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CONTENTS

FALL ISSUE 2023

08 **HEALTHY WOMEN, STRONG COMMUNITIES**
A Q&A with Grounds for Health's New Executive Director, Kyle Engelman
GROUNDS FOR HEALTH





10 **DON'T SETTLE!**
Go All-In with Quality
SPONSORED BY ODDLYGOOD

12 **GEORGE HOWELL**
The Legend of Specialty Coffee
GEORGE HOWELL COFFEE





20 **ONYX COFFEE LAB**
Passion to Profit
JAKE LEONTI

16 **HELEN RUSSEL**
Turning a Dream into Reality
EQUATOR COFFEE





06 **THE VIEW**
CoffeeTalk
KERRI GOODMAN

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{ INDEX }

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THE VIEW

{ CoffeeTalk }

KERRI GOODMAN

I was asked this week, "What sets CoffeeTalk apart as a powerful advertising platform?"

This question gave me pause for thought. I soon realized that it's not solely due to our long history (since 1994) or our extensive involvement in the coffee industry. For 30 years, we have actively participated in and covered numerous events, undergone Q-Grader training, volunteered for several coffee-related non-profit organizations, and served on SCAA committees.

Our profound understanding of the industry and its diverse aspects allows us to effectively connect our savvy advertisers with their specific target audiences. However, CoffeeTalk goes beyond expertise. We are also committed to treating our clients like family, striving to make your life easier in any possible way.

In summary, we offer exceptional value, top-notch service, and genuine care for your success. With 2024 approaching, we are working on bringing more great opportunities to connect the coffee communities. Stay Tuned!

Kerri

My journey as Editor-in-Chief of this stalwart publication began three years ago amidst the uncertainty of a global pandemic.

I had already spent two decades working on the coffee business's green, roasting and retail side, but with the world on lockdown, turning to the publishing side felt like a fresh and exciting venture. Working with Coffee Talk also provided a channel to connect with other members of the coffee community, sharing stories and creativity during a time of social isolation. In that regard, it was genuinely a lifesaver.

I want to extend a special thanks to our esteemed publisher, Kerri Goodman, for being an incredible mentor, collaborator, and friend throughout my time here. Kerri, who brought this publication to life in 1994, was never possessive, always encouraged new directions, and adapted to rapidly changing times.

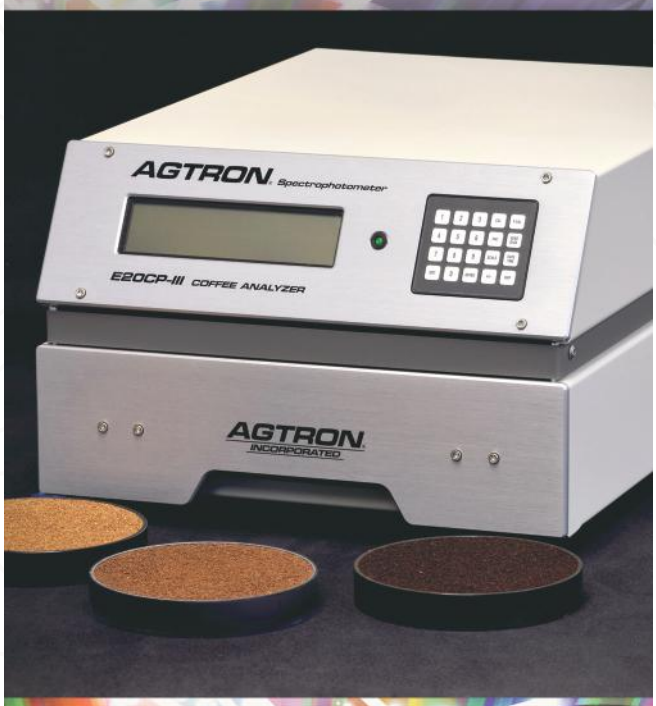
During my three-year stay, we completely revamped the online platform, changed the print format and created more native content than in years past. We reinvigorated the social media channels, introduced storytelling packages to sponsors and added exclusive articles online. All this was accomplished with the help of an incredibly experienced and talented team, including Justin Goodman, Marcus Fellbaum and Meagan Goodman. The team carried me as I learned the ropes, and they will continue to create great work in my absence.

For now, you will find me broadcasting my podcast, Food + Beverage Therapy, which has become another exciting avenue for connecting with professionals I admire. I will also continue with public speaking engagements at conferences and coffee festivals throughout the year. I hope to see many of you there. With the pandemic mostly behind us, my focus is turning back to the part of coffee that I love most: the making. As more requests for custom products, value chain assembly, cafe creation, training and leadership flood in, I am called back into action where I can best serve our industry.

