



Fazenda Vargrem Grande

Minas Gerais, Cerrado Mineiro, Rio Paranaíba, Brazil

Partner since: 2017

Traceable to: Edson Tamekuni and family

Altitude: 1150 MASL

Varietals: Red and Yellow Catuai, Mundo Novo

Processing: Cherries are dried with "volcano" technique, which starts with 2-3 days on patio before being moved into volcano shaped mounds that are rotated every hour. This method allows for more consistent drying and makes for a more clean tasting natural.

Harvest: July August September

Booking: November December

Arrivals: January February



This is the Cerrado Mineiro region of Minas Gerais; an area best described as a high-altitude savannah, and best known as the carrot capital of Brazil. In addition to producing nearly half of the country's carrots, this region also grows onions, garlic, onion, potatoes....and coffee.

Coffee was the most recent to join the party, starting in the 1970's. Quality has always been high, but the coffee has never made it to export before being bulked, and has traded at commodity. But now, a new generation of farmers has returned to talk about 'specialty coffee'.

The history of the Tamekuni family in coffee production is quite similar to many Japanese families that migrated to Brazil in the beginning of the last century.

Edson's father, Mr. Takayuki Tamekuni, succeeded in the family farming activities. After a hard and long time in plantations in São Paulo and Paraná, they planted the first coffee trees in their farm in the city of Campos Altos in 1985.

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Edson says that coffee has always been part of his life since childhood and remembers when he was five and planted the first coffee trees at Poçoões Farm. Since 2004, he has been directly working with it. Throughout his life, he's always been together with his father in coffee activities and always imagined himself working with coffee.

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After the acquisition of Vargem Grande Farm in 2016, he decided to focus this farm on quality, as the property and the previous owner already had a history of producing quality coffee and received some illy quality awards for its pulped natural coffee.

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The secret for producing specialty coffee, according to Edson, is the awareness of everything that happens on the farm. He sees himself working in multiple functions, as owner, manager, and employee. He's in charge of coffee plantation inputs management, harvesting, post-harvesting, lot formation, and coffee delivery at the coop.

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Tamekuni's achievements: ??????????

Cup of Excellence Winner (2016)

1st place Natural category Coffee Quality Awards of Minas Gerais (2017)

1st place Coopadap Coffee Quality Awards (2017)

2nd place Coopadap Coffee Quality Awards (2016)

Finalist at illy Awards 2016/17



Brazil is to other coffee-growing countries as Jupiter is to other planets – huge, and deserving a category of its own. But despite its size, we don't look to Brazil as a source of specialty; we were once told that asking for a sample of SSFC 17/18 is like asking for a sample of a 'big mac'. This, however, is an old view from an older generation. We now have a younger crop of farmers entering the specialty scene – this generation was raised with the Internet, knows 21st-century coffee, and are excited to find out what's possible for their family's farm. But it's a struggle to convince parents that this new approach is not just youthful fantasy – with one approach working so well for so long, it's hard to take specialty seriously. This battle seems to be happening inside households across Brazil, as city-dwelling, college-educated sons and daughters return to the family farm to help their baby-boomer parents prepare for retirement. Despite this tension, wherever we look we see small successes building a case for specialty, one win at a time. It could be glowing feedback, a good yield, a high price or even just the smallest recognition by someone outside the family. And the case is growing especially strong in the area around Sao Gortado where we find Yuki Minami and Aequitas coffee educating farmers on what they have and what it's worth. Here we find farmers in their 20s and 30s standing on the shoulders of giants; they are looking near into the future, and see specialty where we in the US have not yet.