

Every Flavor Resolves Into the Next

First Light Roasters brings its love story with coffee to Livonia

By Terry Jacoby

TWO families plus one ritual equal First Light Roasters.

While the math is simple, the road to producing amazing coffee is a love story between Sam Noor and Amal Almaflahi, and the joy and satisfaction that comes with creating a product others fall in love with.

Sam grew up in 1980s Mogadishu, where his grandmother roasted wild coffee from the Cal Madow mountains of Sanaag. Amal's grandfather left Yemen when he was young and spent his life farming coffee in the highlands of Ethiopia.

When Sam and Amal met, they recognized something familiar in each other: the smell of green beans turning in a pan, the patience of a slow roast, the quiet way a cup gathers people. Their love story and First Light Roasters are the same story.

And the latest chapter began this spring in Livonia, with the opening of First Light Roasters. The roastery – the first of its kind in the city – is open and shipping every day, while the new cafe will open with a grand opening on August 22.

Sam and Amal take what they do very seriously and offer only the highest quality. First Light is SCA-certified and roasted to order, and buys its green coffee directly through licensed partners at origin. Every batch is roasted small, to order, and shipped within 48 hours so the coffee tastes exactly as the roaster intended.

"Clarity is not a metaphor for us," Sam said. "It is a technical goal: a clean cup where every flavor resolves into the next."

That pursuit of clarity happens inside an 8,000-square-foot roastery at 37055 Industrial Road in Livonia, where First Light roasts up to 1,500 pounds a day and has grown into Michigan's largest Black-owned coffee roastery.

The unique and amazing lineup of coffees runs from approachable everyday blends under the First Light label, like the Signature Espresso with its notes of milk chocolate,



Head roaster David Toth II at the First Light warehouse.

toasted almond, and cherry, to the premium Detroit Halite collection, named for the salt mined beneath Detroit for more than a century. The flagship Kenya AA leads with jasmine, milk chocolate and a bright honeydew finish. Alongside it sits a Rwanda Bourbon and an Ethiopia Grade 1, each a benchmark of its origin.

First Light Roasters is warm, local, proud, and welcoming that "puts community first." The Livonia First Promise isn't a slogan but a commitment to being a good neighbor.

"We could have roasted anywhere in Metro Detroit," Amal said. "We chose Livonia, and we want the city to feel what it means to have a roaster of its own."

And that is the idea behind the Livonia First Promise: if you live in Livonia, you never pay full price. Anyone who lives in, works in or ships to Livonia gets a standing 10 percent off every order, online with the code LIVONIA10 or by showing a Livonia ID at the roastery. It is not a limited-time coupon. It is a commitment.

Kenya is the Queen of Coffee. Ethiopia is the Asl, the origin. And Livonia is now the destination – all created through a love story and a passion to produce a cup of coffee that is unique, special, amazing and where every flavor resolves into the next.

For more information, visit firstlightroasters.com.

