

10 years of Tan Bun Skrati

Hip hip hooray! In 2020 the company turns 10! In April 2010 Ellen launched Tan Bun Skrati with cupcakes and carambola-bonbons at the Made in Suriname Fair in Paramaribo. Off course we'll celebrate over the course of this anniversary year on various occasions. For starters we'll participate in the Chocoa Trade Fair en Chocolate Festival, from February 19 to 23 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Chocoa consists of several events. On February 20 and 21 a trade fair and conference will be held and in the weekend of the 22nd and 23rd there is a large chocolate festival which is open to public. Fellow chocolate makers from all over the world will participate. With several of them we've maintained contact through the internet over the years, but Chocoa will be the first time to meet them in person. Exhibiting at Chocoa will also be an excellent opportunity to present Tan Bun Skrati to a wider international public of chocolate lovers.



photo: Chocoa

At the time of 'going to press' of this newsletter our booth number was yet unknown. We do know we share it with Xué Chocolate from Colombia. Tree to bar craft chocolate makers just like us!

Should you wish for a more complete Suriname experience after tasting our cacao, you can visit the Grand Suriname Exhibition that is held at a stone's throw in the Nieuwe Kerk. Luckily it has been extended due to success until March 1st.



Skrati – drinking chocolate: the taste of yore

By popular demand we started producing the one and only, old-fashioned, vintage skrati: bars of coarse ground cacao mostly used to dissolve into a hot chocolate drink. But they perfectly suit baking as well: we've already tasted delicious banana bread skrati was baked into. Anyhow, real skrati, it can't come without hand-drawn stripes. It took a while before we got the hang of making them – the first efforts were judged as 'too stiff' by a skrati-stonfutu – but now we draw stripes like we never did otherwise.

Whether you use it with cow milk or oat milk, whether you sweeten it with sugar cane juice or honey, whether you dip in the roti or drink it with Polak biscuits and Wijsman butter, skrati is the steady base that combines easily.

On the packaging is a pattern – with stripes – of an old koto. This koto was made in 1890 by Ellen’s great-great-aunt Henriëtte Georgetine Jessurun, who worked as a dressmaker. The koto was completely hand-stitched and the pattern was hand-painted on the cloth too. Real handicraft that shows little variations in the execution. Just like the handmade skrati-bars.

You can find the Tan Bun Skrati skrati at Ali’s Drugstore, Clevia Park Market and in the gift shop of Zus & Zo.



Harvest 2019

In 2019 again the harvest of fresh pods was larger than that of the previous year. This is because a large number of young trees - that have been planted since 2010 at Tijgerkreek - started to mature. Remarkably, the peak in harvesting shifted. Hitherto, we harvested most pods in the rainy season of April, May and June; now the largest peak was in November – December, so the small harvest and large harvest swapped places.

Thousandth participant cacao workshop

October 2013 we started the tree-to-bar cacao workshops. On July 19th of last year we welcomed the thousandth participant and celebrated the occasion with an extra-long workshop attended by a group of cacao enthusiasts from Apoera.

We do workshops from tree to bar and back to the tree again. Focus is on Surinamese cacao: its history, current situation and possibilities. With a lot of tasting and hands-on activity we like to let participants experience that there is more to cacao than just chocolate: cacao juice, vinegar, cupcakes, etc. A piece of traditional skrati to take home is made. In a blind tasting of our 72, 80 and 100% chocolates we take you through the flavours of fine chocolate. Ending with planting a bean to take home and grow into a tree, the workshops are done as tailor made to the interests of the participants as possible. So sometimes the stress is more on processing, other times more on taking care of the plants, or on the culinary aspects.



Uncle Berts last beans

For a period of three years we harvested the pods from the five old cacao trees that grew amidst vegetables and other fruit trees in Uncle Berts garden at Tout Lui Faut. During his working life Uncle Bert worked as an engineer at the Ministry of Public Works and was involved in determining the road line of the Marowijne section of the East-West Connection. It was always a pleasure to stay a little while after harvesting and chat with him. Uncle Bert passed away in April 2016 at the age of 91. The last time when we harvested there, three weeks before he died, the pommerak (*Syzygium aqueum*) was in full pinkish bloom.

