

The TEATM House Times



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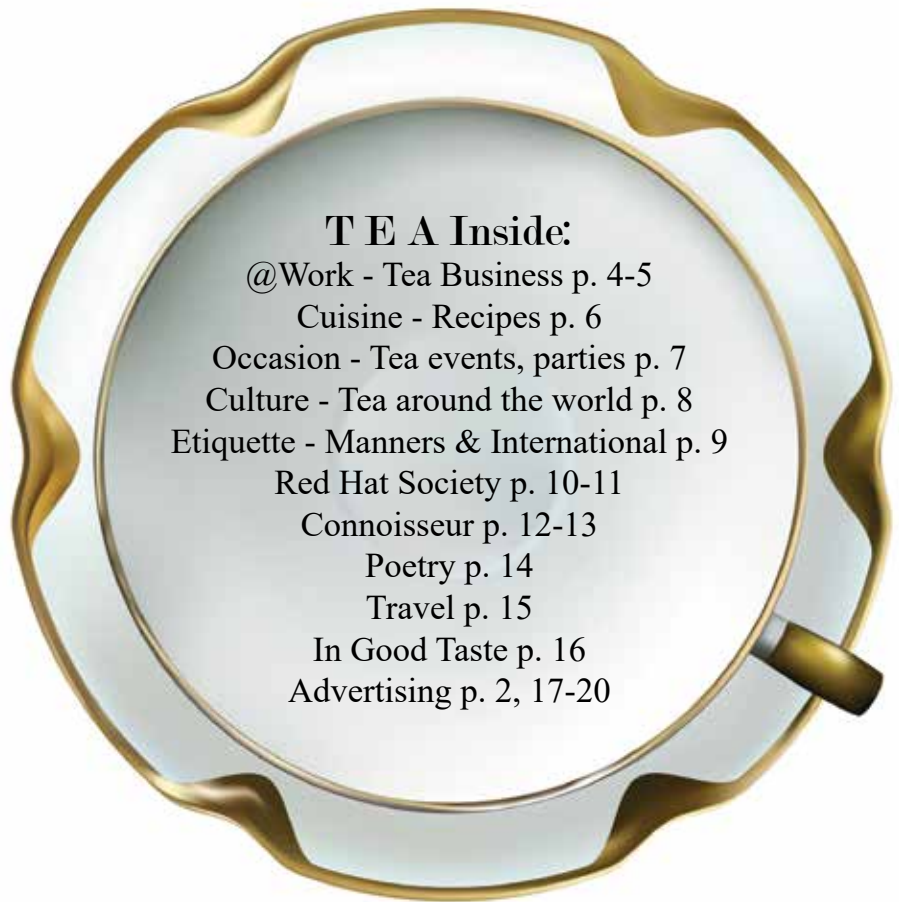
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Greetings from The TEA House Times!

HAPPY New Year! HAPPY Hot Tea Month!

HAPPY is the word I wish for everyone as we move into a fresh New Year! I wish you joy, good health, and many occasions to connect with others over tea.

Now more than ever, I do believe that a greater number of people are experiencing what we tea lovers have been saying all along... that tea is not just nutritious but satisfying in so many ways. It has brought calm during a stormy year. It has brought serenity during times of sadness. It has brought a feeling of comfort and possibly a feeling of healing too when no other beverage would suffice. Grandmothers always say, "Have a cup of tea dear, you will feel better." Not just in times of sickness but in every day moments when stress has gotten the better of us; and in times when we feel off balance and not quite ourselves. Tea sort of rescues us, doesn't it? Yes. It's wonderful.

Let Hot Tea Month open the door to reconnecting with everyone, everywhere. If it cannot be in person, then video chat if you must.

SALUTATIONS

We all need connections with others in a way that can only be satisfied over tea. We need the down time too, for self-care. Yes! You need to nurture yourself as much as you need to nurture your family and friends.

Keep watching The Tea House Times website for updates on tea events for business or pleasure in 2021. Don't forget to register for the 6th Annual Global Tea Initiative Colloquium put on by UC Davis on January 21. Virtual this year! See ad pg. 19.

Put the kettle on, prepare some tea. Do it for you, do it for me.



All the best,

*Gail
Gastelu*

@WORK

A message from . . .



Founded in 1899, the Tea Association of the USA, Inc. was formed to promote and protect the interests of the tea trade in the United States and is the recognized independent authority on Tea.

