

Vote Transparency Report 2022

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Welcome to our transparency report for 2022.

In the global coffee industry and within our own roastery home, 2022 proved to be a very busy year.

For us, last year involved settling-in to our new base at Communal Coffee and welcoming a new permanent staff member (hi, Angel) to our small team. We did our best to respond ethically and pragmatically to drastic changes in the international coffee market.

Amid the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and subsequent logistics backlogs, the coffee industry faced a challenging year. The impact of extreme weather on coffee quality and production grew even more evident, marking only the early days of a broader global industry shift as a result of climate change.

During 2022, we raised our prices across the board for the first time in six years to more accurately reflect the price and quality of the coffee we source. It was a tough year, but one of exciting growth. We always relish the opportunity to reflect on our place in the industry and how we can contribute to its sustainable improvement. Thanks for coming along with us!

In the following report, we'll share information about all of the coffees we sourced and roasted in 2022.

Overall, we roasted 27,543 kilograms of green coffee seeds, turning them into 23,923 kilograms of brown coffee beans. That meant a total of nearly 3,000 batches at the roast machine and countless hours sourcing, analysing, celebrating and sharing these beautiful coffees. As for how many cups of coffee we drank... *those* numbers we'll keep to ourselves!



Our love/hate relationship with transparency reports

We publish this report with a plethora of disclaimers, including our concern with the frequent and often redundant use of the words “transparent” and “sustainable”. We want to avoid grand claims: we see transparency reports as a necessary reference document and tool for industry accountability. We do not

treat this report as a slick piece of marketing. Rather, we hope it can be used for exactly what it purports to be: a detailed representation of the money and labour involved in producing each kilogram of coffee we roast.

We do not claim to have a “direct” relationship with every coffee producer we work with, nor can we perfectly verify what happens at every single step of the supply chain. We trust experienced intermediaries – exporters and importers – who help to bring coffee from equatorial hillsides to our doorstep in Neukölln, Berlin. Our aim is to engage and communicate with coffee producers as directly and frequently as possible, while relying on the sourcing and logistical expertise of our partners. Being a small company, we acknowledge our limitations, including that we cannot take on the financial risk and logistical challenges involved in truly direct trade. We are grateful for our ethically-driven partners who enable our small roastery to source special coffees at prices that can help sustainably fund livelihoods.¹ Thanks to Falcon, Clima, Raw Material, Azahar, Sancoffee, Algrano, Olam Specialty and all our trading partners for their willingness to share the numbers behind this report.

We share as much information as we can, because we believe that coffee buyers (like roasteries) must also honour the values of transparency and sustainability that the specialty coffee industry increasingly demands from coffee growers. We think that a more equitable coffee industry can only be achieved through mutual respect and a willingness to take some risks. Sharing numbers is a way for us to be accountable to you, the coffee drinker, and to the people we buy coffee from. We also have a responsibility to do our best to explain what all these numbers actually mean.

¹ We avoid using the term “fair prices,” because the coffee industry at large remains fundamentally based on a capitalist and colonialist structure. Within this structure, goods are traded from the global south to the global north. Actors in the global north retain most of the value for a the commodity (i.e. roasted coffee is a far more valuable coffee than unprocessed cherries), while growers absorb most of the risk (their crops are at great risk of damage due to climate change, and they remain vulnerable to price changes in a fluctuating stock market).



In a complex and confusing industry, it's tempting to compare coffees and prices with one another, even when they come from different places² with different supply chains. We encourage you to avoid these comparisons and focus on the information unique to each coffee. In our report we have provided FOB – freight on board – prices for all of the coffees we purchased, alongside farmgate prices when they were available. FOB prices should show how much of a coffee's value was retained in its country of origin, but may not be a useful metric for determining if a producer was paid fairly for their coffee. Similarly,

² The wider context is important here, as coffee processing and trading methods vary significantly between countries, regions, and even individual farms. For instance, Hernan Montano from Finca Los Laureles in Colombia sells parchment coffee to an exporter, while small-holder farmers in Nyabihu, Rwanda, sell unprocessed hand-picked cherries to the neighbouring Vunga Washing Station. In Kenya, coffee typically fetches a high FOB price when leaving the country, but farmers receive proportionately little of this revenue, partly due to the colonial-era auction system dominating their national industry. On the other hand, the owner of Finca Santa Clara in Brazil, Paul Alfonso, holds a significant level of control over the marketing and selling price of his coffee as a founding member of the export company Sancoffee. Remarkably, in the case of Finca Santa Clara, the FOB price and the price paid to the farmer are exactly the same.

