

CONTEMPORARY

TEA TIME

Vol. XIX No.4 • December 2010 - February 2011 • Rs.50 • US\$ 4

TEA JOURNAL WITH THE LARGEST READERSHIP • 21st YEAR OF PUBLICATION

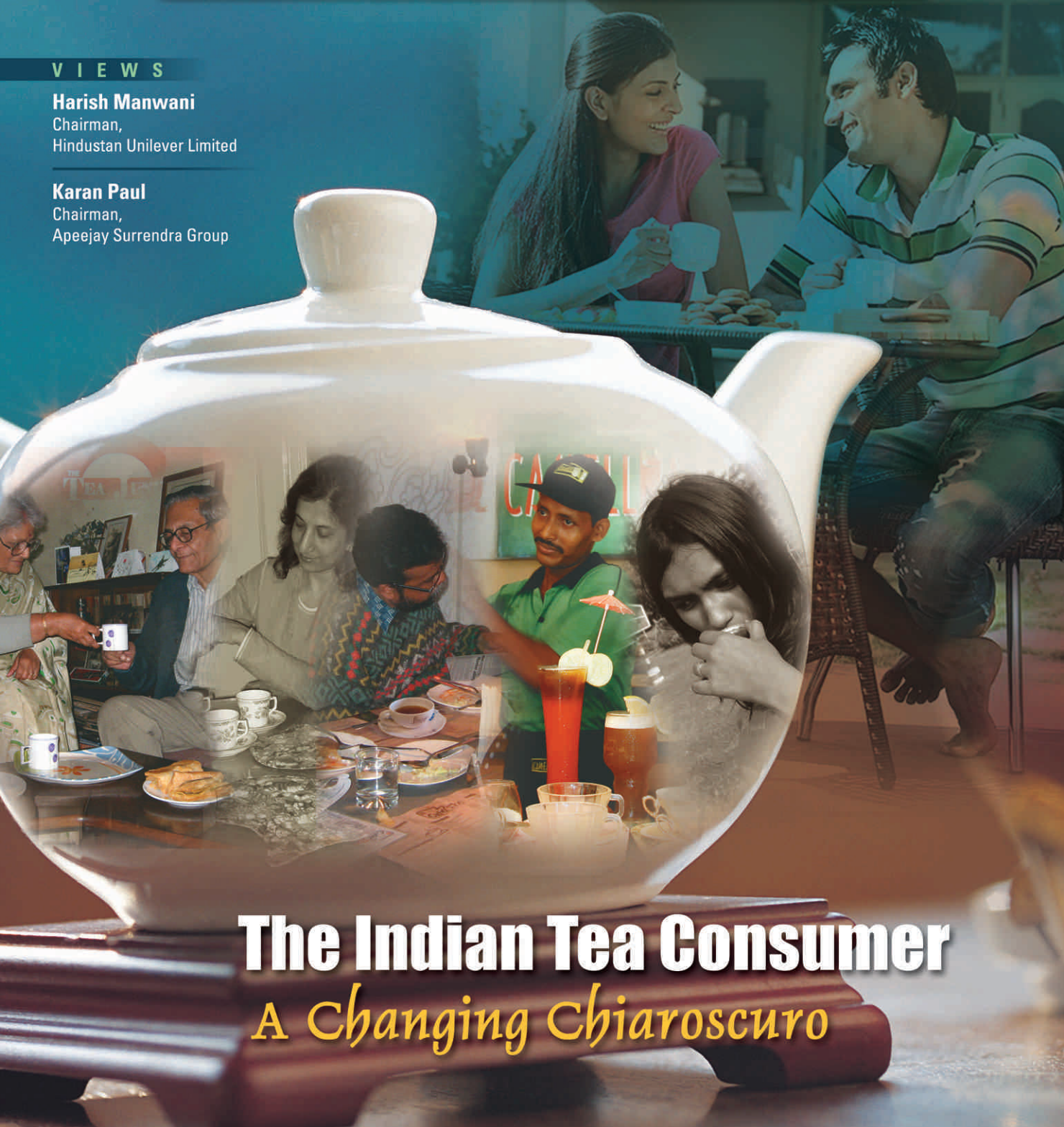
VIEWS

Harish Manwani

Chairman,
Hindustan Unilever Limited

Karan Paul

Chairman,
Apeejay Surrendra Group



The Indian Tea Consumer
A Changing Chiaroscuro

Publisher
Samar Sircar

Advisers
Nayana Goradia, Lal Raisinghani and
Lav Jhingan

Executive Editor
Samar Sircar

Editorial Assistance and Design Consultancy
INKPOT, 58 Jatin Das Road, Kolkata-700 029
Ph. 9831169021, 03340637177
e-mail : inkpot_2@yahoo.com
inkpot2@gmail.com

