



YEMEN MOCCA LOT 22 ECOTACT

Notes: DRIED STRAWBERRY, CASCARA, ALMOND MILK, WHITE CHOCOLATE

ORIGIN INFORMATION

Grower 615 farmers organized around Pearl of Tehama
Variety Jadi, Dawaery, Tuffahi
Region Sa'adah and Ibb Governorates, 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

This coffee is produced by small legacy farmers in the high mountains of Yemen's northwestern Hajjah Governorate, specifically from the village communities of Bani Alawam and Mabyan. Coffee-growing families in this part of Yemen, similar to many others across the country, tend parcels of terraced land passed through many generations. Farm sizes average about one hectare only, managed by an average household size of 6 family members. Coffee is the one crop that continues to survive all others, both for the livelihood it provides as well as a being a deep social tradition that keeps communities together. Coffee tends to be 30-50% of family income in this part of Yemen. All coffee from this part of Hajjah is processed as a natural: hand-picked, sorted for consistency, and dried in a single layer in full sun on raised beds or rooftops. Hajjah's terroir is

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considered one of the best in the country and coffee produced here is constantly in demand both internationally and domestically. The Hajjah Governorate extends from Yemen's west coast, to the boarder with Saudi Arabia, and then down along the country's western highlands. 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 iconically terraced on arid, slightly alkaline, and 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, usually numbering only 700-1000 per hectare (compared to 4000-6000 common in Latin America). This is both out of 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. Fertilizer is often homemade of animal manure and composted leaves; pest control is traditionally ficus wood smoke directed through the coffee canopy. Older coffee trees become very spacious and tall, and often end up hanging their branches over the terrace edge, known locally as "hanging gardens". Canopy 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 of this specific blend of Hajjah farmers, 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 1980s: 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 their 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, including 65% of coffee producers in the western highlands. 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.