farmgate prices can refer to the price paid for either unprocessed cherry or parchment: two very different products that involve vastly different amounts of labour. When publishing this transparency report, a challenge we faced is that we know very little about how payments are distributed to individual members of large cooperatives, particularly in Kenya or Ethiopia. In these instances we are unable to offer a reliable farmgate price. Comparing one coffee lot with another can be a little bit like comparing apples with oranges, or more accurately, comparing cherries with beans.³ For this reason, we have included two additional columns in our pricing table. These columns detail whether the farmgate price was for cherry or parchment, as well as provide more information about each coffee's specific supply chain.

We also try to resist the temptation to benchmark our coffees against the C Price.⁴ The C is a metric for an essentially imaginary commodity. The C price is the price paid for “coffee futures” which are agreements to buy and sell large quantities of coffee in the future. These contracts can be traded without any intention of purchasing actual coffee beans. The C market treats every single coffee as having the same inherent value and production cost, which starkly contrasts the realities of the specialty coffee industry. Nonetheless, it continues to impact the prices roasteries pay, particularly when buying coffee from Brazil. You can read more about the C Price and its influence on the coffee industry in our Glossary of Terms, but we will rarely refer to it in our report.

³ We strongly recommend reading the [2022 Specialty Coffee Transaction Guide](#). Here they discuss how the average price paid for specialty coffee differs greatly depending on the country of origin, and how this price variation is often not an accurate reflection of quality or of labour.

⁴ the price at which coffee futures are traded on the International Commodity Exchange in New York

Specialty coffee in 2022



In 2022 global events impacted the coffees we could source, the price we paid for them, and the way we could roast them. Events and trends that influenced the supply and price of the coffee included, but are not limited to:

1. Extreme weather patterns induced by climate change, including a brutal combination of droughts and frosts in Brazil, which reduced supply and drove up global prices.⁵ Increased and unseasonal rainfall

⁵ Here is an example of how the C Price continues to have an impact on the entire industry.

(particularly in Colombia) also impacted the stability and longevity of green coffee beans, making them harder to roast.

2. A very strong domestic market in Colombia, which meant that many Colombian producers could demand higher prices. While we delight in strong domestic markets and higher returns for farmers, in this case, higher coffee prices did not necessarily lead to higher income for many farmers. In 2022, the cost-of-living and cost-of-production increased for many producers, mainly due to an international fertiliser shortage caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

3. The continuing impact of COVID-19, including ongoing shipping disruptions and difficulties, as well as a shortage of labour at the farm level.

4. The value of the Euro declined against the US Dollar, bottoming at below parity for the first time in two decades in July. Since coffee is conventionally traded in USD, we predominantly contract the majority of our coffees in dollars. In most years this works in our favour; for instance, a coffee that costs 14 USD/kg might cost 12,50 EUR/kg when the Euro is strong. However, the weak Euro in 2022 meant we paid closer to 14 EUR/kg for this hypothetical coffee, up to 11% more than usual.

In short, green coffee became more expensive in 2022.⁶ This was part of a longer trajectory of price increases since 2020, which has continued into 2023. The four key coffees we purchase, Cafeina, Koromij, Hernan Montano, and Villamaria Decaf saw an average price increase of 19% between 2020 and 2022. On average these prices increased by a further 22% between 2022 and 2023, making a total increase of 45% over four years.⁷ Additionally, our roastery's electricity, gas, transport and wage costs also increased in 2022, contributing to higher average production costs.

