



CJ1361 Kenya Kirinyaga Konyu Double Washed Crown Jewel

July 24th, 2020 | [See This Coffee Online Here](#)



Intro by Charlie Habegger

Mt. Kenya, at the helm of Kenya's Central Province, is the second tallest peak on the continent of Africa and a commanding natural presence. The mountain itself is a single point inside a vast and surreal thicket of ascending national forest and active game protection communities. The central counties of Kenya extend from the center of the national park, like six irregular pie slices, with their points meeting at the peak of the mountain. It is along the lower edge of these forests where, in wet, high elevation communities with mineral-rich soil (Mt. Kenya is a

stratovolcano) many believe the best coffees in Kenya, often the world, are crafted.

Kirinyaga county is certainly well-known among these central counties for its jammy, exuberant coffees. Kenya's coffee is dominated by a cooperative system of production, whose members vote on representation, marketing and milling contracts for their coffee, as well as profit allocation. Konyu processing station, or "factory" as they're known in Kenya, alone has 1000 contributing farmer members, and is one of 11 factories that comprise its local cooperative society, Kabare. Farmers belonging to Konyu average 500 pounds of picked cherry each, the same as roughly three-fourths of one 60kg bag of exportable green coffee. High FOB prices for great Kenyas, while the norm, are not a panacea, and in Kenya in particular the number of individual margins sliced off an export price before payment reaches the actual farms is many, leaving only a small percentage to support coffee growth itself, and most often this arrives many months after harvest. However, Kenya coffees are sold competitively by quality, which means well-endowed counties like Kirinyaga achieve very high average prices year after year, and the smallholders here with a few hundred trees at the most are widely considered to be middle class.

Kabare Farmers' Cooperative Society (FCS) is the central management body for 11 different cooperatives in Kirinyaga County: Kiringa, Konyu, Karani, Kiangombe, Kaboyo, Mukure, Mukengeria, Kimandi, Kathata, Kiangothe, and Kiamiciri. Combined, these groups represent almost 10,000 farming households, whose land spans from nearby Kerugoya town all the way to the forest border at Mt. Kenya National Park.

Kenya is of course known for some of the most meticulous at-scale processing that can be found anywhere in the world. Bright white parchment, nearly perfectly sorted by density and bulk conditioned at high elevations is the norm, and a matter of pride, even for generations of Kenyan processing managers who prefer drinking Kenya's tea (abundantly farmed in nearby Muranga and Kiambu counties) to its coffee. Ample ground and river water supply in Kirinyaga has historically allowed factories to wash, and wash, and soak, and wash their coffees again entirely with fresh, cold river water. Conservation is creeping into the discussion in certain places--understandably in the drier areas where water, due to climate change, cannot be as taken for granted—but for the most part Kenya cooperatives continue to thoroughly wash and soak their coffees according to tradition. Cooperatives at Kabare FCS are no



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different, sorting their pulped and fermented coffee into 4 different density grades with the use of fresh nearby water, and conditioning the moisture of each grade independently during drying, before transport to the mill.

This lot from the Konyu Factory impressed us on the cupping table with its classic profile. Zesty Ruby Red Grapefruit acidity and savory tomato notes jump out immediately, and are accompanied by honey-like sweetness, notes of kiwi and dried raspberry, and a fragrant aromatic of fresh cedar.

Grower:	Coffee producers organized around Kabare FCS's Konyu Washing Station	Process:	Fully washed after depulping and fermenting, then soaked in clean water before drying on raised beds
Region:	Kirinyaga County, Kenya	Cultivar:	SL28, SL34, Ruiru 11, and Batian
Altitude:	1700 - 1900 masl	Harvest:	October 2019 - January 2020

Green Analysis by Chris Kornman

Kenyan coffees are almost universally sorted according to the British grading system, assigning letter grades based primarily on the size of the bean. E grade is the largest, but generally disregarded as low density and inferior quality. The next size down is the highly coveted AA, and below it the AB (which is the grade of this Konyu). AB is an occasionally overlooked and undervalued bean, and the best of them can score equally high on the cupping table, and by most traditional metrics are still pretty large in size at 16-17 screens. This AB is also characteristically very high in density, and nicely in the pocket in terms of moisture content and water activity. Expect a healthy green coffee shelf life, and perhaps to push a little harder with your heat during the earlier stages of roasting.