Thank you to all the readers who took the time to listen to what we had to say. Thank you for that show of trust. I hope we delivered, and your time was well spent.

Jake

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HEALTHY WOMEN, STRONG COMMUNITIES

{ A Q&A with Grounds for Health's New Executive Director, Kyle Engelman }

{ Can you share with us the moment you discovered your passion for women's health?

KYLE: I was only 17 years old when I went to Guatemala on a service trip to build houses for families. I encountered a woman who had a really awful rash on her arms and nothing to use for it. We cleaned up and bandaged using our first aid kit, and though she was very grateful, I couldn't help thinking that the kit was woefully insufficient.

Q: How did that experience impact you?

KYLE: At that moment, I said to myself: This is my passion. I want to dedicate my entire career to this cause. Even though, at that time, I was still in school, I knew what I wanted my career to be.

Q: And what was that?

KYLE: I wanted to work towards improving women's healthcare access globally. It was that early, and I have pursued this goal in everything I did since then, in what I studied, in what organizations I worked, in how I applied my skills in my job. My focus has always been on women's health, healthcare access, and equity.

Q: Can you elaborate on the organizations you've been involved with and the work you've done?

KYLE: Absolutely. I've approached the issue of healthcare access and empowerment from several angles. Right out of college, I worked for a USAID contractor, one of the biggest players in international aid. I wanted to understand how they operate and how they address pressing international development issues. After that, I felt the need to be closer to the actual problem. I moved to Alaska and worked with women experiencing domestic violence and sexual abuse, helping them access the resources and services they needed.

During my grad school for public health, I went to Nigeria and worked with young girls who were dying in childbirth because they were too young. Our project was about getting these girls into high school, giving them literacy, math skills, and the financial tools their families needed to support their education to prevent them from being married off at 13 and 14.

Since grad school, the common thread in all my work is quality healthcare access and equity. Around the world, women are the backbone of their families, communities, and society. They should not be dying from preventable causes, and my work has always been my commitment to that belief.

Q: What are you most proud of during your tenure so far with Grounds for Health?

KYLE: Though it's challenging to pinpoint just one thing, I'm incredibly proud of the enduring mission and values of Grounds for Health. I've worked with three different executive directors, various boards, country programs, and staff and yet, the organization's mission and values have remained steadfast.

Cervical cancer is a preventable disease. It's estimated that 6 million women may die from cervical cancer in the next 15 years, yet almost every single one of those deaths is preventable. Our work involves educating communities, working within local partnerships, contexts, languages, and cultures to reach women and families. We aim to create systems where women can access high-quality care.

I am constantly in awe of how much the organization has stayed true to its mission and values over 27 years. It's not about a singular achievement I'm proud of, but the consistent commitment of the organization to its mission that I find remarkable.

Q: What are your hopes and dreams for Grounds for Health in the future?

KYLE: Grounds for Health is doing exceptional work, and my immediate hope is that everyone involved feels the energy and connectivity that comes from this work. My goal is to increase our impact by increasing the number of women we can reach with our new screening technique, self-sampling. We also hope to grow our external partnerships to train other partners in the clinical techniques and support them in high-quality programming. Lastly, we hope to build our presence so there's more awareness globally of what we do, so we can influence more change and work towards eliminating cervical cancer.

Q: When you mention other partners, are you referring to more within the coffee industry or from other industries that complement coffee-growing communities?

KYLE: We partner with a variety of external partners, including people within the coffee industry, other NGOs, and industry partners who want us to provide health services for their workers. For instance, when I was a program manager in Ethiopia, we partnered with flower factories to provide cervical cancer prevention services to women working there. We set up a three-day campaign where the women could rotate through our clinic and receive services. We are exploring different models through which we can work with various partners, all with the goal of expanding access to cervical cancer prevention.

Q: Why is the mission of Grounds for Health so important to the coffee industry?

KYLE: Women play a crucial role in the coffee industry, doing 60 to 70% of the labor picking and sorting coffee beans. While it's harder to draw a direct line between women's health and the coffee sector's export-import goals, studies increasingly show that women's reproductive health has a dramatic effect on environmental outcomes, children's education, literacy, and the economic productivity of the home, community, and region. Women are holding up their families, communities, and the land that makes the coffee industry possible. They are at the heart of the beginning of the supply chain. It's important to care for them; in this case, we can do it in one of the most simple, effective, and cost-effective ways .

Q: What do you wish more people knew about Grounds for Health?

