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# HOLLAND HERALD



*Welcome to the  
Joy of Food issue*

  
KLM



CARRERA 7  
 CALLE 5  
 UNIDOS POR EL BIEN COMUNITARIO  
 CON SENTIDO SOCIAL

Heladeria & Postres

Desayunos  
 Obleas  
 Merengón  
 fresas con crema  
 Guanabanón  
 Granizado de café  
 Ensalada de frutas  
 Jugos naturales

NOS TRASLADAMOS A LA VUELTA

ALMUERZOS

Obleas  
 Merengón  
 Merengón de Café

DESA  
 algo  
 Sandwich  
 Hamburgues  
 Cakes  
 Cakes  
 Arpas  
 Aguas de  
 Cantar



# ART COFFEE HUES VIEWS

In Bogotá, the air is filled with the rich aroma of specialty coffee and a hint of spray paint. From hilltop eco-haciendas to a living gallery of street art, eco-conscious entrepreneurs are shaping the new face of Colombia.

Text and photography Jurriaan Teulings

Bogotá  
Colombia



**“J**ustin Bieber did what?” The street art expert and I are standing in the shadow of a large mural in downtown Bogotá. It’s an hour into her graffiti-themed tour and I’m trying to process what she just said: In 2013, the teen idol served as the catalyst for a Colombian street art revolution; sparked, I kid you not, by Bieber’s spray-painted tribute to his dead hamster.

Let’s rewind a little bit. A few days ago, I arrived in the Colombian capital, which sits on a plateau in what is known as the Cordillera Oriental: the broadest of the three mountain ranges the Andes splits into as it enters the country from the south. In a city that is already 2,640m above sea level, the tallest buildings are doing a very good job of scraping the sky. I came here to cherish the Andean embrace of the mountains on the horizon. Most foreign visitors only spend a day or two in Bogotá before moving on to lower altitudes to enjoy Medellín’s warmer nights or the tropical beaches along the Caribbean coast. I can personally attest to how quickly this city grows on you as soon as the touristic highlights are checked off and you can simply enjoy Bogotá’s raw energy and its amazing food, art, music and people.

During my first days here, I explored some of my favourite neighbourhoods by bike: the bohemian streets and library cafés of La Macarena; the theatres and cultural events along the tree-lined Parkway area in the La Soledad neighbourhood; and the thriving restaurant scene and Latin America’s largest LGBTQI+ club in Chapinero. Bogotá boasts a surprisingly large network of bike lanes, which are brilliant for bypassing the rush hour traffic jams. It gets even better on Sunday mornings when 120km of Bogotá’s streets are closed off to car traffic so that cyclists, rollerbladers, joggers and pedestrians can exercise and move freely. The initiative, named *Ciclovia*, began in Bogotá in 1974 and never fails to lift the spirits with street performers, food trucks and even free open-air fitness classes. At this altitude, and this close to the equator, those mornings always feel like spring.

The fact that Bogotá feels underrated is part of its charm, and perhaps I should selfishly wish that the crowds will never venture very far from the famous Gold Museum in the city centre. One aspect of the city that has been gaining wider recognition, however, is its street art. What started as a safe way to express dissent during the 52 years of armed conflict in the country, has evolved into a fusion of indigenous aesthetics, satire and references to the nation’s biodiversity in psychedelic abundance on the streets surrounding its political centre, including the national congress and the presidential residence.

A lot of the context and juicy details would’ve been lost on me had I not joined Camila Gonzalez on her graffiti tour this morning. She’s the one who just perplexed me with the unusual entrance of Justin Bieber into her narrative. It caught me off-guard after the skyrocketing variations of ‘punkness’ of the artists she’s introduced so far: the sharp-witted anti-war satire of DJ Lu, whose stencils convert pineapples from symbols of tropical abundance into grenades; Stinkfish, who transforms candid snapshots of anonymous people into vibrant, large-scale murals; and Toxicómano, who was one of the first artists to criticise the Colombian government and politicians in the early 2000s, because, as Gonzalez puts it, “He’s a super punk and doesn’t care about the system.”