By and large, Kenyan coffees are also characterized by a limited number of highly controlled cultivars. The oldest of these are SL28 and SL34, selections made in the early days of cultivation from legacy Bourbon and Typica populations which were suited to growing conditions in Kenya. More recently Ruiru 11 and Batian have entered the fold, and are proprietary hybrids integrating the genetics of more than a dozen separate varieties in order to improve quality, yield, and disease resistance. All four are present here in this coffee from Konyu.

<u>Screen Size</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Density</u>
>20	0.00%	699 g/L (free settled)
19	0.00%	718 g/L (Sinar)
18	15.91%	
17	49.20%	<u>Total Moisture Content</u>
16	33.79%	10.4% (Sinar)
15	1.00%	



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14	0.10%	<u>Water Activity</u>
≤13	0.00%	.524 @ 22.95 C (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, and were recalibrated in September 2019.

This coffee behaved with a little more sensitivity in the roaster than CJ1359, which we are also releasing this week. The indicators here might be that you should expect results to be best on a strict dial-in protocol, and to keep your production profiles tight and consistent.

I found that both of the longer roasts, (blue and yellow) were overly savory and toasty. The coffee spent a little longer than intended developing post-crack in both of these roasts (about 80 seconds each, which for a 6-7 minute sample roast is probably just a little too much). The 7-minute low airflow profile was the least-pleasant, suffering in flavor, finish, and balance on my score sheet. I sometimes use the word "sweaty" to describe Kenyas I dislike, those with a savory/salty character paired with a kind of sour, rindy flavor. This long, slightly dark roast verged on that profile for me.

However, the shortest roast (red) cleaned up the profile significantly and was a real standout. Blood orange and caramel, honey and pink grapefruit juice all lept from the cup, and a little hint of aromatic cedar in the dry grounds took me back to my grandfather's woodworking garage. The coffee seems to crack a little early, so keep an eye on your roasts during the color change and after-crack stages and don't be afraid to stay short and light with your profiles.

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

Roast 1: [Crown Maillard +30 SR 1.0](#)

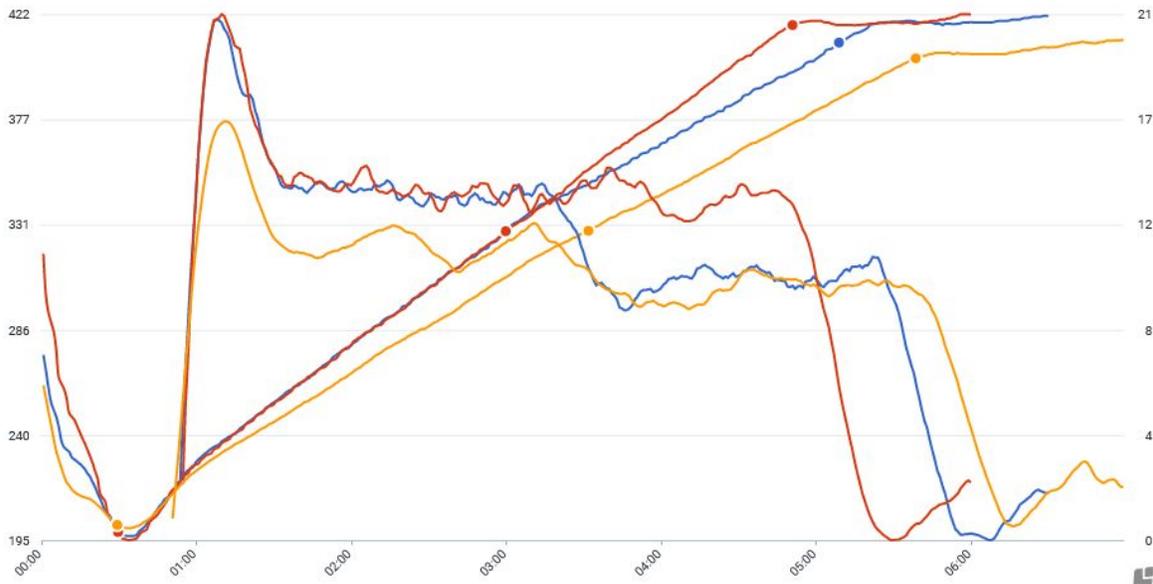
Roast 2: [Crown Standard SR 1.0](#)

