

Crown Jewel Uganda Organic Mbale Mountain Harvest Raised Bed Washed CJO1498

October 7, 2022 | [See This Coffee Online Here](#)

Overview

This is a traditional washed coffee from Mt. Elgon, Uganda, produced by farmers organized around Mountain Harvest. It is certified organic.

The flavor profile is clean, balanced, and well-structured with notes of grape, chocolate, nectarine and vanilla.

Our roasters found that despite the coffee's high density it needed less of a push with heat than expected.

Our baristas recommend a flat-bottomed brewer, using a coarse grind and a long extraction time for best results.

Taste Analysis by Chris Kornman

Cleanliness, balance, and structure make this coffee a cut above every other washed Ugandan arrival we've tasted this season. We're constantly impressed by its effortless smoothness, its pointed but uncomplicated acidity, and its gentle fruit and chocolate flavor profile.

We tasted a fair amount of grapiness, which I think is a nod to the coffee's crystalline acidity – one that consistently feels elevated without being overwhelming and is checked by the silky mouthfeel. We picked up a lot of chocolate, primarily milk chocolate but the notes ran a range, including a hint of sweetened winter hot cocoa. Stone fruits like nectarine made frequent mention, and we found a smooth sweetness like vanilla.

It's a perfect pairing with a fall morning, and we'll be exploring a number of menu possibilities for it over the coming weeks, including its potential for cold brew and possibly even darker roasting styles than the light roasts we've published here.

Source Analysis by Charlie Habegger

Mount Elgon is a massive peak split nearly in two by the border of Uganda and Kenya. The "mountain" itself, now an extinct shield volcano, is more an enormous expanse of successive plateaus that float dramatically above the surrounding valley floor. It is also home to a dense patchwork of farming communities growing some of the best organic coffee in Africa.

Mountain Harvest is a very young and big-thinking group, first established in 2017. The company is dedicated to long-term economic and environmental sustainability for smallholders on Mt. Elgon. These farmers are Uganda’s highest and most diversified coffee growers with incredible quality potential thanks to the climate, soil fertility, and a longstanding culture of land stewardship, but who historically struggle to meet specialty standards by processing coffee in tiny amounts on homemade equipment.

In an effort to raise the economic standard in remote coffee-growing Elgon communities, Mountain Harvest began as an impact investing project underwritten by Lutheran World Relief (LWR). It has expanded in just a few years to include farmer education and training, central processing infrastructure, storage facilities throughout the region, detailed quality control, and international marketing. As of this year Mountain Harvest works with 850 individual smallholders across 8 communities on Mt. Elgon, with each farm growing between 600-1,000 coffee trees. And their coffee stands up to the best fully washed Uganda arabicas we typically taste all year.

The vast majority of coffee managed by Mountain Harvest is traditionally processed by farmers at home and delivered as parchment. This coffee, however, is a centrally-processed, fully washed microlot from select communities within Mountain Harvest’s farmer network: fresh picked cherry was transported directly from select farms in sealed drums to an experimental processing site constructed by Mountain Harvest near their headquarters in Mbale, where it was depulped, fermented for 24 hours, and dried in larger, carefully-controlled volume on raised beds, all of which is overseen by Mountain Harvest’s processing manager, Ibra Kiganda. Centralized processing is ubiquitous across East Africa but in Uganda it is still rare, where collecting low-quality, often still humid, parchment from smallholders is the norm. While Mountain Harvest has had great success training their farmer base to home-process to excellent standards, the central-processing microlots are an attempt to elevate cup profiles even more through greater control.

Over the course of a full harvest coffees are built into blended containers, single-community lots, experimental centrally-processed lots like this one, and single-delivery microlots for sale. Mountain Harvest’s minimum pricing is 10-30% above local market prices. Unlike other regional buyers who exclusively process centrally or buy lower grade smallholder parchment, Mountain Harvest invests in farmers’ capacity to produce high-specialty cherry or fully-dried parchment coffee within their own resources, helping them maximize their margin when they sell.

Grower:	Select smallholders organized around Mountain Harvest	Process:	Washed after depulping and fermenting for 24 hours, dried on raised beds.
Region:	Yilwanako, Buginyanya, Bushiyi, Makali, Bukalasi and Sipi communities, Mt. Elgon, Uganda	Cultivar(s):	SL-14, Nyasaland
Elevation:	1600 – 2200 masl	Harvest:	October 2021 – February 2022

Green Analysis by Chris Kornman

Much like its counterparts, this Ugandan coffee from Mountain Harvest comes to us with excellent physical specs. A tight screen distribution from 16-18 should aid in even roast development, while the coffee’s low moisture and high density will likely require a little extra energy to roast. Low water activity measurements means the coffee should last well as green on your shelf in good storage conditions.

Classic Ugandan cultivars grown here by local smallholders include SL14, the preferred Scott Labs iteration, first selected in Kenya in 1936 for its tolerance to drought. It’s a Typica type plant, per genetic testing as

stated by World Coffee Research. The Nyasaland selection dates back even farther, to Typica introduced to Malawi (formerly known as Nyasaland) from Jamaica in 1878. It's known locally in Uganda as "Bugisu."