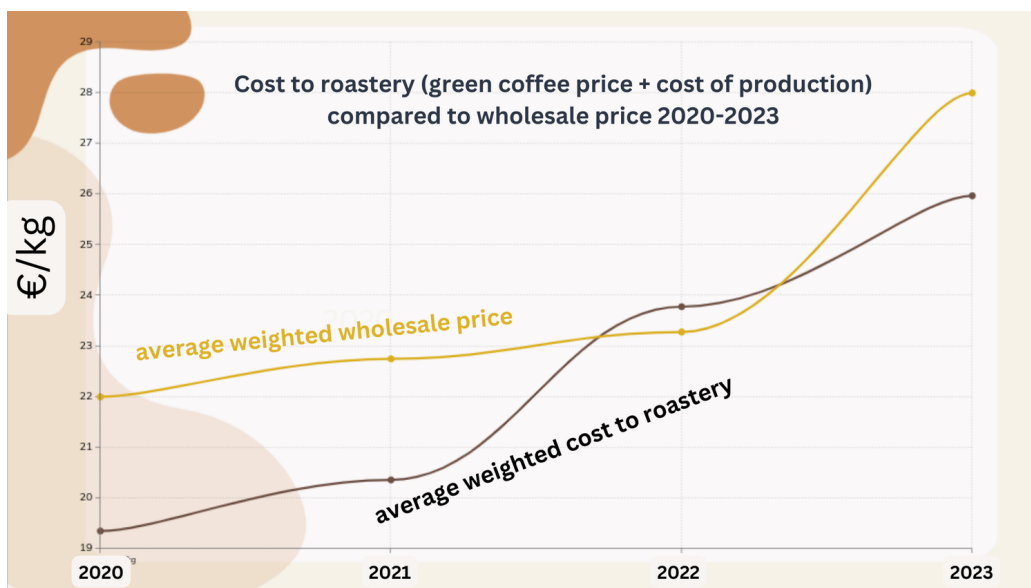
⁶ If you'd like to learn more about the reasons listed above you can read our blog post from August 2022 here.

⁷ We predict that average coffee prices may fall again for the 2023/2024 harvest. We will keep you updated!

2022 at Vote

In response to increasing costs, we increased the wholesale price on our entire coffee range by 15% in October 2022. Raising prices was not a decision that we took lightly. We strongly believe that a decent coffee should be accessible to our own local community. However, in 2022, our average weighted wholesale price fell below the average weighted cost of producing a kilogram of roasted coffee, meaning that raising prices was a necessary step to sustain our business.

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cafeina	4.35€/kg	4.07€/kg	5.30€/kg	6.20€/kg
Hernan Montano	7.54€/kg	7.54€/kg	10.53€/kg	12.76€/kg
Villamaria Decaf	9.54€/kg	10.50€/kg	10.50€/kg	12.58€/kg
Koromii	9.84€/kg	9.84€/kg	10.80€/kg	13.70€/kg
Cost of Production	11.60€/kg	12.18€/kg	13.50€/kg	



Our reflections and goals for the future

Here are some goals that we'd like to work towards in the future:

More accurately predicting and contracting the volume of coffee that we need.

In 2022, we ultimately had more coffee in our warehouse than we could sell at a reasonable rate. This was partly due to an excess of coffee that we had leftover from 2020 and 2021, when demand fluctuated wildly due to lockdowns. Logistics issues often meant that several coffees arrived months later than planned, meaning that we had large volumes of coffee arrive at the wrong time of the year. Sadly, we were forced to reduce the volume that we had contracted on certain coffees, including the Koromii.

Cancelling and reducing reservations is something that we would like to avoid completely in future.

In 2022, we were able to predict product demand more accurately, something which has only improved further in 2023. We hope to plan more accurately in future, so that we can honour our commitments to partners and sell coffee at the peak of its quality and freshness. One way that we can work towards this is by selling more coffee! We're a little marketing-shy at Vote, but we do ultimately understand that buying and selling more coffee is the best way that we can offer tangible, sustained support to producers and our local employees alike.

Sharing the burden of risk arising from climate change's impact on coffee quality.

With climate change accelerating, we are encountering more instances where unseasonal weather during coffee processing has detrimentally impacted coffee quality. An example of this is in Timor Leste, where our partners at Raw Material inform us that the harvest and post-harvest seasons have been

characterised by heavy rain or extremely hot weather.⁸

While we always ensure that the coffees we purchase meet certain minimum quality standards, we believe that we have a responsibility to help producers who are affected by climate change. We see our role as three-fold:

1. Providing specific and constructive feedback about coffee quality and always asking questions about quality, rather than simply rejecting samples.
2. Consistently investing in the same producers or supply-chains year after year, and asking how we can contribute to building infrastructure – such as shade canopies in Timor Leste – that will help make coffee production more climate resilient.⁹
3. Further developing our roasting and brewing skills to ensure that we can extract the maximum potential out of higher-moisture or potentially less stable coffees.