Roast 3: [Crown 7m SR Low AF](#)

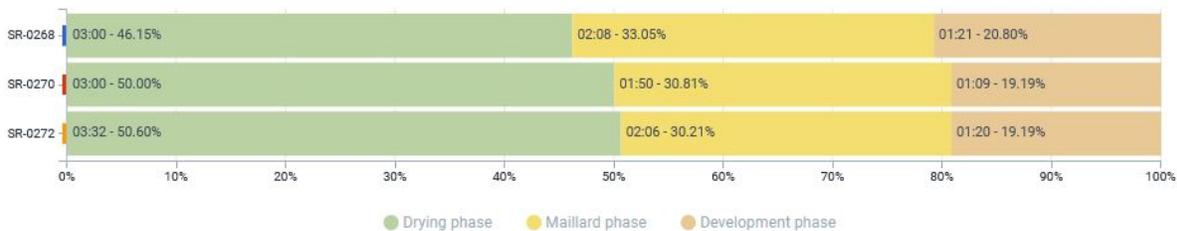


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July 24th, 2020 | [See This Coffee Online Here](#)



Modulation chart



Roast Analysis by Candice Madison

Ever since I have worked in coffee, I always talk about Christmas in the Spring/Summer (depending on whether coffee is being shipped to roasters in London or the far side of the US), and this is what I mean. Kenya, Kenya, Kenya! The mountains, the lands, the rains, heck, the terroir is an alchemist that turns coffee beans into those beloved by every palate.

Coffee is a matter of taste, and at the level of discerning the quality and flavor profile of your coffee in such minutiae as you, dear reader, obviously are, it is an exceptionally acquired taste. And yet, I bet you, and about 100% of people that I have interviewed for this very important scientific test (I asked my husband - it's COVID, what else could I do?), love Kenyan coffees!

And what's not to love, especially with regard to our latest Crown Jewel, this stunning offering from Kirinyaga county? A double washed coffee from Konyu cooperative, is dense, with a low moisture



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reading and a very tightly spaced screen size (16-18), this AB coffee was easy to roast and even easier to drink.

I wanted to give the coffee the space and time it needed to express the sugar and other browning reactions during the coloring stage. But I also wanted to take this coffee further into development than the last coffee I had roasted for Crown Jewel analysis, [CJ1359](#). To do this, I decided to spend 18% or more in post-crack development, and so planned my roast accordingly. Dropping the coffee into the Probatino at 360F, I started the roast at gas 2. At the turning point, I turned the gas up to 3.5, before turning it down at 297F, to 3. I wanted to make sure that I didn't rush through the Maillard stage, but still kept a steadily declining RoC/RoR. Noting the color change at 312F, I waited approximately 1 minute before turning the heat down again, to 2.5 on the gas dial.

Anticipating first crack at 388F, I turned the gas down to the minimum on our machine, 2 on the dial. With the coffee cracking at 391F, I turned the gas back up to 2.5 to combat any moisture being released during the crack. I needn't have bothered, and won't if I roast this coffee again. Simply turning the heat down would suffice, I think, and prevent an upswing in temperature during post-crack development.