KYLE: The coffee industry has a vast community that supports farmers' health and women at coffee origin. There are many dedicated individuals and companies throughout the specialty coffee industry that care deeply about this issue and commit fully to Grounds for Health. The industry has an opportunity to play a leadership role and move the needle on cervical cancer in coffee communities. It can demonstrate globally the connection between a private industry and a public health issue. If we can do it together, with even more power and collectivity, there's a huge opportunity and a huge story to tell for coffee and for farmers around the world.

Q: Can you share a story that captures the essence of the Grounds for Health mission?

KYLE: A woman came to one of our campaigns in Ethiopia with her whole family, which is unusual as women often come alone for services with just the other women from their villages. She was diagnosed as "suspicious for cervical cancer" and our country director, Ashenafi, shared the clinical findings with her and her family with kindness and compassion. Meanwhile, the other women at the campaign were watching her children so that she could have that moment with her husband and her parents. This story captures the essence of our mission and who we are – an organization providing healthcare services with compassion and respect while also fostering a community of supportive, committed partners.

In my career, I've worked with organizations that had to shift their expertise or experience to match the latest grant opportunity from large, international aid organizations. And when I worked in global health research, I watched as our work was hindered by the need to stay true to our study design and capture data. We couldn't shift until after the study, regardless of what we were learning was most needed on the ground. Which is not to say that aid organizations aren't making a huge impact, or to discredit the very important role that research plays in learning how best to solve problems, but when I found Grounds for Health, I knew I had found the place that most aligns with my values and learnings from those experiences. Our partnership with the coffee industry allows us to stay singularly focused on our mission, gaining deeper experience, expertise, and partnerships in pursuit of the goal of preventing cervical cancer, rather than shifting our people and systems to different issues according to grantor expectations. And our commitment to implementation – true "boots-on-the-ground, let's make sure we reach women" implementation – met my goal of achieving impact. We have the tools we need to eradicate this disease; what is needed now is organizations like GfH and our partners to go out and do it.





DON'T SETTLE!

{ Go All-In with Quality }

SPONSORED CONTENT

{ Once upon a time, in a bustling city filled with the aroma of freshly prepared coffee, there was a passionate barista named Alex, an artisan of their craft and dedicated to creating the perfect cup of coffee for their customers. They knew that every ingredient they selected was a testament to their dedication and expertise.

However, Alex faced several obstacles in their quest for coffee perfection. Their current milk alternatives failed to meet their high standards leading to a subpar customer experience and affecting their reputation and craft. Additionally, they felt the pressure of staying relevant in the industry and feared the potential embarrassment and disappointment of offering substandard coffee products to their customers. The biggest obstacle was the risk of missing out on innovative and inclusive brands, which could lead to stagnation in their craft.

But then, a ray of hope appeared in the form of Oddlygood All-In Barista Oat Drink. With Oddlygood, Alex could go all-in and choose an addition that complemented their expertise. The oat drink matched the taste, consistency, and foaming capability they craved. It boasted a full-bodied, rounded taste that harmonized with coffee, without the usual "flake" seen with other alternatives. It was a game-changer in the world of milk alternatives.

Oddlygood All-In Barista Oat Drink was not just any ordinary milk alternative.



It was dairy-free, gluten-free, vegan friendly, non-GMO Project Verified, and Glyphosate Residue Free. It used the entire oat, without removing any part of it, which meant no waste. This made it more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Oddlygood was more than just a milk alternative. It was a partner in Alex's quest for coffee perfection. It understood the challenges and aspirations of baristas like Alex. With their team of industry leaders, including award-winning baristas, Oddlygood offered extensive knowledge and experience. They were ready to guide Alex on their journey to coffee perfection.

By choosing Oddlygood, coffee shop owners and managers could ensure that their baristas had the best tools to create exceptional coffee. They could provide their customers with a unique and inclusive coffee experience that would set their shop apart from the competition. With Oddlygood, they could attract a wider range of customers, including those with dietary restrictions or preferences. They could build a loyal customer base that appreciated the quality and craftsmanship of their coffee.

Oddlygood was kick-started in 2018 by Finnish food & beverage company Valio, globally known for its innovations. With sustainable product development top-of-mind, they harnessed their learnings, listened to the people, and created Oddlygood. The secret to their full-bodied recipe is the way they maximize their oats. They use the oat flour to the fullest in their special production process; this minimizes waste.

But don't just take our word for it. Oddlygood offers a "try before you buy" approach, allowing baristas like Alex to experience the product for themselves. They provide a free sample along with tips and tricks on how to use it in coffee creations. They also have an online community of professional baristas who share their insights and feedback on the product. It is a supportive and inclusive community that helps each barista on their journey to coffee perfection.



Grounds for Health™

Let's keep women healthy in the coffeelands.

