

The LEFT COAST SURFER

Spring/Summer 1998

You Bought A What?!!?

(As most of you know, life at the Johnson household has never been static, and as our want, we have jumped into our latest endeavor in typical Kim and Lewis fashion: precipitously, whole heartedly and, I must say, rather grandly.

We are now plantation owners. Coffee. The other Black Gold. Juice of life, welcome addiction, and the second most traded commodity on the world-wide market.

The fact is that we know nothing about the agriculture business, less about farming. Our plantation is a five hour commute by plane away, and we're now in hock up to our taste buds. And we're having a hell of a good time!)

Hawaii, islands of sun-drenched beaches and tropical forests. Land of the luau, the hula, honeymooners and surfers. The mere mention of Hawaii evokes

visions of
fragrant
flower necklaces,
waterfalls
tumbling from
sheer emerald
green cliffs,
neon
fish dancing in
clear aqua

waters. Paul
Theroux wrote,
"Hawaii is not a
state of mind, but
a state of grace".
Our fiftieth
state is unique,
the only state
with its own
tropical rain
forest, the worlds
most active
volcano and the
largest cattle
ranch. The only
state to grow
pineapples,
guavas, passion



Gold-Rush Puppies in Native Dress

fruit, macadamia nuts, and the chocolate to cover them. And the only place in the world producing Kona coffee.

Left Coast Farm is in the heart of the Kona coffee district, a twenty mile long, one mile wide strip of mountainside known for growing some of the finest coffee ever. Clinging to the side of Mauna Loa at the seventeen hundred foot elevation mark, the farm overlooks Kealakekua Bay where explorer Captain James Cook first discovered, and later gave his life to the "Sandwich Islands". Down from the Bay one can see the ancient Pu'uuhonua o Honaunau, sacred "City of Refuge". Further south, Kilauea spews smoke and lava, adding continually to Hawaii's real estate.

When you fly into the Big Island, be it from Honolulu or points further flung, you descend to the lunar-landscape that is Kailua International Airport. Set in the center of a recent (1801) lava

flow, first time visitors look about the unrelenting rock field in aghast, and think "this is paradise?". But as you you drive the twenty miles south to the Kona region, the scenery undergoes a dramatic change. While reading the messages left along the roadside on black lava banks in meticulously arranged white coral pebbles, you travel to Kona-Kailua, the major population

SPRINGTIME in PARADISE

GROWING PREMIUM
COFFEE

is a year round endeavor, and the spring is devoted to the cultivation of the trees.

This past winter was especially hard on Hawaiian farmers-blame it, of course, on El Nino.

While sunny Southern California slipped into the ocean not from earthquakes but mudslides, the Big Island of Hawaii languished in a dry season equal to

none before. Our normal "dry" season of December thru April usually sees at least three inches of rain a month.

This year ended up with a meager 3 inches for the entire season. Trees wilted, hillsides burned, and flowering and cherry setting was inconsistent and spotty. What this means to the coffee harvest next fall is not known yet.

But coffee trees are scrappy little plants, and the rain has returned, so the spring trip was spent playing a bit of "catch up". We threw down over 1200 lbs. of high powered fertilizer, twice the amount usually spread. Every bit of that 1200 pounds was schlepped up and down the mountainside and

hand distributed to the base of each tree. That pressing chore done, we were able to breath a big sigh of relief as the rains finished the job. The next springtime activity was "selecting", a process where next years producing branches on these radically pruned trees are chosen, and the rest of the "suckers" lopped off. Maintaining only 4-6 main branches *per tree* causes it to put it's energy into bean growing instead of leaf growing, good for the farmer, and the tree doesn't seem to mind too much. There are approximately 800 trees at Left Coast Farm (we've never actually counted) and each one gets lots of individual attention. Several large planter boxes were built and filled with soil-the ground on the farm is basically a lava field-one for vegetables and one for flowers. My neighbor had a hard time with the flower box concept, "If you can't eat it or sell it, why bother" he mused. The remainder of time was spent weeding the established orchard and continuing to clear the acre or so of land yet to be planted. Baby trees will be planted later, when the rain is back, and I have a chance to pick-ax some holes for them!

the island. Ah yes, we're in familiar territory now, with Cost-Co, Wal-Mart and Safeway lining the highway. Blink your eyes, and you are out of town continuing along an ever narrowing, climbing road. The higher you go, the greener it becomes and all of a sudden, Paradise is reality.

