

# 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*

been designed to allow any coffee producer to create their own e-commerce stall and start selling their products worldwide in just a few clicks. Fitzpatrick said in a statement that in Italy alone, 75 percent coffee exports are from the big three producers—Lavazza, KJS Kraft and Café Do Brasil. He founded The Coffee Locator, “to get all independent retailers selling their coffee online, reaching the market that their coffee deserves.”

Fitzpatrick added, “I spend a lot of time in Italy, and wanted a way of making the excellent coffees I was tasting everyday, known around the world.”

For more information on The Coffee Locator or how to open an online store, visit: <http://thecoffeelocator.com>.—AML

### Dispatches From the Field: Costa Rica

*Rachel Northrop is spending a year traveling through Costa Rica and Panama, among other Central American countries. The following is the first of many “field reports” to be featured in New & Notable.*

Exporters frequently cite the high cost of Costa Rican coffee, but there's a lot going on at origin to warrant that steeper price tag. The weekend of January 19<sup>th</sup>, I visited the Feria de Café de Frailes, a coffee-producing town in the Tarrazú region. The Feria was the perfect summation of all the current trends happening at origin.

The Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) of Costa Rica's stand was teeming all weekend long, with attendees watching demos on different methods of coffee preparation. The opening of more upscale cafés correlates with an increased national



knowledge of—and demand for—well-crafted espresso drinks. Costa Rica differentiates itself from other Central American producers in that average domestic consumers are increasing the baseline quality they expect for both in and out of home consumption.

One tent over, ECOM's Sustainable Management Systems showcased H1 hybrid plants developed in their Nicaraguan labs. The H1 crosses Sarchimor with older African varietals to produce a plant with exceptionally large beans that thrives between 600-1400 meters above sea level as part of a regulated shade-system. Some FJ Orlich farms (backed by ECOM's local Cafinter) are in their first years of cultivating the hybrids on Costa Rican soil. In addition to the slow introduction of hybrids, many farmers are also deciding to renovate their crops with Bourbon and Typica plants rather than simply replanting the Caturra and Catuai that currently dominate Costa Rica's mountainsides.

Another strong trend is the continued emergence of micro-mills. Farmers are realizing that potential their unique tracts of land afford them in placing small lots of coffee in niche markets. More and more producers now know the coffee's buyer before they even being processing, and therefore can process according to the roaster's exact demands, giving a new meaning to “custom coffee.” Most micro-mills are not certified organic, but follow rigorous self-imposed standards of sustainability in the interest of the well being of their employees, the majority of whom are family members.

A side benefit to micro-processing is that growers can roast small batches locally and cup their own coffee all harvest long. A strong source of pride among farmers is the ability to taste their own coffee. An even greater source of pride is the ability to drink it every morning and package it with a unique label design.—RN

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