



CJ1260 - Burundi Mbirizi Raised Bed Honey Crown Jewel

December 26th, 2018 | [See This Coffee Online Here](#)



Intro by Chris Kornman

This delightful raspberry, melon, and apricot-flavored gem from Salum Ramadhan's Mbirizi washing station in Kayanza just landed... and we can't even handle ourselves with [this coffee](#) and [its companion lots](#). These are seriously very good coffees, and this honey process is exclusively available as a Crown Jewel.

This is our second year working with Salum, who now is responsible for coffees from four washing stations in northern Burundi. His attention to quality

and detail are second-to-none. The fermentation tanks and washing channels are immaculate, parchment dries in thin layers on well-organized beds, and Salum pays well above average for both daily labor and cherry deliveries from local farmers. Each station is also surrounded by a multi-purpose farm, serving as test plots for new varieties and as examples of a well-run garden for local smallholders. He also recently completed his own mill, which he calls Trust Dry Mill, located nearby which helps ensure better efficiency in processing, storage, and exporting. Mbirizi is his second washing station, established in 2014, and now has around 2750 contributing farmers.

Salum Ramadhan is a self-made man, and a native of Kayanza, where he seems to know everyone. Kayanza is in the heart of Burundi's coffee production area, second only to neighboring province Ngozi in total production volume. Coffee is the country's leading export product, both by value (65%) and volume (90%), followed by tea, cotton, and sugar. The potential for quality arabica is incredibly high: ideal climate and growing conditions combined with old-growth heirloom varieties yield exceptional flavors. Political instability and logistics challenges continue to be the greatest stumbling blocks for access to the specialty coffee in the country. But with people like Salum leading the charge, we can see the pendulum swinging towards positive change.

Incoming coffees, mostly grown by local smallholders who are paid for cherry delivery at the washing station, are washed and floated for density before processing, even for natural process coffees. The second wash this coffee undergoes is the traditional one, after fermentation, where it again is sorted for density. Finally, the third wash includes an overnight soak that helps to stabilize the fermented coffee and lower the microbe load before drying.

Grower:	Smallholder farmers organized around Salum Ramadhan's Mbirizi Coffee Washing Station	Process:	Honey Process: Cherries floated before pulping and then dried on raised beds.
Region:	Kayanza, Burundi	Cultivar:	Batian, Jackson, K7, Mbirizi 49, Mbirizi 68, SL28
Altitude:	1750 - 1850 masl	Harvest:	March - July 2018



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Green Analysis by Chris Kornman

The regional risk of rain during the harvest season can make coffees like this one difficult to dry. Long times on drying beds, sometimes covered in yellow plastic tarp to protect from sudden thunderstorms, can bottleneck washing stations, and the temptation to rush parchment through the process can sacrifice quality. Luckily for us, Salum has invested in copious space for tables and employed well-trained workers for the task. As a result, we have here a pretty dense coffee with lowish moisture figures and a stable elevated water activity. This coffee should last well on the shelf, tasting and roasting great for a good while.

Local varieties are usually part of the Bourbon group, and include regionally popular Jackson and Mbirizi, which were among the older trees distributed in the 1950s. Newer cultivars exist, and Salum keeps a variety garden on site at his washing stations as an example of the kinds of trees that perform well in the microregion. Farmers in the region are also growing classic Kenyan SL-28 and the newer Batian variety, as well as K7, another Scott Lab selection.

The threat of potato may still scare roasters, but Salum's washing stations are rigorous in cherry selection, flotation, and parchment sorting, and we're fortunate to have secured especially clean coffees as a result. If you'd like to read a little more about the defect, including suggestions for talking points and service, take a peek at [this article](#) we ran last year.

<u>Screen Size</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Density (freely settled)</u>
>19	0.05%	0.691 g/mL
18	0.92%	
17	24.03%	<u>Total Moisture Content</u>
16	41.32%	10.4% (Sinar)
15	21.23%	10.0% (Kett)
14	11.19%	<u>Water Activity</u>
≤13	1.27%	0.58 @ 23.0 C

Behmor Analysis by Evan Gilman

Unless otherwise noted, I follow a set standard of operations for all my Behmor roasts. Generally, I'll use the 1lb setting, manual mode (P5), full power, and high drum speed until crack. [Read my original post and stats here.](#)

The Burundi Mbirizi Raised Bed Honey was a delicious coffee last year, and it lived up to the same reputation this year as well. It didn't stay on our shelves for too long last year, so definitely take a look before this one disappears.



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I used my standard profile: 100% heat from the outset, with high drum speed. This coffee had the lowest moisture content and water activity of its contemporaries, and it definitely cracked a little sooner. I brought this coffee to crack by 10:40, and dropped heat to 75% after 20 seconds of development. I did achieve a rather hefty 14% roast loss, but this coffee tasted great on the cupping table.

Juicy mandarin orange, melon, honey, and fresh and clean berries left of the table. This coffee is phenomenal, and held up to my vigorous profile. This is honestly my favorite of the batch, even though none of the Burundi arrivals disappointed. This coffee gets two cups, bottoms up - and that's just me getting started this morning.

Brew Analysis by Sandra Loofbourow

Working with a coffee that's exclusively destined for our Crown Jewel boxes is pretty exhilarating, and this [honey processed coffee from the Mbirizi](#) washing station lives up to the hype. It's packed full of flavor and is incredibly sweet.

I first brewed it on the Ceramic Phoenix 70 from Saint Anthony industries; the thick, even filter and narrow brew bed can lead to an extended but exceptionally clean extraction. Given all the careful processing that Salum and his colleagues do at the Buzira washing station, and aggressive extraction that squeezed out every last bit of deliciousness seemed like the way to go. With the EK43 set to 9 and a 1:16 ratio, this brew went well past the four minute mark, but wasn't negatively affected by the extended contact time. In the cup we found sparkling acidity, jammy sweetness, and a lot of complex flavors like star anise, ginger candy, clove and cinnamon, as well as some delicate florals. This was a great recipe, but still had a hint of over-extraction.

Rather than change the recipe, I opted to change the brew device: V60s have a wider brew bed and thinner filters, which would speed up draw-down without changing any parameters. This worked brilliantly, and the cup abounded with fresh fruit notes like plum, grape, clementine, melon and cherry, as well as sweet spices - think ginger, clove, carob, and cocoa. It was also incredibly sweet, offering delicate lavender, delicious vanilla, and a touch of hard candy. Salum's honey process is a knockout.

Roast	Method	Grind (EK43)	Dose (g)	H2O (g)	Ratio	Preinfusion (g)	Preinfusion (s)	Time
Behmor	P70	9	25	400	1:16	60	30	4:31
Behmor	V60	9	25	400	1:16	60	30	3:38