If once wasn't enough, round 2 of Coronavirus seems to have arrived! Please stay safe, wear a mask and social distance when possible.

As in all things, there does seem to be a light at the end of the tunnel. At least two companies have announced that they have developed effective vaccines, and even Russia is getting in on the act, stating their vaccine is ready as well!

Other positives – with the very active hurricane season, we now have all begun to learn the Greek Alphabet! COVID forced changes in our balloting process, resulting in the largest turnout of voters, both in numbers and percentage of eligible voters, ever! And for us in the tea industry, people are consuming more tea at home.

Amplifying the last point, recent data indicates that tea in the grocery channel is up some 18% year on year. Further, the Tea Association has done some recent qualitative work indicating that some 66% of tea drinkers drank MORE tea while during the pandemic AND are planning to continue drinking more tea after this is over. This is very positive news.

I've said before that I couldn't wait for 2020 to be over, but I'll be happy to preside over an industry in which our consumers plan on drinking more of this great beverage.

Tea's ability to help us relax, center ourselves and connect with one another has never been more necessary. While we are very quick to curse the darkness caused by this hideous virus, we should also be proud that we are part of a great industry whose product shines a bright light of taste, health and healing.

I am looking forward to welcoming 2021, tea cup in hand!

Please stay well and stay safe!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter F. Goggi".

Peter F. Goggi, President
Tea Association of
the U.S.A., Inc.
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STltea.org



A message from . . .



This is the time of year people in the tea industry work to satisfy customers through a busy season of consuming hot tea. It is a great time of year to launch new lines or new varieties of tea. Tea is the most consumed beverage next to water, so it definitely deserves a bit of thought and consideration as you plan for a profitable New Year even if your normal routine has been disrupted.

Certainly you have happy customers who return on a regular basis because they enjoy your location, services, atmosphere, etc. But, how do you bring in more guests, new faces, from both near and far especially during a pandemic? The answer may be quite different for each type of tea business, but if you look outside the [tea] box, you might surprise yourself.

Many tea rooms are used to serving tea and perhaps offering some tea or gifts inside their location and without an online store. Not all, but many. During recent down time, many have cleverly and quickly set up small online shops via services such as Square to sell a selection of teas, some gifts, and even reserving a special take home afternoon tea box filled with all of the delights one might normally enjoy in person.

What is your tea room or restaurant or inn doing to entice your guests to enjoy tea service in any way possible with you?? If you have a 'snail mail' mailing list, you might send a card with one single teabag enclosed to remind your customers they are on your mind and you care during these trying times.

A restaurant might add a free teabag to an order along with a note to enjoy this comforting cuppa and again stating a new way that you care!!

An Inn might send a note to a customer to say that this lovely calming tea will be waiting for them in their room as they return for relaxation and respite.

Whatever you do, celebrate Hot Tea Month because tea truly is the one element any and all businesses can use to connect, to care, to do better business.

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read "gail".

Gail Gastelu
Owner/publisher
The Tea House Times



A message from . . .

**UKTEA &
INFUSIONS**
ASSOCIATION



I like it like that...

How do you take your tea? In the UK this generally means, do you want milk and sugar in your black tea. And let's not enter the debate about which should be added to the cup first; milk or tea. Queen Elizabeth says milk in second, so I will remain a loyal subject and follow her lead. I have long been addicted to a good Builders' Brew, defined in the Urban Dictionary as a strong black tea with milk and prepared in a mug, instead of a teapot. Traditionally, it's the brew of choice for construction workers and tradesmen and having recently had builders working on our house, let me tell you, they can drink a lot of tea!! Whilst my dedication to a strong cuppa with milk prevails, what a privilege it has been to work in the tea industry these past few years and to learn about the many and varied types of teas and their wonderful tastes and aromas.

Whilst I still drink at least four mugs of English Breakfast with milk every day (no sugar thank you, I'm sweet enough), my tea repertoire has extended to fill an entire kitchen cupboard, with the threat of further expansion. These days you are just as likely to find me sipping a Wuyi Oolong and commenting on its rich and buttery taste, lifted by caramel sweetness and subtle floral notes, as you are to catch me dunking a biscuit into my Builders' Brew. It is all tea and as a tea advocate I love encouraging others to drink the tea they like, just as they like it, while politely suggesting they occasionally step outside of their comfort zone, as I have done, to try something new. I hope that our builders, to whom I gave first flush Darjeeling, Long Jing and several Oolongs as well as plenty of strong English Breakfast blend, become tea advocates too.

