TAN BUN SKRATI

newsletter march 2018

New reseller: The Chocolate Shop in The Hague!

Our chocolate bars are now also available at The Chocolate Shop in The Hague, the Netherlands. The Chocolate Shop is a specialty store for bean-to-bar and tree-to-bar chocolate. Since 2016 owners Ray and Sanna have been selling these – often single origin – chocolates online via their web shop. Last year September they opened a physical store in the social ecological project 'de Groene Mient' too.

Adding to the pleasure is the fact that co-owner Ray is from Surinamese descent. In the shop you can regularly find fresh cacao pods from Boxel, Suriname and they'll let you taste the sour and sweet pulp that surrounds the beans. Keep an eye on the facebook page of The Chocolate Shop to stay updated on when the fruit is available.

It is recommended anyhow to pay a visit to the store and let Ray and Sanna take you on 'a trip around the world through chocolate'. To name some of the cacao origins of the chocolates in the assortment? Among others Bolivia, Peru, the Philippines, Honduras, Madagascar, Jamaica and Ecuador. And Suriname since recently too.

Can't make it to the store? No problem. In the web shop the chocolate bars are only two clicks away and delivered in the Netherlands and all of the EU. Though the site is in Dutch, you can mail your order in English.

The Chocolate Shop
Limoenhof 1
2564KV The Hague
The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)6-14854542
info@thechocolateshop.nl
www.thechocolateshop.nl



photo's: The Chocolate Shop

Insect life

Did you know that many, often beautiful insects live on and around the cacao tree? Bees, ants, lice and fjo-fjo's (a type of shield bugs) are common. Some are beneficial, others are considered pests.

Bees and fjo-fjo's for example do harm to the cacao tree. They make little holes in the skin of the cacao pods to suck sap. The fruit then shrivels. It's not so bad when it happens shortly before harvest time, but you'll lose yield when younger, still unripe pods are attacked. Plantains and bananas can lure the bees away from the trees. They love them even better than cacao.

Although mampira's (no-see- ums) are obnoxious to humans, they are beneficial to cacao. It's these tiny stinging midges that take care of pollination. They are small enough to spread the pollen in the fragile cacao blossoms. Ants sometimes can pollinate cacao as well, carrying around the pollen when they are crawling through the trees. Bees on the other hand are too big and heavy to even land on a flower.

Caterpillars don't show themselves easily. They are often perfectly camouflaged and hide between or under leaves. Lately we encountered a beautiful, alien-like specimen while opening pods for fermentation. On the skin of one of the fruits walked a mint-green caterpillar, with pink dots and silver highlights scattered across its back that was covered with protrusions reminiscent of Christmas trees. It looked as if a miniature pine forest was walking on the cacao pod.

We showed it to Joke van den Heuvel. She could determine it as belonging to the Limacodidae family. Joke has been spotting insects and caterpillars in Suriname for years and immortalizes them in gorgeous photographs. Tiny creatures that may look bland or even unsightly to the naked eye will unveil their beauty under the macro-lens of her camera.

On Jokes flickr-page you can catch a glimpse of the rich diversity of insects and other animal life that Joke encounters in the nature of Suriname. Sometimes deep in the rainforest, at other times simply in her backyard. With a bit of searching on the site, you'll be able to find the proper name for those stormtroopers in the picture below too. It was shot in the Mulers garden at Tijgerkreek.



photo: Tan Bun Skrati



photo: Ada Korbee

Planting trees at children's museum Villa Zapakara

On Valentine's Day, in the run-up to activities scheduled for 2019, we planted two cacao tree seedlings in the garden of children's museum Villa Zapakara. Directors Dakaya Lenz and Jantine van den Driest helped along. Ada Korbee took pictures.

In open fields the strong ocean wind reigns free. To protect the young trees from wind damage with palm leaves a provisory windshield was made for one of the trees. The other one is planted inside a pile of car tires. They are growing properly and the seeds that were sown that same day are coming up well too.

We'll have to ask for your patience though: what the project is going to be about, that we can't tell just yet. But there is one thing we're sure of, it is going to be fun!



photo: Andere Wijn

Finding the bottle to the bar: a match made in heaven

In search of good combinations for a wine-chocolate pairing, the teams of The Chocolate Shop and Andere Wijn recently tested a selection of bars and bottles from their assortments.

Earlier we introduced The Chocolate Shop as a specialty store for chocolate. Andere Wijn is a specialty store for harder to find wines made from 'forgotten grapes, from little-known vineyards or pressed by extraordinary winemakers'.

As it turned out the favorite combination was our 72% chocolate with the Greek dessert wine by Karelas, made with Mavrodafni grapes from Patras! The terroirs of Tijgerkreek, Saramacca and the North-West of the Peloponnesos melt in harmony on the tongue: 'a match made in heaven', according to Ray of The Chocolate Shop.

Workshop trees

Planting a fresh cacao bean is a regular part of the tree-to-bar-cacao workshops held during harvest season. At the end of the workshop participants can take the sown seeds home. There they can grow them into trees and transplant these in the soil.

Slowly but surely, bean by bean, participant after participant, the number of cacao trees is growing and the tree is returning in gardens and orchards, like it had been until a few generations ago.

We regularly receive updates about how the trees are growing. Like the one from Ms. Ninon in the photo on the right. She attended the workshop in February 2015 and took home three beans. She planted them in the shadow of a rambutan tree (*Nephelium lappaceum*) where they grew into mature trees that have fruited twice already. We have fermented the second harvest. If all turns out well we'll be able to make chocolate from the beans in about 7 months from now.