### **Bieber la revolución!**

Until Bieber’s arrival, street art remained an illegal and dangerous activity. When he arrived for a concert in 2013, the city was still mourning the death of Diego Felipe Becerra, a 16-year-old street artist who was shot and killed by the Bogotá police less than two years before. Bieber asked for, and received, police protection while he spray-painted his hamster memorial. “Everyone could watch this on his Facebook Live,” says Gonzalez. This double standard catalysed a street art revolution, with hundreds of works created overnight, and artists demanding the same respect from the police »

#### **Previous pages**

Eje Cafetero,  
Salento;  
Cocora Valley

#### **Right page, top (from left to right)**

La Puerta Menta,  
an art collective  
in La Macarena,  
Bogotá; traditional  
food at Casa  
Mamá Luz in La  
Candelaria, Bogotá;  
Azahar Café 93 in  
Chapinero, Bogotá

**Bottom** Street  
art at the historic  
Quevedo’s  
Fountain Square  
in La Candelaria



ENJOY BOGOTÁ'S RAW  
ENERGY AND ITS AMAZING FOOD,  
ART, MUSIC AND PEOPLE

**SALENTO, THE REGION'S  
TOURIST HUB, ALWAYS MANAGES  
TO LOOK CHEERFUL**





Above Cafe Pushkin in La Calendaria, Bogotá  
Left page Main square, Salento

# THE LANDSCAPE CHANGES FROM COOL ANDEAN HEIGHTS TO THE LUSH GREEN COFFEE TRIANGLE



that Bieber got. To illustrate the level of outrage, the country's oldest newspaper, *El Espectador*, likened Bieber's actions to the breaking of Llorente's vase, which sparked a revolution that ended with independence from Spanish rule in 1810. Perhaps that's overly dramatic, but the city conceded: nowadays graffiti is not only allowed but also encouraged.

Around the time of Bieber's visit, a quieter revolution was gathering momentum in a handful of hipster coffee bars. Though Colombia has always been one of the world's largest producers of coffee beans, it had never been a big consumer of quality coffee. As someone who has tried *tinto*, the sickly-sweet brew sold by street vendors, at his own peril, I'm not surprised. Sophisticated brewing techniques remained unfamiliar to many ordinary Colombians who, after the exporting their finest, were often left with poor-quality beans. Today, great coffee, the kind that comes with tattooed baristas and latte art, is easy to find in Bogotá in bars such as Amor Perfecto and Azahar. But according to Alejandro Ospina, speciality coffee is still a very small industry. I'm meeting him at El Pergolero, his newly opened coffee bar, restaurant and gallery space in Quinta Camacho, an area known for its European-inspired architecture.

### Responsible coffee

El Pergolero has all the markings of a sustainable enterprise, promoting local artists and using 'ugly' vegetables to fight food waste. But when it comes to coffee beans, Ospina only sources the best, and is willing to pay for it. "Half a million coffee farms and more than two million people are involved in coffee farming," he says. And yet, Colombia consumes a third of what the US consumes per capita. Rather than simply getting his country more caffeinated, Ospina wants to help others create socially or environmentally impactful projects in Colombia. "We began with the coffee industry simply because it employs the most people."

Over the next few days, I get to experience what sustainable coffee farming looks like in one

of Colombia's best-known coffee regions. Around 150km west of Bogotá, the landscape changes from cool Andean heights to the lush green Coffee Triangle. This region is characterised by its steep hills and valleys blanketed with meticulously planted coffee trees. The countryside is dotted with small towns and farmhouses featuring the region's traditional architecture. But here, too, things are changing, including the farmers.

The owners of Hacienda Boutique Santa Rosanna, a secluded eco-lodge and coffee farm near Pereira, represent a departure from the traditional coffee farmer persona. Alejandra is Colombian, and Luca is Italian, and they met in Spain while working in the travel industry. When the pandemic hit, they traded their rushed existence for a slower, nature-based lifestyle in the hills around Santa Rosa de Cabal, turning a 100-year-old building with 4 hectares of land into an ecologically and socially sustainable business built around organic coffee.

