



# The TEA House Times™



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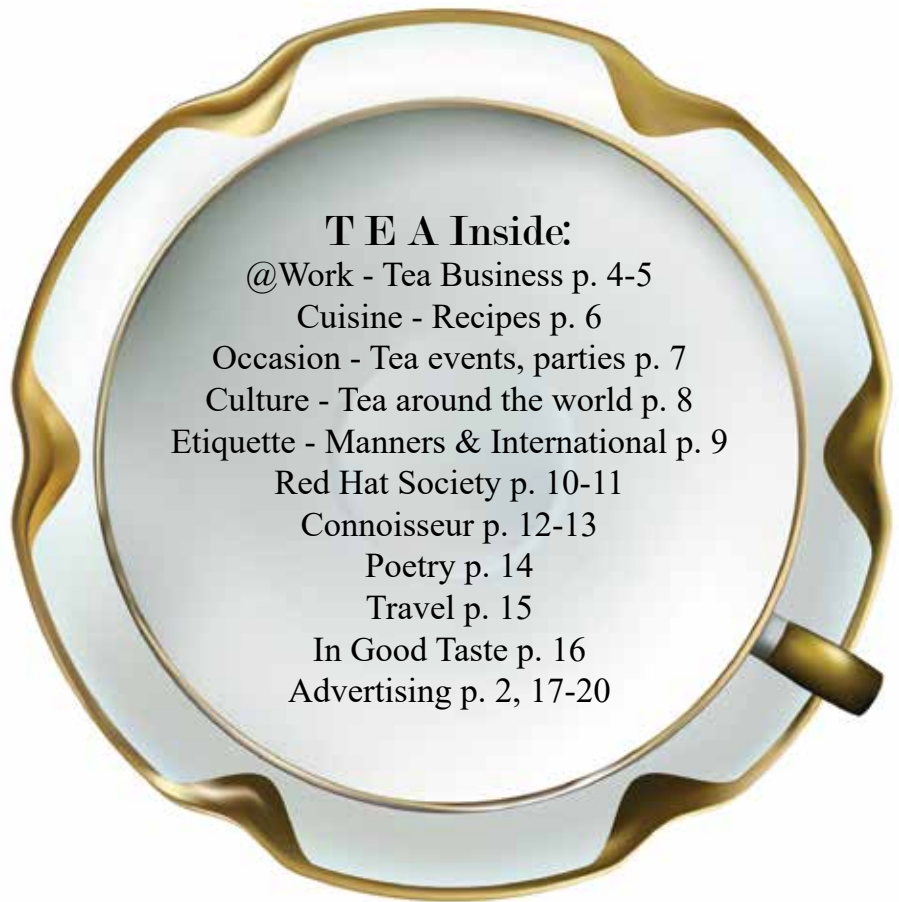


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## Greetings from The TEA House Times!

Travel withdrawal!! There, I said it!! Not just because I'd love to take a vacation, but because travel is the heart of what I do, how I can see and experience things, in order to write about them! So many memories keep popping up on my social media feeds to remind me of the beautiful things and places I have experienced because of tea. TEA!!

The cover image this month lays it out there. Tea leaves spread about and surrounding an unusual teapot. That's tea. To see tea growing in different parts of the world. To see tea enjoyed in different types of tea pots. It is the most beautiful multi-cultural experience in any way it takes form.

Several virtual events continue to surround the food and beverage industries, but I am truly looking forward to seeing people again in person!! World Tea Expo is set to take place in July in Colorado. And SIAL CANADA is set to take place in September along with a few other tea events, yet to be confirmed. Health and wellness is a priority, but I hope to see you soon.

## SALUTATIONS

Travel or no travel, I am grateful to be a part of the tea industry. I consider tea to be – normal – and happily a new normal for anyone you or I have encouraged to enjoy this incredibly healthy drink!

Comfort at home is what's important. Not the rush-rush, hurry-hurry, grab and go world we used to know. No need for the travel mug (maybe soon). But just sit back, drink some tea, have a chat in person or online, knowing that this wonderful thing will continue to connect us. It's normal and beautiful!!



All the best,

*Gail  
Gastelu*

# @WORK

A message from . . .