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GEORGE HOWELL: THE LEGEND OF SPECIALTY COFFEE

George Howell is a legend in the specialty coffee industry. He is widely regarded as one of the pioneers and innovators of the craft, with a career that spans over four decades. He is the founder of The Coffee Connection, one of the first specialty coffee chains in the US, which he sold to Starbucks in 1994. He is also the founder of George Howell Coffee, a roasting company and cafe chain based in Massachusetts, which is known for its exceptional quality, transparency, and education.

We had the opportunity to chat with George Howell on the F&B Therapy podcast, where he shared his insights and experiences on various topics related to specialty coffee. Here are some of the highlights from our conversation.

THE ORIGINS OF GEORGE HOWELL COFFEE

George Howell Coffee was born in 2004, after George decided to return to the coffee industry following a decade-long hiatus. He wanted to create a company that would reflect his passion and vision for coffee, as well as his commitment to social and environmental responsibility.

"I wanted to do something different from what I did before. I wanted to focus more on the origin side of coffee, on the farmers and the producers, on the terroir and the variety. I wanted to create a direct connection between them and the consumers," George said.

George Howell COFFEE

He started by sourcing green coffee from some of the best farms and cooperatives in the world, such as La Minita in Costa Rica, Daterra in Brazil, and Hacienda Esmeralda in Panama. He also developed a unique roasting style that aimed to preserve and highlight the natural flavors and aromas of each coffee.

"I wanted to roast coffee in a way that would respect its intrinsic qualities, not mask them, or alter them. I wanted to roast coffee in a way that would reveal its true potential, not limit it, or compromise it," George said.

He also introduced innovative methods and technologies to ensure the freshness and consistency of his roasted coffee, such as freezing green coffee and roasted coffee, using nitrogen flushing and vacuum sealing, and developing custom grinders and brewers.

"I wanted to use science and technology to enhance and improve the quality of coffee, not to degrade or standardize it. I wanted to use science and technology to extend and preserve the shelf life of coffee, not to shorten or deteriorate it," George said.

He opened his first cafe in 2006 in Acton, MA, followed by two more locations in Boston. He also launched an online store that offers detailed information about his coffees, roasting, brewing, and sourcing.

"I wanted to create cafes that would be educational and engaging for the customers, not just transactional or functional. I wanted to create cafes that would be transparent and authentic for the customers, not just secretive or deceptive. I wanted to create cafes that would be enjoyable and memorable for the customers, not just convenient or habitual," George said.

