

Coffee Tasting Terminology

TERMS DESCRIBING GREEN COFFEE

COLOUR: From Blue Green to Yellow Green and browns dependent on Geographic Origin, species, age, method of process, maturity of cherry at harvest and conditions of storage and transport

FINE: A general term which is usually referred to the better gourmet quality mild coffees which can with their intrinsic qualities stand on their own as quality coffees.

HARD: A term generally applied to some high grown mild coffees which have a relatively long maturity period on the tree and subsequent firm individual characteristics - indicative of good roasting qualities.

BLACK BEANS: due mainly to over-ripe coffee which has matured and then been harvested after falling off the tree.

BLACK JACK: Coffee which has turned black after the full process during transportation or during reprocessing.

BROKENS: otherwise referred to as Brisures or triage when sorted. Beans that are cracked in process of curing and sorting

CLEAN: A well graded coffee free of defects.

DEFECTS: These include husks, pods, brokens, beans in parchment, blacks, sour beans, quakers and any foreign objects such as sticks, stones etc. All are counted as imperfections during grading at various defect negative values.

HUSKS: Loose parchment or dried outercovering

MBUNI: Native grown unwashed arabica from East Africa.

PARCHMENT: Dried coffee still in the outer skin prior to hulling.

PEABERRY: A rounded bean where only one seed has developed within the cherry. Will have the same characteristics in the cup as the normal bean.

POD: Dried portion of silverskin or Fegument being the thin membrane between the parchment and the bean,

QUAKERS: Often referred to as Stinkers or Floaters are unripe or blighted beans - coffees picked when cherry is still green.

SCREEN: The general term for size gradings based on the mesh/screen size through which the beans may be retained whilst grading.

BEAN SIZE: Very Large Bean: Screen 20 plus
Extra Large Bean: Screen 19
Large Bean: Screen 18
Bold Bean: Screen 17
Good Bean: Screen 16
Medium Bean: Screen 15
Small Bean: Screen 13 plus

SOUND: A good marketable coffee.

SOUR BEANS Fully developed large but unripe or blighted bean same characteristic in the roast and cup as a Quaker.

UNWASHED: A coffee which has been processed or cured by the dry method.

WASHED: A coffee which has been processed or cured by the wet method.

BOLD: A large to very large, well formed and even bean coffee,.

TERMS DESCRIBING LIQUORS

ACIDY: A sharp and pleasing characteristic particularly strong with certain origins. As opposed to a caustic overfermented sour or bitter flavour.

BODY: A strong full pleasant characteristic as opposed to being thin, not necessarily with acid.

BITTER: Usually caused by over-roasting.

COARSE: A raspy harsh flavour, lacking in finesse.

ERPSIG: A potato flavour.

EARTHY: A groundy, wet earth flavour after storage with damaged coffees.

FINE: A coffee with distinct quality characteristics such as acid, body etc.

FIREY: A bitter charcoal taste generally due to over roasting.

FLAT: A lifeless coffee lacking in acidity.

FULL: A prefix to good characteristics such as acid and body, to indicate a strong character.

FRUITY: A strong over-ripe characteristic prevalent in coffees left too long in the cherry.

GRASSY: A greenish grassy, or greenish flavour particularly strong with early crop Arabicas which have been picked prematurely.

HARSH: A hard raspy often caustic flavour sometimes described as Rioy.

MELLOW: A rounded smooth taste but lacking in acidity

MUDDY: A dull indistinct and thickish flavour can be due to grounds being agitated.

MUSTY: A flavour often due to poor storage, especially with Robustas. Can be due to lack of sufficient drying and aging or over-heating. Mustiness due to age is not undesirable.

NEUTRAL: An insignificant liquor not distinct in any powerful main flavours. Usually a good blend.

POINT: A fine acidity sharpness.

RANK: A dirty unpleasant flavour due mainly to contamination or overfermentation.

RICH: An overall lively full bodied flavour.

RUBBERY: Mainly prevalent in Robustas especially Indonesians.

SMOOTH: A full body but low acid coffee.

SOFT: A well rounded flavour lacking any harshness or acidity

SOUR: A sharp excessively acidic biting flavour.

SWEET: A nice clean soft coffee free of any harshness.

THIN: A flat lifeless coffee lacking any body or acidity which can be caused if it is underbrewed.

WILD: A gamey flavour often in Ethiopian coffees.

WINEY: A rich rounded full body coffee with a smoothness characteristic of well matured red wine. A flavour which is prevalent with Colombians.

WOODY: A hard woodlike flavour often due to old coffee which has been stored too long as green bean.