Sharon Hall
Chief Executive
UK Tea & Infusions
Tea.co.uk



A message from . . .



TEA & HERBAL
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Atomic Habits

A new year – a new you. That's generally the way so many of us enter a new year. And this year more than any other is one filled with so much pressure to be good. To be great. To make up for having missed all of 2020. Fitness goals, educational goals, change your life goals. We've all made them. This year though, I'm taking a page out of the book "Atomic Habits" by James Clear. True and long standing habits are formed by making tiny changes. Changes so small that may seem insignificant, but when all those small changes are added together, they result in something transformational. "When nothing seems to help, I go and look at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred and first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not that last blow that did it—but all that had gone before."

So my challenge to you all in tea this year is to expand yourselves beyond the comfort of what you know by making small changes. Are you a loose leaf lover? Pick up a few boxes of teabags the next time you're in a grocery store. Are you a tea 'purist'? Think of a flavour you enjoy in other beverages and find that flavour in tea. Are you a teabag junkie? Look for a loose leaf tea and get steeping. Never tried green tea or white tea? Make a small purchase and expand that horizon.

Individually, none of the things I've listed are big. Not even combined are they astronomical. But if you push yourself outside what you 'normally do', you may just discover a transformational change take place – the acceptance of tea types outside the world you normally participate in. And that, my #brewcrew, is the real challenge I place on you all this year – make room for all types, all categories and all formats. Because in the end...it's all tea.

Shabnam Weber
President
Tea and Herbal
Association of Canada
Tea.ca
TeaSommelier.com



CUISINE

It's time to celebrate! Bring out the Champagne and celebrate the possibilities of 2021! Craft a bespoke cocktail for your sweetheart (or bunker mate) on Valentine's Day.

Look no further than your cupboard and your favorite teas to inspire the mixologist in you. Tea is a flavorful ingredient that makes delicious cocktails. Strong steeped unsweetened teas or tea-infused simple syrups allow for multiple combinations that you will turn to over and over to make your signature cocktails (or mocktails).

The fun of simple syrups is that it is so easy to change the flavor and color by the variety of teas and botanicals you use. Simple syrups are just that: simple. The basic recipe is equal parts sugar and water brought to a boil in a saucepan. Lower the heat, set the timer for 2 minutes and then take off the heat. Now add a handful of mint, lemon slices, fruits, herbs, or tea (think Lavender Earl Grey, Jasmine Green Tea, a fragrant oolong, or berry herbal teas) to the hot syrup. Steep for up to 5 minutes for the tea and more to taste for any other ingredient. Strain well. You are ready to start creating your cocktails. For Champagne cocktails, add a splash of flavored simple syrup to an elegant flute before topping with your favorite sparkling wine.

Earl Grey Cocktail

For one drink:

1-1/2 ounces of vodka or gin

1-1/2 ounces Earl Grey Simple Syrup (recipe below)

1 ounce fresh squeezed lemon juice

Combine ingredients in cocktail shaker and add ice. Shake well and strain into cocktail glass. Garnish with a lemon slice. Enjoy!

Earl Grey Simple Syrup

Add 1 cup sugar to 1 cup water in a saucepan over medium heat. Give a good stir and bring to a boil. Turn down heat to low, continuing to heat for 2 minutes. Turn off the heat and add 2 Tbsp. loose leaf or 3 teabags Earl Grey Tea. Steep for 5 minutes and then strain out the tea. Let the syrup cool before using. Makes enough for several (6-7) cocktails. Flavored simple syrups can be kept in refrigerator for 1-2 weeks if stored in sterile containers.

Cooking with Tea

by Karen Donnelly

Mocktails

Use your imagination to create festive non-alcoholic drinks with this basic recipe:

Two parts strong unsweetened tea (2 tsp. loose leaf tea or 2 teabags to 8 oz. water) Steep no more than 5 minutes. If you would like stronger tea, just add more tea. Herbals can be steeped longer; to-taste. Add 1 part simple syrup. Shake over ice. Pour into glasses. Top with sparkling soda or sparkling water. Garnish.

