



BIOGRAPHY

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STEVE SMITH, FONTE COFFEE MASTER ROASTER

With a distinguished career in roasting coffee spanning over two decades, Steve Smith is an industry veteran and considered an expert by many in the coffee trade. Beginning in 1979, Smith worked for Starbucks and was one of the first roasters ever trained under the three original owners of the company. In the twelve years he worked with the company, he was the first and only roaster to earn the title of Master Roaster and was responsible for all aspects of the roasting process. In 1991, desiring to use more of an artisan approach to roasting, Smith left the company to pursue his passion for roasting coffee and went to work for a small, now defunct coffee company. It was here that he developed his personal roasting style discovering unique ways to bring out natural flavor profiles of various types of coffees. Just a year later, Smith brought his expertise to Fonté Coffee Roaster, an independent roaster in Seattle, where his craft-style of roasting coffee was welcomed as part of its unique approach to servicing high-end hospitality clients.

Smith's production philosophy is that of a coffee purist – his techniques adhere to the strictest standards and work to maintain the integrity of the coffee flavor during the roasting process. This is a driving force in Fonté's methodology today. Smith, the most senior roaster in Seattle, is responsible for every aspect of the coffee production, including developing and maintaining important relationships with some of the finest coffee growers in the world. He works to secure the best beans available and visits key coffee growing areas to ensure the quality of harvest practices. He holds regular cuppings with Fonté owner Paul Odom to study flavor profiles from various regions and to create a plan for the development of Fonté's new proprietary blends. He also oversees a rigorous production schedule based on a daily roast-to-order system, shipping out enormous amounts of coffee to clients within 24 hours of roasting; always making sure that Fonté delivers the freshest product possible. He also manages the tea program, which includes importing a variety of exotic teas, supervising the blending and developing new blends at a client's request.

Smith is a Seattle native and grew up in Mercer Island. He graduated from Washington State University with a degree in Spanish and Literature. His daughter is a National Merit Scholar and currently attends Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Other than coffee, his passion is world music; specifically he loves Afro Cuban music.

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