

**Farmers name:** Gersi smallholders  
**Farm name:** Adorsi washing station  
**Kebele:** Aricha  
**Woreda:** Yirgacheffe  
**Zone:** Gedeo  
**Altitude of farm:** 2000 - 2150 m.a.s.l.

**Varieties:** Kurume, Wolisho, and Dega  
**Harvest period:** November – December 2018  
**Processing:** Natural  
**Drying days:** 15 – 18 days

### **About Gersi smallholders and the Adorsi washing station**

Yirgacheffe is often seen as a place of coffee pilgrimage, and no wonder: although it is a relatively small coffee zone, it is home to a range of vibrant and complex coffees. When you travel to Yirgacheffe – and pass Awassa, Yirga Alem, and Dilla along the way, you find a small Kebele; Aricha, home to several coffee communities that have been around for centuries. One group of smallholders is called Gersi.

The Gersi are a small community of 30 farmer families that live and farm upon the hills of Aricha. Most of them are in their prime, from 35 to 50 years old, and have large families; an average of 8 children is common within Gedeo families. The tradition of coffee cultivation is passed down from generations within the Gersi community. These people cannot comprehend a life without coffee.

The Gersi, like many other Gedeo's, live by the 'Baalle' system; a traditional, social-cultural, and political system of governance. It sets out rules of living for the Gedeo's and is comparable with other systems developed by Ethiopia's ethnic groups, for instance; the Gadaa system of the Oromo people and the Luwa system of the Sidama. The Baalle even talks about spirituality and how to be responsible on an ecological level. Proof of the Gedeo's reference and respect for nature is noticeable among the elders of the community, that often repeat a beautiful premise; 'Tree is life'.

In 2018, the communities around Aricha were stirred up by the sudden visit of a man called Faysel A. Yonis, founder of Testi Coffee. Testi Coffee is an exporter and long-term partner of Trabocca. Faysel invited the town elders to talk about Testi's decision to take over a neglected local washing station called Adorsi. During the lunch meeting, with of course a coffee ceremony, Faysel asked the elders and farmers what the community expects of Testi. The elders and farmers, including the Gersi, made it clear that there was great need for electricity in their neighborhood. Faysel installed a committee dedicated to make this happen.

The Gersi smallholders have submitted their harvest to the Adorsi washing station at the beginning of November. "We put 15 kg on drying beds that are shaded by nets. Then, after cherries were dried properly, our workers revisited the beds to perform extra sorting's by hand." says Faysel. The extra sorting for the Gersi coffee enabled the Adorsi washing station to deliver a refined lot for The Ethiopian Cup.

Faysel A. Yonis wants to process the best Yirgacheffe coffee that benefits the communities of Gersi, Aricha, and Idido. "We want to grow with the community that supplies cherries to the Adorsi site." Faysel continues. "We also want to show and teach the world of the importance of working close with local coffee communities. While assisting and guiding them within the coffee market, we aim to make their lives easier and better".