

# Nacional Pure is discovered, an exceptional cacao lost for 100 years

Probably, it had always been there, unnoticed to everybody, or not even given importance to by those who noticed it. Nevertheless, it was one of the most peculiar and prized cacao varieties ever. Dan Pearson and Brian Horsley, from the USA, then suppliers for a mine company, discovered some cacao trees in the north of Peru while searching for bananas. Those trees belonged to a variety which in Ecuador had been known as "nacional puro" disappeared in 1916 due to different plagues. This re-discovered variety was named 'Fortunato No. 4' after the farmer on whose farm such precious discovery was found. And number four because the fourth sample out of several others analyzed by the USDA confirmed the authenticity of this variety.

The trees were growing on isolated fields in Peru's remote Marañón Canyon. The surprising thing is that the pods contained a rare combination of white beans, 40%, and purple beans, 60%, in the same pods, and in some cases only white ones.

Familiar with only purple beans, they were curious about the rare white beans and sent leaf samples to the USDA for testing. "When they called with genetics test results and asked, 'Are you sitting down?' I knew we had found something special," said Pearson.

The research done on the genetic structure of this cacao concluded that these pods were an unprecedented discovery, also that this variety was



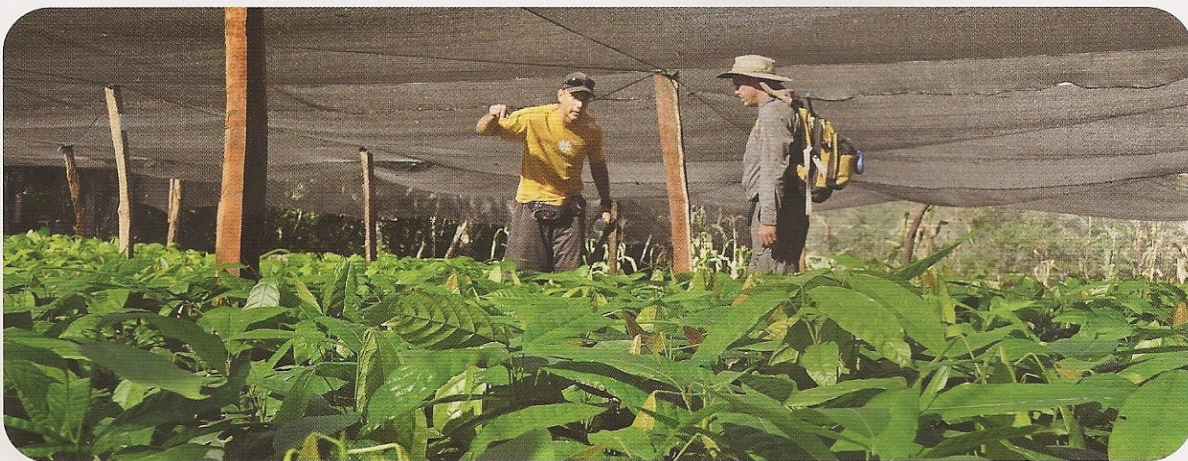


undoubtedly original from Peru and not a result of a foreign, exotic introduction.

Pearson and Horsley founded Marañón Chocolate, the company through which they started presenting Fortunato No. 4 to the world. Franz Ziegler, of Ziegler Consulting, and Paul Edward, of Chef Rubber, joined the project. Both claimed to feel happily surprised and excited with this major discovery, "in our combined 50 years of working with chocolate, we have never tasted flavors like this. We had to experience this ourselves, so we both traveled to Peru, met the farm families, saw the trees, the white beans, the genetics tests and then watched the next evolution in post-harvest processing that they developed. We saw the past and the future of chocolate."

Brian Horsley is in charge of the field work. With a group of 15 local workers, he supervises the harvest, which extends from January to May. They collect the fruits from the fields and carry out the first selection. Then the pods are placed in 20-kilo buckets, weighed and sealed. The farmers receive their wages immediately, "10% more than local mediators pay", assures Horsley. The buckets are transported to one of the processing plants built by Marañón Chocolate, in which both the fermentation and drying processes are initiated on the same day.

Last year, Marañón Chocolate worked with 186 farmers, and processed a total amount of 12.5 tons of cacao. The expectations for this year include hiring 220 farmers and increasing the production to 15 tons.



Paul Edward of Chef Rubber

## “First couverture to be made with a thought to be extinct bean. The 68% is cacao mass with 22% cane sugar and 60 hour longitudinal conche”

### **What is your role in this project?**

I am a partner in the project to help sustain the production of this rare Cacao. Crystal Mier, Fran Ziegler, Dan Pearson, Brian Horsley, Paul Edward have rediscovered a unique, thought to be extinct variety of cacao. We pay the highest price for the cacao to the Peruvians, it's not plantation, so it's eco friendly, it's organic, grown naturally out in the Amazon in Marañón region. We pay the farmer. Not some guy in a suit to fly down from some organization to “certify” it is fair trade, organic, and rain forest compliant. It just is. We put the money directly into the farmer/hunter, and the quality production and handling of the couverture. No wasted monetary resources on no value.

### **How is this chocolate commercialized?**

There is so limited supply production. It has been made in Switzerland, into one of the finest couvertures ever produced. There are a few exquisite chocolatiers that have been contacted and are purchasing the couverture for exclusive production.

### **Why is this chocolate different and special?**

First couverture to be made with a thought to be extinct bean. The 68% is cacao mass with 22% cane sugar and 60 hour longitudinal conche.