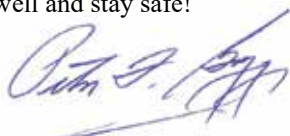
*Founded in 1899, the Tea Association of the USA, Inc. was formed to promote and protect the interests of the tea trade in the United States and is the recognized independent authority on Tea.*

If you were to concoct the worst blend possible for your teapot, you would use old, aged and musty teas. Add some bad water, brew in a cracked teapot and steep for one hour. The resultant beverage parallels how I feel about 2020 and what a horrible year it brewed up for all of us! Like any dark cloud, a silver lining is soon to be seen. The vaccine is arriving and, hopefully, in a few months, we'll all have access to this life-saving medical miracle.

For the industry, COVID has had interesting impacts. For starters, we know that the Foodservice sector was decimated, killing sales in the restaurant and office environments. While those operating in this market place were hurt, mainstream companies selling through grocery and mass merchandise outlets saw sales increase some 18%! Further, and while quantitative data is limited, we surmise that specialty tea also continued its history of growth. Concurrently, research has come out that indicates that tea may play a role by inhibiting the mechanisms used by COVID in the human body. Does this mean tea cures COVID? Absolutely not, but it once again underscores tea as a powerful, natural food that when consumed daily can improve human health.

As I look forward to 2021, there are a few trends that 2020 started that will continue. Tea's position as a healthy, good tasting beverage will continue to underscore growth. The overall surge in tea consumption, particularly in the key Millennial and Gen Z demographics, will remain and even continue to grow. The interest in where our tea comes from, countries and terroirs, will help consumers engage with this great product, and the industry as a whole will recover in all sectors, once herd immunity and a return to "normal" takes place. Tea's innate 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 a much better year in 2021, tea cup proudly in hand! Please stay well and stay safe!



  
Peter F. Goggi, President  
Tea Association of  
the U.S.A., Inc.  
**TeaUSA.org**  
**STItea.org**

A message from . . .



For a year now, people keep referring to the current state of being as the "new normal." But, you know what? Tea has always been normal!! And it is the very thing that each and every business can and should embrace as a daily part of selling or serving anything . . . yes anything!! Tea goes with everything; it is comfort in a cup, and the most normal and wonderful every day activity.

Long ago, I joked that tea could even be sold in a hardware store. I bet it could!!! And so, I say, whatever business you might be in, consider selling tea. And if you don't want to sell it, then serve it if possible. Or give a small packet of tea as a caring gesture when someone shops with you. It's an easy thing to do with friends, family, and neighbors too!

Another one of those things that most in the tea industry embrace is "shop local." Small shops are uniquely connected to their customers and the community around them. It would not seem odd if you were to put a small packet of tea into someone's bag when they pay. Perhaps pack a single teabag with a small note attached that simply says that you wanted to offer a little comfort. Or print something that says, "Stay safe and warm (or Stay safe and well). Thanks for your business, we care about you!" Don't forget your business name and contact info in small print.

Nothin' fancy. Just type it once on your computer screen and copy and paste over and over onto one page and print the page and cut them out. Affix the slip of paper to a lovely pre-wrapped serving of tea.

What's trending is anything that brings comfort and a sense of well-being. I may be stating the obvious, but people are looking for teas that might have caffeine to be uplifting, or caffeine free/herbal options to feel less up and more calm to ensure some good sleep too. Something about tea, just says I care about you. And when you are drinking it, it sets an example, a very good example, that you, yes y-o-u care for yourself too! If tea was not a part of someone's normal, encourage them to make it a part of their "new normal." #DrinkTea



Gail Gastelu  
Owner/publisher  
The Tea House Times



A message from . . .



Tea science continues to evolve and emerging research has shown that drinking four to five cups of tea per day could be just the TLC our guts need. By helping to optimize ‘friendly’ gut bacteria, drinking tea potentially reduces health risks such as obesity and mind health woes, while helping to maintain our immune health. This is according to a report from the UK’s Tea Advisory Panel (TAP), “Let’s drink to great gut health: why a cup of tea could help to keep your gut microbiota happy.” The report shows that various teas including black tea, green tea, oolong and pu-erh, can help contribute to a positive shift in our gut microbiota – the millions of micro-organisms that inhabit our guts.

