



Guatemala Trapichitos

Ixil A'achimbal Santa María Nebaj, Quiché, Guatemala

Atlas' first relationship project continues to deliver excellent, complex coffee year after year.

THE VERDANT BEAUTY OF THE CORDILLERA DE LOS CUCHUMATANES in the highlands of Guatemala belies the tragedies that occurred there during the country's 36-year civil war. During this period, indigenous Mayan communities suspected of supporting leftist guerillas were targeted in a "scorched earth" campaign that resulted in untold numbers of deaths and disappearances. The Ixil Triangle region witnessed some of the worst atrocities, and those who survived often were forced to flee their homes in search of refuge.

After the signing of peace accords in 1996, the refugees began returning to what remained of their communities but with little to no economic prospects. In the Ixil village of Trapichitos located in the municipality of Nebaj, 85 families discovered that the new government did not recognize their ownership of the land. They squeezed on to a mere 25 acres and spent several years trying to acquire more land to farm, eventually enlisting the support of the Seattle-based organization Agros International. In late 2000 they secured a loan to buy 635 acres to grow bananas, lemons, oranges, and coffee.

In early 2003, Agros introduced the Trapichitos residents to Atlas founder Craig Holt, who saw the potential of the coffee that they had been producing. The community lies more than 4,600 feet above sea level, and the climate and volcanic soil provide perfect growing conditions – especially for the complex, balanced flavors that have come to define the Trapichitos coffee. The farmers have planted only bourbon and typica coffee trees and meticulously care for the coffee from seedling to mill. The coffee is passive organic, hand-picked, hand-sorted for defect, and sun-dried on raised wooden racks.

Atlas began purchasing Trapichitos' entire production and promoting it as the company's very first relationship coffee. At the start of each harvest the farmers set the price for their coffee and communicate that to Atlas via the exporter in Guatemala City. The project has been so successful that farmers in the neighboring communities of Batzchocolá, Sumalito, and Xeucalvitz now are participating, however Atlas has retained the name "Trapichitos" in honor of the original group.

Representatives of Atlas have traveled to the area almost every year, often bringing roaster clients to meet the farmers and witness the careful harvesting and processing that contribute to the exceptional quality. In 2009 Atlas requested that a small quantity of parchment be separated by community, with the goal of identifying different cup profiles and offering limited-quantity micro-lots. We are planning a micro-lot cupping competition for 2010.



— meet the producers —

Guatemala Trapichitos



Producer group name: Ixil A'achimbal

Number of families: 261

Year started working with Atlas: 2004

Total producing area: 43.75 hectares (*approx. 108 acres*)

Production quantity: 4 containers (1,100 bags, each containing 69 kgs. of green coffee)

Genetic varieties: Bourbon, Typica

Processing method: Washed process

Harvest period: November-February

Certifications: None

