

A photograph showing three hands holding coffee cups. The top cup is a latte with a leaf-shaped latte art. The middle cup is a dark coffee. The bottom cup is a latte with a leaf-shaped latte art. The text is overlaid on the image.

**Café Finca Cialitos: Q-Grader Joaquín  
Pastor and the Single-Estate Coffee of  
Ciales**



**Café Finca Cialitos is a single-estate Puerto Rican coffee from the mountain town of Ciales. Founded in 1999 as a family-owned coffee farm, the operation is run by Joaquín Pastor González — an agronomist, certified Q-grader, and the man who often serves you coffee himself behind the counter of the Old San Juan café on Calle San Francisco. The coffee is 100% Arabica, never blended with imports, roasted in small batches, and grown at one of the highest elevations on the island. Among small specialty estates in Puerto Rico, Cialitos is one of the most carefully crafted.**

What separates Café Finca Cialitos from the larger Puerto Rican coffee brands is that it is one farm, one family, one roaster, and one café. There is no blending. There is no commodity processing chain. The coffee in your cup, served in Old San Juan or shipped to your door, came from trees that Joaquín Pastor or someone he knows by name personally cultivated, harvested, processed, dried, hulled, sorted, roasted, and packaged. This vertical integration is rare in Puerto Rico and rare in coffee generally.



## The Town of Ciales

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Ciales sits in the cordillera central, in the karst belt that runs across the northern half of the island. The town itself sits at modest elevation, but the surrounding mountains rise to more than 2,400 feet — the threshold above which Arabica coffee thrives. Ciales has been a coffee town for centuries. It is one of the 28 municipalities of Puerto Rico's official zona cafetalera, and it is the home of the Museo del Café de Puerto Rico — the island's official coffee museum, located on Calle Palmer in the Paseo Aroma de Café.

The Ciales coffee profile is distinctive. The combination of high elevation, karst-derived limestone soils overlaying volcanic substrates, and the cool morning fog that settles into the valleys produces coffee with bright acidity, fruity top notes, and a clean dark-

chocolate finish. Different from the heavier, more chocolate-forward profile of Yauco or the balanced sweetness of Adjuntas, Ciales coffee leans toward the lively end of the Caribbean Arabica spectrum.



## **Joaquín Pastor: Agronomist, Q-Grader, Café Owner**

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Joaquín Pastor González is the central figure in the Cialitos operation. He is an agronomist by training — a professional credential that signifies formal education in agricultural science. He is also a certified Q-grader, a designation issued by the Coffee Quality Institute that requires passing roughly 20 sensory exams covering green coffee grading, sensory cupping, triangulation tests, and identification of organic acids and roast defects. There are fewer than 10,000 active Q-graders in the world. In Puerto Rico, the number is in the single digits.

The Q-grader credential matters because it is the international standard for evaluating coffee quality. It is what specialty coffee buyers, importers, and exporters use to certify that a coffee meets specialty grade — generally defined as a cupping score of 80 or above on a 100-point scale. When Pastor cups his own coffee, his evaluation is recognized in the global specialty market.



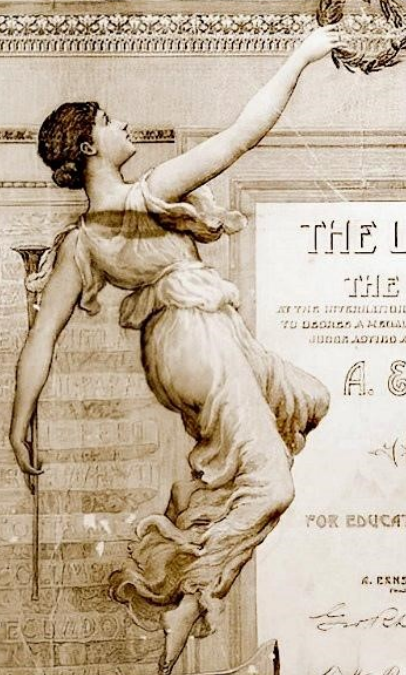
He is also the person behind the counter. Visitors to the Café Finca Cialitos shop on Calle San Francisco in Old San Juan often find Pastor himself preparing their drink. This is unusual in coffee. Most café owners do not pour the coffee. Most coffee growers do not run cafés. Pastor does both, and the through-line — from the farm in Ciales to the cup in your hand — is the same person.