This shift can help avoid gut dysbiosis, a state where the gut bacterial composition becomes detrimental to our health. According to TAP, tea’s rich array of polyphenols is where the answer lies. Tea polyphenols seem to demonstrate a prebiotic effect, rebalancing our gut microbiota towards more favorable strains. In fact, TAP highlight a 10-day study where participants drank 4-5 cups of green tea daily instead of water and researchers observed increased levels of Bifidobacterium, a healthy bacterial strain.

Other studies demonstrated that green and black tea polyphenols increased Bacteroidetes (friendly bacteria) and reduced Firmicutes (unfriendly bacteria), which could be beneficial for controlling body fat, while green tea consumption led to changes in the gut microbiome linked to a reduced obesity risk. Green, oolong, black and pu-erh teas also increased bacterial diversity; important for our immune health. What’s promising is the TAP report suggests a change in diet can result in a change in our gut bacteria within just 1 -2 days. The great news is, tea sits at the heart of this change. Pop the kettle on and give your gut some much needed TLC.



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

A message from . . .



**SPRING TEAS**

**It’s almost that time of year again. That magical time when all tea nerds await the arrival of spring harvest teas.**

As with all crops, tea has harvesting seasons. Spring teas are picked after the winter harvest rest. A general rule on how tea develops flavour profiles is, the longer teas are exposed to sun, as well as warm temperatures, the greater the concentration of catechins, aroma and flavour. This means that spring harvest teas tend to be milder, more delicate and sometimes sweeter than their later harvest cousins.

In “normal” times, tea buyers are hopping on planes about now to taste the new season teas in order to fill the demands those tea nerds place on the market. This year, like last however, the season will look a little different. With travel still forbidden for the most part, finding the rare teas for the market will rely heavily on relationships built over years.

Knowing what to purchase, finding those gems for your market, requires tasting and securing “lots” before they’re sold. Never before have relationships been more valuable in this industry. Those that are connected and know their growers will have an advantage. And those that don’t, will be learning an important lesson to build those relationships once our situation allows us to be physically connected again.

What each season brings is usually a surprise. There may be some hints and expectations based on the climate. But for the most part, nobody truly knows until the teas have been steeped and tasted. What 2021 brings, is still unknown as I sit and write this. But, as a fellow tea nerd, I can’t wait to find out! Remember however, that these represent a very small part of tea production, so getting your hands on spring harvest teas means being QUICK!



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



*As part of a tea table or on its own as a special treat, there is nothing more indulgent than a freshly baked scone with jam and a pot of your favorite tea. Sage Derby cheese is a specialty cheese made in Derbyshire, England where fresh sage leaves are folded into the cheese curds before pressing. This cheese with its bright green marbling and deliciously fragrant sage is very special. Lucky you if you have a well-stocked cheese merchant nearby. You can also order this cheese on-line from several specialty stores. In a pinch, substitute grated aged Cheddar and fresh sage leaves. May I suggest serving Blackberry tea from Greenhalgh Tea ([greenhalghtea.com](http://greenhalghtea.com)) with your scone?*

## Sage Derby Cheese Scones

*Preheat oven to 400 degrees.*

- 2 cups unbleached flour
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1/8 tsp. fresh ground pepper
- 1-1/2 cups grated Sage Derby cheese  
(or substitute 1-1/2 cups aged Cheddar & 2-1/2 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh sage)
- 6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, cold
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 large egg

In a large bowl, thoroughly mix the dry ingredients and cheese (and sage, if substituting). Cut in butter with a pastry blender until the mixture resembles fine crumbs. Whisk together milk and eggs and fold into dry mixture. Quickly and lightly, knead the dough. It is important not to overwork the dough, and to keep it cool. Place the dough on a lightly greased or parchment covered cookie sheet and pat into a 7" circle. Cut into 8 wedges. Separate the wedges and brush the top with milk. Bake for 15-18 minutes or until a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean.



