

LOCAL TASTES

Flavors of Colombia





Juan Vengoechea (right, at left) and Claudia Correa source their coffee from a single farm in their native Colombia, working directly with in-country workers to grow and roast beans.

At Cafetales Coffee, Juan Vengoechea and Claudia Correa provide Tenafly and nearby communities with one of their homeland's richest treasures.

BY RAINA WALLENS

Cafetales Coffee might be 100 percent Colombian coffee, but it's also completely the brainchild of husband-and-wife Tenafly residents Juan Vengoechea and Claudia Correa.

The idea to create a coffee brand first struck Vengoechea when an importer remarked that most people associated Italy, not Colombia, with coffee culture.

Proud native Colombians, Vengoechea and Correa—who had drunk coffee out of their baby bottles—could not believe that Colombia wasn't top-of-mind.

"That created a passion in us to demonstrate the quality of Colombian coffee," Vengoechea explains.

Beginning a Business

"We decided to go to Colombia and visit a couple of farms," Vengoechea says. "We wanted to learn as much as possible."

He and Correa fell in love with the beauty of the farms and people involved as well as the smooth, rich coffee that beans from the farms produced. When they brought sample bags back to the

United States, store managers were equally enamored.

Vengoechea and Correa found a company to source, roast and package the beans, and in 2018, Cafetales Coffee was born.

Tenafly Gourmet was the first store to stock the coffee, and to this day it sells the most out of any store. "People in this town really support us!" Correa says.

In many ways, Cafetales sold itself—just opening a bag and inhaling the scent is a treat. A 100 percent Colombian product is unusual for supermarkets—many big-name brands are blends.

Unlike most coffee producers, Cafetales roasts its beans in Colombia rather than the U.S., even though it's more expensive to do so. "We pay more but we leave it in Colombia, for the community," Correa explains.

A Needed Kick

After successfully growing the business for four years, Vengoechea and Correa noticed a decline in quality. In a defining

moment, they decided to take control of the entire process, sourcing the beans themselves from a single farm in Colombia and personally overseeing every stage.

The result is a standout coffee that's even more distinct because of its single-farm origin—a fact that's not lost on customers.

"The managers at the stores are happy because the product is selling more now," Correa says. Plus, she and Vengoechea now give directly to the Colombian farmers, which they find gratifying.

And they could choose no better place to have introduced Cafetales than Tenafly, with its vibrant multicultural community. "We have met people from all over the world in Tenafly," says Correa. "We love it."

Cafetales Coffee can be found in 50 stores throughout New York and New Jersey, and locally in Tenafly Gourmet and Healthway. For more information, visit <https://cafetalescoffee.com> or scan this code.



Raina Wallens is a writer based in Tenafly. She enjoys a freshly-brewed cup of Cafetales almost every morning.