## **The Founding: 1999**

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Café Finca Cialitos as a brand was founded in 1999. The farm itself dates back further — the family has worked land in Ciales for generations — but 1999 marks the year the operation formalized as a coffee business with its own identity. For nearly two decades it was a small farm selling its coffee through limited channels. The Old San Juan café opened in the early 2010s, originally on Calle San Justo and later moved to its current location at 267 Calle San Francisco. The café concept was, at the time, unusual: a single-farm, single-estate Puerto Rican coffee shop in the heart of the historic district, owned by the grower.

The early validation came in 2010. At the Puerto Rico coffee fair that year, Café Finca Cialitos took second place in Cup of Excellence — the international coffee quality competition that brings together the best coffees from a producing country and ranks them by blind cupping. Second place at the Puerto Rico fair signaled that this small Ciales operation was producing coffee at the top tier of the island's quality range.



**THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
BY ACT OF THEIR CONGRESS HAVE AUTHORIZED  
**THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN COMMISSION**  
AT THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION HELD IN THE CITY OF CHICAGO, STATE OF ILLINOIS, IN THE YEAR 1893.  
TO DECREE A MEDAL FOR EXCELLENCE WHICH IS SET FORTH BELOW UNDER THE NAME OF AN INDIVIDUAL  
SUBJECTING AS AN EXAMINER UPON THE FINDING OF A BOARD OF INTERNATIONAL JUDGES, TO  
**A. & F. GALLARDO, - SAN JOSÉ**  
**COSTA RICA.**  
 (\*) **EXHIBIT: COFFEE** (\*)

- (AWARD) -  
 FOR EDUCATIONAL INTEREST OF A COLLECTION OF COFFEE REPRESENTED  
 IN ALL ITS DIFFERENT STAGES. ALSO FOR THE  
 EXCELLENCE OF THE PRODUCT.

A. ENNST,  
Product Departmental Commission  
*Ernst*  
J. H. Schmitt  
Chief of the Exhibitors' Commission  
*Schmitt*  
J. J. Schmitt  
Secretary of the Exhibitors' Commission  
*Schmitt*

MANUEL LEHUS,  
Exhibitor 2469  
*Lehus*



# Never Blended

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The phrase that appears in every description of Café Finca Cialitos is "never blended." This is not marketing language. It is a precise statement about the coffee's composition.

In Puerto Rico, since 1954, the regulated commodity coffee market permits blending of local and imported beans in commercial products, provided the blend is properly labeled. Most major Puerto Rican coffee brands are blends — partially because domestic production no longer satisfies domestic demand, and partially because consistent flavor profiles in mass-market products often require multi-origin sourcing.

Café Finca Cialitos does not participate in this. The coffee is 100% Arabica from a single farm. There is no Robusta. There is no imported coffee from Brazil, Vietnam, or anywhere else. There is no rotational sourcing across multiple farms. Every bag traces to specific harvested cherries from specific trees on a specific farm in a specific year. This level of integrity is the foundational specialty coffee promise.



The quality cost of this commitment is volume. Café Finca Cialitos cannot produce as much coffee as a major branded blender. The economic cost of this commitment is that the coffee must command a higher price per pound to be sustainable. The benefit is that customers know exactly what they are drinking.

## **Caracolillo: The Peaberry Variation**

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When Café Finca Cialitos has caracolillo beans available, they sell quickly. Caracolillo is the Spanish word for peaberry — the rare bean form that occurs when a coffee cherry produces a single rounded seed instead of the usual two flat seeds. Caracolillos are smaller, denser, and often more intense in flavor than regular flat beans. They develop differently in the roast and produce a distinctively concentrated cup.

Pastor sorts caracolillos out for separate sale rather than blending them back into the regular crop. This is itself a sign of attention. Most commodity coffee operations don't separate peaberries because the sorting is labor-intensive. Single-estate specialty operations almost always do, because it lets them offer customers a different and special product — one that captures a smaller volume but a higher price.



## **The Old San Juan Café Experience**

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The café at 267 Calle San Francisco is small. The space is designed like a living room: sofas, comfortable chairs, good music, generous air conditioning that stays steady against San Juan's tropical afternoons. Customers come for an hour, two hours, sometimes longer, with books, laptops, conversation, or just the cup itself.