It's a nice Trinitario complete with the typical mix of dark and light beans within one and the same pod. By participating in the workshop you help save and protect these Surinamese cacao landraces too.



photo: Ninon Miranda





photo's: Tan Bun Skrati

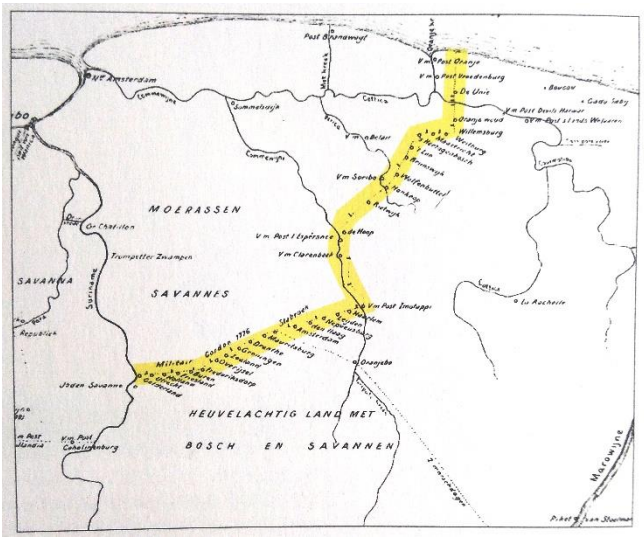
Cordon path

In the context of the World Day of Prayer, which featured Suriname as theme country this year, a visual arts exhibition was organized under the moniker 'How to l'earn peace?' Artist/curators Kirsten Buddeberg and Brigitte Küchler invited a group of artists to show their work in the National Army Museum and the recreational facilities on the premises of the Memre Buku military base in Paramaribo.

For the opening ceremony Tan Bun Skrati was asked to reflect on the ceremonial role that cacao has played in the different religions and customs in Suriname. During the preparation the topic shifted somewhat when Major Ilahibaks asked Ellen if she could say a few words about the role of the army and that of the Cordon Path for Military Defense in particular.

At least since the times of the Maya people and the Aztecs, cacao has fulfilled a cultural role in rituals of priests. Linnaeus referred to this when he named and classified cacao as *Theobroma cacao* ('food of the gods'). This subject has been covered exhaustively. But the role of cacao within the armed forces is a subject that is much less commonplace, even though cacao has always been a fixture in army rations: because of its stamina enhancing qualities it could not be missing in any soldier's satchel.

The Cordon path, constructed under governor Nepveu, was a 20 meter wide defensive line. It ran straight through swamp, savannah and rainforest of the present day Para, Commewijne and Marowijne districts. Before its construction coffee and cacao yields had regularly disappeared from the plantations. In 1778 work on the construction was finished. The path remained in function until 1844. Along the 94 km long path fortified posts were built at signal distance. The soldiers that patrolled the Cordon path were stationed there.



drawing: F.G.J. Bosschart

Descriptions of the military Cordon path reveal it as a culinary path as well. It took off at post Gelderland, situated just north of Jodensavanne. The drinking water there was praised for its pure quality. The path stretched in northeasterly direction first towards post Imotappi. It then went downstream along the Commewijne River to post L'Espérance, from where it went over land again, crossing the Perica and Cottica Rivers to end at post Oranje near the coast. Oysters could be harvested there from the stilt roots of the mangroves.

When fully staffed, the path employed 1100 soldiers. There were no weekly supplies of food from the city, so the soldiers had to be self-sufficient to a large extent. Towards that goal walled off fruit and vegetable gardens and agricultural plots were laid out at several of the military posts: "orange, lemon and soursop trees grew in abundance here". Along the path barter trade was done. The soldiers traded among others food with the indigenous and Maroon people for wild game and fish. Five bakeries baked the bread.

It took 8 days on foot to get from post Mauritsburg to post Armina. The German soldier August Kappler, who served in the military from 1836 to 1842, described the provisions and his pack needed for the trip: "8 pounds biscuits, 4 pounds bacon, 4 pounds meat and 8 pounds rice, to which I added coffee, a bottle with sugar and cacao, garments, a tin pot for cooking, a box and a net to catch butterflies (!), a gun and a saber had to be brought along too."

It is very well possible that the cacao that Kappler carried in his satchel, had been grown in one of the military gardens along the Cordon path. Another possibility is that it had been supplied from Jodensavanne (Dutch for: Jews' Savanna). It were after all most likely the Jews dispelled from Brazil that had settled in Suriname who had learned from the Indigenous people how to process the beans into cacao for drinking chocolate.

But more on that in another newsletter.





photo's: Dirk Jap A Joe

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, just respond to the email with a "NO" and we'll stop the dispatch.

A complete and up-to-date summary of our points of sale can be found here. Before going to the store, we advise to first inquire about availability of stock.

Via the facebookpage you can follow us closely. Like us to stay in the loop!

TAN BUN SKRATI

Tan Bun Skrati N.V. - *tree to bar cacao from Suriname*

+597 458 706 / whatsapp +597 8642609

tanbunskrati@gmail.com

info@tanbun.org

www.tanbun.org

www.facebook.com/TanBunSkrati

© Tan Bun Skrati N.V., 2018