



## **Gazali Bener Meriah Estate**

## **North Sumatra, Aceh, Pantan Lues, Sumatra**

**Partner since:** 2019

**Traceable to:** Single Farmer, 18 hectares **Altitude:** 1600 MASL

**Varietals:** Typica (Tim-Tim)

**Processing:** Gazali follows the traditional Sumatran wet-hulled process. Fresh, wet parchment is held/fermented in bags for around 12 hours, then patio-dried for another 3-4 days before "wet hulling" (removing of semi-wet parchment skin). Green beans are then patio-dried for another few days under shaded protection.

**Harvest:** October November December January

**Booking:** December January February March

**Arrivals:** January February March April



Gazali, the owner of this 19-hectare estate in Bener Meriah, Aceh, has been in coffee for many years, having grown up in a family owning coffee estates around North Sumatra. His estate sits in a small pocket of Benerah Meriah, Aceh, called Pantan Lues. Estates of this size are relatively common in Sumatra, but the difference with Gazali is that he focuses his efforts on producing for a single estate profile instead of simply producing high volume to sell by the truckloads to brokers in Medan.

Over the last few years he has been able to improve consistency and achieve a caramel cup profile instead of the standard Gayo dark chocolate profile. Our staff in Sumatra has known Gazali for some years, but 2020 was the first import of his coffee by Crop to Cup. As of 2020, his trees numbered a little over 33,000, and his seedling nursery is in process to plant an additional 8,500 trees across 5 new hectares. In an area so dominated by large brokers and untraceable multiple-container lots, Gazali's focus on something unique is setting a new trend for Sumatran specialty coffee.



To talk about Sumatra we need to speak of its size. It's large. Larger than Texas and Florida combined. In the middle of the island is a caldera called Lake Toba: the largest caldera from the largest volcanic explosion this world has ever seen. In this lake there is an island bigger than the country of Singapore. It is because of this lake that Sumatra has the largest rainfall seen by any coffee exporting country – the lake feeds clouds trapped in by the island's 1500m tall mountains.

Sumatra is old. When Marco Polo visited the island's northern tip back in 1292, he found the local people speaking Sanskrit, one of the purest remaining forms of the ancient language. When the Dutch East Indian Trading Company came, Aceh (and later Java) became the first commercial coffee origins that the world had seen.

Sumatra is big; I know we already said that, but it is really, really big. There are over 52 languages over four major ethnic groups (Acehnese, Minangkabau, Batak and Mala) covering an area over 170,500 square miles around. However big the island, there is only one government-authorized port of export – the 15 million person city of Medan. To get here, coffee has to travel as far as 375 miles, over massive mountains and on roads that are mostly still mud.

The northern coffee producing region of Gayo Aceh is 20 hours away and southern most Arabica regions in Kerinci are 24 hours. This is the main reason that Sumatran coffee is hulled while wet, and dried while in the green. This process, called Giling Basah, starts with coffee parchment being dried to 30-50% moisture before being milled into green beans. Higher moisture during transport from the farm to the port can lend to the classic 'earthy, musty' flavors that you get in some Sumatrans.

Another source of Sumatra's unique flavors dates back to the turn of the 20th century when Indonesia's coffee crop was wiped out by leaf rust. Much of this was replaced with HDT (Hybrid de Timor) (Bourbon x Robusta), its direct descendant Tim Tim, or the more modern Sigarar Utang (Tim Tim x Bourbon).

And these are Robusta-Arabica hybrids; over the generations these have only added more Arabica

through crossing Tim-Tim and with Sigarar Utang (Ateng). But there are pure Arabica strains as well, like Jember (Bourbon x Typica), USDA (Ethiopian Arabica transplant), and Onan Ganjan (Jember x Bourbon). So the genetic stock is absolutely unique.

But what makes Sumatra truly unique are Sumatrans. As a new generation takes the reigns, they are taking the country headlong into specialty. The past years have seen an explosion of washed coffees, naturals, honeys, new varietals, new regions and new ways of thinking about Sumatra's role in specialty coffee. Not just locally, but regionally. So much of what comes out of Bali, Flores, Timor and Sulawesi comes through Sumatra. Indonesian coffee has so much to offer.