A non-alcoholic version of the Earl Grey Cocktail would be 2 parts tea, 1 part lemon simple syrup. Shake over ice and enjoy on its own or top with sparkling ginger ale, grapefruit, or raspberry juice. Experiment with flavor profiles.

Special touches elevate the flavor and presentation:

- This is the time to bring out the good crystal or vintage cocktail glasses.
- Dip edge of glass in water or simple syrup and then in plain, tinted, or flavored sugar.
 - Pulse 2 parts freeze dried fruit to 1 part sugar in a food processor for flavor and color
 - Add a drop or two of food coloring to a cup of sugar in a plastic bag. Shake well until color is blended well with the sugar.
- Use garnishes that compliment or bring out the flavors in your cocktail—slide berries onto a toothpick and pop in the glass. Orange, lemon, or lime slices are traditional, but consider kiwi, apples, or mango slices. How about colorful, pesticide-free flower blossoms?
- Add the fragrant addition of sprigs of rosemary, thyme, sage, pineapple sage, mint, and lavender.



*Karen Donnelly is a certified Tea Association of Canada Tea Sommelier Professional and has been an afternoon tea event planner, speaker and teacher for over 20 years. She is the owner of Greenhalgh Tea, selling premium teas, tea ware, and gifts. Join her for on-line Tea & Cookery classes and classes on tea production styles, preparation and history. See **GreenhalghTea.com***

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Nothing to Celebrate in January?

OCCASION

by Kim Hendrickson

We all get through the December holidays and once New Year's Day is over depression sets in: bills, the cold, no gatherings, tax season looms in the future and we have nothing to look forward to do except diet.

Did you know that January is National Hot Tea Month? The tea bag many of us use daily was invented by American, Thomas Sullivan in 1908. Statistically Americans drink more iced tea than hot, the cold version came about on a hot day at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. An English tea plantation owner sold hot tea on a very hot day at the fair; obviously nothing sold. Taking a gamble, he poured hot tea over ice which started our current obsession. (Mark your calendar: National Iced Tea Day is June 10th.)

Tea's varied flavors have made it into all aspects of our dining experience. Cocktails using tea as an elemental flavor, teas used in entrée sauces, cookies, and chocolates infused with matcha or earl grey.

We have reason to celebrate! Throw into the mix the fact that January also celebrates Fruit Cake Toss Day and Cuddle Up Day, we have a lot of "excuses" to gather, party, relax or enjoy a small group, a single friend or couple. Use friends to turn January into a reason to celebrate and enjoy.

Consider the following ideas for your future gathering:

- Create an invitation that is both useful and communicative. Fold your invite in with a small bottle of hand-sanitizer, placing them in drawstring bag, easily purchased at a dollar store.
- Ask your guests to bring new socks or gloves to be donated to a local shelter after the party.
- Create a casual buffet table. Use a blanket or quilt as a tablecloth. Use mittens or brightly colored (clean) socks as holders for your utensils.
- Collect all of the candles you have in the house to use as a collection of light on your serving table. Use tea cups for the small votives, turned over small bowls, decorative boxes to stagger the height of your candles. If the dishes and boxes are cracked or worn, once positioned, gently weave a decorative piece of material or scarf around to cover the bases to give it a more unified look.
- Have a soup tasting instead of a sit down event. Ask everyone to make a soup they have never made before (only 1 recipe). Bring the soup in the pot with copies of the recipe and put them out for everyone to taste.
- Award a "Best Soup Award" by giving a rubber duck. (It is Rubber Ducky Day in January).
- Mini grilled cheese sandwiches, onion jam & bacon or cranberry sauce turkey sandwiches are good to "make-ahead"
- If you are going to have a variety of drinks, make sure you have an assortment of hot teas; choose a black, green and a tisane (herbal tea) to offer to your guests.
- Why not ask your guests to wear pajamas to this gathering? No one needs to know?!
- When it is time to bring out dessert, bring out an old fruitcake (wrapped in plastic, of course) and have your own fruitcake toss.



Kim Hendrickson, author of the Tastefully Small cookbook series, has been teaching for over 25 years. A regular instructor in assorted programs in the New York area, JCCFS in North Carolina and The North Folk School in Minnesota and a frequent speaker throughout the US. She has catered for The Travel Channel's Bizarre Food Show, No Taste Like Home in NC, The New York Metropolitan Opera, Penguin Repertory Theatre, and TV's "Slangman" David Burke. Please visit salviapress.net



Planning Time!

by Gail Henderson

As the new year begins, let us begin now to plan for a BETTER year, not a BITTER one. I don't read the tea leaves—it's against my religion-- but I can predict that no matter what happens with politics or pestilence in 2021, we can each find a way to make the world a safer, better place, which it will need to be.

