

The Home Business for the Starbucks* Generation!

MY HOME ROASTERY

My name's Lonnie Wright. I live on Galiano Island, a small community an hour's ferry ride from Vancouver, British Columbia. We moved here when my wife Tess was given a new contract allowing her to telecommute, and it had always been our dream to live on the Gulf Islands... So we thought why not, let's do it.

I'm the main carer for our kids but began thinking about starting a small business as a top-up income that would be flexible enough to fit in around looking after them, involve a little creativity and connect us with the local community. So you look online and all you find is ads for get rich schemes or boring, (and expensive), franchises like carpet cleaning!

So we're hanging out at the Island's Saturday market, with local growers and bakers and I thought, what can I bring to the party?

Tess's Uncle Jerry designed a table-top coffee roaster some years ago and the company that make them Sonofresco was just over the border in Washington. So on a family visit I asked to take a look around the factory, and they had 20 of these machines running to supply their roasting demands. I thought I might be on to something. They were small enough to take to a market but very robust, they were clearly reliable and efficient and then when I tried the fresh roasted coffee beans they were turning out in pretty large volumes I thought wow.



Dad and the Beanstalk

I suppose it is fair to say I have spent much of my working life looking for magic beans... I traded a reasonable, though somewhat soul-destroying life working in the commercials production industry for being a writer-director of my own films and in the process swallowed up a fair amount of the household's resources. So it was with some trepidation that I suggested to Tess, that the sums on a roaster package I had worked out were really that good, and that maybe...? She agreed, and here we are.

Now Galiano is a pretty small place, it only has around 800 full time residents but they love their coffee and with a long tourist season over the summer and most weekends I thought it looked promising. A trip round the local stores revealed that coffee was being sold in large quantities, and I sensed that a market share for a local product could be had. Having the local farmer's market also meant a great place to start perfecting my sales technique and allow me access to a few enthusiastic guinea pigs who might not be overly critical at the beginning.

I needn't have worried. Coffee roasting is really deceptively simple if you have good beans and a good roaster, and if your product is fresh roasted coffee at a reasonable price, you're going to have a market.



"He appeared one day with this wonderful contraption and the next thing you know, the wonderful smell of roasting coffee filled the air. All the stallholders were so delighted something as exotic as coffee roasting could be a part of the market"

Peter Renner, Baker

Is a home roastery for me?
I'd like to work around 10hrs a week
I like coffee
I am a good communicator
I am quite creative
I am self motivated
I could use an extra \$500 a week
I like new challenges
I'd like to be a part of the community
I need very flexible working hours
Does that sound like you?

Farmer's markets are hugely popular all over the world in communities large and small. On Galiano we are rather short of farmers so it's just called the Saturday market! It was a great place to make friends and to build confidence in what I was doing. I would take one of the roasters down, fire it up and a crowd would gather to watch the action. A lot of people had no idea coffee beans were green to begin with and I lost count of the number of times I was asked if the coffee was grown on the island. (Coffee is only grown in countries between the tropics and at altitudes above 4000 ft.)



After the success of the Saturday market I began taking my coffee around the local stores. The Twirly Tree is a co-operative run by local artisans and although they weren't geared up for selling coffee, they could see the value in it drawing in customers who would then remember they needed a gift or something. It's turned into a great bit of extra business for them. They also have a lot of tourists come in who want to take home something of the Islands and many of them who tried a cup in one of the restaurants go; 'Oh that's the Galiano coffee we've been drinking.' Suzanne the Twirly Tree manager was a great support from the beginning.

Do I have a market?

1. Good local Coffee Shop ✓
2. Friends, family, neighbors drink coffee ✓
3. Friendly neighborhood store ✓
4. Farmers Market
5. Can access local school, hospital, university
6. Know someone in large office or factory ✓
7. Know local fundraising groups ✓

If you have 5 checks,
you have a market

"When Lonnie first came in I thought it was a fabulous idea and it would fly. I don't drink coffee so I didn't know whether it was actually any good but my customers love organic and local so it was worth giving a go, now most of them refuse to buy anything else... When they went off Island to have their baby and all the coffee was gone, people were begging me for his number and I said no, can't you wait! When they came back I congratulated them, gave Lonnie a cigar and said, 'now go and roast some coffee, quick!'"

Daniel Kim, Corner Store



"In my opinion having fresh roasted coffee has to be one of the best things that happened to Galiano. I hadn't realized how important it was to have coffee roasted so soon before you drink it before... I am now so spoiled that I cannot drink any other coffee."

Suzanne Laughlin, Twirly Tree

When I first went to talk to Daniel the co-owner of the largest store on the Island I was a little nervous. Here I was up against large and established retail coffee brands. Daniel listened patiently, thought it sounded interesting, then he went round the back and pulled out an old 'Kicking Horse' coffee stand and said, 'Do you think you can fill it by tomorrow?' The next day I returned with 48 1lb bags and we loaded up the stand and I remember his surprise, he didn't think I was actually serious. He then did me the greatest of favors by running it at a low mark-up for the first 5 months. He shifts between 40-60lbs a week there now.