The green erupts with color splashes: bougainvillea of red, purple, orange bouganvilla of red, purple, orange and pink. Wild hibiscus and ten foot tall poinsettias intermingle. Steep road banks are covered with yellow daisies on the sunny sides, multi-colored impatiens in the shade. Guava fruits litter the roadside. Some idiot imported Kudzu, so there's plenty of that growing rampant, consuming derelict cars and untended porches. The road twists and climbs through small towns with difficult names - Kainaliu, Keauhou, Kealakekua. Between the level patches that are these villages, the road is carved in cliff side, Mauna Loa looming mauka, the Hawaiian term for upwards, the Pacific Ocean in breathtaking splendor makai, or downwards. All along the drive, you glimpse a darker green bush covered with delicate white flowers, usually spread haphazardly along the slopes and cliffs. That's what you came here for-that's the coffee.

Between mile marker 107 and 108, a single lane dirt road struggles further up the side of the mountain. Look left, and you spot a hangar-sized greenhouse filled with orchids. Further along, Taro plants, the ancient starch of Polynesia, grown in stepped beds, and Avocados drop cannon ball sized fruit to run over. The coffee is more abundant here, crowding the roadside. Not quite a mile along, a green wood house with traditional corrugated tin roof slips by on the right, then a three tiered platform shed, with a 100 year old pulper is seen. Welcome to Left Coast plantation.

The tiny Kona coffee region, with less than 2000 acres in production, is home to more than 600 individual family owned and operated farms. Much as the Napa Valley has the soil and climate conducive to producing a superior wine grape, so the Kona coast is to coffee trees; a special blend of

afternoons and a medium of rich volcanic soil. In addition to coffee Arabica (the richest kind!), the farm is replete with avocados, citrus, coconuts, guavas, papayas, cocoa and pineapples. Stands of thirty foot tall bamboo wave in the trade winds to the south, the front yard is filled with antheriums, multi-colored Ti plants, orchids and heliconia's. The 180 degree view of the coastline from the Lanai, or covered patio, is breathtaking at it's worst, and on days when Kilauea is calm, and the

Hawaii is not a state of mind, but a state of grace

winds blow right, you can see so far that your eyes hurt.

An airy, bright home in a lush and stunning setting are happy details; the heart and soul of this land is the coffee. For nearly 200 years, this mountainside has been producing a brew comparable only to Jamaica's elite Blue Mountain, grown in startling similar conditions half way around the world. The flavor of this paradise born brew is primarily characterized as mellow and smooth, yet with a lively taste and intense aroma. Mark Twain wrote of it while traveling the Pacific, "Kona coffee has a richer flavor than any other, be it grown where it may and call it by what name you please." An added bonus to it's fabulous flavor is a health perk (no pun intended). Because of it's extreme isolation, the coffee trees of the Hawaiian islands are free from disease and pests that plague all other coffee producing areas. We are very proud, and relieved to be able to say that no pesticides, fungicides or other "cides" are used on the trees.

Elite and gourmet, this coffee's rather shocking price is the result of not only its quality, but also where it is grown: in the United States of America. Kona coffee is hand picked, every one of the 2500 beans it takes to make up a pound of roast coffee, and the pickers are the highest paid in the world. Fully one third of the cost of a bag of Kona coffee goes to picking costs alone. But one pound will brew up 30 cups of fabulous, fragrant Tavaat 50 cents a cup still a

1998-99 Left Coast Coffee Crop in the Making



The Gold-Rush Continues Westward

Alas, Paradise isn't perfect, 'cause it's lacking our dogs. Hawaii has strict quarantine laws which make it difficult to bring the pets along. But fear not, Gold-Rush West is alive and well and still living in Venice. Lewis says that the dogs are the only thing that keeps me coming home occasionally.

Not true-I also miss the Killer Shrimp.

Bart (Gold-Rush Rapid Transit) is currently amassing points on his championship in Indiana, being handled by Erik and Megan Strickland.

Naomie (Can. Ch. Gold-Rush Cover Girl, WC) and her #1 son Presto (Gold-Rush Presto Finito) welcomed the return of mother and grandmother Diva (Gold-Rush Diva) after five years away- she is a spry ten and a half years old.

Georgia (Jenlyn's Gold-Rush on My Mind) and Wednesday (Ch. Cordial Demeanor) attend weekly Novice level training class, handled by myself and neighbor Ben Moore.

I enjoy the friendship and fun of co-owning and showing Riviera (Gold-Rush Jett Setter) with Jean Ettinger,

Brice (Gold-Rush Pelcorp Hoodoos) with Gina Bradley and Hobbs (Jeff's Gold-Rush Hobbs) for Lori McElroy.

Gold-Rush travels further west, to Bangkok Thailand in August, when I fly several promising young dogs over for international clients.

Hawaii will have to remain a part-time home until we can figure out a way to have the Gold-Rush Goldens enjoy the Kona Coast along with us!

Left Coast Farm is the result of our hard work and crazy dreams, but more important has been the support of family and friends in this endeavor. If you are not mentioned here, it's because I need someone to talk about in the next newsletter!

Our appreciation has no bounds to....