## Small Batch Fresh Blackberry Jam

*Simple and quick to make with just a few ingredients. No need to add packaged gelling agents since blackberries are naturally high in pectin.*

- 1 lb. blackberries, fresh, or frozen and thawed
- 1 cup sugar
- 1-2 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice

Use a deep, heavy bottomed pan and add blackberries, sugar, and lemon juice. The ingredients should fill less than half the pan volume. It is important to use a deep pan so that the foaming jam does not overflow. Continually and gently stir jam over medium low heat. Keep a bowl of ice water nearby in case of accidental splashing of hot jam on hands. Skim off the foam. The foaming will stop once the jam starts getting to the gel stage, and will start setting in about 15-20 minutes. Spoon a bit of jam on a plate and set in freezer to check if jam is set. You may need to heat up to another 10 minutes. When finished there will be about 1-1/2 cups jam. Place in clean, lidded container and store in refrigerator. If you prefer seedless, or less seeds, carefully strain the jam while warm to your preference.



*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](http://GreenhalghTea.com)*

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# It is in the Cards

by Kim Hendrickson

OCCASION

Interest in Astrology had been waning since the 17th century in England until Alan Leo, father of modern astrology, came on the scene. His brand of astrology was based on the understanding of one's character rather than predicting events as it had been done for centuries. (This didn't stop him from being convicted in the then crime of fortune-telling in 1917 and fined.) It is that aspect of astrology that gives us the most entertainment, or information, or both.

Victorian England was the only time when the mystical could co-exist with the scientific. Those whom practiced astrology were often women on the "fringe" of society...those that were "less than" though talented. The fear of poisoning was on the top of the list of concerns in Victorian England and many would consult the "cards" to calm their fears and take comfort in what the future had in store for them.

Fast forward to today where women, and the use of astrology have both been liberated. Practiced by many, regardless of class or color and of interest by both men and women, some of us take part in checking our astrological reading daily! Astrology is a fun way to wrap a tea or luncheon around it as a theme. Consider some of these party ideas:

- Use images of Victorian astrological signs to create an e-invitation or paper one. Many available online.
- Make your invitation exclusive by only asking those with Gemini & Virgo, or any signs of your choosing, to come to your event. Then offer a brief overview of each astrological sign's key characteristics.
- Make your finger sandwiches in the shapes of sun, moon, and stars to keep in with the theme of your gathering. Make it simple using popular fillings: egg salad, hummus, smoked salmon, flavored cream cheese, etc.
- Choose "other worldly" tea flavors by offering unusual tea and tisane flavor combinations. Consider combining two teas together to create a new exotic flavor. Better yet, ask your local tea supplier what teas best suit each astrological sign.
- Cutter shapes are available for the signs of the zodiac. Make cookie cutouts using the zodiac shapes changing the flavors of the cookies by their shape. Check Amazon or EBay.
- Zodiac balloons are readily available for a dramatic centerpiece. Maybe choose the appropriate sign balloon for each guest?
- Use Zodiac images to decorate your table as well as acting

as a place card. Glue printed images (or use zodiac cards) together sandwiching a stick or dowel, in between, then insert into a small potted succulent or fern, allowing each guest to take it home to enjoy.

- Keep your guests busy. Offer your guests the chance to guess their tablemates' astrological sign by allowing everyone to give hints, one at a time, and the one guessing correctly the fastest, WINS. (You may need to distribute a list of basic characteristics by sign to your guests in advance.)
- Hire (or bribe with a free meal) a local astrologist to give 5-10 minute readings to each guest as they are enjoying their afternoon tea.
- Using [cultureastrology.com](http://cultureastrology.com) as a source, tell your guests which Victorian profession they would be best suited for by their zodiac sign or their house style if that is of more interest.
- Give books by Mary Shelley or Edgar Allan Poe as a prize or a gift as they are authors of this time period.



"We do not feel ashamed of flirting with the zodiac. The zodiac is well worth flirting with."  
-D.H. Lawrence

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*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](http://salviapress.net)*



# CULTURE

## A Trip to “Flavor Tea Town”

by Gail Henderson

It’s Spring 2021 and I’m told we may have to look into a cup of tea to find adventure. The question is, are you brave enough to take a trip to Flavor Tea Town?

First we must travel down Nostalgia Street, where a national desire for nostalgia is giving rise to a whole new set of tea foods and tea flavors that remind us of happy times in our past. Why else would you want to try peanut-butter or s’mores flavored tea, or orange creamsicle or grape cotton-candy flavors? Why not try a Dill Pickle Milkshake, which I’m sure could someday become a tea flavor too. Personally, I hope that street is a dead-end. But it would be an adventure.