Correspondent (South India)
P S Sundar

Correspondent (United Kingdom)
Kalyan Sircar

Mailing Address
Editorial & Marketing Office
1&2 Old Court House Corner, Post Box
No. 14, Kolkata-700 001
Ph: (+91-033) 2230 7241/7242/4665
Fax: (+91-033) 2230 5753/2210 4671
E-mail: kolkata@contemporary.co.in

Branches
New Delhi
C-10, First Floor, Amar Colony Market
Lajpatnagar-IV, New Delhi-110 024
Ph : (011) 6590 7905
E-mail : bgs@giasd101.vsnl.net.in

Guwahati
S Hazarika, 2A Centre Point
(opp. Bora Service Station)
G.S. Road, Ulubari, Guwahati-781 007
Ph: (0361) 251 1052/252 4253
Fax: (0361) 254 1119
E-mail: ctlgau1@sancharnet.in

Siliguri
Rajeev Roy, STAC Building Mallaguri
Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri-734 403
Phone: (0353) 251 3095/251 3521
Fax: (0353) 251 7752
E-mail: ctlsil@sancharnet.in

Published for Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd.
by Samar Sircar from 1 & 2 Old Court House
Corner, Kolkata 700 001

Designed by Caps Micrographics, 8/2, K.S.
Roy Road, Kolkata-700 001, Ph. 2230 1827

Printed at Caps Micrographics, 8/2, K.S. Roy
Road, Kolkata-700 001, Ph. 2230 1827

COVER STORY

The Indian
Tea Consumer
- A Changing
Chiaroscuro

page ... 20



industry



- 08 South India Column
2011 Begins Hopefully
By P S Sundar
- 10 Tata Tea in Save Wildlife Pledge
- 13 The Vexed Problem of Weed
Control in Tea Gardens
By Anjali Pathak
- 30 Garden Profile
Namsang Tea Estate
By Subodh Paul
- 36 Face to Face
With N Dharmarajan
- 46 Improving Humidification in
Tea Processing
By Harki Sidhu
- 48 North Bengal Tea Park

international

- 15 United Kingdom
On Tea Break and Tea Towel
By Kalyan Sircar
- 17 Bangladesh
Tidings from Bangladesh
By Monjur Hossain

finance &
figures



- 12, 32, 39 Statistics
- 50 Crop
Facts and Figures

current events

- 33 Trade Winds
- 42 Happenings



miscellany



- 11 Tea & Health
The Cup That Cares
- 27 Travel
New Family in Neora Valley
By Mrittika Bose
- 34 Tea Tales
Floodgates of Nostalgia
By S K Vohra
- 40 Tea Break
Cal-Ca-Tea
- 44 Someplace Else
Ganga, Sabarmati, Neelgiri,
Northeast — The Unofficial
Geography of Tea
By Promona Sengupta
- 52 Tea Talk
Blow Hot Blow Cold

regulars



- Quiz - *By Errol O' Brien*
Inside front cover
- 04 Readers Write
- 05 From the Publisher
- 38 Infusions - *By Ashley D'Rosario*
- 54 Last Page
The Tea Maker



THE INDIAN TEA THE INDIVIDUAL



The concept of tea as an acceptable beverage that can give a lift to our spirits and energy was handed down to us by the British.

A freshly brewed cup early in the morning to wipe away the last traces of sleep and the afternoon cup enjoyed at 'tea time' with wafer thin sandwiches, tea cakes and muffins, have been useful habits that we have imbibed from the Raj. However, over time, we have made tea a part of our very own Indian culture. The beverage is now had in our country round the clock in every metro, town and village. It has become the traditional drink to welcome guests, the ice breaker in board rooms, the ideal pre-exam morale booster and the perfect travel drink because of its ubiquitous nature. The vastness and variety in Indian geography, ethnicity and culture has lent colourful layers to our tea. What the elders handed down has continued to blend beautifully with the choice of the younger generations. From the giant tea companies to the smallest retailer, the marketers of tea continue to strive to bring better quality and variety to the consumers. Research plays a big role in making tea a healthy and stimulating drink to all and sundry. And tea continues to evolve and remain India's favourite beverage.