Our parents for not telling us too many times that we were nuts.

June and Gene for the fab barbecue which has completely taken the place of the stove, oven and local restaurants.

Gene and Mario for the industrial strength coffee grinder.

Our left coast neighbors Peg and Barry Williamson

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

and their boys Kawika and Keoni for all the airport runs, truck moving, weed-whacking, bean raking and innumerable dinners. You have made your part-time neighbors feel welcome and loved.

To our other left coast neighbors Marcia and Michael Moore and their boys Ben and Jame. They shared our dream immediately and have been the creative forces behind the packaging and mood of our coffee. All the bag sewing, jelly stirring and dog walking is remembered.

Debbie and Jeffrey Cohen for the use of the Little Red Truck. She is backbone of the farm, and the cutest truck in the Kona District. Your generosity is beyond belief.

June and Jennifer for pots and pans to help make being miles from the nearest restaurant bearable.

Jean and George Fike of Fike Farms, for initially welcoming us into your life to teach us about the coffee business, then continuing to embrace us as neighbors once we got there. Robin and Roy Rose, who carry Left Coast Farm Coffee in their gourmet candy and ice cream store, Robin Rose, and openly share their extensive business and gourmet food expertise with us.

Jorge Casas as chief dog and house caretaker when we both run away from Venice at once. We leave assured that our kids are safe and happy. Everyone who has so far bought and enjoyed Left Coast Farm 100% Kona Estate coffee.

Brew a Better Cup

1

Scrub that coffee pot. Coffee is oily, and oils allowed to linger in the machinery and on the pot can become rancid-yeech!

2

Use tasty water. Using great coffee is important, but really, it is mostly water. Tap water, especially if it is softened, can give the brew a salty or chlorine after taste. Water that has been filtered through an activated carbon filter, such as Brita products, is the best.

3

If you have a grinder, use a grind to suit your machine. A medium grind, the texture of sugar, is best for flat basket drip and vacuums pots. Espresso grind is a fine cornmeal texture, and works well with cone-shaped drip, filter-brewing and of course, espresso machines. Too fine a grind will result in over-extracted, bitter coffee. Too coarse will brew watery, thin coffee.

4

Use around one tablespoon ground coffee per cup to be brewed-this is a pretty personal preference-the amount of coffee to use. I find that a light tablespoon of fresh ground Kona is plenty...

5

Once it's done, please don't cook your coffee. Coffee left on a heating element WILL start to lose it's flavor and become bitter in as little as 5 minutes. Place freshly brewed coffee in a lidded thermal carafe which has been pre-heated with hot water, and your coffee will stay fresh for hours (if it lasts that long!)

Store your beans in the freezer, in an airtight container, such as a zip-lock bag, once the bag has been opened. Coffee will last several months this way, but remember-the coffee beans you bought two years ago just won't stand the test of time-use it, or loose it!



My favorite way to make Kona coffee is with a French press pot. These are available at most specialty coffee shops, and allow for the maximum enjoyment of Kona coffees' rich full aroma-one of it's unique characteristic. Medium ground coffee is placed in this glass cylinder, and doused with water that is just-off boiling temperature. After a short

LEFT COAST FARM

Estate Grown

100% KONA COFFEE

Grown, sun-dried and roasted in paradise, then rushed to the mainland for your enjoyment, this is premium 100% Kona coffee from the estate of Kim and Lewis Johnson of Honaunau, Hawaii and Venice, California.

MEDIUM ROAST, equivalent to a Full City roast, produces a coffee with Kona's characteristic smooth, fruit-and-wine acidity with a bright finish. It is a bit higher in caffeine than a darker roast, and is an excellent morning coffee

DARK ROAST, equivalent to a Vienna Roast deepens Kona coffee's intrinsic sweetness and produces a brew with an intense, rich aroma. It is a wonderful evening and dessert coffee.

Kona coffee is the only coffee hand-picked and processed in the United States. Often selling for up to \$30.00 a pound, Left Coast Farm is please to introduce our 100% Kona coffee for...

\$20.00 pound

\$11.00 one half pound

shipping please add \$2.50, \$2.00/pound after 1st pound
all coffee comes in Aloha print fabric bag

Dark Roast

#	\$
___ 16 oz/one pound whole bean	_____
___ 16 oz/one pound ground	_____
___ 8 oz/one half pound whole bean	_____
___ 8 oz/one half pound ground	_____

Medium Roast

___ 16 oz/one pound whole bean	_____
___ 16 oz/one pound ground	_____
___ 8 oz/one half pound whole bean	_____
___ 8 oz/one half pound ground	_____
shipping	_____
Total=	_____

Send To:
Address:

Gift From?:

Special Instructions:

GET IT FROM.....

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Left Coast Farm

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(Hawaii too!)



"a cup a day keeps you jammin"