



RAW MATERIAL

Villamaría

Region: Caldas
Country: Colombia
Altitude: 1800 MASL
Variety: Variedad Colombia, Castillo Naranjal
Process: Washed
Screen Size: 15+
Preparation: Euro Prep 0,20
Sorting: Optical
Packing: GrainPro

The Context

Villamaría's processing station, Jamaica, was chosen due to its perfect climate and altitude for the drying of naturally processed coffee. Alongside this, the large space available meant that producing high-quality naturals at scale was a possibility not available before.

As the project gained speed, roasters worldwide began to buy long-term from Villamaría, and neighbouring communities were able to see the merits of selling cherry to La Aurora instead of parchment to a nearby trilladora. The sale of whole cherry to a processing station is a method uncommon in Colombia but seen in many other coffee-producing countries. We can see that the communities including Villarazo La Batea Corozal have been positively affected by the existence of Jamaica. Today, we see a continued increase of producers delivering their cherry to La Aurora, the buying point and farm managed by Rubiel Orrego.

Like many coffee producers in Colombia, producers of Villamaría had historically been promised higher prices and the purchase of a farmer's entire crop by large institutions in the past. Having never delivered on this promise, understandably faith in new ventures had greatly diminished amongst producers.



Thankfully, Jamaica is a processing station that neighbours the communities who sell to Villamaría, and our consistent return every harvest has helped those hesitant to see that we are committed long-term. The producers that create the lots you enjoy from Villamaría, now grow in number as word spreads of a system that ensures better prices, for reduced labour (selling cherry not processed parchment), and a need for a growing volume of their harvest as roasters continue to support harvest on harvest.

The Station

Villamaría is a Colombian municipality located in the department of Caldas. The region is fed by numerous sources of water and natural resources. Villamaría is located a few kilometres from the city of Manizales, whose urban areas are surrounded by the Chinchiná River. Our drying station "Jamaica" is located in Chinchiná, Caldas. The station currently represents the harvests of 30 to 50 coffee producing families in the surrounding area of Villarazo, sitting at altitudes higher than the drying station itself. As Jamaica sits at a lower altitude of 1300 MASL, it is better suited to the processing of honey and natural coffees due to the hotter temperatures found here.

This station is focussed on the production of washed, honey, and natural lots. With the aid of Nuna dehydrator and mechanical drying systems, controlling humidity and temperature throughout the drying process aids the processing of honey and natural lots. The station processes coffee from 30 to 50 producers 500 metres further up the mountainside.

La Batea

Region: Chinchiná, Caldas
Country: Colombia
Altitude: 1700 MASL
Variety: Variedad Colombia, Castillo Naranjal
Process: Washed
Screen Size: 15+
Preparation: Euro Prep 0,20
Sorting: Optical
Packing: GrainPro

Home to 20 members of the Red Association Villamaria, La Batea is a sub-region of the area of the same name, located twenty minutes by car from the buying station Finca La Aurora.

The topography of Villamaria is challenging to put it mildly, as it is comprised of steep hills and valleys that have been affected by volcanic activity in the not so distant past. This area of Caldas is afforded a unique scenario, with several microclimates sitting side by side across this region.

La Batea means the valley in English and is an area of Villamaria where its incredibly steep hills provide a unique microclimate. Here, cold air currents swoop down from the snowy mountains of Santa Isabel and Volcan Nevado del Ruiz, improving air quality, circulation, and pollination, whilst cooling the air temperature that surrounds the growing cherries!

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"As the business is so good [selling to Villamaria], I convinced some of my neighbours, and now we are almost 20 producers delivering cherry to La Aurora"

- Alexander Barboza, producer from La Batea

Corozal, The Cold Lands

Region: Chinchiná, Caldas
Country: Colombia
Altitude: 2000 - 2100 MASL
Variety: Variedad Colombia, Castillo Naranjal
Process: Washed
Screen Size: 15+
Preparation: Euro Prep 0,20
Sorting: Optical
Packing: GrainPro

Corozal is the highest area within Villamaria. Situated towards the Otun lagoon, the area is located 25 minutes by car from Finca La Aurora, Villamaria's buying station.

This area is also known as Tierra Fria, or the Cold Land, where some farms sit as high as 2100 MASL. The combination of altitude and cold weather provides a particularly interesting microclimate for the farms of the Cold Lands.

Miraflores

Region: Chinchiná, Caldas
Country: Colombia
Altitude: 1800 MASL
Variety: Variedad Colombia, Castillo Naranjal
Process: Washed
Screen Size: 15+
Preparation: Euro Prep 0,20
Sorting: Optical
Packing: GrainPro

Miraflores is the area that looks over Finca La Aurora. It is the home of Reinel and Felipe, the drivers that collect the coffee harvests that are delivered to La Aurora, Villarmaria's buying point.

They are key members of the community and Miraflores is home to the largest number of Villamaria's coffee producers. The area sits at an average altitude of 1800 MASL, with an extraordinary view of the snowy mountains of El Cisne, El Volcan Nevado del Ruiz, and Santa Isabel.

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"We pray for your business to be good because the services that La Aurora provides us are very important for our community. Now we don't need to spend late hours pulping and washing coffee, and on top of that, the transport is free."

- Reinel Giraldo, harvest collector for Miraflores

Villarazo

Region: Chinchiná, Caldas
Country: Colombia
Altitude: 1850 MASL
Variety: Variedad Colombia, Castillo Naranjal
Process: Washed
Screen Size: 15+
Preparation: Euro Prep 0,20
Sorting: Optical
Packing: GrainPro

Villarazo is a sub-region of Villamaria, where Finca La Aurora is located. It is home to 25 members of the Red Association Villamaria.

The topography in Villamaria is very challenging, its landscape is mostly made up of intense hills and steep valleys. This undulation provides unique microclimates to Villarazo.

Villamaría Washed Sugarcane Decaf

Sugar cane decaffeination is often termed as a natural decaf. Ethyl Acetate is an organically existing compound (C₄H₈O₂) and by-product found most commonly in the fermentation of fruits and is present in both ripe bananas and beer for example. The plant we work with in Colombia, a short drive from Villamaría, uses water from the Navado el Ruis (a volcano between Caldas and Tolima) and natural ethyl acetate from fermented sugarcane sourced in the southern region of Palmira, Colombia.

This process begins with steaming of the coffee, increasing its porosity, beginning the hydrolysis of caffeine, which is usually bonded to salts and chlorogenic acid in the bean. The beans are then submerged in an ethyl acetate solvent until 97% of the caffeine is removed. Finally, steam is used to lift residual traces of the compound. The ultimate residue which remains is ≥ 30 ppm, which is a level dramatically less than that of a banana!

Villamaría Natural 72 hour Extended Fermentation

The whole cherry fermentation process takes place in an anaerobic environment for 72 hours, which keeps the temperatures stable. Once complete, the cherry is moved to drying beds, where they are turned regularly for 15 days. Following this slow drying of these cherries, they are moved to a mechanical dryer to complete the process, before the cherry fruit is removed.

Villamaría Natural Sugarcane Decaf

Dried for 15 days, in a temperature-controlled greenhouse finished in a mechanical dryer. Sugar cane decaffeination is often termed as a natural decaf. Ethyl Acetate is an organically existing compound (C₄H₈O₂) and by-product found most commonly in the fermentation of fruits and is present in both ripe bananas and beer for example. The plant we work with in Colombia, a short drive from Villamaria, uses water from the Navado el Ruis (a volcano between Caldas and Tolima) and natural ethyl acetate from fermented sugarcane sourced in the southern region of Palmira, Colombia.

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