

CASA RUIZ, S.A.

Boquete
República de Panamá

Leading Specialty Coffee Organization in Panama

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P. 1

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SCAA

Visiting the U.S. Specialty and Gourmet Coffee Market

At the beginning of August '89 we left our hometown--Boquete, Chiriqui in the Republic of Panama--with the idea of visiting those organizations and companies involved in the various aspects of the American specialty coffee market.

Our first stop was the Specialty Coffee Association of American and the Coffee Development Group, both located in Washington, D.C. With the help of Daryl Davidson (SCAA) and Steve Greg (CDG), we were able to gather important information which supports those who are interested in entering this new and growing segment of the market, or for those whose main concern is to increase their effectiveness in the field.

We also visited the John Conti Coffee Company, roasters of specialty coffee, and had the opportunity to see a wide range of coffee-related activities and to experience first-hand a typical work day. Mark Nethery also gave us his impressions of the specialty coffee market.

In San Francisco, California we found one of the most active coffee centers on the West Coast of the U.S.A. We visited several specialty coffee dealers, including the well-known Knutsen Coffees, Ltd., "The House of Fancy Coffees." Mrs. Erna Knutsen shared some of her experiences and her never-ending enthusiasm for the finest coffees of the world. On our visit to Royal Coffee, we exchanged ideas about quality coffee with Pete McLaughlin and Bob Fulmer, and then examined and cupped a green bean sample. At Coffee, Tea and Spice we enjoyed the company of Christian

and Phyllis Baldenhofer. Finally, we stopped off at C. Melchers and Co., where we were exposed to the flavored gourmet coffee segment of the industry for the first time. Elaine Lederman was good enough to explain the process to us.

In general, we were interested in visiting the organizations, corporations, and, most importantly, the people who make this market a reality, and who, through their experience and ongoing efforts, give support to the whole system. We wanted to meet the people who are willing to work together with producers, growers and others in the specialty coffee business in order to assure the best quality coffee for their customers.

As representatives of Casa Ruiz, S.A. and Cafe Ruiz, S.A., specialty growers, processors, exporters and roasters of the best coffee produced in Panama, we are very appreciative of all the help and kind attention given us by the individuals we met on our tour.

A trip from Panama to the various centers of the American specialty coffee trade may sound a bit tiring, but the benefits certainly made such an excursion worthwhile. If you are part of this business, we believe it is essential to get in touch with and share information about specialty coffee with the rest of the people in the industry.

Best regards from Boquete, Chiriqui, Republic of Panama.

Maria Elisa Ruiz A.



SCAA On the Move...

Between September 29 and October 8, representatives of the Specialty Coffee Association of America toured the coffee centers of Europe, including London, Zurich, Lake Como, Milan, Parma and Bologna. Look for an account of this exciting European excursion in the next issue of *In Good Taste*.



Members of the SCAA also participated once again in the Annual Kona Coffee Cultural Festival held from November 4 through November 12 in Kona, Hawaii. Keep an eye open for coverage of this trip in the next issue of *In Good Taste*.

Member News...

Erna Knutsen of Knutsen Coffees, Ltd. has been invited to speak at the Coffee International Symposium and Trade Fair in Bali being held November 29 and 30 1989. She tells us that she "is thrilled by the invitation, since she has never been to that exotic land." Congratulations!

Timothy Castle, green coffee broker and editor of *In Good Taste*, recently gave a seminar on coffee at the University of California, Los Angeles. Those in attendance included individuals from the coffee trade as well as consumers with a special interest in the topic. The response to the class was extremely positive, and most felt that the wealth of material warranted a follow-up class.

