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Columbia River Coffee Roaster sources beans directly, and traceably, from family farms and through trusted importers who buy from small farms. If the company doesn't visit growers or importers in person, they connect remotely to confirm samples.

Once the raw beans arrive, they are stored under controlled conditions until roasted in single-origin batches of 25 to 100 pounds.

"We really dial in on consistency," Reimer said. "We're locking in on individual profiles." Reimer noted that head roaster Josh Olson plots temperatures at various points in the process assisted by a digital readout.

Though computers are an important part of today's roasting operations, the craft is still carefully developed and monitored at several points by human senses.

The raw beans are dumped into a hopper and suctioned into a roasting drum where they are roasted at various temperatures and durations, depending upon the desired outcome: dark, medium or light.

As the beans heat up, they reach a stage where the parchment, or chaff, separates and is vacuumed off into a separate chamber. Once the beans are sufficiently roasted — which means they've come to the desired flavor profile — they are dumped into a cooling bin where they are constantly in motion while air is

drawn over them.

Once cooled, they are moved into a destoner to remove any small rocks and the like that might remain. Each batch is then stored in bins for a resting period before being bagged as single-origin or combined in blends.

"As a roaster, we can't make the coffee any better. We can only bring out characteristics and qualities that are in each bean," Reimer said.

Quality beans are essential, but so is creating ideal roasts. That is largely subjective, but roasters and growers have in place their own language and certification to put them all on the same page. This familiarity allows for consistency as different beans and roasts are tasted.

The process of cupping, or tasting, is used to find the various roast profiles of each bean. These flavor notes are used as playful descriptors in the coffee's labeling.

Columbia River Coffee Roaster continues to develop new tastes and blends, and are currently crafting a nitro cold brew to be offered in an upcoming retail space. In the near future, a training center with a coffee lab and cupping room will be set up, with classes and tastings offered for the community.

"We want to celebrate coffee and everything about it, from seed to cup, including all the people along the way," Montgomery said. "The best thing about coffee — it brings people together."

Photos by Gregory Zschomler  
**ABOVE:** Coffee beans cool in a cooling tray during one step of the roasting process. **BELOW:** Josh Olson, head roaster at Columbia River Coffee Roaster, watches a batch of beans as they rotate in the Diedrich roaster.



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