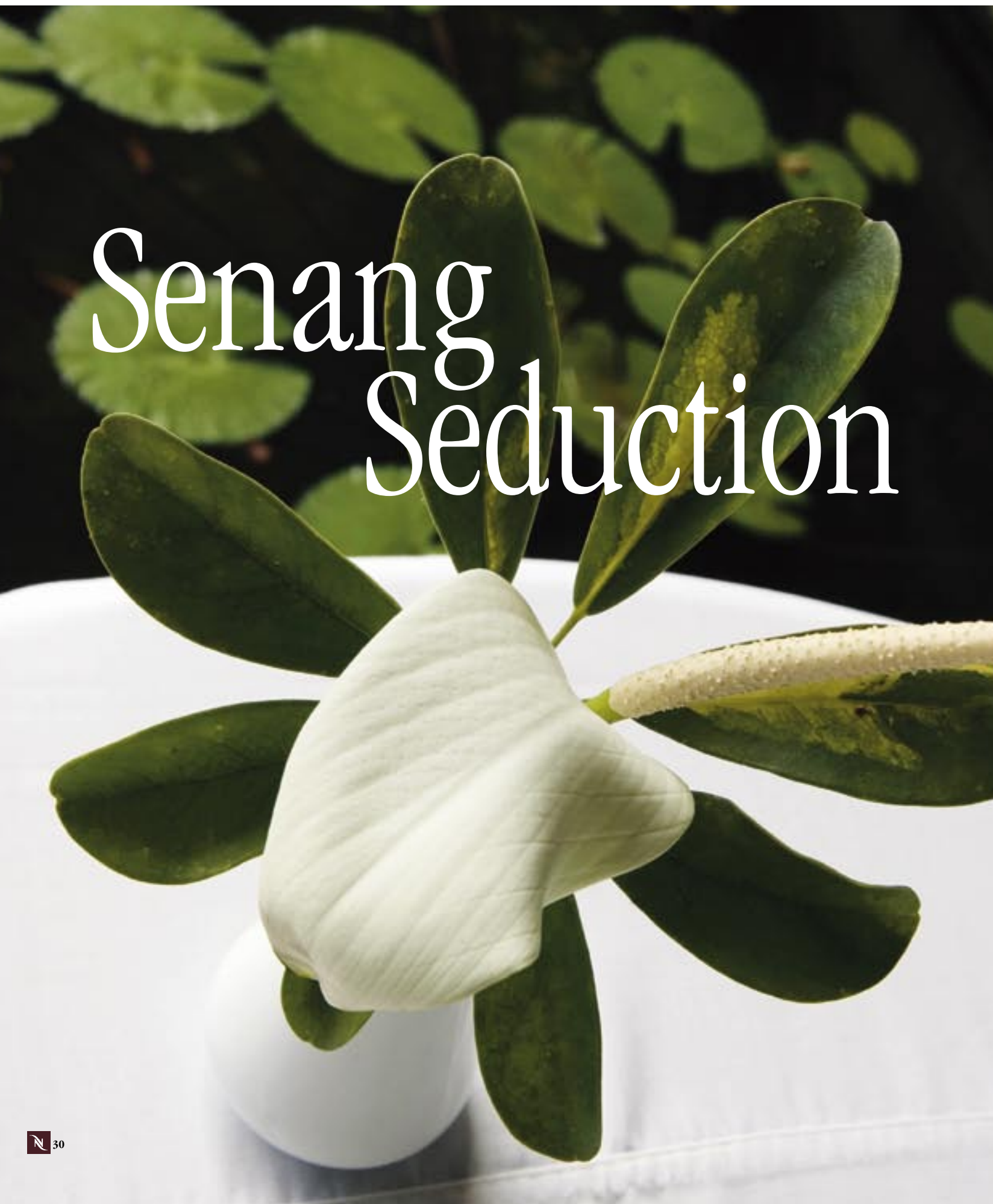


Senang Seduction



TRAVEL & MORE



Coffee plantations on the Ijen plateau on Java not only provide highest quality beans but harmonise well with the picturesque landscape around it. Just as the farmers of Java live in peaceful accord with nature.

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Coffee excellence. 300 years ago, Java was the champion amongst the coffee producers. Heralded by this year's Special Club from Nespresso, Java celebrates its highest coffee quality comeback. The chosen name "Senang" means "delightful" in Indonesian. A good motto for the promising future.



the Ijen plateau looks quiet and somehow enchanted in the first sunrays of the early morning when wafts of mist still cling to the coffee plantations while the striking silhouette of the nearby volcano looms large against the blue sky. At this time of day the pickers in their colourful wrap-around skirts have already been working for a while. They start early, before the tropical sun burns down on the lush mountainside with all its mighty force.

