



Bernard Uwitije – Producer - Rwanda



Trapro Coffee Washing Stations

Producer	Bernard Uwitije
Washing Stations	Gitega Hills, Bwenda Mountain
Altitude	1700 - 1900 m
Region	Nyamagabe District, southern Rwanda
Harvest	April - June

About Bernard Uwitije

Bernard Uwitije was born into a coffee producing family and since he was young, he has cared for coffee farms, helping his parents pick and process cherries at their home. His father used to collect coffees processed at homes throughout their village and sell them for a small profit at the nearby town, Kigali. This was a business Bernard took over as he grew up and as his father became ill, but it was also a source of inspiration for him. He says, "It is very exhausting labor to process coffee at homes; this is where I got the aspirations to alleviate the burden to farmers by building coffee processing factories." In 2012, Bernard began his own coffee business dealing with coffee brokerage, and in 2016 he acquired his first, of what would become three, washing stations that aligned with the country's policy to convert commodity coffee into specialty coffee. This business was Trapro Coffee Washing Stations.

Trapro Coffee has only grown in its size and success. In the most recent harvesting season, Bernard bought from nearly 5000 farmers. His washing stations at Gitega Hills, which he acquired in 2016, produced 450 tonnes of green beans and his washing station at Bwenda Mountain, which he acquired in 2019, produced 320 tonnes. But the company has plans to expand these numbers even further, with goals to increase the number of farmers by 30% and, by training farmers in good agricultural procedures, they plan to increase coffee production by 200%, all by 2025.

The focus at Trapro Coffee is to help equip farmers in southern Rwanda to have a better and sustainable life through coffee production, with a focus on those in the



Gitega Hills drying area - Rwanda

surrounding communities and those who were affected by the genocide only decades ago. Bernard recognises the needs for those in his community and so he puts effort towards improving those areas through his business. He delegates 10% of Trapro's gross profits towards projects like health insurance schemes, agriculture training and farming schools, small loans and children's school fees. They provide coffee seedlings and monthly training to farmers to help improve their yields and their quality. Trapro works with all farmers through the community but puts focus towards women, those who are disadvantaged, and the youth who were unable to complete their higher education.

The washing stations managed by Bernard and Trapro Coffee boasts ecologically friendly pulpers and modern equipment as well as accommodation for key staff members. The areas where the coffee trees are grown have sandy and volcanic soils at high altitudes with cool climates, which is ideal for elegant maturation of coffee. The Nyungwe Mountains lie near one of the oldest rainforests in Africa, and this heritage surely feeds through the earth and into the cherries that provide such vibrant and rich coffee profiles. Project Origin are so excited by the work of Bernard and his commitment to his community, and we wanted to share his story alongside the coffees that prove Rwanda is as beautiful a coffee origin as the rest.

Bwenda Mountain Washing Station

Varietal: Bourbon

Process: Natural

Tasting notes: raspberry, cherry, red plum, orange, grapefruit, creamy



Processing Details

- o Farmers bring cherries to the station and hand sort and separate red cherries from under- and over-ripe cherries
- o Ripe cherries are then laid on raised beds and further sorted by hand
- o Cherries are turned regularly to maintain clarity and left on beds to dry until moisture reaches 10-12%
- o Drying typically takes 20-30 days
- o Beans are stored in dried cherry pods until ready for export