



Fazenda Santo Antonio

Minas Gerais, Cerrado Mineiro, Sao Gotardo, Brazil

Partner since: 2017

Traceable to: Yuki Minami and family

Altitude: 1145 MASL

Varietals: Red and Yellow Catuai, Mundo Novo

Processing: Natural processed; cherries are floated then dried 7-10 days on patio, until 15-16% moisture, supported by mechanical dryers if needed down to 11.5% before resting in warehouse.

Harvest: July August September

Booking: November December

Arrivals: January February



This is the Cerrado Mineiro region of Minas Gerais; an area best described as a high-altitude savannah, and best known as the carrot capital of Brazil. In addition to producing nearly half of the

country's carrots, this region also grows onions, garlic, onion, potatoes....and coffee.

Coffee was the most recent to join the party, starting in the 1970's. Quality has always been high, but the coffee has never made it to export before being bulked, and has traded at commodity. But now, a new generation of farmers has returned to talk about 'specialty coffee'.

This is the story of Yuki Minami, who returned to her parent's farm to take up specialty. Long a specialty supplier in the region, Fazenda Santo Antonio has since invested in the field, in raised beds and in training as part of Yuki's so-far successful experiment of increasing quality to get better prices. In 2016 Yuki banded together with other farmers in her community – a group of third generation Brazilians of Japanese descent – to form Aequitas Coffee – with their first export being to Crop to Cup in 2018.

If it were not for Yuki we would not be able to work in Brazil like we do. She has the fire, her heart is in it for the right reasons, and she's sharp as can be. Her coffee is almost as impressive, maybe more so because it has so much potential. We are excited to support Yuki Minami and her neighbors, Edson Tamekuni and Michael Tomizawa, as they launch Aequitas – a company that's set out to do coffee differently. In her words, "Aequitas is the Roman goddess of equity. But she was also a goddess that meant justice, transparency and fairness. And this is what I wanted to do, I wanted to promote a fair trade for producers."



Brazil is to other coffee-growing countries as Jupiter is to other planets – huge, and deserving a category of its own. But despite its size, we don't look to Brazil as a source of specialty; we were once told that asking for a sample of SSFC 17/18 is like asking for a sample of a 'big mac'. This, however, is an old view from an older generation. We now have a younger crop of farmers entering the specialty scene – this generation was raised with the Internet, knows 21st-century coffee, and are excited to find out what's possible for their family's farm.

But it's a struggle to convince parents that this new approach is not just youthful fantasy – with one approach working so well for so long, it's hard to take specialty seriously. This battle seems to be happening inside households across Brazil, as city-dwelling, college-educated sons and daughters return to the family farm to help their baby-boomer parents prepare for retirement.

Despite this tension, wherever we look we see small successes building a case for specialty, one win at a time. It could be glowing feedback, a good yield, a high price or even just the smallest recognition by someone outside the family. And the case is growing especially strong in the area around Sao Gortado where we find Yuki Minami and Aequitas coffee educating farmers on what they have and what it's worth. Here we find farmers in their 20s and 30s standing on the shoulders of giants; they are looking near into the future, and see specialty where we in the US have not yet.