

## Finca La Escondida, Jinotega, Nicaragua

 <b>VARIETY:</b> Red Catuai	 <b>PROCESS:</b> Washed	 <b>HARVEST TIME:</b> April–May	 <b>FLOWER SEASON:</b> December–March
 <b>ELEVATION:</b> 975–1230 MASL		 <b>WET MILLING:</b> Depulped and fermented in tanks for 24–36 hours	
 <b>PRODUCER:</b> Elean Mierisch		 <b>DRYING:</b> Dried on patios and raised beds over 10–12 days	 <b>DRY MILLING:</b> Hulled and sorted for defects and density

Every holiday season, we look forward to sharing a coffee that highlights all that we love about coffee and matches the festivity of the season. Rockefeller, our annual coffee, does just that—comforting and spirit-warming, it is guaranteed to delight everyone around your holiday table.

Designed to be a crowd-pleaser, this year's Rockefeller, a Red Catuai from the Mierisch Family in Nicaragua, is full of warm caramels and dried tropical fruits. The aftertaste is just what we hope for all holiday season: pleasant, long-lasting, and creamy flavors of milk chocolate.

Our relationship with the Mierisch family and their farms traces back to our earliest days, before we began independently roasting our own coffee. In those days, Steve Mierisch was a wholesale representative for Intelligentsia. When he started planning a Brooklyn-based roasting cooperative, Joe Coffee was one of the first companies to commit to being a future client. We've been working closely with Steve and his family ever since through our relationship at Pulley Collective and because we purchase coffee from his family's farms in Nicaragua and Honduras year after year. Although we have since expanded into our own roastery space, our connection with the Mierisch family remains strong—they are an open-hearted, inspirational group of people we're proud to call valued collaborators and friends of Joe.

In the true spirit of partnership, Elean Mierisch, who is the producer of this coffee and manages their beneficio, or dry mill, has helped us cultivate a deeper understanding of the coffees we purchase from their farms over the years. Through open dialogue, we have been able to better understand and contextualize the climate and business challenges they may face in any given year—an element of our relationship that helps us be good business partners in return.

This lot of Red Catuai comes from La Escondida, one of the family's farms in the Jinotega department. Perched on steep, northwest-facing slopes, La Escondida is situated between a lake and a large nature reserve. After harvest, cherries are sent to a washing station that serves the three closest farms, where they are depulped, then placed in fermentation tanks. Depending on temperature conditions, the coffee is ready to be washed about 24–36 hours after harvesting. From there, the coffee is taken as wet parchment to the beneficio where it is dried on patios or raised beds. During drying, each lot is spread out in thick layers to control how slowly it dries, and it's moved or raked about four times a day. Washed coffees take 10–12 days to dry depending on the weather.

When we recently spoke to Erwin Mierisch III, who manages client relations and works in the Nicaragua QC Lab, he reported that this harvest saw an overall improvement in quality thanks to more rainfall than the 2019-2020 season, but noted that this was a double-edged sword. November brought hurricanes Eta and Iota in quick succession, which carved a path of destruction across the region, bringing heavy rains and causing cherries to fall to the ground or burst on the tree before reaching maturity. Then, in December, a cold front slowed down the maturation of the cherries, which ultimately delayed harvesting.

Between the excessive rain and delayed harvest, production was about 20% lower than their projections, but Wingo credits his team's hard work in achieving such a high-quality harvest in spite of the conditions. By installing more shade into their greenhouse, thus lowering the temperatures without changing the relative humidity, they were able to achieve a slower drying rate. Indeed, the experience and expertise of the human hands at the dry mill level are what create great coffees. Careful and attentive drying is known to be one of the hallmarks of stability and long-lasting quality, and that intentionality is apparent in every role at the dry mill.

The spirit of compassion and intentional giving is a real quality to this coffee, both in the cup and in the design. \$1 per bag will be donated to Go Fund Bean, an organization founded to support the most vulnerable and important community in our industry: hourly workers across the nation.