A CONTEMPORARY TEA TIME report



CONSUMER

COMPARISON

— *A Changing Chiaroscuro*

A group of fifty-plus men and women from different corners of the world had gathered at a popular coffee lounge in Kolkata for a get together. They had been schoolmates in this city 35 years back and this was a nostalgic affair. As they settled down in the comfortable lounging seats, the waiter came for the order. All of them ordered tea with snacks. Their choices ranged between Darjeeling, Earl Grey, honey cinnamon tea and iced lemon tea. They had opted for a coffee bar as their rendezvous but none of them had asked for coffee from the great variety on offer there.

Up market coffee shops in the metro cities are now offering a fairly good range of teas and many of their customers now prefer tea to coffee. And the tea joints – roadside tea stalls, the *chai* shop at the street corner, trendy *cha* bars or the traditional tea rooms – continue to draw customers as well. Is this preference for tea restricted to the elderly and the middle aged? We spoke to people of all age groups in New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Kolkata and came up with some interesting facts.

Consumerspeak

Sandhya Mitra and Dr. A K Mitra, an eighty-plus couple from Kolkata have been savouring Makaibari

Apoorva tea for the last 30 years. Mrs Mitra is rather particular about the brand and has always been having black tea without milk and sugar. When she was in service she used to have Lipton Green Label in office and at home. She also has a spirit of adventure as regards tea and was the only family member who had immensely enjoyed the box of Ginseng tea from Korea – gifted by a friend – when she was in her fifties.

H K Mitra, also in his early eighties – a Chartered Accountant by profession – and his wife Manju, in her seventies, enjoy both tea and coffee. However, the morning cuppa must be tea as also the rejuvenating cup they have at the traditional ‘tea time’ between 4:30 and 5pm every day. Both of them prefer light flavoured black tea with a little sugar. When they are at the club in the afternoon or evening, they always have tea with snacks. “I don’t have coffee after seven in the evening as it hampers my sleep at night,” says Mitra. He has to travel on work quite often, sometimes beyond the metros to remote places. “Even in the suburbs or villages one can always find a reasonable cup of tea. Coffee is not available in many of these places and on train journeys and what sells as coffee is sub standard. So I always stick to tea while travelling.” At home they have a flavoured blend of broken leaf that the local retailer blends for them.



Cover Story

For D P Saha, also a Chartered Accountant in his late seventies, tea is a necessity and coffee an indulgence. He has to have his cup of tea before going out for morning walk at 5:30 am every day. "I get the stimulus and energy to go for my morning walk from my cup of tea," says Saha. This is followed by two cups before breakfast and two more while at work in office. Though the aroma and variety of coffee attracts him and can entice him to have a cup now and then on impulse, coffee in the evening reduces his appetite at dinner time. Saha is fond of Green tea and must have at least three to four cups when he goes to a Chinese restaurant.

Here is what Reeti Sinha, a researcher and home maker from Mumbai has to say about her tea preferences. "Tea has always been more than a drink in India. It has been enjoyed and celebrated over the generations. It has been a ritual. Right from the



selection of tea leaves, to preparation and then the presentation – it is an art in itself. Every step requires careful consideration especially if it is for someone special. We do offer tea to new acquaintances but when it comes to friends or people close to us we love to prepare it according to the taste of that particular person.

Having grown up in a small township where men went to work to the same office at a fixed time and for a definite duration, day after day, women at home would get together after finishing their daily chores, over their cups of tea, discussing everything under the sun. We had leaf and dust as two varieties of tea at home and choice of brand was easier as there were not many brands available in the market. My mother was very particular about timing the



ingredients, right from sugar to *elaichi* or *adrak* (cardamom and ginger) and everyone who came to our house – including the maids, gardener, plumber or electrician – was offered tea. Tea without sugar was a rare thing. Special guests were given tea in tea pots with sugar and milk in separate containers. Tea was a big no for children. Not even the lemon tea my father preferred to have especially on Sundays.

We (me and my sister) were introduced to the world of tea by our roommate in the hostel as none of us wanted to have the morning milk and she would bring the milk to the room to prepare tea on the hotplate. Later during my post-graduation days tea was brewed especially in the rooms of research



students at anytime of the day or night. Getting together in the college canteen over a cup of tea and bread *pakorras* is a fond remembrance.

Over the years I must have sipped thousands of cups of tea and there are many memories attached to it. When we were in Sri Lanka the maid and driver were amused to see me prepare tea with milk. They had black tea with sugar. The malls in Colombo displayed many varieties of tea and I had all the time in the world to experiment with and taste the huge range. Jasmine tea served after food at a Chinese restaurant was my favourite. I still remember the taste and have tried copying it at home but have never reached perfection.