It is commonly understood that the world's most vulnerable population, particularly in the Global South, are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change. In many ways, specialty coffee is a luxury good that is shipped across the entire world for us to enjoy. Situated in industrialised Germany, we need to do our small bit to mitigate the imminent financial and environmental precarity faced by approximately 12.5 million small-scale coffee farms worldwide.

⁸ During the drying-phase of coffee processing, coffee requires optimal weather conditions for stable drying. Unseasonal weather occurrences can negatively influence the overall humidity level and water activity of a coffee, which in turn, have a direct impact on its quality and shelf-life.

⁹ In order to invest in infrastructure and crop development (such as planting more disease-resistant and weather-hardy coffee varieties), we need to pay farmers prices that not only cover, but exceed their cost of production. Sadly, many coffee prices barely meet this basic threshold. We see price models such as Azahar's [More Sustainable Income](#) benchmark as a realistic way for us to contribute to ongoing investment.

THANK YOU.



It's hard to express sincerity in a written report, but we are genuinely grateful to all of our partners. We are so thankful that when we barrage our importing partners with questions about the coffee supply chain, they do not provide us with cursory answers, but share their reflections and deep empirical knowledge. Thank you to the baristas, home-enthusiasts and cafe-owners who vote to use our coffee every day. We might overwhelm you with excessive amounts of information (sorry) but we're not ones for hollow marketing slogans or empty platitudes. In an industry that can seem opaque – even to us – we hope and aim to be transparent: what you see is what you get. In turn, we rely on your honest feedback to improve. Please share it with us liberally.

Every day, we get to work with caffeinated seeds that have been grown inside the nutrient-rich home of a cherry, then fermented, dried, shipped halfway across the world, cupped, roasted, ground, brewed and finally poured into your cup. We're glad and lucky that we get to be part of this complicated and sometimes, seemingly miraculous transformation from green seed to brown bean. We also enjoy keeping you up to date with roastery life and the changes that we witness in the coffee industry - it is one of the most enriching parts of our job. If you have any questions, please never hesitate to get in touch.

Graphs, tables and detailed data:

