



**Nima Sherpa
Tenzing – Lekali
Estate**

Nuwakot, Nepal

Partner since: 2016

Traceable to: Lekali Estate

Altitude: 1495 MASL

Varietals: Bourbon, Caturra

Processing: Cherries are hand-sorted and then pulped within hours of harvesting. Parchment is kept in fermentation tanks for 12 – 24 hours then moved to raised beds and patio.

Harvest: January February March

Booking: March April May

Arrivals: April May



In 2014 we met Nema Tenzing of Nepal's Lekali Estate and were immediately impressed – at first more by him than by his coffee. Tenzing was doing all the right things, fighting to create specialty coffee out of an interesting, challenging coffee context. But – back a years ago – the quality just

wasn't there. We made a habit of visiting with SCA annually, and in 2016, all that changed. Tenzing had produced remarkable coffee from a place that is not even listed as a coffee exporting country by the ICO.

The History of Lekali estate is a tall tale. Tenzing's grandfather was a sherpa on the legendary Sir Edmund Hillary summit in 1958. The success of the expedition led to national recognition and eventually to a family business in trekking. Tenzing's father, the son of the Mr. Pasang Phutter Sherpa, learned the trade and from it and built a tourism and trekking business (that would eventually win the REI contract for tourism in Nepal). When things were good, they were good. Then, a 10 year civil war (the Moaist Revolution) in the mid 90's to mid 2000's claimed almost 17,000 lives and dried up the tourism that sustained Tenzing's family. It was clear at that point, that the family business needed to diversify to protect itself from another falter in tourism. After trying many things (tea + honey), the family eventually tried coffee, and Tenzing (the youngest of two siblings) was the perfect person to manage the business. Nima Tenzing Sherpa had attended University in the Midwest, was familiar with coffee culture and the United States market. In 2008, he began Lekali Estate.

After a few years of consecutive quality improvement Tenzing's work was interrupted by a series of earthquakes which struck in 2015. Every house (~40 residences) in Lekali was destroyed (read more: [here](#)). For a time, all the residents were housed in Tenzing's coffee storage facility (see cover photo) – until that too was damaged in an aftershock. In 2018, Nepal was still recovering from the 2015 earthquakes. During the visit to Lekali, Tenzing pointed out a few displaced families living there and helping on the farm post-earthquake. Not a bad place to homestead. It's about 1.5 hrs outside Kathmandu, and on a steep hillside, directly across from a 300 ft waterfall that just washes the entire valley with a beautiful white noise. There are a few varieties on the farm; Caturras, Typicas, some Bourbon – all are really productive. This is likely due to the constant fertilization (cow manure) and pest control (cow urine). Tenzing has his own small dry mill in Kathmandu, so he can oversee the process from cultivation to air-shipment.

Tenzing's coffees are processed immaculately. The cup sparkles with fruits, florals and lingering sweetness. At Crop to Cup we've been interested in Nepali coffee for almost a decade. This is the only coffee we've seen coming out of Nepal worthy of the US specialty marketplace. The harvest at Lekali is typically 20 bags (40kg), which must make this one of the rarest coffees in the United States.



Mexico is for coffee lovers. Few origins offer such variety, such competency, and such short flights to the farm. While often overlooked by their neighbors to the north, Mexico is the world's 7th largest coffee producer, the largest exporter of organic coffees, and a fast-growing consumers of specialty coffee.

Seventy percent of Mexico's crop comes from larger estates, concentrated around Veracruz, with the remaining thirty percent coming from 2 million smallholders, spread around the country but mostly in the Southern States of Chiapas and Oaxaca.

This is also where we find most of Mexico's indigenous population, communities who moved higher and higher up-mountain, onto smaller and smaller plots of land, first to get away from colonial Spain, and later pushed by larger landowners during decades of highly political land reforms. In this way Mexico's agrarian, coffee and Puebla movements are intertwined.

Though coffee arrived into Mexico two centuries earlier, it did not take off until the late 20th century. In the 1970s a farmer friendly government came to power and encouraged smallholder production. Coffee exports skyrocketed nearly ten-fold over the next two decades. However, in the middle of this growth the government had to default on debt, cut back programs, and end a decade of federal support for smallholders. Price, markets and credit dwindled to drips – and on top of that – we got some Royce too. Oh, and did we mention the condition of the peso?

Into this distressed situation we see the rise of the coyote; middle-men who build truckloads of coffee up from 1-5 bag household level. Still today, buyers look for points of aggregation that can cut out middle-men but still give them access to volumes.