Coffee and Community



A single coffee tree yields just one pound of coffee a year, then those beans pass through a hundred different hands before reaching the North American consumer, so I always felt they should be treated with the utmost respect. And making sure they are the best they can be when drunk seemed like a social responsibility as much as anything. Not roasted, ground, extracted and combined with chemicals to create a powder which you then add to hot water. But you can do much more in this business than commit to supplying freshly roasted coffee.

One of the key things for us as new members of the community was to get out and meet people, become involved in activities like the market. We have served our coffee during intervals in plays, political meetings and donated a years supply to various different organizations for their auctions. We quickly became known on the Island as the coffee people, well it could be worse!

But there's a greater sense of community that I also wanted to commit to. From the beginning we committed to only buying Organic and Fair Trade beans. Organic because we believe the long term health of our planet's limited growing regions are best served by moving away from chemical assisted growing and genetic modification and fair trade because I did not want to earn a single dollar profiting un-fairly from another human being.



Here's a great definition of Fair Trade:

"Fair Trade is an alternative approach to conventional international trade which promotes social equity, economic security and sound environmental practices. It's goal is to contribute to sustainable development by improving market access for disadvantaged producers, by raising awareness and campaigning. It works to a set of values and objectives that seek to improve living standards and achieve a fairer distribution of income and influence. It is a partnership between all involved in the trading process — producers, workers, traders and consumers."¹

A simple summary of Fair Trade is *'Treating producers as if they were your relatives and the environment as a best friend.'*



We visited Lon's "beanhouse" one day and were immediately impressed with his set-up. We thought he was onto something, previously our main marketing thrust was to coffee shops and retailers looking to provide fresh product in their stores. But Lonnie's claim that "every village and every town across North America must have a beanhouse!" caught our imagination. We thought, well, we shall see, and we're delighted Lonnie was interested in sharing his story and inspiring others to get their home roasteries off the ground!

Here is a list of his essential roastery kit, built up over time: 3-1lb. Roasters (although 2lb. Roasters are now an option), a venting kit and fan, organic Fair Trade beans, professional scale, 2 scoops, 1lb. and 1/2lb. bags, bag labels, a spare roasting chamber, and a spare temperature sensor. Sonofresco can provide all these items to get your business started. Give Sonofresco a call today!

A few words from sonofresco

How to turn a garden shed into a coffee empire!

1. Clear out junk
2. have a yard sale and invite neighbors etc to pay for that junk
3. Seal any holes, and openings, though Mice and Rats actually won't come near the place
4. Buy a roastery
5. Find a couple of strong tables and a couple of propane tanks.
6. Invite local health inspector to approve your roastery
7. Start roasting your way to world domination, well sort of!



What does a 1lb bag of beans cost me?

Cost of green beans \$2.50-\$3.50

Average weight loss of roasting 60c

Bag, labels and printing - 50c

Propane and Electric 10c

Transport 40c

Machine Cost and Deterioration 50c



\$5-6 Profit on a \$10 sale



Who should buy the Sonofresco Home Roastery?

It is a perfect home based business for anyone who wants to make additional income and feels confident in their ability to sell a product. Profits of over \$20,000 a year can be made with just two hours of roasting per day with the potential to further develop your market enormously.

How easy is it to set up?

Sonofresco roasters have been in the market place for 10 years and are very user friendly and require little technical knowledge to run. Detailed instructions are included in the package and a support team is available from Monday through Friday 8am-5pm at the Burlington headquarters in Washington State. The roasters need to be connected to either natural gas or propane on site and all the fittings to connect them are included. The roasters also need to be vented, as the roasting coffee will make a small amount of smoke.

How do I market my Coffee?

We guarantee that once you have tasted fresh roasted coffee it will become your obsession and that passion will quickly be transferred to your potential customers. The flavor and taste of coffee brewed from fresh roasted beans is beyond comparison. Roasted coffee loses its flavor rapidly so you will be able to provide the best tasting coffee available at an affordable price to your customer base. Once people have tasted freshly roasted coffee, they will accept no alternative. Turn your work and social network into your customer base and make them happy at the same time.

It is an easy and well-tested method of making money from your home. You determine the hours that you work and the amount of income you require, and the sonofresco 11b roasters are the best way to do it. They have been in the market place for 10 years and are very reliable.

Coffee is an essential part of life in America, a product that people both want regularly and enjoy, it is not going away. So, if you want to increase your financial independence, do something a little creative and a bit different in a tried and tested marketplace, do what Lonnie did, and get home roasting!



What does home based mean?

The bright cheerful red roasters can be set up in a small area like a shed, garage or a workshop. You do not need a purpose-built building to operate. The roasters need to be set on a small table, work bench or moveable cart that is level.

Can I start a business immediately?

Yes, you can. Sonofresco can supply everything you need to market your freshly roasted coffee beans. Roast your green beans, weigh them, scoop them into bags, put labels on and most importantly stamp the date that you roasted the coffee — that way your customers will know just how fresh your coffee is!

Sonofresco can provide you with: Coffee Roaster/s, green beans, bags, and labels. You will provide the marketing through your network of friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, service-group contacts, school activity contacts, local farmer's markets, craft fairs, neighborhood grocery stores, and the list goes on and on. Your fresh coffee will soon start to sell itself!