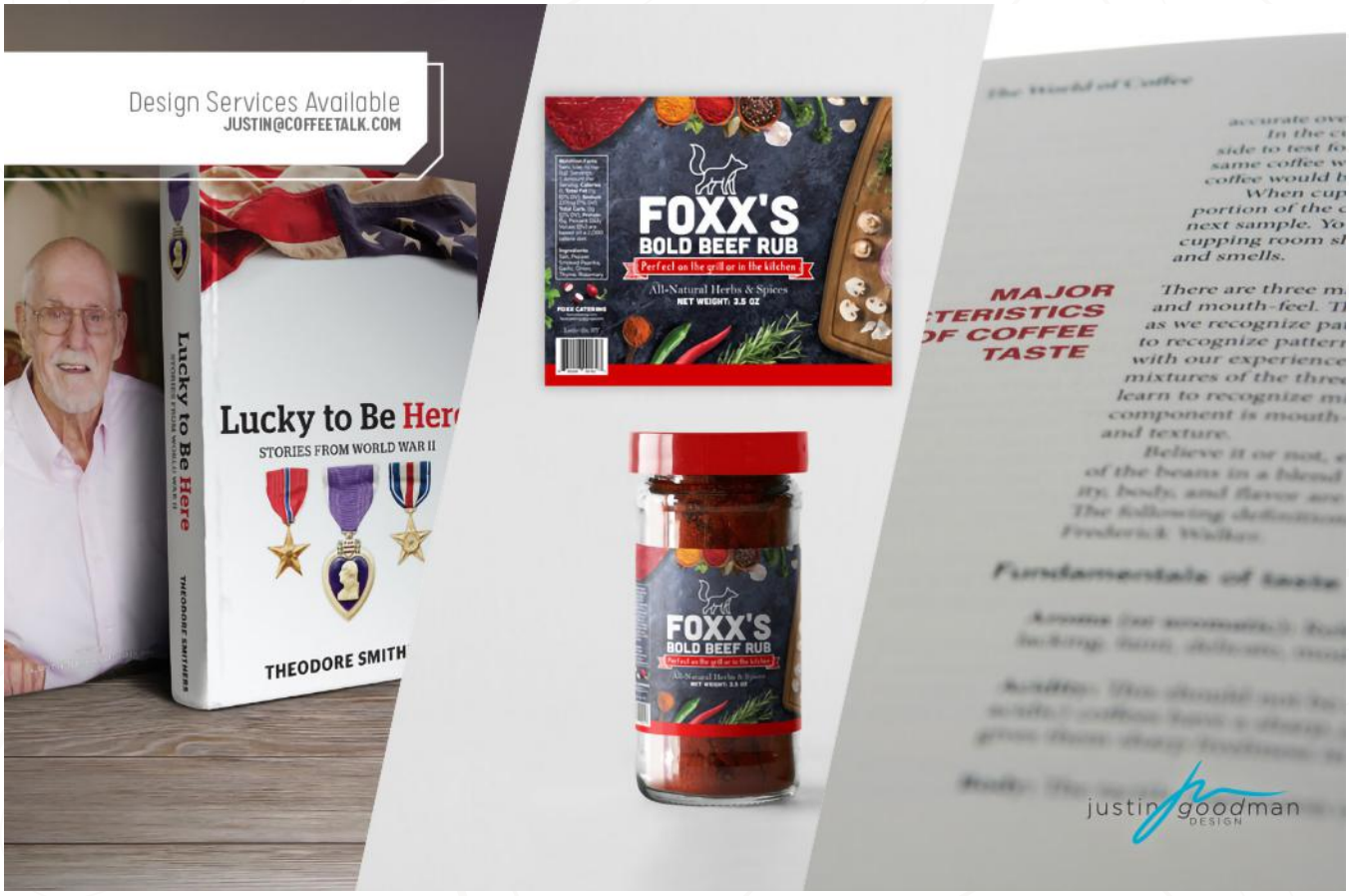
THE GROWTH OF GEORGE HOWELL COFFEE

George Howell Coffee has grown steadily over the years, gaining recognition and reputation for its outstanding coffee quality and service. It has won numerous awards and accolades from various organizations and publications, such as Roast Magazine, Good Food Awards, Coffee Review, Sprudge, Barista Magazine, Boston Magazine, The Boston Globe, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, CNN, NPR, and more.

"We are very grateful for all the recognition and support we have received from the industry and from

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GEORGE HOWELL

Continued from page 12

the media. It has helped us to grow our brand and our business. It has also helped us to raise awareness and appreciation for specialty coffee among the public," George said.

It has also established strong relationships with its customers and wholesalers, who value its quality, consistency, transparency, education, and innovation.

"We are very proud of our loyal and engaged customer base. They are not just consumers of our coffee. They are partners in our mission. They are advocates for our vision. They are friends of our family," George said.

It has also maintained close ties with its farmers and producers, who share its values and goals. It has supported them through various initiatives and projects, such as paying fair prices and premiums, providing feedback and advice, investing in infrastructure and equipment, funding social programs, and promoting environmental sustainability.

"We are very committed to our farmers and producers. They are not just suppliers of our coffee. They are collaborators in our craft. They are contributors to our quality. They are members of our community," George said.



THE FUTURE OF GEORGE HOWELL COFFEE

George Howell Coffee has come a long way since its inception in 2004. It has become one of the most respected and influential specialty coffee roasters in the country, with a loyal customer base and a growing wholesale network. It has also become a source of inspiration and innovation for the coffee industry, setting new standards and trends for quality, service, and creativity.

However, George is not satisfied with his achievements. He has big plans and ambitions for the future of George Howell Coffee.

"We are always looking for ways to improve and to grow. We are always looking for new challenges and opportunities. We are always looking for new coffees and new partners. We are always looking for new ideas and new projects," George said.

One of his main goals is to expand his cafe network, both within and outside Massachusetts. He wants to bring his coffee and his culture to more people and places, while also adapting to different markets and preferences.

"We want to open cafes that are relevant and appropriate for each location. We don't want to just copy and paste our existing cafes. We want to create cafes that are unique and original, that reflect the local community and culture, that offer something new and different," George said.

Another goal is to continue to participate in competitions and events, both as competitors and as organizers. He wants to showcase his skills and his coffees, as well as support and promote the specialty coffee scene.

"We love competitions because they challenge us to be better and to learn more. They also connect us with other people who share our passion and our vision. They also help us to raise awareness and appreciation for specialty coffee among the public," George said.

George is optimistic about the future of George Howell Coffee. He believes that he has a strong team, a strong brand, a strong product, and a strong mission. He is confident that he can overcome any obstacles or difficulties that may arise along the way.

"We are very grateful for what we have achieved so far, but we are also very excited for what lies ahead. We have a lot of dreams and goals that we want to pursue. We have a lot of love and passion that we want to share. We have a lot of coffee that we want to drink," George said.

