



## **Conduct for Ethical Sourcing Coffee: A Union of Quality and Social Responsibility**

Union is our model for global trade in relationship coffee creating a system for transparent trade structures leading to sustainable livelihoods through provenance, transparency, and education; pivoting on the production of exceptionally high quality coffee.

Although we are a small company this is a powerful mechanism for international development because we participate as a stakeholder not just a buyer. The coffees which epitomise our approach to sourcing are based on the knowledge we obtain from travelling to coffee growing communities and our assessment of farmers needs. This is how we fulfil our worldwide search for coffees with unsurpassed aromas and exceptional flavour profiles.

To achieve this Union Hand-Roasted developed a Code of Conduct for Responsible Sourcing in 2001. This Code is designed to help us work with coffee farmers to ensure we have access to high-quality coffee and promote equitable trading relationships with farmers, farm-workers and coffee communities as well as protecting the environment where coffee is produced.

Our Code defines what we consider the critical quality, social, economic and environmental aspects of growing and processing coffee. Coffee farmers and milling processors engage with us and demonstrate best practices which are subject to independent verification by third party auditors.

### **The Strength of our Union:**

- **Relationships:** The coffee we buy is the result of long-term relationships and contracts. By receiving high prices for high quality the farmers who supply us can earn a profit and look after their families and the land. This relationship coffee builds strong ties between us and diligent farmers who produce excellent coffee year-after-year and ensure we have access to the best of the best.
- **Training:** We travel to coffee growing communities to train farmers in cupping skills and sensory evaluation. We work alongside small producers to create a point of reference so we can use a common language to talk about quality. They learn to understand the value of what they grow, take pride in the pursuit of outstanding quality and ultimately control their reward for it.
- **Trade Credit:** Small coffee farmers often struggle with cash-flow during the growing season before harvest. By providing zero interest, pre-harvest credit, we enable farmers to avoid exploitative middlemen who pay lower prices or charge high interest.
- **Fairtrade Certified**—is an alternative trade model that guarantees a minimum price to only smallholder farmers. We support this model and also include the optional additional social premium for community projects. However, the single-family farms we work with are not eligible to be Fairtrade Certified so these premier estate coffees are purchased according to our Code of Conduct for Sustainable sourcing. Experience has shown us that we can achieve results through our own efforts and attain a higher level of transparency than by simply purchasing Fairtrade coffees.