



CJ1304 - Yemen Bura'a Traditional Rooftop Dried Natural Crown Jewel

July 29, 2019 | [See This Coffee Online Here](#)



Intro by Chris Kornman

Yemen's contributions to the history and culture of coffee are impossible to overstate.

The country is where the crop was first commercially cultivated and popularized. The peninsula lent the arabica species its name and established its own unique consumption trends including *qishr*, a brew made from the dried cherry skins and husks with spices. Innovations including roasting, grinding, the *ibrik* (or *cezve*) coffee pot, the coffeehouse, and even the word “coffee” (from *qahwah*, which the Turkish

pronounced *kahveh*) are all gifts from Islam's Golden age. The globe's smoldering appetite for coffee was first stoked by Sufi Imams in Yemen's port city of Aden in the fifteenth century.

Yet modern Yemen is sadly far removed from that Golden Age. Some small early signs of the [possibility of peace](#) notwithstanding, the most recent conflict has dragged on for nearly 5 years, cost almost 100,000 lives (disproportionately [innocent civilians](#)), displaced over 3 million, and left two-thirds of the country in need of food or medical aid.

Freshly landed Yemeni coffee is back in our coffers, and always warrants a little celebration. While the odds may be stacked against coffee in general, Yemeni coffee breaks the curve. Beyond the war, the country's climate is dry and unforgiving. Yet Yemen is blessed with unparalleled history, uncommon elevation, and unusual access to a wealth of arabica's genetic diversity. Out of all of this comes a distinctive coffee that defies convention at nearly every turn.

For the second year in a row, we've been delighted by a delivery from a small group of farmers in and around Bura'a, a district named for its impressive granite mountain, Jabal Bura'a. In 2011, the region was [added to UNESCO's list of biosphere reserves](#), noted for its “rugged mountainous area intersected by several deep valleys rich in rare, vulnerable and endemic plant species.” Located thirty miles or so inland from the crucial port city of Al Hudaydah—an epicenter of recent regional conflict—Bura'a, its people, and its local biodiversity, including coffee, remain at the highest of risks.

Our finest quality Yemeni coffees have frequently come to us from the Muslot family; Royal has been buying coffee from Ali Hibah Muslot and his children since 1984. This year, exceptional coffees from the Pearl of Tehama company run by Ali Hibah's daughter, Fatoum Muslot, have been especially impressive. [Elsewhere on the blog](#) you can read an extended interview with Fatoum to hear more of her story in her own words.

The coffee farming community in Bura'a is tiny. Small outlying villages tend to have community-style gardens for their coffee terraces, typically farmers who share the plots also share a common ancestor, and have inherited the land, passed down in this manner for centuries. Most are averaging tiny,



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2,500-tree coffee gardens, relying almost exclusively on traditional horticultural and preparation methods. Ms. Muslot has worked tirelessly to improve practices and traceability for her coffees, down to providing the names of many of the individual farmers who grow each lot of coffee she has supplied this year.

We're pleased as punch to present this sustainably sourced Yemeni coffee to the American market with all its glimmering fruit flavors in both [10kg Crown Jewel boxes](#) and [60kg Ecotact lined bags](#).

Grower:	Smallholder farmers organized around Fatoum Muslot's Pearl of Tehama export company	Process:	"Natural" dried in the fruit, on raised beds on rooftops.
Region:	Bura'a district, Al Hudaydah Governorate, Yemen	Cultivar:	Bura'a/Burrai Yemeni Landraces
Altitude:	900 - 2000 masl	Harvest:	November 2018 - February 2019

Green Analysis by Chris Kornman

Green coffee from Yemen is by-and-large consumed by countries that don't include the United States. Yemen is one of very few exporting entities not included in the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) in the 1960s that established quotas for exports (the quotas broke down in 1989 due to refusal to participate primarily from Brazil and the United States, though the organization still exists) and thus Yemeni coffee bags do not include the 3-digit ICO (International Coffee Organization) code found on most exported green coffee.

