A TOUR … AN EDUCATION … A STRATEGY FOR LIFE

by

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The LaTerza Coffee Roasterie tour occurred on February 20, 2016 with approximately ten attendees (nine NFB chapter members and one guest).  From the planting of the seed to entering the coffee cup, the fascinating inner workings of this micro-roasterie was presented to the group.

Upon entering this quaint coffee facility located in Lockland, Ohio, it was apparent that David, the owner, had given a lot of thought and preparation as to how to ensure we, persons with visual impairments, would have an unforgettable experience.  Together with an additional tour guide, Aaron, who was also a passionate coffee fan, led us into a small, cozy room where we sat to hear the intriguing history of coffee sourcing, roasting and its delivery which David called the  “business pillars of his operation.”  As we listened we learned their sourcing involved identifying and working with small farmers in second and third world countries.  The two fold purpose for this approach is to purchase a high quality coffee while those countries, in turn, use the income to build up their communities including their schools and provide healthcare for their workers and families.

Absorbing every word, we were informed of the three primary regions (Africa, Central South America and Indonesia) from which the unique samples of the various coffees we tasted were purchased.  The African area coffee had more of a fruity, wine taste, Central South America, a chocolate, nutty flavor and Indonesia, an earthy, bold taste, and everyone selected their favorite coffee to go with their cake and pumpkin crisp (brought by NFB members)  which would be enjoyed at the end of the tour.  Also, our tasting experience included infused coffee tea brewed from dried coffee cherries called cascara which was imported from Costa Rica.

Next, we went to the roasting area where we learned the two major methods of processing coffee are air or gas drum roasting.  At LaTerza, the gas drum is used because it allows for a small batch at a time as opposed to air roasting in which the coffee is roasted in mass production.  We were given the opportunity to touch the drum, listen to the movement of the coffee spinning as it roasted, smell the aroma, hear it make the sound like popcorn and, when finished, pour into the cooling tray as the fan pulled the hot air from it.  When asked “how long does it take to roast a batch,” David said, “between ten and twenty minutes depending upon the temperature set; generally, though, it varies—roasting is a marriage between science and art.”

After nearly everyone had left, I asked David what made his coffee roasterie so special.  What he shared helped me to really understand why, I’m sure, each of us had come away with a new appreciation for coffee and grateful for having had this experience.  David said, “While our company’s passion is about roasting great coffee, I would have to say that my personal passion is how do I do business to make the world a better place.”  My ears perked up and I leaned closer to hear more as he continued.  “From my interaction with my sources, roasters, employees, customers, competitors, and my family, it is my practice to strive to treat others the way I want to be treated.  We work with the farmers to help them produce a high quality product; I give my employees the necessary tools to do their jobs along with creating a warm and positive work environment; I give my customers a high quality coffee at a fair price; I encourage competitors since coffee is the second largest world commodity; and I work with other business owners to encourage them to have a healthy, balanced family life.  It is very important that these entities are given my best before I reward myself.”  I left thinking, “to put others first,” what a profound principle to have as a family man and business owner!

To find out additional information about scheduling group tours and/or registering for coffee brewing classes, visit LaTerza Coffee's website at http://www.laterzacoffee.com