Tea in India is not only people specific but area specific too and unlike Delhi where we love to have tea in huge mugs, in Mumbai we relish small cups of tea at frequent intervals. During my training days at Ahmedabad I learnt that a



HARISH MANWANI,
President – Asia, Africa,
Central and Eastern Europe
and Chairman, Hindustan
Unilever Limited says:



As the largest marketers of branded tea not only in India but also in the world, our aim is to bring the functionality of tea in every price slab. We have just launched Brooke Bond Sehatmand tea in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. This is a brand of tea enriched with vitamins, meant for the masses. Tea in our country is not just a beverage that provides stimulus, it is actually a snack. We want to make it a healthy snack.

India has over 200 million undernourished people, the largest in any one country. More than one-third of men and women suffer from chronic nutritional deficiencies. Using a breakthrough coating technology, we have guaranteed vitamins in every cup of Sehatmand tea that will help combat micro nutrient deficiency and provide an affordable and healthy option to families. We intend to go national with Sehatmand tea to ensure a means of better health to the masses all over the country.

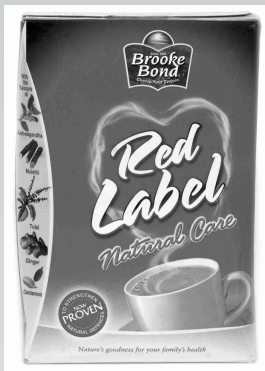
The beauty of tea is that there are so many different kinds of it. It gives different benefits to people of different age groups, different income groups, different geographies at different times on different occasions. Research in scientific laboratories all over the world including our state-of-the-art research centre at Bangalore continues to bring out the immense health benefits of tea. The anti oxidants in tea are known to reduce risks of many diseases including cancer. People from all levels of the society have to be made aware of the health benefits of



tea. We feel that tea must be made accessible and relevant to everyone in the country.

Our job is to straddle the entire socio economic and demographic pyramid as far as tea is concerned. We have brands that cater to different demographics. Brooke Bond Taj Mahal tea is for the connoisseurs, Red Label is a phenomenal success with the middle income households, the out-of-home category is well covered by Lipton brands and now Brooke Bond Sehatmand will fulfill the need of the masses.

The Lipton slogan 'Tea can do that' reflects our philosophy.



cup of tea at roadside shops meant tea in the cup as well as in the saucer given along with it. It was a messy affair and I had to order only half a cup to let the tea remain inside the cup!

Unlike our generation, the present generation has taken up tea at a much earlier stage. Parents do not mind giving tea to their children as tea is no more seen as an unhealthy indulgence of the grownups. Milk is the regular drink for my eight and half year

old son but he loves to have herbal tea with honey whenever he catches cold. Flavoured tea is in these days and there are vanilla, mint and chocolate flavours readily available in the metro cities. I love to have tea without sugar. It has to be tea with milk, the first cup in the morning, and then without sugar and milk for the whole day, preferably Green tea. We have a decent collection of various kinds of tea from tea dust to Darjeeling leaves, Green tea from India and China, herbal tea and flavoured tea bags. I love to brew tea according to specific preferences.

When I am writing for my research work, I have tea alone but otherwise tea needs company. Most of us have to have someone to enjoy our cup to the fullest. A small cup of tea works wonders when it comes to social bonding. It is hard to imagine life without tea."

Dr. Kaninika Mitra, working with the UNICEF in Kolkata says, "A cup of light freshly brewed tea with a little bit of sugar and may be a dash of lime is the most refreshing drink that is also very simple to make. Whether it is a five-star hotel or a roadside *chai* shop, it is equally tempting. I always like it light and without milk, so that the flavour is not masked. Early in the morning or after a tiring day, there is nothing better than a cup of Darjeeling to take the edge off your lassitude and pep you up. Coffee over stimulates, the

aroma is too strong and it is often embellished with too much paraphernalia like cream or even ice-cream. I like it plain and simple, that is why it is always tea for me."

Krittika Sengupta, in her early fifties and a teacher by profession, swears by tea. She feels physically uncomfortable with coffee as it disturbs her sleep but tea acts as a perfect invigorating beverage for her. In winter, steaming hot second flush Darjeeling tea that



Cover Story

she purchases from a tea boutique and in summer iced lemon tea that she makes and stores in the fridge regularly is the best thirst quencher for her and her guests.

From the above facts it may seem that tea is favoured generally by the elderly and the middle aged. But the picture we got after talking to youngsters all over India is quite different and revealing. Many of them prefer tea to coffee or even aerated drinks and are very definite about the reasons. Let us take a look at some of these.