In some cases due to high demand from places like Saudi Arabia and Europe, the available exports from Yemen to the United States have been very limited, and the quality of processing and export preparation suffered as a result of high demand. That is to say, years ago, expectations for well-sorted high-density coffees like we see from Ethiopia, for example, would have been non-existent.

Fortunately for us, increased focus on specialty markets and the attention to detail undertaken by producers like Fatoum Muslot have delivered us a fine quality green coffee work with. Some of the usual hallmarks are here including fairly low density, very small screen size, and slightly high water activity. However, each of these remain within the realm of nicely-graded specialty preps we see from elsewhere in the world. As always, when dealing with low density coffee, a gentle heat approach in the roaster will likely yield benefits in the cup.

Fatoum Muslot identifies this lot as mostly Bura'a (also spelled "Burrai") landraces. Landrace indicates that the coffee is a locally cultivated domesticated selection rather than a lab-crafted cultivar. In Yemen and Ethiopia both, it's quite common for a regionally specific landrace to simply take the name of its locale.



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<u>Screen Size</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Density</u>
>20	1.56%	677 g/L (free settled)
19	1.56%	706 g/L (Sinar)
18	7.37%	
17	15.28%	<u>Total Moisture Content</u>
16	28.06%	11.0% (Sinar)
15	23.85%	
14	14.51%	<u>Water Activity</u>
≤13	7.80%	0.594 (Rotronic)

Ikawa Analysis by Chris Kornman

We've updated our V2 Ikawa Pro machines with the latest Firmware version (24) and run on "closed loop" setting. Our roasters underwent full service in October of 2018 which included replacement heating elements and an updated PT 1000 temperature sensor.

Crown Barista and rising Ikawa roasting all-star Doris took to the machine this week, roasting this Yemeni coffee in two separate profiles. For the first roast, she took a recent profile I've been used for natural coffees that integrates a sharp decline in airflow at the beginning of Maillard reactions and again at the beginning of first crack. This roast (blue) produced about 1 minute of PCD and yielded plummy notes with hints of caramel, cocoa powder, dried apricot, Rooibos tea, and was generally pretty clean - a good entry point for a sample roast.

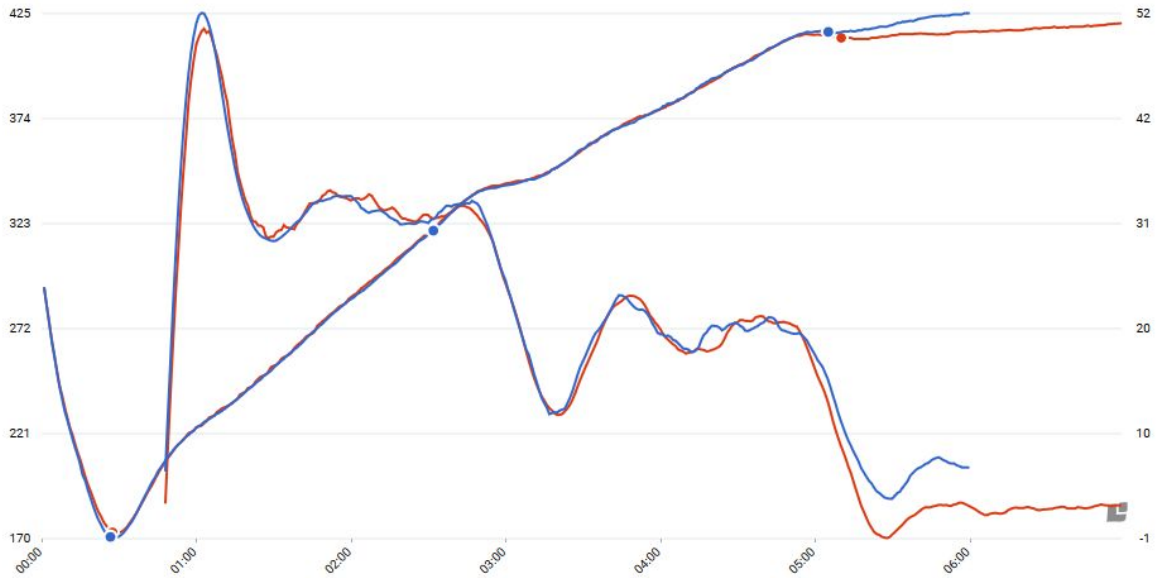
Doris's following roast modified my original profile by adding a full minute of post-crack development to the roast, but actually lowering the end temperature, resulting in a very flat heat rate of change (what some might consider a stall) immediately after first crack. The results, cupped blind, were quite positive, and while the flavor was distinct from the first roast, cuppers—including myself—had difficulty deciding on a preference. Notes included baker's chocolate, black tea, blackberry, melon, syrah, vanilla, and a buttery mouthfeel.

