

FIRST CROP COFFEE
NICARAGUA LA HAMMONIA – SELVA NEGRA



MATAGALPA
CATURRA AND CATUAI
WASHED AND PATIO DRIED
1200-1400 MASL
ORGANIC

MAUSI AND EDDY, OWNERS OF SELVA NEGRA, ARE THE CHILDREN OF COFFEE FARMERS, BOTH OF GERMAN DESCENT AFTER THEIR GRANDPARENTS HAD IMMIGRATED AFTER THE WAR, THEY DECIDED TO BUY A COFFEE FARM IN 1974 AFTER GETTING MARRIED. THEY CALLED THE FARM LA HAMMONIA (HAMBURG), A NOD TO THEIR GERMAN HERITAGE, AND LATER THE AREA OF LAND WHICH THEY OWN BECAME SELVA NEGRA. SELVA NEGRA ENCOMPASSES NOT ONLY THE FARM BUT THE LODGE, RESTAURANT AND FACILITIES THAT MAUSI AND EDDY HAVE SLOWLY CREATED. IT IS DIFFICULT TO APTLY EXPLAIN SELVA NEGRA BECAUSE IT IS SUCH A VAST AND COMPELLING EXAMPLE OF WHAT A COFFEE ESTATE COULD BE.

THE COFFEE: LA HAMMONIA HAS 12 SEPARATE LOTS, EACH LOT IS SEPARATED BY VARIETAL AND UNQIE IN IT'S ELEVATION, WITH THE ELEVATION RANGING FROM 1200-1400MASL. THE LOTS ARE SHADE GROWN AND THE TREES ARE FERTILIZED WITH ORGANIC FERTILIZER MADE ON THE FARM, LA HAMMONIA IS CERTIFIED ORGANIC. THE CHERRIES ARE PICKED AND THEN TAKEN TO THE WET MILL ON THE FARM, WHERE THE COFFEE IS PROCESSED USING WATER FROM THE MOUNTAIN. FERMENTATION IS 12 HOURS IN THE MUCILAGE AND THEN A SECOND WASH, BEFORE BEING MOVED TO THE COVERED DRYING BEDS. THE LOTS ARE HARVESTED INDIVIDUALLY, CUPPED AND THEN BLENDED SO THERE IS TRACEABILITY OF LOT VOLUMES AND CUP PROFILE FROM SEASON TO SEASON. ONCE THE COFFEE IS DRY IT IS MOVED TO THE DRY MILL ON THE FARM WHERE IT IS PROCESSED AND PACKED. THERE IS A NURSERY ON THE FARM WHICH IS USED FOR NEW TREE PLANTING, THEY ARE CURRENTLY REPLANTING 50 HECTARES AT A TIME AS SOME OF THE TREES ARE OVER 65 YEARS OLD. THEY ARE ALSO GROWING AND EXPERIMENTING WITH A NEW VARIETY CALLED MARSELLAZA – AN IMPROVED CATIMOR VARIETY.

ECO-LODGE: ALONG WITH GROWING COFFEE, SELVA NEGRA HAS DEVELOPED INTO A COMPLETELY SELF-SUSTAINING ECO VILLAGE. THERE IS A VEGETABLE GARDEN WHICH PROVIDES VEGETABLES FOR THE RESTAURANT, A FARM OF PIGS, COWS AND CHICKENS FOR MEAT AND EGGS. THERE IS ALSO A BAKERY AND A CHEESE MAKING FACTORY. THE POWER IS GENERATED BY SOLAR PANELS AROUND THE FARM AND ON THE ROOFS. METHANE GAS IS PRODUCED FOR COOKING BY USING THE WASTE WATER FROM COFFEE PROCESSING. THE FARM ITSELF PRODUCES EVERYTHING NEEDED. THEY HAVE A SAYING THAT EVERYTHING MUST HAVE 2-3 USES.

FOR THE WORKERS THERE IS A VILLAGE ON THE FARM WITH HOUSING, A SCHOOL FOR THE CHILDREN, A MEDICAL CLINIC AND A BASEBALL DIAMOND (BASEBALL IS THE NUMBER ONE SPORT IN NICARAGUA), AND THEY HAVE THEIR OWN TEAM COMPETING IN THE NATIONAL COMPETITION. THE WORKERS HAVE POWER, RUNNING WATER AND SATELLITE TV. THEY ARE CHARGED \$1 PER YEAR IN RENT SO THAT THEY HAVE LEGAL TENANCY LEASES.

THE RESTAURANT AND LODGE ON THE FARM PROVIDE A PATHWAY FOR PICKERS TO LEARN NEW SKILLS AND UNDERTAKE NEW EMPLOYMENT IN THE OFF SEASON, THE MANAGER OF THE RESTAURANT HERSELF STARTED OUT AS A COFFEE PICKER ON THE FARM. THERE IS A HUGE AMOUNT OF HISTORY AROUND SELVA NEGRA AND YOU CAN TAKE A WALK THROUGH THE FOREST ON THE VARIOUS FOREST TRAILS, WHERE YOU WILL ENCOUNTER NOT ONLY ANCIENT RELICS AND BUILDINGS BUT ALSO WILDLIFE.

WE VISIT MANY COFFEE FARMS AND WORK WITH SOME AMAZING AND FORWARD THINKING FARMERS, BUT WE HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED ANYTHING LIKE SELVA NEGRA. THERE IS A FAMILY SPIRIT DRIVING THIS ENTERPRISE THAT MAKES IT A VERY SPECIAL PLACE. IT'S AN INCREDIBLE FARM TO VISIT FOR THE EXPERIENCE OF SEEING WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WITH AN OPEN MIND AND A TRUE GOAL OF SUSTAINABILITY. IN MAUSI AND EDDY'S HOUSE YOU WILL FIND A WHOLE ROOM AND TABLE COVERED IN PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEIR FAMILY AND THEIR STAFF, MANY OF WHOM HAVE BECOME FAMILY. MAUSI AND HER DAUGHTER'S VICKY AND HEDDY RUN THE FARM, WHILE EDDY OVERSEES THE RESTAURANT AND LODGE. EVERY NIGHT AT DINNER YOU WILL BE TREATED TO SOME OF EDDY'S STORIES (EDDY HAS WRITTEN OVER 50 BOOKS!) AND A MENU OF DELICIOUS MEALS ALL MADE ENTIRELY FROM INGREDIENTS FROM THE FARM.

