



## **YEMEN MOCCA PEARL OF TEHAMA ECOTACT**

Notes: DRY FRUIT, FRESH CAKE, FLORAL, CHOCOLATE, SPICE

### **ORIGIN INFORMATION**

|                |                                                |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Grower         | 615 farmers organized around Pearl of Tehama   |
| Variety        | Jadi, Dawaery, Tuffahi                         |
| Region         | Sa'adah and Ibb Governorate, Yemen             |
| Harvest        | October - February                             |
| Altitude       | 1,700 – 2,400 masl                             |
| Soil           | Sandy loam                                     |
| Process        | Full natural dried on rooftops and raised beds |
| Certifications | Conventional                                   |

### **BACKGROUND DETAILS**

YEMEN MOCCA PEARL OF TEHAMA is produced by legacy farmers of various sizes in the high mountains of Sa'adah and Ibb Governorate. Coffee-growing families in Sa'adah and Ibb, similar to many others across the country, tend parcels of terraced land passed through many generations. Coffee is the one crop that continues to survive above all others, both for the livelihood it provides, as well as being a deep social tradition that keeps communities together.

Yemen is the oldest territory on Earth to cultivate coffee. Its seed stock, originally transported from wild arabica landraces in Ethiopia, was used to create the world's first ever coffee farms where coffee would be grown commercially for trade across the Arabian peninsula and eventually mainland Europe. ("Arabica" itself referred to the Arabian coffee supply that was the West's first in history.)



Maintaining coffee trees in a climate as dry, high, and uniquely challenging as Yemen's western and northern ranges, requires the kind of proven techniques that only generations of farming can bestow. Coffee farms are terraced on arid, incredibly steep slopes. Bore holes are dug manually into the rock to access individual water reserves for each tree wherever rain is scarce. Coffee trees are spaced generously, about 1000 per hectare (compared to 4000-6000 common in Latin America), both by necessity on the narrow terraces, as well as for better groundwater access and erosion control. Raising young coffee trees is a matter of hardening them for a lifetime of vicious elements and water scarcity. Older coffee trees become very spacious and tall, and often end up hanging their branches over the terrace edge, known locally as "hanging gardens". Above the coffee, shade trees are carefully selected and positioned for how well they block water evaporation. As can be imagined, productivity is very low in such conditions. And still, over one million people work in Yemen's coffee trade, from farm to export.

Pearl of Tehama, the miller and exporter who manages all transportation, milling, and exporting of partner farms' coffee, is a family business founded in 1970. For many years, all coffee was exported under the name of the family patriarch and founder, Ali Hiba Muslot. After his death in 1980 his three sons continued using the family name until 2012, when the family business, including other trades and retail, was split up. The coffee export business was reborn as Pearl of Tehama for Import, Export, and C.A.S, and is still owned by Ms. Fatoum Muslot, the late Muslot's daughter. Fatoum's eldest son, Yasser Al-Khaderi, is the company's general manager.

Royal has been working with the extended Muslot family since the late 1980s and also carries coffee from Fatoum's company, Pearl of Tehama. See [HERE](#) for Bob's personal memoir of the ongoing relationship, and [HERE](#) for Mayra's interview with Fatoum Muslot



herself to learn more about the family's ongoing mission in her own words.

Yemen continues to suffer from protracted conflict that has cost many lives and displaced over 3 million people. Two-thirds of the country is in need of food or medical aid. So, when new crop arrives we pause to remember and honor the coffee. What makes the quality so special is that it hinges on a relationship of trust, which has been constant for decades between Royal and the Muslot family despite many odds.

Yemen's ongoing civil war has not stopped the Muslot family and Pearl of Tehama from dutifully managing and exporting the coffee harvests of the farms and families they represent; something they can be very proud of given the conflict's overwhelmingly ruinous effect on much of Yemen's international trade. Not only this, but Pearl of Tehama has established a consultancy for other service providers in coffee, particularly exporters, to help expand Yemen's coffee sector safety net and even increase the coffee's availability and competitiveness abroad. Consulting covers the management of traceable harvest information, preparing technical reports from the field, correspondence with farmers and customer relationship management, harvest and processing calibration, and more. The guiding mission is to increase potential at both ends of the value chain: more available quality coffee from throughout Yemen's historic producing territories; and greater buyer appetite all over the world thanks to expertly managed, traceable coffees being marketed.