It is in the dry season between May and October that the red coffee cherries are harvested in Jampit and, on the same day, pulped, fermented and washed. They are then dried for a period of three weeks. The wet-milling building is clinically clean and plantation administrator Syuhadak is scrupulous when it comes to quality control. "We are proud of our coffee. We managed to preserve the old Typica coffee trees that grow only in a few countries these days. At the beginning of

the harvest the beans, which are sorted out of the cherries, are a bit astringent – but during the season the soft, chocolate aroma unfolds. And it is just as harmonious as the people here", Syuhadak adds with a friendly smile.

It was back in 1894 when Dutchman Davit Bernie settled on the fertile tableland below the Ijen and planted his first coffee trees. About 200 years before some Dutchmen had smuggled a few specimens of the precious Arabica plant from Yemen to Ceylon and thence to Java, where it thrived so extraordinarily that the island soon became the worldwide coffee production champion.

Then, however, disaster struck. Coffee rust, the most devastating disease of coffee plants, caused by the fungus *Hemileia vastatrix*, destroyed almost the entire coffee cultivation in all of Indonesia. Forced to respond quickly, the plantation



Good reasons to smile: Schooling for the plantation kids is paid for by the coffee estates up to the ninth grade – and the worker's families all have access to their own swimming pool.

owners changed to the less vulnerable Robusta trees and the world-famous Java coffee virtually disappeared from the market. It was only in the 1950s that the (meanwhile independent) Indonesian government decided to reactivate the old Arabica plantations by the Ijen massif. The planters there managed to save some of the legendary old trees and thus preserved the typical aroma that had previously given Java coffee its distinctive, much-appreciated taste. "This coffee is truly of special premium quality", enthuses Mike Glenister, an American specialty coffee importer, who has been buying the PTP estate Java Arabicas from the Ijen region for many years. "The quality of the PTP Java estate coffees is special and unique because of the mild micro climate and volcanic soil conditions its grown in. It has a good body, a slightly spicy aroma and a mild to medium acidity with a chocolate background flavour, that characterises this traditional and unique Indonesian coffee."

The former grandeur of the colonial merchants is still present in the old buildings in Eastern Java's capital Surabaya. The Hotel Majapahit is one of the gems of colonial architecture in all of Southeast Asia. Commissioned in 1910 by the founding family of Singapore's famous Raffles Hotel, the Art Nouveau palace offers every imaginable comfort and convenience. Somewhat more simple but still exceedingly stately is the look of the airy houses the Dutch plantation owners had built on the remote Ijen



plateau. Today these are guesthouses for visitors who want to get away from the busy metropolis. The coffee plantations of Blawan and Jampit are popular starting points for tours up the Ijen crater, which is famous for its lunar landscape and notorious for its sulphur mine.

"Lonely Mountain" – this is what the Javanese name Gunung Ijen means literally. Once upon a time it was the 2,386 metres high volcano that the Hindu kings of the mighty Majapahit Empire came to in order to meditate and revitalise their inner resources. While Europe was in the grip of the Dark Ages, the Javanese house of Majapahit reigned over an empire that extended further than Europe did at the time. It was only after the Islamic conquest, brought on as a consequence of the introduction of Islam to the archipelago of more than 14,000 islands through Arab and Indian merchants, that the proud Hindu kings had to seek refuge in nearby Bali. However, even today the predominantly Muslim population of Java cultivates an eclectic mix of Hindu, Buddhist, and Animist customs and practices. Thus the legends of the Hindu gods and king are still related in Javanese dance culture.

Today tourists come from all over the world in order to discover the exotic culture and breathtaking nature of Java, the Indonesian archipelago's main island. The journey takes them through opulent rice terraces and lush tropical forests

before, on an altitude of 1,000 metres, the high plateau suddenly opens, complete with 5,600 hectares of Arabica plantations that, administratively, belong to the national Nusantara Plantation XII (also referred to as PTP Java Estate). The dip was created by the still active volcano during a previous eruption. The Ijen becomes active every once in a while, most recently in 1993, but so far its eruptions have been classified as moderate.

It takes another 90 minutes on foot along a serpentine way to the mountaintop. Here, deep in the effluvium of the volcano, begins the harsh realm of the sulphur workers – small, tough men who climb up to the sulphur mine by a lake several times a day, shod in slippers, and oblivious to the tourists who are out of breath. Downwards they climb with a weight of up to 80 kilos of the yellow gold loaded onto their shoulders.

While the yield is less bountiful on the national coffee plantations, the work is certainly safer and healthier. The working hours are regulated and every family is provided with a house of their own. Water and electricity are free and so is health care. The family of Bahri from Blawan has been living here for three generations. "My ancestors originally came from the isle of Madura. I wouldn't want to work anywhere else than here, myself", the 31-year old father. "We have everything we need here, even schooling is free. Quite a contrast to life in



SENANG Special Club 2005

Nespresso makes it possible to enjoy a bit of special Javanese culture in your own home with the introduction of this year's Special Club. In order to emphasise the exceptional aromas of this Special Club, they have chosen to call it "Senang" which means "delightful" in Indonesian.

