



## Mringa Estate

## Kilimanjaro, Northern Tanzania, Tanzania

**Partner since:** 2017

**Traceable to:** Single Estate

**Altitude:** 1675 MASL

**Varietals:** Bourbon, Mocha

**Processing:** Cherries are harvested by block and brought to a central pulper within two hours of picking. Coffee is then washed using an eco-pulper, floated through channels, skin dried for 3-5 days on raised beds and finished on patio.

**Harvest:** July August September November December January

**Booking:** October November December February March April

**Arrivals:** February March April May June



Mringa Estate is located on the southern slopes of Mt Meru close to the village of Usa River, which is near the city of Arusha in northern Tanzania. The farm borders and is bordered by Arusha National park, stretching to just a few kilometers from the entry gates. That's 50 hectares of forested coffee

farm, nestled in 50 square miles of national park.

Founded in the early 1900s by German colonial settlers, and later turned over to British settlers, the estate was nationalized during independence in 1961. The next fifty years saw various owners before 2008, when Di Banister and her family moved in; they run it to this day. One of their first additions was a drip irrigation system, a small washing station geared to quality, drying beds, shade nets and covered patios to extend drying times and manage the region's erratic weather.



Tanzania is a country rich in history, culture and resources. In East Africa, only Kenya has more wealth. But these numbers hide the incredible disparity you see between rich and poor, north and south, estates and smallholders.

Only 7% of Tanzania's harvest makes to the US – compared to 37% which go to Japan – and most of what arrives is in the form of block lot 'Tanzania AA' or 'PB'.

Block lots are bought from auction and blended to customer specification; 75% of Tanzania's coffee is sold through auction in this way. The alternative to the auction is the Direct Export Channel, which came under fire from recent (2018) governmental reforms.

The reforms were aimed at eliminating the grey area between three parties: farmers – organized into Agricultural Marketing Co-Operative Societies (AMCOS), mills, and exporters who are confined to operate at the auction level. In practice this cut off investment, cut short agricultural extension programs, cut out the direct export channel – reducing options for farmers and buyers alike.

So, after 9 months these reforms were reversed, and the direct export channel is open again. But this is just the most recent in a decade-long roller-coaster that's hampered Tanzania's ability to compete for larger parts of the US specialty coffee menu.

Lower production, aging plants, lack of irrigation, dwindling markets all sparked the TechnoServe-backed KiliCafe organization; an association of northern smallholder groups founded in 2001. The KiliCafe effort is credited with turning around coffee in this area, and it has successfully reinvigorated quality. But political forces, including corruption, caused this to collapse right around the time Crop to

Cup started sourcing in the area.

In the South we are looking primarily at Mbeya and Mbinga. Both are two-days drive from the capital and port city of Dar es Salaam. Both are large, rugged areas dominated by smallholding coffee farmers. And both are in a fluorescence.

In the early 2000's cuppers started noticing the variety of flavors coming out of the South. Compared to the North, where volumes are dominated by large estates, the South is home to diverse terroirs and profiles. Over the next two decades this interest has encouraged AMCOSs and exporters alike to get more involved, increasing both quality and production.