Since we do drink tea, maybe some following thoughts will brighten up your day if not your year. Some new ways for celebrating tea times until the vaccine arrives or the virus departs:

I had never thought to come up with a College Care Package that contains tea until recently asked to contribute to one. My suggestion was to pick one of Simpson & Vail's literary teas since most students have at least one introductory English or Humanities course. Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson are two great choices. Frederick Douglass could be a real conversation starter in a dorm. Send some love too.

For neighbors still distancing by having outside events, may I suggest another new idea: "Tea Around the Firepit." Warm your pre-cooked scones, sweet or savory, around the edges of the firepit while sipping from large cuppas to have a hearty toast to (1) the Super Bowl winner or (2) the end of the 12 Days of Christmas, which officially ends with Epiphany, Jan. 6. You could actually order a dessert tea or a holiday tea from Simpson and Vail or serve a popular one like Bigelow's Constant Comment tea as the Fall holidays ride off into the sunset and Valentine's Day nears.

Another idea would be to go "Tea Glamping." That's a combination of tea and camping, so pack your elegant teaware and pretend you really are warm while drinking the champagne of teas, Darjeeling. Pair it with chocolate anything, preferably scones. And don't forget to bring along your Valentine!

Finally, whip out your copy of Laura Childs' latest tea mystery, *Lavender Blue Murder* and start planning some of the creative parties suggested there. I'm on only page 44 and already I want to do a Paris & Pearls Tea and a Gone With the Wind Tea (to benefit hurricane survivors).

So, if your piece of the world needs to be better this year, do something posiTEAvley. Host a tea, reach out to someone, and as the steam rises from your cup, by all means, send up a prayer with it. We probably won't say at the beginning of the year that "The world is our oyster," but maybe, just maybe, by the end, we will find a pearl.



*Gail Henderson connects people through her business - Love Your Neighborhood. She lives in Palmetto, Florida. Gail makes memories with her grandchildren and helps others make memories by giving away tea resources and information. Visit her website to learn more: **LoveYourNeighborhood.com** Or call 813-928-1166 for information and help. Photo credit: Martha DeWeese*

Your Manners Matter® Minute with Cynthia Grosso

Life has changed rapidly in the past few months and one of the biggest adjustments to the global pandemic has been the number of video conference meetings we attend each week.



Etiquette Tip: Building Trust Through Effective Communication



Life has changed rapidly in the past few months and one of the biggest adjustments to the global pandemic has been the number of video conference meetings we attend each week. Video conferencing is not new, but its use has been accelerated due to travel and meeting restrictions. Whether you are a student, professional, or even enjoying retirement, video conferencing has quickly been integrated into our day-to-day lives.

Some recent studies reveal a large percentage of workers feel more productive at home and enjoy the flexibility of working remotely. However, there are some barriers to overcome with solely digital interaction.

The number one reason people do business with you is trust and building trust should be our goal if we desire to enjoy quality and productive relationships. Recent studies show that phone conversations are least effective, video conferencing is more effective, and face-to-face is the best way to build trust. Shaking hands, sending body language signals of eye contact, facial expressions and smiles all build trust.

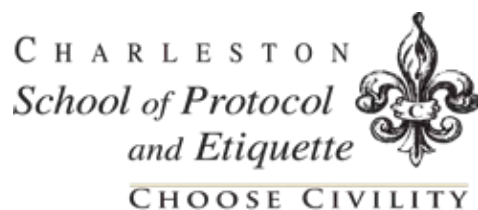
If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, when using video conferencing, practice good visual impressions including good eye contact by looking directly into the camera. Dressing professionally, having a sincere smile, using positive body language and hand gestures all contribute to the message you send.

Reflecting your personal brand with excellence is vital to your success whether on the phone, video conferencing or face-to-face.

The pandemic has affected people globally. The proper use of video conferencing, now more than ever, can be an effective communication medium to build trust and establish relationships around the world.



Editor's note: Alongside the multi-cultural experience of tea, many tea lovers travel the world - to tea growing countries and to those places where tea is experienced in special ways. Updates to this wonderful feature page for manners, etiquette, and international protocol will help you in every situation around the world. Enjoy!



