

# ABOUT BRETT STRUWE

I FIRST FELL FOR COFFEE DURING A 5-WEEK BACKPACKING TRIP I MADE WITH MY THEN GIRLFRIEND (NOW WIFE) THROUGH EUROPE DURING THE SUMMER OF 1993. WHILE MEANDERING THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF PARIS, THE STREETS OF BARCELONA, AND THE CANALS OF VENICE, I REALIZED THAT THE CULTURE OF COFFEE THERE WAS TRULY UNIQUE AND DISTINCT FROM MY EXPERIENCE LIVING IN THE UPPER MIDWEST OF THE US. SHORTLY THEREAFTER A STARTUP COMPANY CALLED CARIBOU WAS BRINGING THIS PASSION FOR A COFFEEHOUSE REVOLUTION TO THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF MINNEAPOLIS & ST PAUL. I WAS INSTANTLY HOOKED, AND EMBARKED ON WHAT WOULD COME TO BE A 24-YEAR JOURNEY WITH THIS MINNESOTA BRAND.

I BEGAN MY CAREER AS A BARISTA, WHICH QUICKLY LED TO MANAGING A CAFE ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA. I REALIZED MY PREFERRED NEXT ENDEAVOR WAS TO GO DEEPER INTO THE COFFEE OPERATIONS OF THE BUSINESS. I PLEADED TO LEARN TO BECOME A ROASTING TECHNICIAN, AND THEN SPENT THE NEXT FEW YEARS LEARNING THE CRAFT AND TRADES OF ROASTING & CUPPING, SENSORY EVALUATION, AND GREEN COFFEE PROCUREMENT/ BUYING. SOON I BECAME THE ROASTERY SUPERVISOR FOR A COMPANY ON THE VERGE OF BECOMING A NATIONAL BRAND THROUGH COFFEEHOUSE EXPANSION AND A GROWING COMMERCIAL BUSINESS, WHICH INCLUDED THE NORTH AMERICAN INFLIGHT ACCOUNT FOR DELTA AIRLINES.

GROWTH CAN BE EXHILARATING, AS WELL AS PAINFUL WHEN YOUR OPERATION IS BURSTING AT THE SEAMS. SO SOON ENOUGH THERE WAS EXPANSION INTO A NEW ROASTING PLANT, COFFEEHOUSE, AND OFFICE SPACE. IT WAS JUST THE TONIC FOR OUR ILLS WITH ENOUGH ROOM TO GROW INTO A MULTI-CHANNEL COMPANY TO SUPPORT LINES OF BUSINESS SUCH AS OFFICE COFFEE & FOOD SERVICE, INTERNATIONAL RETAIL STORES, GROCERY & MASS, AND EVEN KEURIG SINGLE-SERVE. THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE I PURSUED AND RECEIVED AN EXECUTIVE LEVEL MBA AT THE CARLSON SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AT THAT SAME U OF M.

NOW AS THE EXECUTIVE LEAD FOR A BURGEONING NEW COFFEE COMPANY HERE IN MINNEAPOLIS & SAINT PAUL I AM SO EXCITED TO BE A PART OF KATHIE'S COFFEE, AND TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THIS COFFEE EXPERIENCE WE ARE CREATING!