



**COCOA
NECT.**

Garyth, Ecuador



REGION: Santo Domingo De Los Tsachilas

VARIETY: Arriba Nacional

SOURCE: Single Estate

FERMENTATION: Fully controlled box fermentation

FLAVOUR NOTES: Ripe fruit, chocolate, banana

CERTIFICATIONS: Organic Certification
August 2018 onwards

THE STORY BEHIND THE BEAN

In the heart of Ecuador's cocoa growing area, the Cedeño Aguilar family farm stretches out among the rolling hills. The farm is not only renowned for its slightly unusual name (the name Garyth was inspired by sons Gabriel, Alberto and Ricardo and parents Yolanda and Thomas's initials) but also for its high quality *arriba nacional* cocoa, which they cultivate without shying away from innovation.

When you see the farm today, with its flourishing fine flavour operations, it's hard to believe that before 2005 the land was used to grow oil palm. Switching to *arriba nacional* cocoa was primarily fuelled by a drive to protect and expand Ecuador's fine flavour heritage. On top of that the family were curious about the endless possibilities cocoa could bring. The family made the switch to cocoa farming to be part of a supply chain that brings the joy of high quality chocolate to the world, and upon seeing the growing demand of chocolate makers for pure and exciting flavours.

In a few short years, the family and their team have established a thriving cocoa business. This success can be largely attributed to Thomas' passion for farming, which shines through when walking around the well-cared for plantation. Over 30 years of experience working in agronomy is evident when you see the healthy, meticulously pruned trees, which hang heavy with large colourful pods.

It is thanks to Thomas Cedeño Aguilar's extensive knowledge of organic farming practices, that there are hardly any fertilizers or pesticides used on the plantation. Instead you will find an intrinsic system to protect the trees from diseases. Chromotropic traps, which look like large adhesive sheets, hang among the trees to attract and trap pests. To welcome pollinating insects, banana plants are left to decompose between the cocoa trees. On the plantation and in the on-site nursery where new cocoa seedlings are nurtured, Thomas and his team continuously experiment with nutrition, grafting and nursing. Only the finest young cocoa seedlings are selected. This high level of care and attention helps to ensure continuous high quality.

The Garyth plantation is trailblazing not only in its dedicated cultivation of fine flavour cocoa, but also in its high-tech solutions to post-harvesting. ▶

Next to the family's house, just a stone's throw away from the plantation, there is a 1,200 m2 building which houses the impressive fermentation and drying centre. Here the fermentation of the cocoa beans takes place in a three-tier wooden box system. After six to nine days, the fermented beans are transported in electric wagons to the other side of the building for the drying process. While sun drying is common among smaller fine flavour operations, at the Garyth plantation they have built a remarkable heat inductor. Fuelled by palm husk, a waste product from extracting palm oil, the machine sends gusts of hot air through the cocoa for four to five days, during which time the cocoa beans slowly reach the correct moisture levels.

Yolanda, Thomas' wife, is another vital ingredient of their success. She has been making test batches of chocolate since the very first harvest. This constant testing enables her to explore the full potential of their beans, and to taste how the quality translates into the end product. Building upon the experience she has gained over the years, Garyth chocolate has now become a full-blown chocolate brand, and Garyth chocolate bars can be found lining the shelves of local shops.

Since the start of their fine flavour adventures, Thomas has made a big investment in both his farm and the post-harvest centre, with great rewards. Not only has he reaped the benefits of this in the form of some divine chocolate, but he was also the very first farmer to be awarded the 'Denominación de Protección de Origen Cacao Arriba' certificate. This certificate highlights the fact that the entire plantation is *arriba nacional* cocoa, with zero mixing of other varieties.

The cocoa from the Garyth farm is among the tastiest Ecuadorian cocoa we have come across, cultivated with some of the most progressive cocoa farming methods. The best news is that there is space for growth, a willingness to cooperate with neighbouring farms and an eagerness to supply even more chocolate makers across the world with pure Ecuadorian *Arriba Nacional* cocoa. We're confident this cocoa is going to take the chocolate world by storm.

REVIEW BY



Alex, Barry & Stewart

Harris & James chocolate

"It is easy to tell by the quality that the grower has taken immense pride and care in growing, fermenting, and drying these beans. It's a good plump bean with very little waste, and the chocolate has a complex flavour profile".

TASTE PROFILE

Fasten your seat belts and get ready for this cocoa to take you on a wild chocolatey ride. With its intense ripe fruit flavours, this cocoa is sure to ignite chocolate lovers' palates, and keep them coming back for more.

CHOCOLATE:



ACIDITY:



BITTERNESS:



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Connecting the world of Cocoa