

TEA & COFFEE

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South East Asia: Tea Remains Dominant, But Coffee is Thriving

- **Special Report: Vietnam**
Part I in a Five-Part Series
- **FDA Regulations:**
Facility Re-Registration Now Mandatory
- **Aiming to Reduce Coffee Cup Waste**





From the Fields...

Tea & Coffee Trade Journal is eager to introduce Rachel Northrup as its new freelance writer. Rachel is traveling through Latin American coffeelands collecting stories from coffee producers to compile into a new book, *When Coffee Speaks*.

During her travels, Rachel will be offering *T&C* readers a “sneak peek” into in her book by submitting accounts of her conversations, journeys and adventures. In the past four months, she’s collected stories from producers in Costa Rica and Nicaragua and experienced first hand the divergent paths by which coffee can be produced.

When Coffee Speaks will be the average consumer’s window into the lives and work behind the beverage the majority of Americans interact with daily. “Coffee is so ubiquitous it seems to have slipped through the sieve of general inquiry; most people who drink coffee don’t know anything about the process behind the cup because it’s simply never occurred to them to consider it,” she said. “A year ago, I was



surprised to realize I was in the middle of this demographic.”

Before trading her Metrocard for a machete and a pair of rubber boots, Rachel wrote for *examiner.com* and *City Atlas* about living sustainably in New York City. As she attempted to write an article about the city’s sustainable coffee offerings. “Labels like “organic, fair trade, sustainable, shade grown, bird friendly,” and “direct trade” were all essentially empty because I had no point of reference for any of them. I felt stymied by my own ignorance—an avid coffee drinker who had absolutely no idea what coffee looked like before becoming those aromatic brown beans filling the rustic

burlap sacks of Porto Rico importers on 8th St,” she acknowledged.

Rachel decided she couldn’t make an effective evaluation of one coffee over another if she had no idea what coffee plants or farms even looked like. Since coffee can be roasted in Brooklyn yet never grown there, Rachel decided she’d have to head to the source itself and talk to a few of the world’s 500 million coffee producers in order to understand what it means to produce coffee. So far she’s visited and worked on farms, toured mills, sampled prizewinning cups, and listened to men, women, and children as they share their stories of coffee.

“*When Coffee Speaks* will let coffee speak for itself, acting as a channel for the people who produce it to share with the people who drink it all the details, anecdotes, family histories, personal struggles and triumphs that can’t be contained in any label,” she said.

Rachel is currently in Panama, and will then continue onto Columbia, in total capturing four countries that represent a wide array of coffee-growing realities. In addition to her field reports, readers may follow Rachel at elcafehabla.com. She’s eager to hear from more coffeepeople, at any link in the chain, so feel free to contact her at: northrop.rachel@gmail.com.—VLF/RVN



Since consumers in Singapore are more familiar with fresh brewed coffee following the expansion of specialty coffee shops, they are seeking the authentic taste and lifestyle at home, which supports the demand for hot drinks.

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