



Ngila Estate

Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania

Partner since: 2021

Traceable to: Single Estate

Altitude: 1800 MASL

Varietals: Bourbon, Kent

Processing: Cherries are harvested by block, soaked over night, then pulped the next morning before being washed, floated through channels, skin dried for 1-2 days on patio, and finally finished on raised beds for an additional 7-12 days

Harvest: July August September November December January

Booking: October November December February March April

Arrivals: February March April May June



Located ~ 3 hours from Arusha, high in the cloud forest that surrounds the Ngorongo Crater next to the Serengeti, Ngila Estate is recognized as a leading farm for quality in all of Northern Tanzania. They placed in the 2021 Alliance for Coffee Excellence auction, setting record prices and showing the world what Tanzania is capable of. The estate was established in the early 1920s by German settlers, then bought in 1992 by the Rudolph Meyer family who have invested heavily in technology like drip irrigation and eco-pulpers.



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.