From these two roasts, I might conclude that with the combined low moisture and low density of the green coffee, a gentle approach to heat application, regardless of your intended final roast level, should help produce the most nuance and sweetest fruit notes. Don't be afraid to slow it down a bit, especially after first crack.

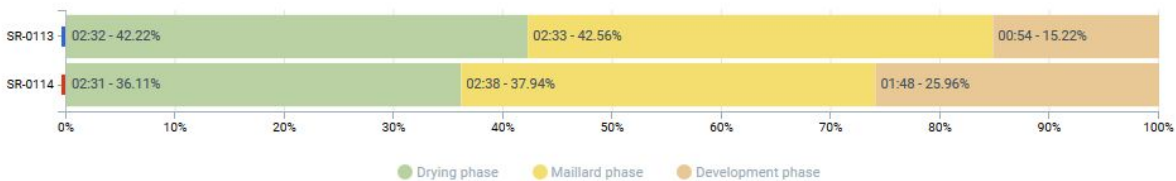


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Modulation chart



You can download the profile to your Ikawa Pro app here:

Roast 1: [Royal CK 6m425 NatEthiopia V3](#)

Roast 2: [Royal CK 6m425 NatEthiopia /DG](#)

Roast Analysis by Candice Madison

“Ooh, I like this” was my first thought when this coffee arrived from Yemen, via our Royal offices, on the Crown’s selection table and I had the very same thought after playing with this delightful stalwart of the Crown Jewel offerings. I’ll be the first to admit though, this is a very different coffee to roast than I’m used to. Although I managed to get some post-crack development in there, it meant missing my temperature target by 4 degrees. This coffee is of a medium to low density, and although it has a moderate/good moisture level, roasting this coffee wasn’t straightforward at all.

My first roast was quite a spectacular failure, or should I more accurately say, a very sharp lesson! The coffee’s solid moisture content, I had believed, would allow me to roast a little hotter than I normally would even with the spread and significant proportion of smaller screen-sized beans that make up this



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lot. However, what I didn't know was that this coffee didn't crack when expected. In fact, this coffee cracked about 10 -12 degrees later than any other I've put in this little roaster! Finding this out was a shock, and, because I hadn't adequately planned for this unusual element of the roast process, my first roast had barely a few seconds of PCD time before I was trying to take it out of the machine.

So for my next roast, realising that the beans could take heat early on, and wanting to accentuate the delicious rooibos tea note and berry notes that I had observed on the selection table, I started this roast off hot, but quickly stepped down off of the gas, in order to allow the roast process to continue unimpeded, and hopefully ride through the late crack to a more acceptable PCD ratio. The coffee dried quickly, but, because of the late crack, spent a significant amount of time (almost 65% of the total roast time) in the Maillard Phase. From this extended browning and caramelization process, we noted delicious dark brown sugar, dried dates, figs and malt notes.

The short development time didn't prevent those flavors from tasting full and sweet. The coffee even had a touch of Syrah and allspice notes, as well as a lovely buttery body. This Yemeni coffee is a great example of its origin's character and would be an unusual and thirst-quenching flash brew/Japanese-style ice-brewed cup.