Senang – Special Club 2005 is an Indonesian blend made of several washed Arabicas and a touch of washed Robusta (an unusual and expensive processing technique that is unusual for Robusta production, which enhances the body, the strength of taste and brings out the best aromatic notes, typical for the Robusta). This blend is subtle and characterised by a remarkable cacao note and cereal hints; an unctuous, dark hazel-coloured and full-bodied crema. Roasted using the "split roasting" process, which consists of roasting certain origins or blends separately, so that each develops its highest flavour potential perfectly. The particular aroma profile of this new variety – which will reveal its full character in an Espresso cup (40 ml) – differs from those of the other 12 Grands Crus and is a tasteful way to enjoy Nespresso's innovative spirit. As with all Nespresso Special Clubs, it is only available while stocks last.

This coffee comes from 5 different plantations of East Java. The coffee cherries are picked and sorted entirely by hand. The coffee is then washed, naturally fermented and sun-dried. It comes from shady plantations in the vicinity of the Ijen volcanic complex where the coffee grows at an ideal altitude on well-drained soil. Mike Glenister, an expert on specialty coffees, explains that, "the PTP Java Estates have planted local shade trees throughout their

Arabica coffee estates, which protect these relatively old, traditional Java Typica variety coffee trees from the heat of the midday sun, especially during dry periods. Quality is also improved by slowing down the ripening of the cherries during the harvesting period." In addition, the trees attract local and migratory birds, that in turn consume harmful insects, allowing the estates to cut back on the use of insecticides. The traditional Java Typica trees are relatively old (30 to 40 years) in today's coffee farming terms, but they maintain good and consistent yields because of the deep natural volcanic fertile soils, boosted by an ongoing estate program of adding in organic fertiliser, with the long term objective eventually to be 100% organic. The coffee cherry skin waste after pulping is converted into a natural organic fertiliser, and all the water used to wash the coffee during processing, is cleaned and purified in special effluent tanks and ponds. "The PTP coffee estate management and workers are proud of the heritage of their coffee plantations, and the modern sustainable and environmentally friendly coffee farming and processing facilities", according to Mike Glenister, who has personally visited the estates many times. "This pride is reflected in the excellent quality of the special unique coffee they produce for their discriminating customers world-wide".



Communal life on the plantations is very much intact: Preparing local Javanese food in traditional ways or taking a moment to savour a good cup of coffee are both an integral part of everyday culture.

the city, I can tell you." Schooling for the plantation kids is paid for by the company up to the ninth grade. Outstanding pupils may even be provided with grants for secondary school. Workers and employees also have a swimming pool to enjoy in their spare time, as well as tennis and volleyball courts.

"My experience is that well managed, very clean coffee estates like the PTP Java coffee estates, produce excellent, and consistent coffee quality. The pride, hard work and expertise of the estate staff reflects in the excellent overall consistent high quality of their coffees. The PTP Java Estates on the Ijen Plateau, meet and exceed the demanding employee social welfare, and environmental standards required today by socially responsible companies and monitoring agencies world-wide", says coffee expert Mike Glenister.

The Nusantara Plantation XII stretches from the national parks by the sea to the tableland of the Ijen. Visitors must follow the road for hours, driving past Robusta-, cacao-, tea-, carnation- and natural rubber trees, before the Arabica homestay in Kalisat is reached. Once a year the descendants of the original Dutch plantation founder make the long way, too. Then they sit with the Indonesian administrators in the old stone house of Davit Bernie, eat potatoes with honey and, of course, drink coffee. ☕

Travel Tips for Java

Hotel Majapahit, Mandarin Oriental

This luxurious Art Deco hotel is one of the gems from Indonesia's colonial past. The café in the lobby offers a selection of sundry coffee brands from all over Indonesia. Tel.: +62-31-545 4111, www.mandarinoriental.com/hotel/518000001.asp

Kalimas – Old Port

The traditional Bugis schooners with their colourful sails still berth in Surabaya's old harbour. Indonesians have sailed the seas on these ships for hundreds of years. One of their traditional cargoes: coffee.

Arabica Homestay

The air around the coffee plantations on the Ijen plateau is so fresh that a jumper comes in handy in the evening. Visitors can also stay overnight in the guesthouses of Jampit and Belawan.

Tel.: +62-31-352 4893 95, ptpn12@rad.net.id

Ijen Volcano

It takes a good one and a half hours to ascend the Ijen, then climbers are rewarded with a spectacular view of the turquoise-coloured crater lake with its sulphur fumes. Workers carry loads of up to 80 kilos of sulphur down the mountain, several times a day.

Ijen Resort & Villas

Amidst breathtaking scenery of lush rice terraces and volcanoes 30 generously dimensioned bungalows are grouped around a panorama swimming pool that is fed with spring water.

Tel.: +62-333-429 000, www.ijenhotel.com