

# Guatin Territory – Hacienda San Alberto – Colombia

## Guatin Territory – Hacienda San Alberto

This Guatin Territory lot is a single day picking lot from the peak of San Alberto's summer harvest. The lot is located in the middle of the farm, at 1550 to 1600 meters above sea level. This area of San Alberto is entirely planted with Caturra trees. Hacienda San Alberto's quality team identified the day lot from the Guatin Territory lot on this day as Quintuple selection quality. This means the beans were of exceptional quality and were consequently kept separate from other pickings on other days.

Following the strict quality procedures of the Quintuple selection, the cherries were thoroughly selected manually on tables at the cherry collection point. Thanks to this step, the cherries have a uniform ripeness. This uniformity allows for a finer adjustment of the pulping disks and more efficient processing. After a short dry fermentation, the parchment is washed in three different tanks. Next, the coffee goes to the covered pre-drying tables. Here, much of the water from the processing drips off the parchment, smoothening the final drying in the tower.

## Hacienda San Alberto

San Alberto is a coffee farm you can easily write entire pages about. First, location facts: the farmlands are located in Buenavista in Quindío, the smallest city in Colombia's smallest department. The soil is predominantly volcanic and the area has a stable temperature between 18 and 23°C year-round. The farm's main crop (about 70-80% of the total harvest) is produced in April, mitaca falls around September – October.

When you visit the farm, you understand where the small town got its name from. Standing amidst the coffee trees you overlook the departments of Quindío and Valle del Cauca, while seeing the western ridge of the Andes mountain range in the distance. Sunsets on the farm's coffee bar terrace are really priceless, especially when thunderstorms light up the sky far away.

### **The background story**

Juan Pablo's grandparents, Gustavo and Melba acquired the first part of the farm in 1972. The couple managed the farm together until Juan Pablo's grandfather died in a road accident with the iconic Willy jeep. The grandmother was left to manage the farm by herself.

In 1996, Juan Pablo's parents Eduardo and Olga took over the business and changed the direction of the farm. Eduardo Villota used to run a rice producing company and worked a lot with plant genetics and crop optimization. With his knowledge, he started the first transformation phase of the farm towards high-quality coffee production.

### **Pushing standards**

Ten years later, Juan Pablo and his brother Gustavo came into play. They decided to take part in the Villota's coffee legacy and steer Hacienda San Alberto to the model specialty producing farm it is now. They implemented practices they learned in France's wine production sector to reach an even higher "standard". The team deliberately chose a path of quality, technology and strong control over production. Hacienda San Alberto also obtained UTZ certification as a guideline for good administrative and agricultural practices. Along the way, two lots were added to San Alberto: the higher altitude La Ponderosa (1700-1800m) and the lower altitude El Paraíso (1500-1600m).

Nowadays, the farm itself is a picture perfect example of what specialty coffee in Colombia could look like, with the right knowledge and dedication of the producer. The team consists of two units: on one side, the agronomist José Jaír and his team of field managers and pickers; and the quality control team headed by Juan Pablo himself on the other side. José Jaír oversees the entire production and selection steps until the dried parchment coffee rests in the farm's small storage space. Next, a sample of each bag goes to the farm's lab for evaluation where they decide over the final destination of each lot.

### **Quíntuple selection & Fine selection**

San Alberto typically produces two quality lines: the famed Quíntuple Selection and the Fine Selection. The Quíntuple selections are San Alberto's flagship coffees. Lots with this label undergo a five-step selection process along the production chain. Quíntuple selection coffees are small day lots, harvested during the peak of the harvest. After a day's harvest, the cherries are inspected at the farm's wet mill. A first inspection through flotation takes out bad qualities. Floaters are separated into the hopper with lower grades, not destined for export. The cherries that sink move on to the cherry selection tables for the second quality check.

The quality team manually selects the cherries on picking tables. Only the dark red cherries pass the Quíntuple selection before going through the depulper. This takes off most of the mucilage. After pulping, the Quíntuple selection ferments overnight to break down the remaining mucilage. The next morning, the batch is washed in between 3 tanks using a pump and friction. The precious selection then passes through pre-drying in the parabolic drier. This step takes off initial moisture so the beans don't drip anymore in the drier and allows for wet parchment selection at the same time.

*Measuring moisture content after drying. The dried parchment goes into grainpro bags for storage.*

### **Gentle mechanical drying**

The type of mechanical drier San Alberto uses is heated by burning milled parchment instead of carbon. Hot air blows into a five-meter high drying tower with three levels. The temperature in this tower never surpasses 40°C. The Quintuple selection dries at 30-35°. Each level of the drier has a hatch. After seven hours to nine hours, the quality manager pushes the parchment through this hatch so it falls to a lower level. By moving around the parchment like this, the coffee dries in a soft and homogeneous way. Extremely important in this process is the dedication of the night staff, who could just as well get a couple of hours sleep extra by speeding up the process!

After 21 to 27 hours, the coffee reaches the desired moisture of 11%. Next, the parchment is stored in grainpro bags with their corresponding traceability tag. Storing the parchment in grainpro is an additional measure to protect the coffee against the relatively high humidity in the area. The bags go to the bodega for a resting period of eight days to stabilize, before being evaluated by the quality control team.

### **Quality control**

In the next step, the quality team comes into action. José Jaír's production team sends a sample for evaluation both to Almacafe and to the farm's own lab. Based on the cupping results, the quality team decides if a lot fits the profile for the Quintuple selection or the Fine selection. Feedback goes back and forth between José Jaír's team and Juan Pablo's to understand the results and the profiles. Lastly, each lot in its respective category goes to the FNC warehouses, where the storage conditions are less humid.

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## Country



## Quality

Guatin Territory - Quintuple selection

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## Farm/Washing station

Hacienda San Alberto

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## Variety

Caturra

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## Crop

2017

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## Comments

CPGP-3198-4: liquorice, fig, high sweetness, viscous body | Score: 88

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## Producer

Juan Pablo Villota

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## Location

Buenavista, Quindío

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## Mountain range

Central Andes

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## Altitude

1550 - 1600m

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## Drying

Parabolic & mechanical drier

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