The menu emphasizes the coffee. Espresso shots are pulled from house-roasted beans. Macchiatos are recommended for visitors serious about tasting the coffee — an espresso shot topped with a teaspoon of frothed milk, just enough to reduce the intensity without masking the flavor. Iced coffee, lattes, cappuccinos, and traditional Puerto Rican café con leche are all available. Pastries, sandwiches, freshly made cakes, pumpkin bread, pumpkin muffins, and traditional rabbit turnovers fill the case.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/l6Niblc5Qq0>

*Café Finca Cialitos in Old San Juan — Joaquín Pastor's specialty coffee shop*

The café has, over the years, become a particular pilgrimage destination for coffee enthusiasts visiting Puerto Rico. Travelers who have read about specialty coffee from the island arrive in Old San Juan, search out the small storefront, and find Pastor preparing their coffee. The conversation often turns to the farm — to the elevation, to the variety, to the harvest year, to the specific microclimate that produced the cup in their hand. The café is a teaching space as much as a commercial one.

## **Brewing Recommendations from the Source**

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Café Finca Cialitos roasts to a medium-city profile — the level of roast that preserves the most origin character without going so light that the coffee tastes underdeveloped. The recommended brewing methods reflect this:

Pour over (V60, Chemex) brings out the bright acidity and the fruit notes. The clean separation of soluble compounds through a paper filter keeps the cup transparent. This is the recommended method for tasting the coffee analytically.

French press emphasizes body and chocolate notes. The metal mesh allows oils through, producing a heavier, fuller cup with less acidity in evidence. This is the recommended method for those who want a more substantive cup.

Mokapot — the traditional Italian stovetop espresso maker, also widely used in Puerto Rican homes — produces a strong concentrated cup that approaches espresso. It is the recommended brewing method for café con leche, served with hot scalded milk and sugar.

Drip coffee makers work but are not recommended for showcasing the coffee's full character. The temperature inconsistency and over-extraction of standard drip machines tend to flatten the cup.



## The Subscription Model

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Café Finca Cialitos has, in recent years, built a subscription business that ships freshly roasted coffee to customers monthly. The roasting schedule is built around small fresh batches: all subscriptions are roasted and shipped together during the first week of each

month, regardless of when the subscription was started. Orders placed after the monthly shipping window are included in the following month's roast.

This model is a deliberate trade-off against on-demand convenience. The customer waits longer between order and delivery than with a standard online retailer, but the coffee arrives within days of roasting rather than weeks. For specialty coffee, this matters: roasted coffee begins losing aromatic compounds within a week of roasting, and most coffee on retail shelves is at least three to four weeks past its roast date.

## **Café Finca Cialitos in the Specialty Coffee Landscape**

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Among Puerto Rican coffee operations, Café Finca Cialitos sits in a distinctive niche. It is smaller than the major heritage brands. It does not have national supermarket distribution. It does not blend with imports. Its price per pound is higher than commodity Puerto Rican coffee. And its target customer is the specialty coffee drinker — someone who reads roast dates, who notices the difference between a Colombian Huila and a Kenyan AA, and who wants to know exactly which farm produced their morning cup.

The operation is part of a broader specialty coffee movement in Puerto Rico that has grown through the 2010s and 2020s. The University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez's Estación Experimental Agrícola has supported research and education programs aimed at growers entering the specialty market. La Taza de Oro — the Cup of Gold competition — has been awarded since 2014. Single-estate operations in Adjuntas, Yauco, Jayuya, Lares, Ciales, and Maricao have proliferated. The OCPR's Programa de Cafés Especiales provides institutional support.

Café Finca Cialitos is one of the longest-running of these single-estate operations. The 1999 founding date predates the formal specialty coffee movement on the island by more than a decade. Pastor's combination of agronomic training, Q-grader credential, and direct retail engagement is unusual.



## Visiting and Buying

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The Café Finca Cialitos shop in Old San Juan is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Hours typically run 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on most days. Some sources list a Pier 2 location with extended hours, reflecting expansion of the brand's retail footprint. Direct visitors can buy whole-bean coffee, ground coffee, and the Café Selecto flagship product. Caracolillo is sold when available.

The farm itself in Ciales is private and not on the standard agritourism circuit. Visitors interested in the Ciales coffee region can begin at the Museo del Café on Calle Palmer in Ciales itself, where the history and culture of Puerto Rican coffee — including the regulatory documents preserved from the 19th century — are on display.

