

DISCOVERIES

Jeff Keith and Sharon Kirkland toast the unveiling of their new Fire Island Kona Nitro Cold Brew at the South Kona Green Market.



COOL BEANS

Honaunau couple creates nitrogen-infused cold-brew Kona coffee

Honaunau resident Jeff Keith and his wife Sharon Kirkland have tapped into something new and exciting with their Kona Coffee, and it's definitely not your average Joe.

Infused with pure nitrogen and kegged like beer, the couple's newly crafted Kona Nitro Cold Brew is a creamy-smooth, chocolately cold beverage served on tap like a Guinness stout. The foamy head stays firm atop the flavorful, effervescent coffee, which they cold brew "Kyoto-style," in an

ice-drip tower for 10 hours prior. Pressurizing the cold brew with pure nitrogen fuses air into the coffee and livens up the inherent flavors, says Sharon, who is the brains behind their custom-engineered system.

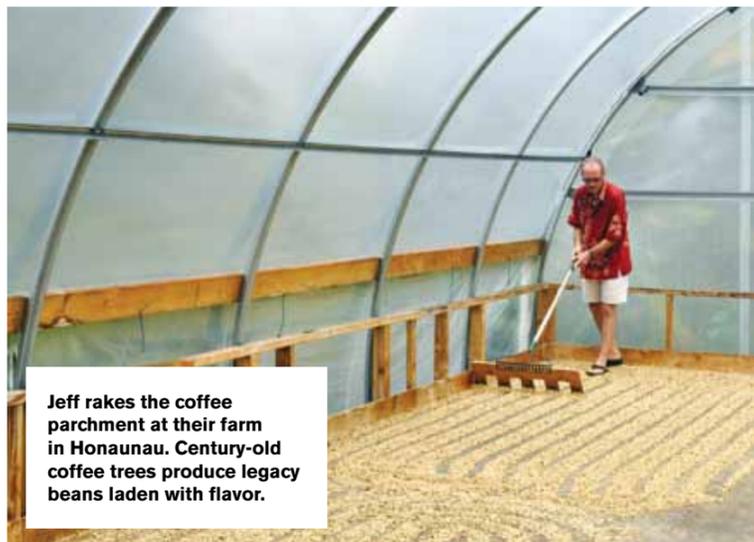
After almost a year of experimentation and fine-tuning, Jeff and Sharon unveiled samples last month at the South Kona Green Market, held every Sunday in Captain Cook. Jeff says every single step of the process — from farm to cup — makes a huge difference in the final result.

"We love to experiment and tweak to make things the very best. It took us months to perfect. We found out that certain combinations of roasts work better than others, and that temperatures, quantities and equipment are super important. There are so many factors that go into it. When you get it all right and it finally comes together, wow, it's really cool."

On their five-acre Fire Island Coffee farm at the 1,500-foot elevation, Jeff and Sharon harvest coffee cherry from 110-year-old legacy trees that grow

Served on tap like Guinness Stout, the couple's Kona Nitro Cold Brew is creamy and chocolately with a firm head and plenty of caffeine. It takes them up to 10 hours to cold-brew the coffee before infusing it with pure nitrogen.