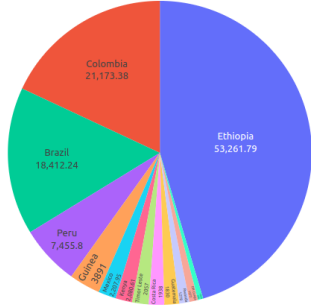
Vote Transparency Report: ALL COFFEES ROASTED 2022											*Very blank fields indicate that the coffee was used as a blend component only. These prices are averages for the entire year and factor in any discounts that were applied	**the price paid by vote for the green coffee. This does not include overhead transport	**we have converted this price into US cents to reflect the units in which coffee is typically traded. Usually we contract coffee in US cents, if we contracted the coffee in EUR we have converted the price based on the average exchange rate for 2022 (€:96.00:US\$1.00)	**FOB + Freight on Board and means the amount that was paid for a coffee when loaded onto a ship at its country of origin	**The price paid to the farmer (block purchase) indicates that very different products which require different amounts of labour and infrastructure	**In accordance with the SCA Specialty protocol 2022, scores by Vote staff
COFFEE NAME	ORIGIN	Exporter	Importer	Number of harvest purchased	Quantity Purchased	Quantity roasted in 2022	Wholesale price per kg (mean price throughout 2022)	Ex-warehouse price (€/kg)	Ex-warehouse price (US\$/lb)	FOB (US\$/lb)	FOB (US\$/lb)	Parcament of cherry	Total purchase cost to roastery (€)	Score		
Yingqing	China		Yigama	1	50	50		€13.00	€22				€650.00	85.5		
Santa Clara 2021 Crop	Brazil	Sancoffee	Algaro	3	2100	1456	€21.62	€5.58	267	224	224	Parcament	€11,718.00	83.75		
Djafa Canavieiras Robusta 2021 C 3195	Guinea	Mascota Beans	Algaro	2	600	460		€9.46	405	310		Cherry	€5,076.00	81		
Inoculada Conocillo KP54	Brazil	Sancoffee	Algaro	1	300	282	€20.52	€9.87	472	354		Parcament	€2,951.00	85.5		
Kikali Grade C	Kenya	Vava Coffee	Algaro	1	300	85	€11.76	€62	562	440		Cherry	€3,528.00	84.5		
Hunapu Mountain Flower	Guatemala	Bella Vista	Beko	1	644	176	€28.92	€10.40	497			Parcament	€6,697.60	86		
Karanga SCHACZ	DR Congo	Cafe imports		2	120	120	€21.47	€9.94	428			Cherry	€1,072.80	87		
Korona 2020/21 Crop	Ethiopia	Sookoo	Clina	2	3600	2172	€25.39	€11.30	540	370	303		Parcament	€40,680.00	88	
Thakay Kallamu 2020/21 Crop	Ethiopia	O-Broad	Clina	1	600	590	€9.70	€9.70	464	400	360		Parcament	€5,020.00	85.5	
Behava Temea 2020/21 Crop	Ethiopia	O-Broad	Clina	2	600	595	€14.34	€10.95	483	480	360		Parcament	€8,030.00	87.5	
Hugo Marifo Gasha	Peru	Incahuasi	Clina	1	40	40	€51.00	€32.20	1539	1000	800		Parcament	€1,288.00	88.5	
Cafena Women's Group	Brazil	Cocacel	Falcon Specialty	3	12300	11369	€20.55	€5.29	259	200		Parcament	€69,928.00	83.75		
Jitamo	Ethiopia	Jitamo Coffee Plantation	Falcon Specialty	1	2400	2023		€6.65	297	210	NA	Cherry	€13,960.00	85		
Nanda Of Grade 5	Ethiopia	Kata Mutaga Union	Falcon Specialty	1	1200	786	€19.64	€6.21	332	220	NA	Cherry	€7,452.00	86		
Mustafa Abakeno / Boshasha G2	Ethiopia	Mustafa Abakeno	Falcon Specialty	3	1200	500	€22.59	€9.68	402	299	253	Cherry	€10,416.00	84.5		
Mustafa Abakeno #7	Ethiopia	Mustafa Abakeno	Falcon Specialty	3	480	300	€21.15	€10.75	498	360	253	Cherry	€5,160.00	86		
Maribel Heredia	Peru	Falcon Peru	Falcon	1	207	207	€23.72	€9.08	468	350		Parcament	€1,879.56	87.5		

[Click here to view: supply chain information in accordance with transparency.coffee, our cost of production, contracts and detailed information about how we sourced each coffee](#)

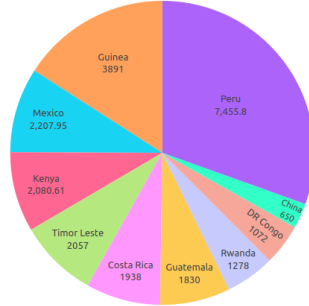


[Click here to see an interactive map showing the origin and size of Vote's coffee purchases in 2022](#)

Vote Coffee purchases 2023 by origin country. Value in Euro



Zoomed-in on smaller purchases



- Ethiopia
- Colombia
- Brazil
- Peru
- Guinea
- Mexico
- Kenya
- Timor Leste
- Costa Rica
- Guatemala
- Rwanda
- DR Congo
- China

[Click here to see graphs showing: the price we paid for coffees in relation to their score, the origin of coffees by weight and purchase volume, and the price we pay for key coffees over time](#)

Recommended Reading

[State of the Smallholder Coffee Farmer: An Initiative Towards a More Equitable and Democratic Information Landscape](#)

[Specialty Coffee Assoc. The Information Landscape: what we know \(and what we don't\) about smallholder coffee producers](#)

[Azahar, A Sustainable Coffee Buyer's Guide](#)

[2022 Specialty Coffee Transaction Guide](#)

[Kim Elena Ionescu | Pathways between Farm and Consumer: Mapping Specialty Coffee](#)