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Cynthia Grosso is Founder of The Charleston School of Protocol and Etiquette. The Charleston School of Protocol and Etiquette specializes in helping people handle life's events and changes with style, polish and confidence. The Charleston School of Protocol and Etiquette teaches the skill of confidence to eliminate personal and professional barriers and live an extraordinary life.



A Tea-riffic Reunion

Nothing is better than reuniting with best friends after you haven't seen each other for a long period of time!

The Purple, Red, and Ravishing chapter, led by Queen Diana, had a very special tea party to celebrate coming back together after many months apart. "One of our chapterettes, Sandi, planned and organized the whole event. We had all but one of our members attend," Queen Diana shared.

They gathered at McKenna's Tea Cottage in California, USA, and the group enjoyed a full tea together, complete with multiple flavors of teas as well as delicious sandwiches and desserts!



The chapter also played a fun game, which seemed very appropriate for the current times! "Sandi had us each tear off as many squares of toilet paper as we wanted without knowing what we would do with them," Queen Diana said. They then went around the table and each lady had to share one thing about themselves for every one square they took. "Greedy me took 8 squares!" Queen Diana laughed.

It was a great time of fellowship and getting to learn new things about each other. There are sure to be many more wonderful reunions just like this one to come for members of the Red Hat Society in the days ahead!



If you'd like to join like-minded women from around the world who are coming together for fun and friendship, be it virtual for now and in-person later, join RHS today – visit RedHatSociety.com to get started



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CONNOISSEUR

James Norwood Pratt



Lockdown leaves tea lovers at the mercy of home delivery and online services, as there has been precious little socializing in tea society. Tea life continues out of sight and in private nevertheless and many if not most businesses somehow survive. Take Silk Road Teas, owned and operated by Catherine and Ned Heagerty here in the San Francisco Bay Area, for example. For the first time Ned has not been able to visit China to purchase his new season teas in person. His Chinese comrades have not let him down and the high standards Silk Road customers expect have not diminished. Filling holiday orders required Ned and Catherine to put in extra long hours but provided new insight. Today's tea lovers number ever fewer middle aged and older individuals and many, many more millennials, about the same age as the Heagerty's two sons: welcome evidence that America is becoming a tea consuming society, something we have not been before now.

Tea festival impresarios Babette Donaldson and Nicole Buriss have not been idle either. They produced and brilliantly promoted a wildly successful International Tea Festival via Zoom November 7 and 8 that attracted thousands world-wide.

Down in New Orleans, tea lover Kerri Blache has orchestrated for WYES-TV PBS a Zoom ParTEA with participants throughout Louisiana and beyond. WYES TV produces more "foodie" programs than any other PBS station and Kerri, the station's chief fund-raiser, induced Bruce Richardson, maestro of Elmwood Inn Fine Teas, to headline the most enjoyable tea time ever zoomed. Harney & Sons was among the sponsors and yours truly among the participants.

Come what may, tea will always be shared.



*James Norwood Pratt
is acknowledged as America's Tea Sage.
He is an award winning author and authority on tea.*

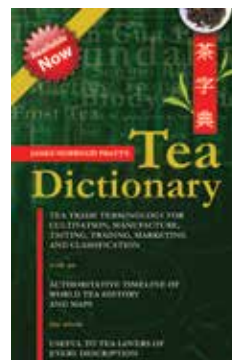
Please visit

JamesNorwoodPratt.com for Norwood's schedule of appearances and to purchase his books.

****Do you have input or a question for Norwood?**

Send your question to info@theteahousetimes.com

*Find more of James Norwood Pratt's work at
TeaCourse.com where learning never ends.*



Affirming the Diversity of Tea

By Gail Gastelu, The Tea House Times

Tea is diverse. It is multi-cultural. It is social. Tea is the most powerful thing that transcends all barriers to equality and acceptance of all people. Tea brings people together in so many ways that someone could probably write a book or many different books about it.

