Title: 5 Southern Coffee Roasters You Must Try Now
SEO: southern coffee roasters
Meta: Southern coffee roasters don’t receive as much attention as their West-coast peers, but here are five Southern coffee roasters you must try now.

 There’s an old idiom—“When it all goes south…”—that is commonly used to describe something that is declining in value or quality. One could justifiably argue that the state of Southern coffee roasters has “gone south.”

Now, I’m a Chicagoan and, to me, everything below Interstate 80 is “the South;” but, with this piece, I’m going to try to redeem that old expression.

While the West coast and major metropolitan areas like Chicago and New York City have been engulfed by specialty coffee, the “third wave” is also slowly “going south.” Southern states—collectively, even—may not have the sheer quantity of critically acclaimed and nationally renown specialty coffee roasters that, say, Portland, Seattle, or San Francisco have, there are several operations that definitely stand out.

Here are five Southern coffee roasters that you must check out:

[CREMA: Nashville, Tennessee](http://www.crema-coffee.com/)

Of all the South’s major metropolitan areas, I don’t think the third wave has made as much of an impact as it has on Music City, USA—Nashville, Tennessee. Maybe it’s Vanderbilt University’s constant influx of young adults that keeps Nashville on the cutting edge, maybe it’s the residency of world-renown musicians who have experienced specialty coffee elsewhere and brought it back home to Nashville, or maybe it’s Nashville’s reputation as a culinary hotspot, but specialty coffee is a big deal here.

And one of the operations that put Nashville’s coffee scene on the map is CREMA. Through sourcing some of the best (and most interesting) coffees in the world, customer education, and being incredibly active in their community, CREMA has achieved quite a lot in a relatively short amount of time.

In addition to being at the forefront of Nashville’s specialty coffee explosion, CREMA has become one of the country’s most critically acclaimed roasters, earning prizes at the Brewer’s Cup and the Olympics of Coffee.

[PERC Coffee: Savannah, Georgia](http://www.perccoffee.com)

Not so long ago, PERC Coffee was relatively unknown at the national level. However—as is usually the case with the South—Savannah, Georgia locals have always known that they had something special in their area.

Since 2010, owner/roaster Philip Brown has been sourcing high-quality specialty grade coffees, establishing PERC’s wholesale and online presence, and quietly building, what he calls, “a rocket ship.” I think the metaphor is accurate, as PERC has lifted off and exploded beyond the stratosphere, particularly over the past several months.

After a very successful campaign with coffee reviewers like Abandon Coffee, Coffee Adventures, The Coffee Compass, and my own site, A Table in the Corner of the Cafe, and even being a featured roaster with the subscription service, Craft Coffee, PERC refuses to rest on their laurels. In the near future, PERC plans to build a retail operation that will help to establish a baseline of quality brewing and customer service that they hope to inspire in their wholesale partners.

[BeanFruit Coffee Company: Flowood, Mississippi](http://beanfruit.com/)

There are many Southern coffee roasters that are up-and-coming or almost famous and are recognized as great operations throughout the country; some of them are even included in this list. But one company that has been criminally overlooked for the past few years, even as their products keep getting better and better and better, is Flowood, Mississippi’s BeanFruit Coffee Company.

Mississippi is not and has never been known for having great coffee; that’s no secret. And that is the same conclusion Paul Bonds, founder of BeanFruit, came to when he first fell in love with coffee and wanted to find something locally that he could put in his cup every day. “After many months of disappointment and wasted gas,” he jokes, he decided to take it upon himself to be The Guy That Provided Mississippi with Great Coffee.

Since launching in 2010, BeanFruit Coffee Company has remained but a blip on the national radar, but has been quietly roasting the best specialty coffee in Missisippi.

[Reve Coffee Roasters: LaFayette, Louisiana](http://www.revecoffeeroasters.com/home)

One thing that constantly surprises me is Louisiana’s lack of a specialty coffee scene. Even with a city like New Orleans—one of the historically great cultural capitals of the world—Louisiana, as far as I know, has never had a roasting operation to boast about. Of course, that soon might change with the arrival of Revelator Coffee Company—which has been really hyped up over the past few months—but we still don’t know when that will be.

Regardless, a state should never be defined by one city, and there is a lot more Louisiana than there is New Orleans. A bit west of the city, almost halfway to Houston, is the city of LaFayette—one of Louisiana’s French-Creole towns that is steeped in history and home to the recently launched microroastery Rêve Coffee.

While in its first year and still growing, Rêve already has an impressively vast lineup of single origin offerings, a handful of wholesale accounts, and their own retail operation.

[Onyx Coffee Lab: Springdale, Arkansas](http://www.onyxcoffeelab.com/)

Set in the scenic Ozarks, in the miniature metropolis of Springdale, Arkansas, is a specialty coffee company that quickly became one of the South’s premier roasting operations: Onyx Coffee Lab.

Combining the rustic charm of modern Ozark design, Southern hospitality, and third wave practices of seed-to-cup brewing and consumer education, Onyx Coffee Lab deftly straddles the balance between traditional and cutting edge.

Two things matter most to the folks at Onyx: the coffee and the people. Keeping those two things at the center of their focus, Onyx roasts and brews some of the best specialty coffees in the world and lets the customer experience all aspects of the coffee world through weekly cuppings, brewing classes, a home roasters association, and knowledgeable, friendly baristas.