The cup delivered the dominant fragrance, aroma, and taste of blackcurrant that makes me think simultaneously of the green fields of England and the lush coffee forests of Mount Kenya. Chocolate covered raisins and acacia honey lent the brew its sweetness. Notes of ruby red grapefruit and red apple brought forth a complex acidity, and a velvety body delivered a chocolate fudge after taste. Super yum! As we're back a few days a week at the lab working in shifts (as well as in full PPE), I was lucky enough to have a flash brew masterfully prepared for me by our Tasting Room manager, Alex Taylor. A win on both counts!

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.](#)

Another week, another fantastically pleasurable Kenya to roast. I found after cupping a few seasons of Kenya arrivals at the Royal office in Emeryville that I tended to prefer the AB lots over the AA and PB lots from the same factory, with some regularity. AA sounds very nice, and PB beans just look so nice.. But at the end of the day, this screen size (and that's all the grades mean here) is just as tasty. In any case, I approached this as I would most high density Kenyan coffees - with full power easing into lower power just before first crack.

In this particular instance, I kept P5 on until 9:45, when I reduced to P4. Crack happened about 35 seconds later, and I opened the door of the roaster to abate smoke and keep this coffee as clean as



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possible. My final roast time was 11:30, stopping the roast by hitting 'COOL' after just 1:10 of post-crack development.

And what a hearty crack it was! You won't mistake a few puffs for the crack on this coffee. I never, ever leave my roaster unattended, but I'd hazard to say you'd be able to hear this one from the other room.

The flavors in this roast of this coffee are what I'd call elegant; but more of a nightclub elegant than a palace ballroom elegant. Heavy and sweet, coffees like this make me do a little dance when I take a sip of them. I do appreciate complex acidity (and this coffee has it), but when I taste that sweetness.. It's over. This coffee is one of my favorites this year so far. I recommend [this track](#) for an aural representation of the taste of this coffee.

Don't be afraid to roast differently from what I set out above - this coffee is bound to be flexible, offering bright and citrusy notes at lighter levels, and even more marshmallowy sweetness at darker levels. Delectable.

Brew Analysis by Evan Gilman

I tend to enjoy Kenyan coffees as filter drip, so I naturally brought out the Chemex for this selection. While my usually tactic is to start with 24 on the Baratza Virtuoso, I ground a bit finer from the outset and was not disappointed. At grind setting 22, I performed my usual pour with 45 seconds of preinfusion and 150g pulse pours up to a 1:16 ratio. In this case, I used 40g of coffee to 640g of water. The brew was completed just shy of 5 minutes.

Drinking this first cup, I was taken back to the first times I tasted Kenyan arrivals at Royal Coffee. It's a magic time. There is something very special about these coffees, and even though my extraction percentage was just below 18%, comforting flavors of plum, brown sugar, and caramel squares (the kind wrapped in cellophane) came through. Before taking my TDS reading, I was thinking to myself that I didn't need to do anything different to this coffee! Splendid.

But I did try something different, and I'm glad I did, too. For my second brew, I used grind 20 on the Virtuoso - just a bit finer than the previous brew. After my first pour, at 230g brew weight, I agitated the grounds gently but firmly with a spoon. My draw down took a little longer than I anticipated, and the final brew time was 6:00 even.

My tongue was greeted with a much fuller flavor, with heavy black cherry syrup sweetness, bright juicy plum, and chocolate fudge aftertaste. This isn't the typical Kenyan profile you might expect, but what a syrupy cup. I love sugary coffee, and this is such a great example.. I'm glad I have some left over to drink! This coffee would even do splendidly as an espresso. I can't recommend it highly enough!

Roast	Method	Grind (Virtuoso)	Dose (g)	H2O (g)	Ratio	Preinfusion (g)	Preinfusion (s)	Time	TDS	Ext %
Behmor	Chemex	22	40	640	1:16	80	45	4:55	1.28	17.89
Behmor	Chemex	20	40	640	1:16	80	45	6:00	1.38	19.31



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