Or we could choose to check out Immuni-TEA Street. Have you tried tea with turmeric (cures everything, I’m told) or acai berries, or goji? Be prepared to drink a very vibrant “spring green” colored tea made by whisking matcha powder from Japan into hot water. It certainly would be a taste of spring, at least visually. If really brave, you might try a high energy “turbo tea.” But let’s keep walking.

Other adventures await your taste buds if you choose Heat, Smoke and Spice Street, where you may enjoy flavors that burn, tingle or surprise. But the best street in Flavor TEA Town may be your own!

For St. Patrick’s or Easter, you can enjoy a tea party where guests must decipher the flavors they are drinking using more familiar teas. Start with a simple tea blend with just several identifiable flavors, then work your way up to exotic teas with an explosion of flavors.

Prize goes to the person whose taste buds can isolate the most flavors. You may just find your new favorite tea and introduce it to family and friends.



*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](http://LoveYourNeighborhood.com) Or call 813-928-1166 for information and help. Photo credit: Martha DeWeese*



## Your Manners Matter® Minute with Cynthia Grosso

*Some people may be suffering as well, but if you can afford to support those who have been hit hard during this time it can help support your community.*



### Etiquette Tip:

#### Tipping- How Much is Correct During a Pandemic?



A few years ago, in this publication we wrote about tipping for restaurant service. At that time, 62% of the people surveyed tipped at least 15%, the largest percentage, even if the service was subpar.

Thirty five percent of participants said they would tip 10% or less for subpar service while 8% said they would not tip at all.

We have always recommended tipping between 15-20% for good restaurant service. We also recommend tipping 10-15% for sub-standard service rather than no tip at all. That still stands for in-house dining.

But what about now? Has that changed during a pandemic? A lot of businesses and people have been hit hard during COVID-19, restaurants included.

Realizing that the deliverers are working hard and risking their own health to deliver your meal may be a consideration when you tip.

There is really no one way that is the absolutely correct way to tip. Popular meal-delivery apps like Grubhub, DoorDash and UberEats set the default tip at 15 percent. Some restaurants have in-house delivery services. So, it may be that you tip a flat fee for delivery, something like \$10.00, or a percentage of the meal price something like 15%-20% same as indoor dining.

Some people may be suffering as well, but if you can afford to support those who have been hit hard during this time it can help support your community.

Tipping is subjective and has always been and still is a gesture of appreciation for service rendered well done, in-house or delivery.



*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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and Etiquette  
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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.



# Royal Treatment!

Where there is a will; there is a way. No mere pandemic can keep Red Hat Society members down. Living up to their chapter name, the Social Butterflies of the Triad of North Carolina, USA, safely reunited for their annual Tea Luncheon.

Queen Dianne had made these not-to-be missed reservations months in advance, so she was extremely pleased when the restaurant owner offered, while observing all necessary precautions, to have the venue open for her Chapter alone. What a Royal treatment that was!

As a token of gratitude for each attendee, Queen Dianne provided a lovely gift. A lively fashion show came next, and Chapterettes showed off their wonderful attires. "Each Chapterette had the

*"I love my Sisters and they love me. They have given me so much love and joy throughout this difficult year," explains Queen Dianne.*

opportunity to strut their stuff (6 feet apart, of course) and the winner was awarded a prize.

A marvelous time was had by all and they cannot wait until they can get together again.



*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](http://RedHatSociety.com) to get started.*



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# CONNOISSEUR

James Norwood Pratt



Susan Walcott came up to ask questions following my talk. I quickly realized she sought understanding, not just knowledge of various tea names and origins. No, Professor Walcott wanted to understand how tea grows and just how leaf from this evergreen shrub is transformed into the fragrant herb whose nectar we cherish. Since we were speaking in North Carolina where she taught geography at UNC-Greensboro, I suggested she contact Christine Parks and say I'd sent her. Christine and her husband David Parks are proprietors of Camellia Forest Tea Garden and Nursery in Chapel Hill, I said: Go ask her to show you. Now, ten years later, we all benefit from that introduction. Christine and Susan together have published "Grow Your Own Tea." This beautifully illustrated book is a landmark in our horticultural history and a milestone on America's path to becoming a tea consuming society. If you share Susan's curiosity and have enough space and suitable climate for it, you too can watch tea growing in your garden and know what to do with its leaves.

