

Lifestyle



This photo shows farmer Hoang Manh Hung posing with coffee from his farm in Buon Ma Thuot city in Daklak province.



This photo shows a worker selecting coffee beans at Mori coffee farm in Plei Bau Can in Vietnam's central highlands, Gia Lai province.



This photo shows a man checking coffee beans at a coffee tasting fair in Buon Ma Thuot city in Daklak province.

Paul Newman's
Rolexes celebrating
his racing career
up for auction

Two Rolexes that carried "sentimental" value for actor Paul Newman will be auctioned as part of a broad collection of the late icon's personal effects, with the timepieces each expected to earn up to \$1 million. Sotheby's said last month that more than 300 items owned by the movie star and car racer Newman and his wife of 50 years Joanne Woodward would go under the hammer on June 9.



In this file photo taken on June 09, 1979 US actor and driver Paul Newman is pictured, during 24 Hours of Le Mans car race in Le Mans. —AFP

On Tuesday the auction house unveiled the two Rolex Daytonas, classic and coveted watches that celebrate the model's 60th anniversary this year, and which Sotheby's said Newman wore during his celebrated racing career. The 'Zenith' Daytona Rolex was presented to Newman in 1995 to mark his victory in Florida's 24 hours of Daytona Race in the GTS-2 category. He was 70 years old at the time and became the endurance contest's oldest winner.

The other, in white gold, was a gift from Woodward which bears the inscription: "DRIVE VERY SLOWLY," followed by "JOANNE."

Sotheby's said the watches are "imbued with sentimental and historical value imparting from pinnacle moments in Newman's celebrated racing career." Each watch is valued at \$500,000 to \$1,000,000, but the final price will be determined by the highest bidder in June. Another Rolex that belonged to Newman, who died in 2008, was sold by New York auction house Phillips for a staggering \$17.8 million in 2017, a world record for a wrist watch.—AFP



This handout image shows a Rolex 'Zenith' Daytona (left) and a Rolex Daytona in New York City.

Vietnam's robusta:
The go-to coffee bean in a warmer world?

Bitter and earthy. Fit for instant brews only. Robusta coffee has a dire reputation, but a small group of farmers in Vietnam is trying to turn the bean's fortunes around as a warming world threatens the industry.

As an interior designer in trendy Ho Chi Minh City, Tran Thi Bich Ngoc, 42, largely stayed clear of Vietnamese coffee, puzzling over why it didn't taste as

most double the caffeine content of arabica — is found in most instant coffees, as well as some espresso blends.

Most experts agree that the bean has potential, but is stuck in a "vicious circle of bad quality", said Mario Fernandez of the Specialty Coffee Association. "We get bad quality from robusta, therefore it gets a bad reputation, therefore no one wants to pay a pre-

Robusta, although by no means immune to a warming world, may be able to endure up to around 23C. Should global production of arabica start to fall short, "people will have to find an alternative supply", said Pham Thi Diep Giang, deputy director general of Trung Nguyen, one of Vietnam's top coffee brands. A tumble in arabica supply caused by extreme weather in Brazil already helped Vietnam earn \$4 billion in 2022, a 32 percent rise from a year earlier, the government said in a recent report. At a coffee fair in Buon Ma Thuot city, farmer Hoang Manh Hung tries his best to convince visitors to take sips of his "fruity and elegant" robusta.

"I really wish more people would love robusta, as it's truly a 'wow' drink," Hung told AFP. The 53-year-old transformed a farm that had produced low-quality coffee cherries for decades, first under the French and then his parents.

"We can now produce robusta with a completely different taste, and a scent that anyone would love," Hung said. Key to the change, Hung said, is that the cherries are now hand-picked, and only when they're fully ripe. "And they're fully organic," he added.

Gaining recognition

Robusta was first brought to Vietnam by the French in the late 19th century, and in 1991 the country exported its first beans — 104,000 tonnes.

By 2022, that figure had climbed to 1.8 million tonnes — almost all of it as raw material for instant coffee and other



This photo shows a man holding coffee beans at a coffee tasting fair in Buon Ma Thuot city in Daklak province.

mium for it, therefore there's no motivation to improve the quality," he said.

But robusta has advantages over its competitor: the yields are greater, and it can better cope with higher temperatures. Climate change presents a serious concern for the multi-billion-dollar coffee industry, with scientists predicting lower yields and fewer areas suitable for growing.

Arabica, which makes up around 60 percent of the world's coffee production, originates in the highlands of Ethiopia and South Sudan, and prefers average annual temperatures of around 19 degrees Celsius (66 degrees Fahrenheit).

good as cups from abroad. Now, nearly a decade later, she runs her own coffee farm — "Mori" — in the remote Central Highlands, cultivating robusta she believes can match the world's favourite bean, arabica, in quality and flavour.

"My beans have a fruity, flowery smell, and they taste strong — but in a gentle way," Ngoc told AFP at her farm close to the city of Pleiku, in the heart of the Vietnamese robusta region. "Vietnamese farmers need to know it is possible to make these beans taste good."

'Vicious circle of bad quality'

Long scorned by giants such as Starbucks, robusta — which has al-



This photo shows Tran Thi Bich Ngoc pouring coffee beans into a roastery at Mori coffee farm in Plei Bau Can in Vietnam's central highlands, Gia Lai province.



This photo shows Tran Thi Bich Ngoc checking on coffee cherries at Mori coffee farm in Plei Bau Can in Vietnam's central highlands, Gia Lai province.



This photo shows a man walking in a coffee farm in Plei Bau Can in Vietnam's central highlands, Gia Lai province.



This photo shows an engineer working at the Trung Nguyen coffee roastery facility in Buon Ma Thuot city in Daklak province.



This photo shows an engineer checking coffee beans at the Trung Nguyen coffee roastery facility in Buon Ma Thuot city in Daklak province.



This photo shows a farmer watering coffee plants at a farm in Vietnam's central highlands near Buon Ma Thuot in Daklak province.

Celebrated
Ethiopian pianist
and nun dies in
Jerusalem

The celebrated Ethiopian pianist and nun Emahoy Tsegue-Maryam Guebrou has died in Jerusalem aged 99, the Ethiopian patriarchate said Tuesday. Guebrou composed more than 150 works and recorded four albums during her career, according to a foundation created in her name. The musician died Monday and "many people will attend her funeral" from abroad, a secretary for the patriarchate said.



The celebrated Ethiopian pianist and nun Emahoy Tsegue-Maryam Guebrou

Born in 1923 to a wealth family in Addis Ababa, Guebrou was sent to Switzerland aged six where she learned to play the piano and violin. She returned to Ethiopia and during the 1930s was taken prisoner along with her family and sent to Italy by the country's invading forces. After the war, Guebrou lived in Egypt where she studied under Polish violinist Alexander Kontorowicz before both relocated to Ethiopia and worked for emperor Haile Selassie.

She became a nun at the age of 21 and later gained permission to leave her convent in Addis Ababa to compose music for the violin, piano and organ. The proceeds of the four albums Guebrou recorded during the 1960s and 1970s were used to educate orphans. Her music was revived in a 2006 album, as part of the "Ethiopian" series featuring musicians from the country.—AFP