Quest M3s Analysis by Evan Gilman

Unless otherwise noted, I follow a set standard of operations for all my Quest roasts. Generally, I'll allow the machine to warm up for 15 minutes until my environmental temperature reading is at least 250F, weigh out 150g batch size, and begin roasting when I've reached my desired charge temperature. [Read my initial post here.](#)

I recently read [Steve Caton's](#) book [Yemen Chronicle: An Anthropology of War and Mediation](#) and was happy to see a Yemeni coffee on the docket so soon after I finished.

So: this week in hilariously delicious misadventures brings us to the [Yemen Bura'a](#). Much akin to Candice's travails above, I thought that the moisture content in this coffee would allow me to start off hot and gently move toward first crack.

My first roast was an abject failure, but during my second roast I reduced heat application very close to the beginning of Maillard, maxed out the fan speed, and completely cut off heat application by 3 minutes into the roast. This coffee needed almost no prompting, and continued on to rocket through Maillard, though I was able to achieve quite a bit of post-crack development time without taking the coffee past 405F. My 1:27 of development time was a whopping 23.9% of the roast, with a very slow rate of rise (see Doris' Ikawa roast above).

The results on the cupping table were a resounding success, however. People really enjoyed this coffee! Darjeeling black tea, dried strawberry, vanilla, and jam were all noted. There was a bit of nuttiness that I believe could be mitigated with more time in Maillard, which shouldn't be a problem if you start with a lower charge temperature than I did (398F).



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Roasting this coffee is sure to be an adventure; remember that it takes on heat *incredibly* easily. Start with a lower charge temperature, and be very gentle with your heat application. Extremely dense coffees with otherwise very similar green characteristics had me fooled. Definitely keep in mind that this coffee deserves a light touch.

Brew Analysis by Alex Taylor

I love drinking coffees from Yemen! They're uncommon and typically have unusual flavor profiles, not to mention the fact that I studied Arabic for 7 years. So I was thrilled when this coffee got put on the Crown Jewel track, as I knew that meant I would have several opportunities to drink it!

How I decide what brew devices to use for brew analysis is a fairly random process. To be honest, I usually ask the team what I should use today, and then go with whatever I had in mind in the first place. Today, however, when Evan suggested I use an Aeropress, I decided to roll with it. After a quick search for Aeropress recipes that I could easily replicate (I'm not super familiar with the device, despite its ubiquity within the coffee community), I landed on Carolina Ibarra Garay's winning recipe from the 2018 World Aeropress competition. This recipe called for a lot of coffee (34.9g), not a lot of water (100g brew water), and a cool brew temperature (185F). I had no idea what it would taste like, but I was excited. I poured my 100g of brew water, waited 30 seconds, stirred for 30 seconds, and plunged. After snagging some drops to measure my TDS, I added the 100g bypass and started drinking. The resulting cup was fascinating. We tasted lemon, raspberry, maple syrup, PB&J, and cocoa, and the finish went on for days!

For the second brew, I wanted a coffee that I could easily compare to the coffees I've been drinking at The Crown daily, so I went with a pretty straightforward brew recipe on the Fellow Stagg brewer. This cup had a much more tea-like, crisp body, with tasting notes of lavender, lemongrass, plum, peach, marmelade, maple syrup, cashew, and toffee!

As you can see in the brew below, the extraction yield for the Aeropress was surprisingly low (like, off the charts low). The numbers make sense, but everyone was surprised, as the cup just didn't taste like an 8ish% extraction. Maybe it's some Aeropress detail that I'm unaware of, or maybe it's just a funky recipe. Feel free to sound off in the comments if you've got questions about it or think you have an explanation! We're all ears!

Roast	Method	Grind (EK43s)	Dose (g)	H2O (g)	Ratio	Preinfusion (g)	Preinfusion (s)	Time	TDS	Ext %
1887	Aeropress	13	34.9	100	1:2.8	N/A	N/A	1:00	5.15	8.78
1887	Stagg	10	18	300	1:16.6	40	30	3:05	1.41	21.87