Another successful collaboration has produced the best-selling novel "The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane" by Lisa See and Linda Louie. It's not Lisa's first novel but to write it required Linda's expert understanding of Pu-Er. Linda owns Bana Tea and is highly regarded as perhaps our foremost importer of Pu-Er, Yunnan's mystery

tea which is usually manufactured as round tea cakes. One such cake is the girl's only link to her mother and her home village from which she was stolen as a child. Lisa required all Linda's cunning to figure out how a disc of tea can be identified right down to the mountain where its leaf grew on ancient trees harvested by local villagers. The two women delivered a joint keynote address to open this year's (virtual) Sixth Annual Global Tea Initiative Colloquium January 21st.

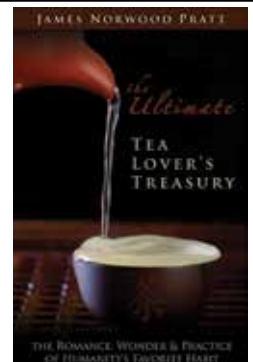
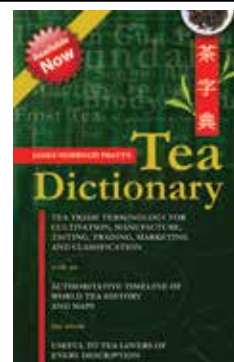
Experience shows the tea business is virtually recession-proof. After all, people in reduced circumstances and in isolation naturally drink more tea than usual. No pleasure is simpler, no luxury more affordable, no morale booster more benign. But are you doing your part to support your local tea enterprise? Nationally known brands like Adagio and Harney are sure to survive but like a mother hen I worry about the lesser known. How about The Tea Smith in Omaha or Shang Tea in Kansas City or The Cultured Cup in Dallas, noble names all and deserving of wider respect. I might mention others too but you get the idea: Your tea purveyors need you now more than ever. In the name of the sacred leaf, let us support our beloved tea community!



*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](mailto:info@theteahousetimes.com)  
*Find more of James Norwood Pratt's work at  
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# TEA IS POETRY POURED

By Susan Patterson aka Earlene Grey

Elections are over. Spring is here. Earth day is April 22nd. Now is the time for new life, new dreams, and new beginnings. I want to turn our attentions to one of our most important challenges. It is the protection and healing of our mother earth. Our President promises to support the knowledge of scientists and earth experts around the world. His lead should be an example. Let us start in our own homes and cities. Quit using plastic. Don't throw anything away that can be recycled. Plant trees. There is much more we can do, of course, but this is a start.

Now, I know that I am preaching to the choir here. As, the poetess said, "Tea people are the most wonderful people in the world." You are already doing the world good just by drinking tea. And, most likely you are good stewards of the earth, but let's carry on. Let's find as many ways, local and world-wide, to help our mother earth. She needs it. Our grandchildren need it. Happy tea times from your poet in Oregon. Skp



## Clearing out the Clutter

I am happily putting away childish things.  
Things like the jack-in-the-box  
Which frightened me so many times,  
But that I still kept winding up  
To see if it came out the same.

I'm putting away the cat's cradle string that I  
Bound myself to so tightly, I could not let go.  
Away goes the ball that I had when I so often said,  
'It's mine and if you won't play the  
Way I want, I will take it and go home.'

Out go the toy traumas in boxes, some of  
Which are in the original packing material.  
The top that spun me around for years  
Has been stopped.  
I'm putting away happy toys too. A few of them  
I've never wanted to share, and now they are  
Too old to play with.

I've saved too many relics from my childhood.  
There are fears and hurts and hopes and dreams  
Which need to be put into their rightful spot.  
It's time to do so, maybe passed time.  
It's getting late.  
Mom and Dad would be so pleased  
That I am finally cleaning up the place.

Susan Patterson

## Your Travel Through the Existence of Earth

Some will tell you to do as  
Much as you can.  
Several things at once  
In fact.  
To experience  
The most for your dime,  
So to speak.

I do not advocate that  
At all. No Sir.  
Plain to say,  
It is not necessary.

Slow down.  
Enjoy the humanity.  
Do not speed.  
You may very well be ticketed  
For unsafe travel!