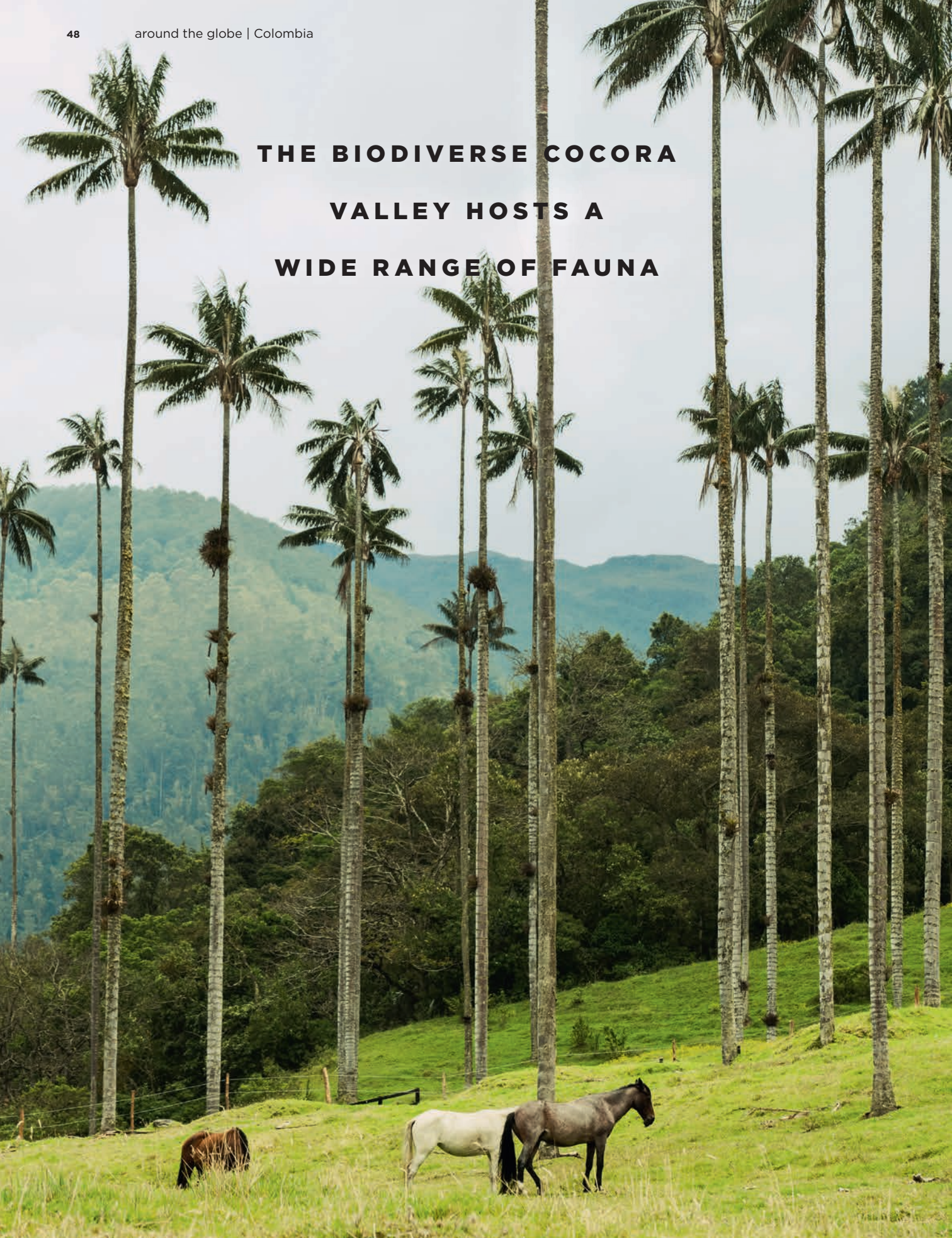
After the rush of Bogotá, the Hacienda is a wonderfully silent paradise. Hummingbirds dart between the flowers of a garden that has sweeping views over a green valley. The silhouettes of the volcanic peaks of Los Nevados National Park loom on the eastern horizon. Over a cornucopian breakfast of all things home-picked, Alejandra tells me of her plans to offer mindfulness experiences for guests. Luca has been following a university course in all things coffee and confesses that his favourite brewing method is now the French press. "I used to be a defender of ristretto and espresso, but I now realise that this isn't the best way to truly appreciate coffee and its properties," he says, perhaps imagining how he will soon have his Italian passport revoked for uttering such sacrilege. Still, it's hard to argue with the home-grown specialty coffee they serve me at breakfast, which now ranks among the highest-quality products from the region.