George Howell Coffee is more than just a coffee company. It is a story of passion, perseverance, creativity, quality, service, culture, influence, impact, family, fun, love. It is a story of coffee.

If you would like to hear the entire conversation, visit **tinyurl.com/4c6ekwwa**

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HELEN RUSSELL

{ *Turning a Dream Into Reality* }

Helen Russell is the co-founder and executive chair of Equator Coffee, a specialty coffee roaster and retailer based in San Rafael, CA. Equator Coffee was founded in 1995 by Helen and her partner Brooke McDonnell, who share a passion for coffee and a vision for social and environmental responsibility. Equator Coffee sources its beans from small-scale farmers around the world, roasts them in-house, and serves them in its own cafes and wholesale accounts. Equator Coffee is also a certified B Corporation, a designation that recognizes businesses that meet high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency.

We sat down with Helen to learn more about her journey in the coffee industry, her daily coffee routine, and her advice for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Q: How did you get into the coffee business?

A: I always wanted to own my own business ever since I was a kid. I grew up in Boston and I worked in sales for a telecommunications company. I met Brooke in 1989 and we moved to San Francisco together. She had this passion for coffee that I didn't really understand at first. She took me to Spinelli Coffee, which was one of the pioneers of specialty coffee in San Francisco. Then we moved to Mill Valley and we discovered the roastery on the corner, where they were roasting coffee right there and selling it in bags. I was amazed by the whole process and the stories behind the beans.

We decided to start our own business in coffee. We sold our company stock, and we went to the Northwest, where we saw the specialty coffee scene booming. We opened some small units in Portland and Seattle, but we realized that we wanted to do more than just sell coffee. We wanted to roast our own coffee and have more control over the quality and the sourcing. We came back to Marin County, and we started Equator Coffee in 1995.

Q: What is your daily coffee routine or ritual?

A: I love a pour over. I go to the roastery every morning and I pick up whatever single origin that we are featuring that day. I like to try different coffees from different regions and learn about their flavor profiles. I use a Fellow kettle and a Hario dripper to brew my coffee at home. I usually have one cup a day, in the morning.

In the afternoon, I have an espresso. I have a Breville Pro on my counter, and I pull a shot of our Tiger Walkers espresso blend, which is one of our signature blends. It has a nice balance of sweetness, acidity, and body. It's a great way to wrap up the day.

Q: How has your palate evolved over the years?

A: When I started in coffee, I used to like dark roasts. I think that's what most people were used to back then. But as I learned more about coffee and tasted more coffees from different origins, I started to appreciate lighter roasts. Lighter roasts allow you to taste more of the nuances and complexities of each coffee. You can taste the terroir, the variety, the processing method, and the roasting style. Now I'm really into single origins and lighter roasts.

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HELEN RUSSELL

Continued from page 16

Q: What are some of the challenges and opportunities that you face as a coffee roaster and retailer?

A: One of the biggest challenges is climate change. Climate change is affecting coffee production all over the world. It's causing droughts, floods, pests, diseases, and unpredictable weather patterns. It's threatening the livelihoods of millions of small-scale farmers who depend on coffee for their income. It's also affecting the quality and availability of coffee.

We are trying to do our part to mitigate climate change by sourcing our coffee from organic and sustainable farms, by reducing our carbon footprint as much as possible, by supporting reforestation projects, by using renewable energy sources, and by educating our customers about these issues.

One of the biggest opportunities is technology. Technology is enabling us to connect with our customers in new ways, to improve our operations, to enhance our quality control, and to innovate our products. For example, we use an app called Cropster to monitor our roasting profiles and ensure consistency across batches. We use an online platform called Odeko to streamline our ordering process for our wholesale accounts. We use social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook to showcase our coffees and tell our stories.

Q: What are some of the values that drive your business?

A: Our core values are quality, sustainability, community, diversity, and inclusion. We are committed to providing high-quality coffees that are sourced ethically and roasted with care. We are committed to supporting sustainable practices that protect the environment and empower the farmers. We are committed to building community among our employees, our customers, our partners, and our suppliers. We are committed to fostering diversity and inclusion within our company and within the coffee industry. We are proud to be a certified B Corporation, a women-owned business, and a LGBTQ+ business.

Q: What are some of the goals that you have for the future of Equator Coffee?

A: Our main goal is to continue to grow our business in a responsible and meaningful way. We want to expand our reach and share our coffees with more people, but we also want to maintain our quality and our integrity. We want to keep exploring new coffees, new origins, new roasting techniques, and new products. We want to keep supporting our farmers, our employees, our customers, and our communities. We want to keep learning, improving, and innovating.

Q: What are some of the lessons that you have learned as an entrepreneur?