Online ordering is available through [fincacialitos.com](http://fincacialitos.com), with subscription options for ongoing monthly shipment. Authentic Puerto Rican specialty coffees, including small-estate brands in this category, are also available through the encyclopedia's sponsor [PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com](http://PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com).

## What This Operation Demonstrates

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The significance of Café Finca Cialitos extends beyond the cup. It demonstrates that Puerto Rico can produce single-estate, internationally certified, never-blended specialty coffee — and that there is a viable economic model for doing so even on a small scale. For the future of Puerto Rican coffee, this is critical. The historical commodity coffee model — large haciendas selling green coffee to wholesale processors — has been declining for a century. The future, if there is one, lies in models like Cialitos: small estates, vertical integration, direct retail, certified quality, and a customer base willing to pay specialty prices for traceable, named, single-origin coffee.

The mountains of Ciales still produce coffee. The Atienzas still farm in Jayuya. The Madre Isla cooperative still grows in Adjuntas. The Tres Picachos still operates. Hacienda Lealtad still stands in Lares. Each of these operations represents a different model for Puerto Rican coffee's twenty-first century. Café Finca Cialitos represents one of the smallest and most personally directed of those models — and the cup it produces is one of the cleanest, most transparent, and most carefully crafted on the island.

## Key Facts

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- Founded: 1999, family-owned
- Farm location: Ciales, central mountain region, Puerto Rico
- Cafés: 267 Calle San Francisco, Old San Juan; Pier 2 location
- Owner / lead operator: Joaquín Pastor González (agronomist, certified Q-grader)
- Coffee: 100% Arabica, never blended

- Elevation: roughly 2,200 meters cited in product literature
- Roast profile: medium-city
- Award: 2010 Cup of Excellence (Puerto Rico) — second place
- Distinctive products: Café Selecto flagship; caracolillo (peaberry) when available
- Subscription model: monthly fresh-roasted shipments, first week of each month

## Frequently Asked Questions

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**What does "Q-grader" mean?** A Q-grader is a coffee professional certified by the Coffee Quality Institute, having passed approximately 20 sensory exams covering green coffee grading, sensory cupping, triangle tests, organic acid identification, and roast defect identification. There are fewer than 10,000 active Q-graders worldwide. The credential is used for evaluating specialty grade coffee in international trade.

**Where exactly is the farm?** The farm is located in Ciales, in the central mountain region of Puerto Rico. The exact farm address is not part of the public-facing brand presentation. Visitors interested in the Ciales coffee region typically begin at the Museo del Café in Ciales town center, on Calle Palmer.

**What is caracolillo?** Caracolillo is the Spanish word for peaberry — a rare coffee bean form in which a cherry produces a single rounded seed rather than the usual two flat seeds. Peaberries occur in approximately 5% of any coffee crop. Café Finca Cialitos sorts and sells caracolillo separately when supply allows.

**Is the coffee available outside Puerto Rico?** Yes. Café Finca Cialitos ships to mainland U.S. addresses through its website and through some specialty retailers. The encyclopedia's sponsor, PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com, also stocks select Puerto Rican specialty coffees.

**How does Café Finca Cialitos compare to major Puerto Rican brands?** The major Puerto Rican brands — Yaucono, Café Rico, Crema, Alto Grande, Yauco Selecto, and

others — are blends, often containing imported coffee, produced at commercial scale and distributed broadly. Café Finca Cialitos is a single-estate operation producing 100% Arabica, never blended, in small batches. The two categories serve different customers and operate at different price points.

## Related Articles

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- [Hacienda San Pedro: The Atienza Family Coffee Legacy in Jayuya](#)
- [Coffee Cupping: The Professional Tasting Method](#)
- [What is Coffea Arabica? The Noble Coffee Species](#)
- [Café Don Ruiz and Specialty Coffee in Old San Juan](#)
- [The Bourbon Coffee Variety](#)
- [Pour Over Coffee: The Complete Guide](#)
- [Puerto Rico Coffee Grades: Specialty, High Mountain Grown, and the SCA Scale](#)

## Buy Authentic Puerto Rico Coffee

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Single-estate Puerto Rican specialty coffees, including small-batch roasts traced to specific mountain farms, are available year-round at [PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com](https://PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com), the encyclopedia's exclusive sponsor. Choose authentic, never-watered-down Puerto Rican coffee for your kitchen.

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