

A complete list of first-, second- and third-place winners of the North American Tea Championship is available at www.teachampionship.com. Honorees will be featured at the North American Tea Championship Winners Tasting Circle at World Tea Expo

(www.WorldTeaExpo.com), June 7-9, 2013 at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. The next North American Tea Championship will be held in May 2013 for an evaluation of iced teas. Entries will be accepted in April. To inquire about entering the competition, e-mail rwren@worldteamedia.com.—AK

Dispatches from the Field: Boquete, Panama

Don Tito is a known personality in Boquete, Panama, a small species of local celebrity. A visit to his farm and hand-built artisan processing/roasting “plant” was suggested and recommended. He was eager to tell me how Café Royal—named for his parents, Rosa y Alfredo, all started.

“I had the opportunity, the luck, and the craziness to buy property. In this way, I bought what is now Finca La Milagrosa. It was a cow farm for herding. It was all pasture, so I started to cultivate coffee. And, well, it’s been a long time. Right now it’s about 30 years I’ve been doing this,” said Tito. “I’ve tried different varieties of coffee, from the most resistant to the most productive.” The farm tried many different varieties: Geisha, Bourbon, Caturra, Catuai and Typica. On the farm now, there are about 10 different kinds of coffee. It’s a mixed production, more or less.

“After 8 to 10 years of trying to grow coffee, I decided to process it however I could—very artisan. Little by little I started building a few machines. I built the majority of the machinery we have now. Without any knowledge, with just necessity,” he mused. “Well, I always say it was like a hobby. I was occupied, entertained. But it was difficult for us. I didn’t have the experience of processing or of production. I didn’t know anything about



machinery or coffee either! But now, we have the end result.”

The next step was commercializing the coffee, which was also very difficult. It is difficult, still, Tito admitted. “We’ve dedicated ourselves to producing quality coffee. And this has brought us a few clients and markets that are rather attractive. Japan, Taiwan, the United States, France. We’ve been the most focused on quality.”

Because the machines were built by trial and error, there wasn’t financing or a way of getting adequate machinery. But that’s why the farm is called “The Miraculous,” it was all a miracle, said Tito. “But now I have more work than ever! Before I could get up late, now I have to get up at 4 in the morning. And to the same effect work doesn’t end until 9 or 10 at night.”

In 2012, Tito’s Panacoffee Special Geisha earned second place at the Panama’s Best cupping competition and auction with a score of 90.25 points. Visit panacoffee.com to learn more about Don Tito and his products. Read more stories from origin at whencooffeespeaks.com.—RN

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