



**Lucas Ribeiro  
Vinhai, Fazenda  
Estrela**

**Cerrado Mineiro,  
Patrocínio, Brazil**

**Partner since:** 2021

**Varietals:** Red Catuaí, Yellow Catuaí and Topázio

**Traceable to:** Single Estate

**Processing:** Cherries are harvested based on the results of a pre-harvest plan, which separates by quality potential (historical cup score) and varietal; cherries must be 92% ripe fruit with a brix measurement of 27 degrees. Pulped naturals are the specialty; after harvesting cherries are washed, floated, separated and then passed through a depulper, after which beans rest with macerated fruit on raised beds 4cm high for up to 23 days, turning multiple times per day. Lots are rested 48 days before milling.

**Altitude:** 960 - 1040

**Harvest:** July August September

**Booking:** November December

**Arrivals:** January February



The Vihhal family farm knows they are not normal. In fact, they take pride in being the ‘geeks’, the ‘data nerds’, the ‘tinkerers’ and ‘mad scientists’ well before fermentation experimentation became cool. Since 1988 the family has specialized in pulped natural – leading the trend here as well. They plant experimental varieties, and have a granular plot numbering system which combines with thorough planning, strict quality standards, and incredibly patient drying to produce coffees that always seem to be a bit ahead of their time.



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