This last harvest had by long been turned into chocolate. But a very last pound of beans had been stored in the Netherlands with Maureen de Jong from the Kleinkookbedrijf, aging and awaiting their final destination. On June 30, on the eve of Keti Koti, they ended up on stage as nibs sprinkled on top of buttermilk ice cream and puffed black rice. This was the dessert of culinary theater play "Cooking for Kakerakoti".

Uncle Bert, who himself lived for several years in The Hague, the city where the play was performed, sure would have loved it!



photo: The Chocolate Shop (1)

Taste of the Caribbean

In June 2019 the National Culinary Team Suriname participated in the Taste of the Caribbean contests in Miami. Tan Bun Skrati sponsored the chefs with chocolate, skrati and fresh cacao juice. The photo's below show the entries of pastry chef Xaviera Mijnhijmer and bartender Stefano Feliskdal. With a daring creation called 'Skrati froktoe prisiri' in which she combined our chocolate with Ruby chocolate Xaviera got silver for Suriname in the Chocolate competition.

Stefano prepared 'Skrati, a gentlemans cocktail (stirred not shaken)': a cocktail with rum and skrati, refined with fresh cacao juice (from the pulp that encapsulates fresh cacao beans) and Jamaican beer. Self-made ice to chill and a lit cigar to complete it. For his overall performance during the whole competition Stefano was awarded with bronze.



photo: Patrick Woei (l); Suriname Chefs Association (r)

Belém: Chocolat Festival & Flor Pará 2019

In September Ellen represented Tan Bun Skrati at Chocolat Amazonia 2019, a festival held in Belém, Brazil, that is completely dedicated to chocolate and flowers. The International Business Round served as a perfect occasion to get acquainted with cacao cooperatives and tree to bar processors from the state of Pará. All are hard-working to bring Amazonian Cacao to the next level. More and more businesses make the switch from beans-only to end products like bars, pralines and jellies. With thanks to FIEPA (Industry Federation of the State of Pará, Brazil) and the Embassy of Brazil in Paramaribo for making the visit possible. To be continued.



photo: Chocolat Festival (I)

Education

In 2019 too Tan Bun Skrati spent much time on education and mentoring. We helped several kids get along with their show-and-tell projects on cacao and chocolate. Students from the Polytechnic College Suriname and the Anton de Kom University paid studio- and field visits. And the participants of the annual Future Leaders and Entrepreneurs program of the Global Shapers Paramaribo were welcomed once more. This last group participated in an inquiry into taste preferences that was led by trainee Bo Vos.

And the kids from an elementary school in Nieuw Weergevonden even got an entire class devoted to cacao and chocolate from their teacher ms. Estrella, who obtained information and pods from Tan Bun Skrati.

Bars in te book 'Thee – de nuchtere neef van wijn' ('Tea, wine's sober cousin')

In her recently released book tea sommelier Mariëlla Erkens describes a multitude of tea pairings: combinations of tea and different foods that go well together. The chapter on craft chocolate features this beautiful photo, with the Tan Bun Skrati bars in it! The first edition is already sold out, but a second is on its way and expected to be available at the end of February.



photo's: The Chocolate Shop

Umami bomb

Mariëlla Erkens earlier posted an example of how surprising such a tea and chocolate pairing can turn out on her Instagram account:

'Pairing Surinam tree to bar chocolate 72% with Da Yu Ling oolong from Li Shan, Taiwan. The chocolate: earthy, dry, ripe, strong, fruity, seaweed. The tea: floral, buttery, mint, refreshing. Together: an explosion of oyster! Spectacular!'



photo: Mariëlla Erkens

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.

Every Thursday and Friday we open our workshop to host [workshops](#).

Via [facebook](#) and [instagram](#) you can follow us closely. Like us to stay in the loop!

**TAN
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