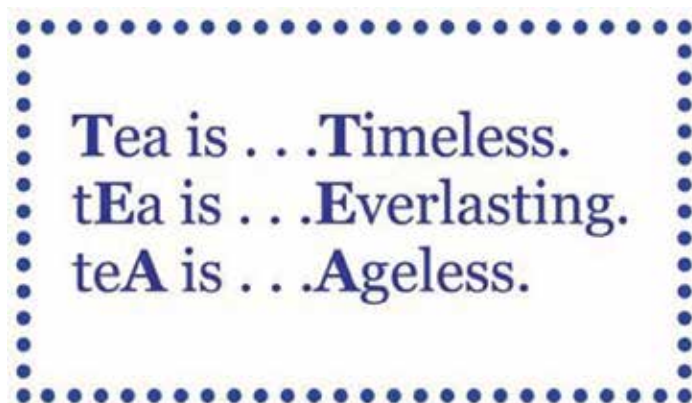
TEA is. . . – Tea means much more than two leaves and a bud or the wonderful beverage we all enjoy, hot or cold, or the experience of afternoon tea. Understanding this deeper meaning comes from my own passion and enjoyment of tea plus years of being so closely immersed in the tea industry and watching others as they connect more deeply with other people –through tea– for every reason under the sun.

As I write this, I'm thinking again more about what TEA is. . . Tea is transcending; it rises above. tEa is Equanimity as it provides stability, composure, and calmness. teA is Affirmative as in affirmative action and all-inclusive for all people; equality.

Think of the many different countries growing tea. Each tea is unique and each nationality enjoys it and celebrates it and prepares and consumes it very differently. Have you ever experienced a Japanese tea ceremony for example? In America, we enjoy all types of tea from many different countries and embrace the multi-cultural differences in preparation and enjoyment thereof. It's a beautiful thing to experience tea as it is served in time honored, traditional ways with different types of tea ware specific to the customs and ways of a specific tea's origin.

More than this, here in America, tea is enjoyed in every cultural way possible but also takes center stage in every type of special occasion, event, or social gathering. It is revered for its elegance and its simplicity at the same time. It is enjoyed by every age.

Since 2003 I have been connecting businesses and consumers to all things tea. My passion and drive is to help every person enjoy tea in the way that he or she desires for business or pleasure. That person may be a young child enjoying tea with dolls and teddy bears. It may be a teenager or young adult. It may be a woman in a frilly hat. It may be a man! It may be an older person who



has known all along how wonderful tea is – and we are just now learning their secrets! It may be a tea business trying to find its niche within the industry. It may be anyone who likes anything or enjoys any unique hobby or career. Business men. Women. Moms. Dads. Grandparents. Children. College Students. Nurses. Doctors. Restaurateurs. Coffee lovers too. We are a diverse group of every nationality and of every walk of life. Tea people are all inclusive and embrace equality and affirmative action whether they consciously realize this or not.

Tea is not just for when you are sick, although it sure does make you feel better. Tea is not just for little children's parties. Tea is not just for people in pretty hats sitting in a pretty tea room. Tea is not just for people who prefer a more simplistic or holistic approach or environment.

Tea is for everyone, everywhere and I have witnessed how powerful it is in bringing people together, even complete strangers.

Find your own personal way to enjoy tea and by all means share it with others.



TEA IS POETRY POURED

By Susan Patterson aka Earlene Grey

Dear Readers, I didn't know what to write for this column. I wrung my hands, and cried, "Oh dear, oh, dear." I thought and thought. I fussed for days and waited to the last moment. My husband offered to write column for me. I somewhat politely declined his offer. It all had been said before, one way or another.

But in the end, basically I concluded we needed to love more than ever in this world. And with that conclusion, I simply filled my column with love poems for you. Here goes. Each from my book, "Passions." Do you agree?

Email me at Susan@earlenegrey.com.

Happy tea times from your poet in Oregon.



Because We Will Not End

Meet me after awhile
Where the earth meets the sky,
Where flowers rise up to become clouds.
Watch for me where the firmament
Melts and evaporates into the heavens,
Where waters flow into the sun.
I will be there.
Either, before or after you,
I do not know which.

But shall we promise
To look for and to find
Each other,
In the morning,
At the start of a new day,

Susan Patterson



Comfort

Rest with me, my Love.
Calm down your mind.
Release your pain.

Rest with me, my Love.
Let go of your hurry.
Undo your cares.

Rest with me, my Dear
Put down your fears,
Begin to heal.
Let me give you a heart of chamomile.

Susan Patterson

Perfect Union

Their love has the
Energy of new creation
And the immensity old.

It doesn't now,
Nor ever will,
Want for more.

