

BUSINESS

Steve Gilchrist, left, and his wife Barbara Gilchrist, owners of Green Truck Coffee, hold bags of their coffee at their home in Swansboro.



Steve Gilchrist holds a handful of green coffee beans and a handful of roasted coffee beans at Bake, Bottle, and Brew in downtown Swansboro.



Robust brew

Local coffee company says a good cup of coffee starts with a good roast

By AMBERLY POZZI
Daily News Staff

A LOCAL Swansboro couple have taken their love for coffee to the next level by hand roasting their own beans.

Green Truck Coffee is owned by the husband and wife team of Steve and Barbara Gilchrist. They offer 11 different varieties of beans as well as three different blends. Instead of carrying what Gilchrist refers to as “the popular beans,” which are brands and blends that are found in most coffee shops, he and his wife tend to buy lesser known beans in season when they come to market.

“I buy the best that I

can buy,” said Gilchrist who looks for beans that are grown at a higher altitude, ensuring a better quality.

According to Gilchrist, coffee beans are broken into different levels ranging from one to five, with one being the most expensive but also the highest quality, and five being the cheapest, and most likely to have a high number of defective or damaged beans.

The beans sold by Green Truck Coffee are typically at a level two or three, which is a higher quality than the grade of bean that major corporations tend to purchase, according to Gilchrist.

“We also try to buy beans that are natural-

ly processed, organic, shade-grown, and fair trade,” says Gilchrist.

Green Truck Coffee also guarantees the freshness of his beans sold at Bake, Bottle and Brew, located on Front Street in downtown Swansboro. Beans that are more than a month past the roast date, displayed on the front of the bag under the colorful lime company logo, are discarded.

“The average shelf life of a bag of coffee bought at the store is three months,” says Gilchrist. “I want my whole bean coffee to be as fresh as possible for the

customer.”

Gilchrist packages his coffee in one-way valved bags that allow CO2 to escape and prevents O2 from entering, complete with a zip-lock seal to help maintain freshness.

Green Truck Coffee also roasts their beans to order in small batches, furthering freshness.

On a recent afternoon on the back deck of Bake, Bottle, and Brew overlooking the Swansboro waterfront, Gilchrist roasts a variety of bean from Indonesia, called East Timor, that is both organic and fair trade.

All of Gilchrist’s equipment is customized and

hand-made and includes multiple timers, thermometers and even a hand welded roasting chamber.

At 500 degrees, it’s only a matter of time before the green coffee bean emits an audible cracking sound, known as “first crack” which creates the seam found on a roasted coffee bean.

“While machines automatically roast their beans for designated times, I treat each roast and each batch differently,” says Gilchrist. “It’s a matter of temperature over time and not

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every batch will roast exactly the same.”

Gilchrist treats the process as an art listening to the tell tale signs of cracking and popping to signify the different stages the beans are in and watching for smoke.

“Because we hand roast our beans, as opposed to letting machinery do all of the work, we can do things that big corporations can’t,” says Gilchrist. “I listen; I watch; I know what’s going on with the beans while they’re roasting.”

Gilchrist’s attention to detail in the roasting process also prevents over-roasting, which is evident in a burnt flavor when the coffee is brewed.

After nearly a half hour of roasting, Gilchrist is satisfied with his roast as it has entered a roasting period known as “full city roast,” where he lets the beans continue roasting briefly after encountering a second crack.

The beans, which are now a milk chocolate color, are now poured into a cooling chamber, where fans and a spoon are used to break up the heat mass of the beans. Gilchrist also uses this time to sift through the roasted batch looking for husks or burnt beans, and tosses them away.

“A fresh bean will explode in your mouth,” he says, popping a one of the freshly roasted beans in his mouth. “Like popcorn.”

To maintain freshness Gilchrist recommends keeping coffee beans whole and purchasing a grinder to grind them as needed as opposed to grinding the whole bag. He also recommends not keeping beans in the refrigerator or freezer to prevent moisture from coming into contact with the bean.

Peggy Beane, a former resident of the Cape Carter-



Don Bryan / The Daily News

Steve Gilchrist collects fresh roasted coffee beans from his cooler at Bake, Bottle, and Brew in downtown Swansboro.

et area orders the coffee all the way from her new home in Florida, claiming the coffee is, “Hands down, the best coffee I have ever had.”

Beane said, via email, that her favorite blend is the East Timor, as she enjoys the dark blends. She also buys the whole beans and grinds them fresh for each pot.

“It only took one sip and I was hooked,” said Beane. “I had to have it on a regular basis.”

As Gilchrist continues to gain popularity, he hopes to expand his business to other local and statewide sellers.

“People who love coffee, love what I do,” says Gilchrist. “Once you’ve tried our coffee, you won’t want to go back to your old brand.”

Contact Business Reporter Amberly Pozzi at 910-219-8467 or apoizzi@freedomenc.com.



Want to learn more?

Green Truck Coffee roasts their coffee twice a week and sends out roasting announcements via email to all customers who register with the Gilchrists.

Beans are sold in 14 oz. bags and a full list of the beans and blends offered is available online at greentruckcoffee.com.

To purchase look for Green Truck Coffee at Bake, Bottle, and Brew, at 147 Front Street Swansboro, NC 28584 or place an order online at greentruckcoffee.com.

Business Briefs



VanGilder named sales manager

A local sales team leader has been named retail area sales manager by U.S. Cellular

Brent VanGilder, who leads the sales teams at 10 stores in Aberdeen, Clinton, Jacksonville, Morehead City, New Bern, Sanford and Wilmington, has more than seven years of wireless experience in eastern North Carolina.

“He is a proven leader and will help our associates provide customers with all of the latest information on the unmatched benefits of being a U.S. Cellular customer,” said Dee Taylor, director of sales for U.S. Cellular in eastern North Carolina, in a release.

VanGilder, who holds a Bachelor of Arts in biology from West Virginia University, most recently served as the business development manager for U.S. Cellular in West Virginia.

press release.

Spencer, a military spouse, understands the hassles of military moves and says she looks forward to working with the military community.

“We are thrilled to have Renee join our team,” said Shirley Morrison, owner of the Jacksonville office.

For information or assistance buying or selling a home, contact Spencer at 910-467-7403 or rspencer@century21sweyer.com.



Campaign launched for veterans group

A full-service branding agency located in Dallas is launching a pro-bono branding campaign for veterans advocacy group.

Johnson & Sekin, owned by the veteran creative team of Kent Johnson and Chris Sekin, will create TV spots, videos, ads, brochure, banners and emails to promote Heroes on the Water.

Heroes on the Water is a nonprofit veterans association designed to help wounded warriors relax, rehabilitate and reintegrate with society through kayak fishing and the outdoors, according to a press release. The campaign focuses on the veterans themselves and the sense of tranquility and healing that being outdoors and on the water provides.

For information on Heroes on the Water, visit heroesonthewater.org or call 214-295-4541.

For information on Johnson & Sekin, visit johnsonandsekin.com.



Century 21 welcomes new sales associate

A new sales associate has joined Century 21 Sweyer & Associates.

Renee Spencer, who joined the Jacksonville office on July 23, was first licensed as a Realtor in Fla., working with coastal communities through a builder/developer that primarily built beachfront or within walking distance to the beach condos and subdivisions, according to a



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