For the rest of the day, I tour the famous sights of the Coffee Triangle, starting with a »

**Top Views**  
over the coffee  
highlands  
from Hacienda  
Boutique Santa  
Rosanna

**Bottom (from  
left to right)**  
Relaxing after the  
rain in Salento;  
butter made  
with *cachirra*  
(dried fish) at  
Leo restaurant;  
Cafe Jesus  
Martin in Salento

**THE BIODIVERSE COCORA  
VALLEY HOSTS A  
WIDE RANGE OF FAUNA**



**Left page** Majestic wax palms rise towards the sky in Cocora Valley

hike in the famous Cocora Valley, a surreal landscape that's straight out of a fantasy film. It's the home of the rare and absurdly tall wax palm that grows to heights of up to 60 metres, making the surrounding hills look like pincushions. The biodiverse valley hosts a wide range of fauna, including many species of birds, various monkeys and spectacled bears that, in pictures I've seen online, look vaguely like the negatives of pandas, but I don't get to spot much of it because my hike is cut short by menacing clouds rolling into the valley. The rainstorm that follows lasts the rest of the afternoon. These valleys are green for good reason.

### Revived recipes

With its buildings painted in vibrant colours and wooden balconies adorned with flowers, Salento – the region's tourist hub – even manages to look cheerful in the pouring rain. I've already booked a dinner in the nearby town of Filandia, at a beautiful restaurant called Helena Adentro that's run by another set of modern coffee farmers. The restaurant's backstory started 10 years ago, with one of the owners, Alejandro Fajardo Mendoza, returning home after living in Australia to produce a specialty coffee brand on his grandfather's farm together with Jade Gosling, his Kiwi business partner. Both trained in the hospitality industry, and they quickly moved beyond mere farming, opening Helena Adentro to showcase local artists and artisans, while reinventing traditional dishes, ranging from vegan nachos and shrimp *patacones* to rabbit sandwiches and slow-cooked pork belly salad. There's another revolution in the making: the slow and steady rise of Colombian cuisine. Note to self: must return soon for a gastronomic exploration of the coasts and cordilleras of this hugely diverse country. «

*Jurriaan Teulings visited Colombia at the invitation of Sapa Pana Travel, a Dutch travel agency specialising in tailor-made trips to Latin America.*



WIDELY PUBLISHED TRAVEL WRITER JURRIAN TEULINGS HAS SPENT MANY MONTHS IN COLOMBIA. HERE ARE HIS TIPS FOR BOGOTÁ.

### *Jurriaan's Favourites*

#### Queen of Ajiaco

Food market vendor Mamá Luz became a local celebrity, first for her traditional *ajiaco* (chicken and potato soup), and then for Netflix series *Street Food: Latin America*, which featured her life story. She has since started her own restaurant, Casa Mamá Luz, in the historic centre. **Cl. 10 2-23, in La Candelaria**

#### Calle de los Anticuarios

Look for the statue of the blue dachshund that marks the corner of Calle de los Anticuarios, or the Street of the Antiquarians, in El Nogal, one of the most affluent parts of Bogotá. This street is a great place for souvenir shopping, especially at Casa Santa Maria, a fashion and design hub for upcoming talent that also happens to serve great coffee. **casasantamaria.co**

#### Árbol del Pan

During a work stint in 2014, I spent many mornings working on my laptop at this wonderful bakery and café in a quiet

street in the Chapinero area. When I returned after a three-year absence, the waitress still remembered how I like my coffee. **elarbodelpan.com**

#### Quick bearings

The historic city centre serves as the starting point for several excellent tours. Aside from specialised graffiti tours, there are also bike tours that take you further afield; these are a brilliant way to quickly get your bearings in the city. The latter are every day at 10.30am and 1.30pm and you can just show up. **bogotagraffiti.com and bogotabiketours.com**

#### Leo

Leonor Espinosa is routinely ranked as one of Colombia's best chefs. Her ancestral knowledge and respectful use of local ingredients supports sustainable development in rural Colombia. Her 'Cycle-Biome' menu was a mind-blowing introduction to the country's hidden culinary treasures. **restauranteleo.com**

#### Paloquemao fruit market

I love this sprawling farmers' market, which is teeming

with a fantastic range of unfamiliar fruits. Vendors offer a variety of fresh juices, including the tangy *lulada*.

**Av. Cdad. de Lima 25-04**

#### San Felipe

Architect Alejandro Castaño turned the San Felipe district into an art hotspot housing more than 20 galleries with a vibrant scene, including bars, restaurants and coworking spaces. Look out for Open San Felipe, a quarterly event where artists showcase their studios. **opensanfelipe.com**

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