A: I think one of the most important lessons is to be passionate about what you do. Passion is what drives you to overcome challenges, to pursue opportunities, to work hard, and to have fun. Passion is what makes you authentic and credible. Passion is what attracts people to your business and your brand.

Another important lesson is to be flexible and adaptable. The coffee industry is constantly changing and evolving. You must be able to adjust to the market trends, the customer preferences, the competitive landscape, and the external factors. You must be open-minded and willing to try new things.

A third important lesson is to surround yourself with good people. You can't do everything by yourself. You need a team of people who share your vision, your values, and your goals. You need people who complement your skills, who challenge you, who support you, and who inspire you. You also need mentors, advisors, peers, and friends who can offer you guidance, feedback, advice, and encouragement.

Q: What are some of the tips that you would give to aspiring entrepreneurs?

A: I would say:

- Do your research. Learn as much as you can about the industry that you want to enter, the product that you want to offer, the market that you want to serve, and the problem that you want to solve.
- Write a business plan. A business plan helps you clarify your vision, your mission, your goals, your strategies, your finances, and your risks. It also helps you communicate your idea to potential investors, partners, and customers.
- Start small. Don't try to do everything at once. Focus on one product or service that you can do well and that meets a specific need or demand. Test it out with a small group of customers and get their feedback. Iterate and improve based on their feedback.
- Be persistent. Don't give up easily. Expect failures and setbacks along the way. Learn from them and move on. Keep working hard and keep trying new things.
- Have fun. Enjoy the journey. Celebrate your achievements. Appreciate your team. Share your passion.

If you want to learn more about her company and their coffees, visit their website at **equatorcoffees.com** or follow them on Instagram at **@equatorcoffees**.

If you would like to hear the entire conversation, visit **tinyurl.com/4ez7ft6p**

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ONYX COFFEE LAB

{ Passion to Profit }



{ Onyx Coffee Lab is one of the most successful and influential specialty coffee roasters in the United States. Founded in 2012 by Jon and Andrea Allen, Onyx has won numerous awards, including four US Barista Championships, two US Brewers Cups, and a second place in the World Barista Championship. Onyx has also established four flagship cafes in Northwest Arkansas, attracting coffee lovers from all over the country and beyond.

But how did Onyx become such a powerhouse in the coffee industry? What are the secrets behind their exceptional quality, creativity, and culture? And what are the challenges and opportunities they face as they continue to grow and innovate?

To find out more, we spoke with Jon and Andrea Allen, the co-founders, and owners of Onyx Coffee Lab, on the F&B Therapy podcast. Here are some of the highlights from our conversation.

THE ORIGINS OF ONYX

Jon and Andrea both started working in coffee in Northwest Arkansas in the early 2000s, managing cafes and learning the basics of roasting and brewing. However, they soon realized that there was more to coffee than what they were doing.

"We kind of were just dipping our toes into specialty coffee but knew quite a bit about just like the cafes, service, and things like that. And so, there was kind of this moment in 2010-2011 where we started to see what coffee could be. And sort of the movement that was happening at the time," Andrea said.

Jon was particularly interested in green coffee and the potential of different origins and varieties. He started roasting on a small machine at home and experimenting with different profiles and techniques.

"I was just obsessed with it. I was reading everything I could find online, watching videos, talking to people. I was just trying to learn as much as possible," Jon said.

They decided to launch their own brand, Onyx Coffee Lab, with a vision of creating a transparent and quality-driven specialty coffee company. They wanted to showcase the diversity and complexity of coffee, as well as tell the stories of the farmers and producers behind it.

However, it was not an easy task to start a specialty coffee roaster in Arkansas, a state that was not known for its coffee culture or market.

"We just really couldn't get anybody to try our coffee. Honestly, we were new. And then also we were in Arkansas and so people just kind of were like. No, I'm good. I'm like, no, I'll send it to you for free. They're like that's OK," Jon said.

They had to overcome many obstacles and challenges, such as finding reliable sources of green coffee, building relationships with customers and wholesalers, educating consumers and staff, and competing with bigger and more established roasters.

"It was hard. It was really hard. We had to work hard to prove ourselves, get people to trust us, and give us a chance," Andrea said.

THE GROWTH OF ONYX

Despite the difficulties, Onyx gradually gained recognition and reputation for their outstanding coffee quality and service. They started to win awards at national and international competitions, such as the US Barista Championship, the US Brewers Cup, and the World Barista Championship.

"We were just blown away by the response we got from the competitions. It was amazing to see how much attention and support we got from the industry and from the media. It really helped us to grow our brand and our business," Jon said.

They also opened their first cafe in 2015 in Bentonville, Arkansas, followed by three more locations in Springdale, Fayetteville, and Rogers. Each cafe has its own unique design and concept, reflecting Onyx's creative vision and culture.

