

Lalita

Rio Bonito, Siguatepeque, Comayagua, Honduras

 VARIETY: Red Catuai	 PROCESS: Washed	 HARVEST TIME: April-July	 FLOWER SEASON: February-June
 ELEVATION: 1450-1550 MASL	 PRODUCER: Fincas Mierisch	 WET MILLING: Cherries are depulped the same day they are picked, with the least amount of water possible, and then allowed to dry ferment in tiled tanks for 36-48 hours  DRYING: Fully dried on raised beds for 12-14 days to 11% humidity. The parchment is moved an average of 3 times a day throughout the drying process.  DRY MILLING: Dry milled, sorted, and bagged for export at third party facility Cadexa in San Pedro Sula	

If you know Joe Coffee, you’ve probably heard us mention our dear friends at Fincas Mierisch. We’re always proud to talk about our special relationship with the family-run business based in Nicaragua and Honduras, which produces, exports, imports, and roasts its own coffee. We first got to know the Mierisches way back, and jumped at the chance to join their Brooklyn-based roasting cooperative, the Pulley Collective, when we began roasting our own coffee back in 2013. Even though we’ve expanded to our own roastery space since, our connection with the Mierisch family remains strong—through open dialogue, we’ve been able to gain a better understanding of not only the coffees we purchase, but of the business challenges they face in any given year.



The Mierisch family began their coffee business in their home of Nicaragua, but have since expanded with three farms in Honduras. This washed lot of Red Catuai comes to us from the smallest of their Honduran farms, Finca Lalita, located in Rio Bonito, Siguatepeque, Comayagua.

After harvest, the cherries are depulped the same day they are picked, with the least amount of water possible, and then allowed to dry ferment in tiled tanks for 36-48 hours. From there, the coffee is fully dried on raised beds for 12-14 days to 11% humidity. The parchment is moved an average of 3 times a day throughout the drying process.

Coming from Nicaragua, the family worked to adapt their techniques for fermentation in their washed process coffees—in Honduras, they have to utilize a dry fermentation because of the colder weather. If they used water, it would take a long time to properly loosen the material surrounding the parchment, but with a dry fermentation the time it takes is closer to 36-48 hours, which makes it much more feasible.

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Similarly, another big difference from the way they process coffees in Nicaragua is the humidity level to which they dry the coffees in Honduras. In Nicaragua they aim for 12.5% or under, but in Honduras they aim for 11% due to the colder temps and higher humidity.

Like other growers we've spoken with in Honduras, the Mierisches are not immune to instability throughout the country—with seemingly increased migration to places like the United States year after year due to violence nationwide, the family struggles to find seasonal labor come harvest season. Because the family, like many other specialty coffee growers in their position, pursue a high standard of quality, harvesting cherries at peak ripeness requires many passes over a specific growth area. As cherries ripen in the dense, mountainous region where they're grown, it takes many hands to ensure they achieve maximum yield and highest quality for the harvest.

When speaking with Erwin Mierisch III, who manages client relations and works in the Nicaragua QC Lab, he points to labor shortages, inadequate financing from the business' banks, and a deficit from all the difficulties in selling last year's crops during the pandemic as the biggest challenges they faced this season. The family, however, is buoyed by their ongoing success in the Cup of Excellence competition in Honduras, as well as upcoming updates and renovations at Lalita, with the hopes of further optimizing the growing conditions and best-performing varieties on the farm.

Ready yourself for a coffee with big personality and bright flavors to match. After a vibrant first sip of winter citrus—tangerine and orange—warm notes of dried fruit unravel as the coffee cools, with pleasant flavors of roasted nuts and caramel throughout.

