Honduras is an undiscovered destination. The adventurous traveler will encounter picturesque beaches, untouched nature and a rich Mayan history. Meanwhile, the coffee enthusiast can find mainstream coffee growth, certified coffee expansion and opportunities in a budding specialty coffee market.

Frank Reese, General Manager, Molinos de Honduras S.A. de C.V.

PRODUCTION
Sitting at the heart of Central America, Honduras offers a wide range of coffee, the bulk of which is mainstream. However over the past five years Honduras has been slowly grabbing the attention of roasters by producing specialty and sustainable certified coffees.

Legend has it, Honduran coffee farming started in 1804 in the department Comayagua. Today it is the main agricultural export, vital to the livelihood of many families and the country’s economy. There are approximately 120,000 registered coffee farmers, around 98% of which are smallholders with an average farm size of between two to three hectares. It is estimated that during high season the Honduran coffee industry directly employs one million people, almost 13% of the population.

Honduras is the largest exporter of coffee in Central America. It is the world’s second largest producer of washed arabica coffee, and may be the world’s fifth largest producer of coffee very soon. Coffee farms are present in fifteen out of eighteen departments, with more than half of the crop produced in Comayagua, Copan, El Paraiso and Santa Barbara. Overall, there are around 350,000 hectares dedicated to coffee production.

In recent years, Honduran coffee production has increased rapidly and noticeably. Even with la roya, coffee production in the crop 2012/2013 was nearly 5 mio 60 kg bags of green bean. Despite current low prices there are large swathes of new plantings that indicate upward production potential.
PROCESSING
Intermediaries still play a large role in the Honduran coffee supply chain. Roughly 77% of producers sell to intermediaries, 16% of producers sell directly to exporters and the remainder is exported directly. The majority of smallholders harvest, de-pulp and ferment the coffee on their own farm, then deliver mainly wet parchment and some dry parchment to intermediaries. Exporters purchase, dry, store and mill the parchment coffee immediately before export. Every day more and more producers are installing wet mills to implement best practices and improve quality.

REGIONAL CUPPING CHARACTERISTICS
IHCAFE (Instituto Hondureño del Café) is a private organization, with the principal goal of developing the coffee culture in Honduras. It does this by educating producers in best practices in the field, in technology and in processing methods. As well as training programs, IHCAFE helps to market Honduran coffee. To support this effort they have redefined these regions for cup quality:

- **Agalta** is in the north-east of the country and coffee is grown between 1,000 to 1,400m. It is known for well-balanced coffees with round body and a chocolate finish.

- **Comayagua** is the department with the most productivity per hectare. This is due to the producer’s deep commitment to the crop, which also comes out in the cup – citrus acidity, honeyed sweet chocolate and a creamy body.

- **Copan** is home to the famous San Marcos region, and includes the highest and most mountainous areas of the country. Among its main attraction and cultural riches are the famous Mayan ruins. The coffee has tropical fruit notes, lively acidity, caramel chocolate fragrance and a sweet finish.

- **Montecillos** is the best-known coffee region, home to the Montecillos mountain range, which is protected by origin denomination “Marcala Coffee.” Coffee from this region has lively orange acidity, velvety body and peach flavors throughout.

- **Opalaca** has excellent climatic conditions, which allows for a special cup. The coffee is chocolatey with blackberries and grapes, fine acidity and delicate finish.

- **El Paraíso** is one of the oldest coffee farming departments and has the largest area of coffee land. In cup, the coffee has a smooth body, with milk chocolate flavors, citrus acidity and a nice finish.

VOlCAFe IN HONDURAS
The story of Molinos de Honduras started on September 6, 1960, when a local Honduran family formed the company to mill coffee and other commodities. Since the end of the 1980s Molinos has been fully owned by the Volcafe Group. Today the company mills coffee in San Pedro Sula, Santa Rosa de Copan and Comayagua, and has buying stations in San Nicolas and El Paraíso and purchases coffee cherry in La Fortuna.

Despite the traditional intermediary model of buying in Honduras, there is a noticeable change in mentality between producers, intermediaries and exporters, to work more closely together. This has resulted in significantly better coffee and more of it. Currently, we handle mostly mainstream coffee, but we are using our well-established relationships in the country to develop the high quality and certified coffee segment. Molinos tries to remain true to their long tradition while incorporating fresh ideas for the next fifty years.