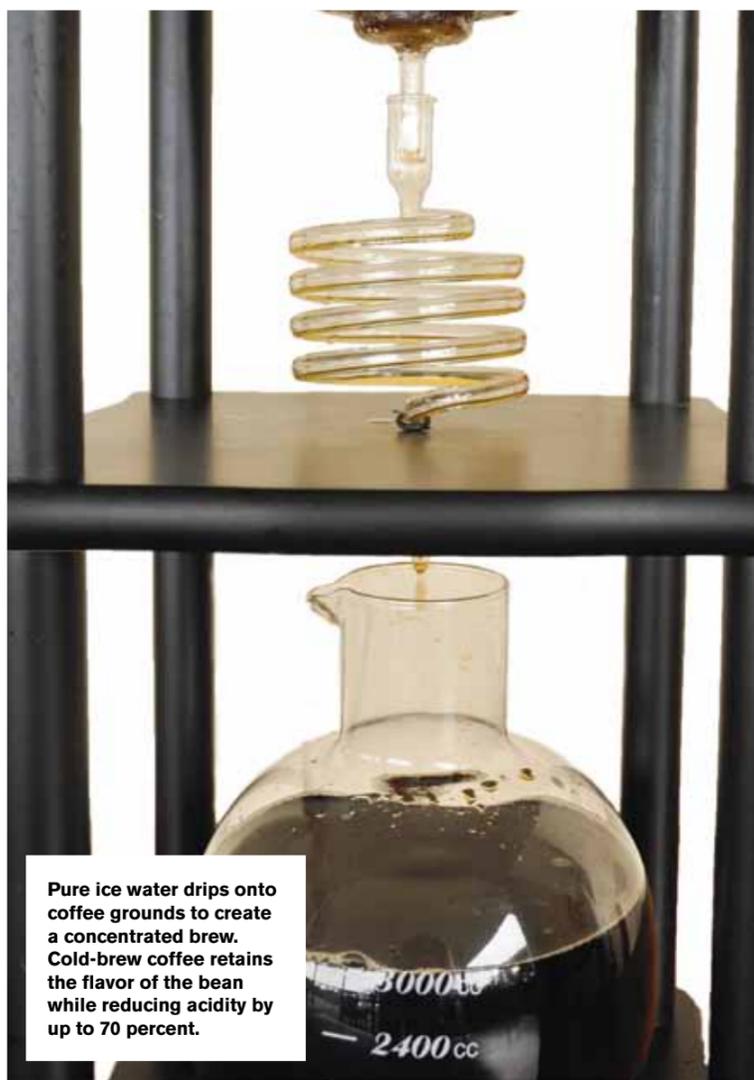




Jeff rakes the coffee parchment at their farm in Honaunau. Century-old coffee trees produce legacy beans laden with flavor.



Jeff Keith checks their cold-brew coffee tower. The couple recently installed four new towers inside their home, where they make cold brew 24/7.



Pure ice water drips onto coffee grounds to create a concentrated brew. Cold-brew coffee retains the flavor of the bean while reducing acidity by up to 70 percent.

in deep, fertile soil that is a rare attribute in Kona Coffee Country. The property had been previously farmed by several generations of a Japanese coffee-farming family, but was completely overgrown when the couple purchased it in 2011. As Jeff and Sharon hacked away the vines and weeds, they initially thought they'd simply sell coffee cherry and settle into retirement. But their industrious nature led them to dive head first into coffee production. Eventually they began experimenting with cold-brew coffee, which earned them kudos at the local farmers markets, festivals and coffee strolls.

"After we got the cold brew off the ground," said Sharon, "I continued researching the latest in artisan coffee and saw something about bottling cold brew with CO2 like beer. We tried the beer gas, but after 24 hours the coffee tasted horrible. Nitrogen, on the other hand, preserves the freshness for up to 10 days. It's a naturally occurring gas on the Table of Elements, like what's used in soda fountains."

The daughter of an engineer, Sharon began tinkering with equipment. She bought a kegerator at Home Depot and utilized just the box, adding a stainless-steel tower for the faucet, which she insulated with a copper pipe covering 18 inches of the tubing to maintain a consistent cold temperature from the corny keg to the tap.

"Once we got all the parts here, it took us quite some time to try all the different combinations of gas and coffee strength," she said. "One ounce of difference in grounds makes a huge difference in taste and flavor. It's really important what kind of roast you use. We use a proprietary blend of mixed roasts."

Like mad scientists, the couple now has four cold-brew towers inside their house making cold brew 24/7. They serve samples of their nitro brew each Wednesday at the Sheraton Kona's Ho'oulu Community Farmers Market, and on Sundays at the South Kona Green Market. ■

Cock-a-Doodle-Do, Part II

EDITOR'S COLUMN



Green Acres is the place to be . . . unless there's a stray rooster crowing under my window at the crack of dawn, that is.

You guessed it, peeps. I've got roosters again. Loyal readers will remember the last time I dealt with a neighborhood rooster that wandered into my yard. Forget about free range, I became *de*-ranged. My neighbors unjustly blamed me for the noise and ruffled my feathers. I finally did catch that wily rooster, but I'm still recuperating from the entire *egg*sperience.

I don't have a beef with chickens, but roosters put me in a fowl mood. Warning: If I don't get my full eight hours of sleep, I can easily turn a migraine into a *your*grain. I might even go off half-cocked.

Can anyone tell me why the heck this rooster is crowing at 3 in the morning? I'm determined to have insomnia if it takes me all night. This is not a pheasant experience. Did he voluntarily come here or was he egged on? Is this some kind of a yolk?

What the flock is going on? If this dang rooster keeps it up, I'll be hosting a *meat*-and-greet session for him this *Fry*day followed by a *poultry*geist in his afterlife. I cannot allow this nonsense to *car*rrion any longer.

But seriously, the best approach to rooster control is to rent a trap from the Humane Society. Birds are people too and should be treated with respect. I love birds and this is aviary important issue to me. Simply bait the trap with chicken ~~feed~~, aka, my bank account. Voilà, the trap works im-*peck*-ably and rooster lives on . . . in somebody else's yard! ■

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