Invite a fellow wayfarer to sit and  
Have tea with bread and jam.

What is put in front of you  
Is what you are to experience.  
Nothing more. Nothing less.  
Marvel at that.  
Enjoy the scenery.  
Relish the company.

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](http://EarleneGrey.com)



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- Cheese puffs
- Onion tart
- Hummus and veggies
- Homemade spiced nuts
- Oysters on the half shell (when in season).



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also will enhance their personal knowledge and enjoyment of tea. Innkeepers who choose membership in ALP are committed to high standards of hospitality through continuing education on management, marketing, and exceeding guest expectations. ALP's membership includes hundreds of innkeepers in the US, and is seasoned with innkeepers outside of the US borders. ALP is delighted to acquaint *The Tea House Times* readers with the historic mansions, rustic lodges, intimate cottages, contemporary inns, and more, with innkeepers that offer tea service. To discover more about ALP, visit [www.ALPLodging.org](http://www.ALPLodging.org)



# In Good Taste

## A Time for Change by Birendra “Jopy” Perera

Hello there dear tea aficionados! We have all dawned in a new year and allowed this time of complete altered normality to determine the pace in our lives and set our tasks & goals for 2021 hoping for positive change; especially as the past twelve to fourteen months have been anything but normal or having much promise of hope for a brighter future, at least in the visible future. But as we now know there may soon be a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel as many of us prepare to inoculate and protect ourselves. It could, then, be said that this is a time for change, for accepting a new challenge, to prepare ourselves for the inevitable in the ever changing world and the ever reshaping future.

Being tea lovers we are often on our own personal quest to discover “our own cup of tea”. We have spoken of tea and time, the value in our tea, detoxing, celebrating and enjoying our own personal cup of tea in its many forms. But as hedonists of a world renowned and loved beverage who seek pleasure in discovering the ultimate elixir for soul satisfaction, should we simply stop when we reach our goal or should we persist in our adventure of discovering yet another brilliant cup? This thought provoking idea beckons the hankering need for change in our cup, just as much as we seek change in our lives. It is true that as creatures of habit we are considerably resilient to change; this being said, deep in our hearts we all know that new discoveries are what make life interesting, and most often worth living for.

So, how does one change their cup of tea? Whilst we love a good favorite as our go to option for comfort, we must admit stepping out of our comfort zone is the only way to discover new tastes. As a tea taster I have often kept my tea drinking habits to somewhat of a traditional nature of beginning my day with a robust flavorful cup of Ceylon tea with a hint of fresh ginger to have a good kick start to the day and a healthy boost to my immune system with natural antibiotics. And to wind my day down, a simple yet calming cup of Sencha from Japan.

This year however, I have ventured into the realms of the unknown by pursuing my need for self-discovery by taking in a cold glass of Kombucha. This, rather new, love affair began on a hot day when I strolled into a health food store to discover this lovely thing of wonder. I was taken in with the charm of its zesty taste and ever so slight effervescence. The whole experience of the drink left me very satisfied and refreshed in quenching my taste and giving myself a treat. Later on I discovered that it not only made me feel instant satisfaction in the sense a gourmand would, but it also gave me mental satisfaction in discovering something new and it made me feel very relaxed as the heat was not only from the tropical temperature, but also from the heavy meal consumed before. The probiotic properties of this lovely drink helped settle any uneasy feeling I was experiencing which made me realize there is a tea drink for every requirement.

Since then I have discovered that Kombucha comes in many forms and mixes of varying teas of green, black, herbal and fruit flavored with natural fruit juice. I am sure this will lead me down a path of many more discoveries and thus broadening my horizons as well as satisfying my never ending quest for the discovery of more tea drinks the world has to offer.

Change in our drinking habits and finding something new does not necessarily mean letting go of what you already know and love. It simply means you are broadening your experience to take in something new, to enjoy the best, to experience the undiscovered and to enjoy the feeling of change. The here and now will always be there as we have already experienced it, but the new change will refresh your entire world. To all those who love tea, this is the essence of a worldly tea lover – new discovery, hope and change. Sometimes we need to step out of our comfort zone to discover a new great experience.

Until next time, stay safe and enjoy the change!



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](http://MlesnaTeas.com)

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