Susan Patterson



Susan Patterson is an unexpected author. She did not put writing into her life's plan. However, after a demanding and busy career in business, much to her surprise, poetry came to her. Ms. Patterson is an author of the heart and writer for the soul. Her work, it has been said, is so sharp, so intricate; it is like a Fabergé egg. Ms. Patterson's worldwide audience declares her writing to be in the top caliber of modern poets. Her work, which ranges from humorous to thoughtfully intelligent, is always quietly compelling. Please visit EarleneGrey.com



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Dressing

Tea Sandwiches

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Mini Red Velvet Cake with Cream Cheese Topping
Chocolate Covered Strawberries

Choice of tea.

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IN GOOD TASTE

Value in Your Tea by Birendra “Jopy” Perera

A happy new year to everyone!

Where there's tea there's hope; let us hope 2021 is filled with good things to come, since we know tea is here to stay!

Welcome to another year and welcome to more ramblings of a tea taster.

Since we have spent our holidays being as festive as we could, beginning with thanks giving, going into Christmas and emerging out of the holidays through the New Year, it is time to reset ourselves for work mode. Given the nature of the current world situation, where we live in an altered version of reality, let us now look at what tea has served herself to be since the discovery of this wonderful herb – a beverage. Whilst this is known to everyone, let us take a closer look at how we can enjoy this drink for what it truly means to us.

The first question though is this – is tea just another drink? At the heart of it yes it IS indeed a beverage, but tea has, through millennia, proven itself to be a force to reckon with on its own and has very successfully carved out her own niche in being a world all by herself. Since “tea time” has now become a daily part of life, it is no surprise that we all take this beverage in all its forms to give us something regularly which we cherish, but often don't realize, that we need to appreciate more often. The most important part of tea time is the experience itself. We drink tea, but we actually take in more than just the tea, and this is how we eventually define ourselves – not just by the tea we consume, but the time we spend doing so and the company in which we chose to spend that time.

The average tea drinker will take this elixir as a pick

me up drink steamy and strong or sweet and cold, or even a wind down drink – soothing and calming. The refined drinker will look for the connoisseurs' choice in this beverage – something rare only affordable and enjoyed by the affluent as the time taken to consume it is considered a luxury. The strategist will look at it as an opportunity to cease a person's time and convince them, woo them even, with the aide of this time. All of this is done under the guise of “tea” and “tea time”.

With all of this in mind, we can then say the most valued thing we possess, and once gone can never be brought back, is time. The experience, the enrichment it brings and the value we gain from it can all be attributed to this wonderful beverage we call tea.

So as we dawn upon this New Year, let us take time to enjoy it, enjoy the tea, enjoy the experience but most importantly enjoy the time as it is so limited, so precious and fills our lives with joy which makes the value immeasurable.

Since winter is still upon us let us take time to share a hot cup of this most treasured beverage, be it black, green, herb, or even a concoction of a heart-warming tea toddy laced with our favorite tippie or even one that is a tea totaler's choice. The most essential ingredient to your tea is the company you are in to add value to your time.

Remember, giving someone the gift of tea, of spending time having tea means you are granting them the ultimate luxury and parting with a gift of utmost value to them which shows you care more than anything else in the world – and that is sharing tea time together.

Until next time, stay safe and enjoy tea time!



Birendra Perera grew up in a family business through which he engrained or “infused” himself in the art of selecting and tasting the finest teas of Sri Lanka. As a director of Mlesna Group, Birendra leads the marketing and export of tea; actively participates in the procurement of tea at public auctions; procures unique flavours and ingredients; and expertly carries out daily tea tasting and blending activities ensuring all Mlesna products match their tagline, “Naturally the best!” Birendra has worked with major universities; is a regular presenter; and works closely with the Colombo Tea Traders Association and the Sri Lanka Tea Board on promotion, authenticity and the global marketing of Pure Ceylon Tea from Sri Lanka. **MlesnaTeas.com**

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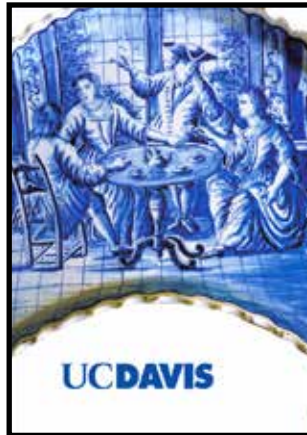
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