



**COCOA
NECT.**

GoGround, India



REGION: Idukki

VARIETY: Forastero

SOURCE: Social enterprise

FERMENTATION: Fully controlled box fermentation

FLAVOR NOTES: Floral, spices and hints of red fruit

CERTIFICATIONS: organic certified

THE STORY BEHIND THE BEAN

The green hills of the Idukki region are a delight for cocoa trees. The region sees plenty of sunshine and rainfall, and the cocoa pods are surrounded by fragrant spices and tall coconut trees. Despite these excellent conditions, fine flavour cocoa never received much attention in the Idukki region in South-India. Until GoGround entered the stage.

The GoGround team is headed by Ellen and Luca, a husband-and-wife team with an engineering background and a passion for creating change in rural communities. With support from the Italian RIVA foundation, GoGround set out to build a dedicated fermentation and drying center in Udumbannoor, Idukki, India.

At the farms in Idukki you can find an impressive number of food crops. Mango, papaya and coconuts grow everywhere, but even more enchanting are the fragrant spices. Pepper, nutmeg and cardamom grow in abundance on the farms in this region, and fill the air

with a spicy aroma.

GoGround buys from farmers which range from very small, some with just a few cocoa trees in their farm, to farmers which set more land available to cultivate cocoa. Driver Jilsmon and his assistant Baiju or Luca, drive across the region every week to buy the wet cocoa directly from the farmers. This weekly meeting helps to discuss the development of the harvest, and to give feedback on the bean quality and how this can be improved. They are committed to buying all the cocoa each farmer has available, regardless of the quantity or the season. And they make weekly payments when buying the cocoa, which is a welcome steady flow of income for the for the smallholder farmers.

This dedicated relationship is beneficial both ways as the farmers can trust the team comes every week, they will wait with breaking the pods until collection day. This ensures that only the freshest wet cocoa reaches GoGround's fermentation boxes.

The GoGround team built a post-harvesting facility with fermentation boxes in four rows, each row consisting of three boxes. Certified organic and non-organic are separately processed. As can be expected from two engineers, the research on processing the fresh cocoa beans are endless. Ongoing experiments ►

with variables such as pulp reduction, aeration and moisture-levels, ensure the team finds the best protocol which fits the beans and the seasonal and climatic circumstances. A big help in this are the test-batches of chocolate which local chocolate makers regularly make out of the GoGround beans. Discovering the nuances in flavour and how the quality of the bean translates into the finished product, has been invaluable to their work.

After fermentation, the cocoa moves to one of the seventeen drying tables. On these tables, the beans are constantly shuffled and monitored by a dedicated team of four ladies from the nearby village.

Once the drying stage is completed, the beans are sorted, and bagged in the bright white GoGround bags. These sturdy bags with inner liner protect the cocoa beans from the very humid conditions in South-India, and keep the beans safe during transportation.

In just a few short years the GoGround team managed to build a flourishing cocoa processing facility. But the young couple is eager to do more. On top of their wish list is hiring an agronomist, to give their farmers more hands-on support and organize agronomic training sessions. Adding another farmer group in a neighbouring region to their list of suppliers is also one of their ambitions. This would enlarge their impact and add new, slightly different flavours which they can't wait to unlock. Finally, their never-ending curiosity leads them to exploring alternatives beyond the beans – commercializing cocoa juice being one of them.

At the core of GoGround's philosophy is building committed relationships with their farmers, and creating a positive socio-economic impact in the beautiful Idukki region.

Their hard work is clearly paying off, and we are very happy to support the further growth of the Go Ground social enterprise and their efforts to put Idukki on the fine flavour cocoa map.



REVIEW BY

David Senk
Areté Chocolate



These beans are a delight from the time we open the bag until they are tempered and molded. You can tell that a great deal of thought and care goes into the post-harvest treatment, and the naturally high cocoa butter content makes the finished chocolate a dream to mold and gives it a wonderful mouthfeel and texture. Most important to us, though, is the flavor – and that's where Idukki shines – it is creamy with notes of butterscotch, honey, and subtle floral notes...simply delightful.

TASTE PROFILE

Please your grinder with these flavourful beans, the high fat content will have it spinning with delight. The result will be a chocolate, so sweet and creamy, it will make your mind spin as well. Butterscotch, caramel and honey notes, topped off by some very interesting fruity and floral notes... This cocoa is all you need for a mindblowing chocolate.

CHOCOLATE:

ACIDITY:

BITTERNESS:



COCOA NECT.

Connecting the world of Cocoa