Screen Size	Percent	Density
>20	1.70%	689 g/L (free settled)
19	10.78%	758 g/L (Sinar)
18	22.70%	
17	36.51%	Total Moisture Content
16	27.72%	10.4% (Sinar)
15	0.40%	
14	0.20%	Water Activity
≤13	0.00%	0.537 @ 22.48 (Rotronic)

Diedrich IR-5 Analysis by Doris Garrido

For this Uganda, as usual I would first take notes from the green grading, and I would go from there in order to build a roasting plan. Numbers came high on density, the size of the beans mostly between 16 to 18, and moisture on average. Based on that I have started with high – I wanted to take advantage of the density and try some kind of aggressive approach of 442F /100% gas.

The turning point happening at 1:27/199 F and as I have noticed, when I have 100% gas, adding air after turning point will do an extra push on my roast, and that's what I did it, 50% at that part of the roast and I went fully open around first crack at 360F.

Following the exhaust temperature, I watched for 450F as my maximum and from there started dropping the gas, first the 60% worked well, rate of rise started dropping at a good pace but as I was getting close to crack, I decided to drop to 30% and with the full air open the roast ended just great. 1:28 seconds of post development and 394F of drop temperature.

The first part of the roasting trial went well, the second part was the QC. My roast got great cupping notes: almond, cinnamon, clean, clementine, dried dates, dried fig, floral, graham cracker, lemon grass, mild nutty, pear, raisin, stone fruits, sweet tropical fruits, white sugars, zesty, this is a great quality coffee and it show itself, but I feel that my roast went a little fast. I have spent only 2:11 seconds in Maillard, and I feel that a little more than that will impact the flavor in a better way. I would change the airflow on this roast. I think that the extra push I did wasn't necessary, and I would prefer to start 50% in the middle of Maillard and 100% at first crack, which I think will bring nicer acidity and complement the body.

Aillio Bullet R1 IBTS Analysis by Evan Gilman

Unless otherwise noted, we use both the roast.world site and Artisan software to document our roasts on the Bullet. You can find our roast documentation below, by searching on roast.world, or by clicking on the Artisan links below.

Generally, we have good results starting our 500g roasts with 428F preheating, P6 power, F2 fan, and d6 drum speed. Take a look at our roast profiles below, as they are constantly changing!

The neutron star, the absolute unit, of dense coffees. This coffee, along with the even denser [Natural](#) and [Honey](#) lots we received from the same group, require some forethought before applying fire.

For all these lots I started off with a higher charge temperature of 455F, big P8 power, and the usual F2 fan. At 260F / 1:45 for this coffee, I increased fan speed to F3, then reduced heat application to P7 shortly after. My peak RoR here was at 33F/min, and by 330F / 4:05 it wasn't decreasing as much as I would have liked, so I added more fan speed to F4. At 369F / 6:25, I knew first crack was rapidly approaching and I wanted to reduce the speed of this roast even more, so I increased fan speed to F5 and reduced heat to P6. Generally this is enough to stop most coffees in their tracks, but this one kept cooking and even sped up a bit more into first crack, much to my chagrin. Just after first crack, I went whole hog and increased fan speed to F6 and reduced heat to P5, and was finally met with an appropriate reduction in RoR. To smooth out post-crack development I returned to F5 and P6, and dropped the coffee at 397F / 9:43.

While my RoR curve was by no means ideal, this coffee still came out shining, with plenty of sweetness and a creamy mouthfeel. Upon cupping, the bitterness I attributed to the last moves I made in this roast cooled into forest honey sweetness, a lasting ginger-like spice, and plummy juiciness.

I would suggest really ramping down heat in a dramatic way past 360F, with only a very short touch of added heat in post-crack development to prevent a crash in RoR. This coffee will hold all the heat you put into it early on, so beware late-stage runaway roasts and you'll be golden!

Brew Analysis by Joshua Wismans

All the different coffees and processes we've gotten to try from Mbale Mountain have been exceptional, and this washed process is no different. This coffee shows both depth and delicacy, balancing flavors of honey, molasses and brown sugar with pear, mandarin orange, and grape. These flavors were all brought out in a variety of ways as we explored different expressions of this coffee through the Kalita Wave and Hario V60.

For our initial brew, we started with the Kalita Wave, ground at 10 on our EK43s. Using a coffee to water ratio of 1:15.79, we achieved a TDS of 1.55, which proved to be a bit high for our liking. While it was still a delicious cup, we found the flavors of vanilla, hazelnut, and chocolate overpowered some of the more delicate flavors we could sense were lurking there in.

For the second brew, we went coarser on our grind to an 11, however extended our bloom time to a full minute. With a TDS of 1.33, we found the more delicate flavors of grape and mandarin were encroached upon by notes of baking spices. Not unpleasant, but not exactly what we were going for.

The brew which we all agreed was the highlight came when we kept the parameters the same as our second brew, but switched back to the Kalita. This brew had a TDS of 1.43, and brought back out the honey and brown sugar we were hoping to highly while still balancing the grape and mandarin orange delightfully.

For this coffee, we recommend a flat bottom brewer, ground coarse, and given a long brew time. Aim for a TDS of around 1.43.

Roast	Meth od	Grind (EK43s)	Dose (g)	H2O (g)	Ratio	Bloom (g)	Bloom (s)	Total Brew Time	TDS	Ext %
Diedrich	Kalita	10	19	300	15.79	50	40	3:35	1.55	21.37
Diedrich	V60	11	19	300	15.79	50	60	3:50	1.33	18.55
Diedrich	Kalita	11	19	300	15.79	50	60	3:30	1.43	19.34