"Our cafes are like our playgrounds. We love to experiment with different ideas and concepts, from the interior design to the menu to the equipment. We want to create spaces that are not only beautiful but also functional and engaging for our customers and staff," Jon said.

One of the distinctive features of Onyx's cafes is their open bar layout, which allows customers to see and interact with the baristas as they prepare their drinks.

"We want to break down the barriers between us and our customers. We want them to see what we do, how we do it, why we do it. We want them to ask questions, to learn more about coffee, to have fun with us," Andrea said.

Another characteristic of Onyx's cafes is their emphasis on hospitality and service. They train their staff to be friendly, professional, knowledgeable, and passionate about coffee.

"We want our staff to be happy and proud of working at Onyx. We want them to feel like they are part of a family, not just employees. We invest a lot in their education and development, not only in coffee skills but also in personal skills," Andrea said.

Onyx also has a strong online presence, with a website that offers detailed information about their coffees, roasting, brewing, and sourcing. They also have a loyal and engaged following on social media platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

"We love to share our story and our passion with our online community. We try to be as transparent and authentic as possible. We also try to be entertaining and educational. We want to show people that coffee can be fun and exciting, not just a commodity or a routine," Jon said.

THE FUTURE OF ONYX

Onyx has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 2012. They have become one of the most respected and influential specialty coffee roasters in the country, with a loyal customer base and a growing wholesale network. They have also become a source of inspiration and innovation for the coffee industry, setting new standards and trends for quality, service, and creativity.

However, Jon and Andrea are not satisfied with their achievements. They have big plans and ambitions for the future of Onyx.

"We are always looking for ways to improve and to grow. We are always looking for new challenges and opportunities. We are always looking for new coffees and new partners. We are always looking for new ideas and new projects," Jon said.

One of their main goals is to expand their sourcing program, which involves traveling to coffee-producing countries, meeting with farmers and producers, and building long-term relationships based on trust, respect, and mutual benefit.

"We want to source the best coffees in the world, but we also want to source them in the best way possible. We want to support the people who grow our coffee, not only financially but also socially and environmentally. We want to make a positive impact on the coffee industry and the world," Andrea said.

Another goal is to open more cafes in different locations, both within and outside Arkansas. They want to bring their coffee and their culture to more people and places, while also adapting to different markets and preferences.



"We want to open cafes that are relevant and appropriate for each location. We don't want to just copy and paste our existing cafes. We want to create cafes that are unique and original, that reflect the local community and culture, that offer something new and different," Jon said.

A third goal is to continue to participate in competitions and events, both as competitors and as organizers. They want to showcase their skills and their coffees, as well as support and promote the specialty coffee scene.

"We love competitions because they challenge us to be better and to learn more. They also connect us with other people who share our passion and our vision. They also help us to raise awareness and appreciation for specialty coffee among the public," Andrea said.

Jon and Andrea are optimistic about the future of Onyx Coffee Lab. They believe that they have a strong team, a strong brand, a strong product, and a strong mission. They are confident that they can overcome any obstacles or difficulties that may arise along the way.

"We are very grateful for what we have achieved so far, but we are also very excited for what lies ahead. We have a lot of dreams and goals that we want to pursue. We have a lot of love and passion that we want to share. We have a lot of coffee that we want to drink," Jon said.

Onyx Coffee Lab is more than just a coffee company. It is a story of passion, perseverance, creativity, quality, service, culture, influence, impact, family, fun, love. It is a story of coffee.

Listen to the entire conversation at **tinyurl.com/2p8t29fd**

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{ fresco.com }



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This promotion is a testament to Wayne's unwavering dedication to providing exceptional customer service. Texpak Inc is confident that Wayne's well-deserved promotion from within the company will further strengthen their commitment to delivering the highest quality service to their valued customers.

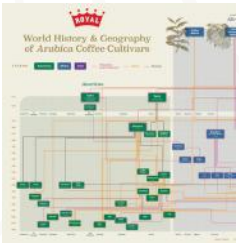
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ROYAL COFFEE RELEASES NEW ARABICA COFFEE GENETIC HISTORY INFOGRAPHIC

A new poster from Royal Coffee tells the story of coffee's journey from an Ethiopian heirloom to a globally cultivated crop, including full geographical and historical context for over 60 Arabica cultivars. The poster was first unveiled in New Orleans during September's NOLA Coffee Fest and at The Crown, Royal Coffee's Lab and Tasting Room in Oakland, California. Prints and digital copies are available on the Royal Coffee website, and in-person at The Crown at 2523 Broadway in Oakland, CA.

{ royalcoffee.com }



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