Sonia Khosa, a 26 year old professional from Mumbai says, "My fascination for tea grew in my early years of childhood while watching my grandfather sip and relish a simple cup of Green Label tea. He preferred his tea brewed to perfection, with a dash of milk and very little sugar. Apart from bringing back fond memories from the past, tea also happens to be my preferred choice of beverage primarily because when consumed in moderation, it is the most healthy and refreshing of all the beverages. I enjoy my tea steaming hot or iced, depending upon the weather and my mood."

Abhishek Singh, a 23 year old lawyer from Mumbai says, "When I was in college, drinking tea at the small tea shop just outside the campus at odd hours of the night or early morning was an experience in itself. We used to spend a lot of time at the small tea shop sipping tea, having long conversations and munching on cheap snacks. People used to run large debts with



the tea stall owner. Now that I am working, tea brings me out of the monotony of work. It refreshes me. I generally like my tea sweet and strong. If I feel like having tea, the first choice would be to make it at home, and then a tea shop/ cafe rather than a coffee shop."

Aishee Sengupta another 26 year old Mumbai professional says, "I generally drink tea three times a day on weekdays since I get time for morning tea only on holidays. I like my tea without milk and sugar, although at office I end up drinking tea with both. It





Karan Paul, Chairman Apeejay Surrendra Group says:

gives me a break from work. I can chat with colleagues while drinking tea in office. When at a coffee shop I always prefer drinking tea over coffee since I am not a coffee person. In such situations I drink iced tea preferably with lemon. To me drinking tea signifies a break from work, it also signifies fine taste. I like to try different kinds of tea while travelling to new places.”

Kolika Mitra, a post graduate student from Hyderabad has done a survey among her friends there and come up with some interesting facts. “Most of them said that their preference would be contextual. If they're sitting and chatting or maybe discussing something, they would prefer it over a cup of tea. Some said they are conscious of the harmful effects of aerated drinks, so they deliberately stay away from these. Others shun any products from multinational companies like Pepsi or Coca-cola on principle. Some have grown used to drinking tea at a particular time in the day, or in the evening. They're in a way addicted to tea. Some like the flavour of tea and don't like the artificial taste of aerated drinks. A few of course are there who simply don't enjoy the taste of tea. And some prefer coffee to tea. But the general consensus seems to be that they would like a hot cup of tea because young people like us are more health-conscious now. The emergence of many tea-bars has also led to a rise in tea-drinking among the youth.”

The youngsters from New Delhi have their own reasons for favouring the golden brew. Ria Basu, a JNU student told us, “I drink tea because I like the taste. I have always been an avid drinker of lemon tea, and even when I go to a Barista or a Cafe Coffee Day, I always stick to this favourite drink of mine.”

Bedatri Datta Choudhury, a



I believe that any young person today likes to have a wide choice of beverages/drinks. They may wish to have tea, coffee, cola, juice, water or any other drink – all in the same day. Today's households have several kinds of tea – Green, Camomile, Mint and so many other kinds besides the Darjeeling, CTC or Earl Grey in their cupboards. Personally I like to have a bit of everything. On a typical day I have a lot of beverages. I love mint tea, infusions. I am enjoying flavoured tea. I also like tea with ginger with a slice of lime as well as *masala chai*. I have a gigantic collection of teas at home and also in office.

Around 20 kinds of Chinese tea, 20 kinds of Green tea, Black Assam, CTC, Orthodox, as well as many types of coffee. My taste is evolving just like that of the Indian tea drinker.

A lot of experimentation is going on with tea both in India and abroad. There has been growth in the demand for Green tea. In our own tea bag business Green tea is taking off. It has captured the imagination of both the young and the old primarily because of its health attributes. And the improved manufacturing process today is making Green tea a tasty brew. In spite of all this the standard tea with milk and sugar is still the predominant seller all over the world. Variants of grandmother's tea concoctions that we have all taken some time or the other will give rise to more innovative drinks. The Indian palate is used to thick, sweet and spicy drinks in both the hot and cold forms. So we have to innovate around that.

We are aggressively and innovatively promoting tea through our outlets. Several programmes centering around tea happen at Flurys. Customers visiting there enjoy these, which of course cater to a certain market. Our Cha Bars are also promoting tea as a trendy drink very much the way coffee is being promoted at the coffee bars. Our hotels have extended tea menus. Typhoo is also being promoted at our outlets. Flavoured teas and Green tea are now gaining popularity, and in this area we are at the top of the market. Like Kolkata, the Oxford Cha Bars in Mumbai and Delhi are also very popular. We also have Cha Bars in Bangalore and Chennai. Plenty of popular programmes take place around these Cha Bars. We may have programmes on how to make special tea drinks in the future.



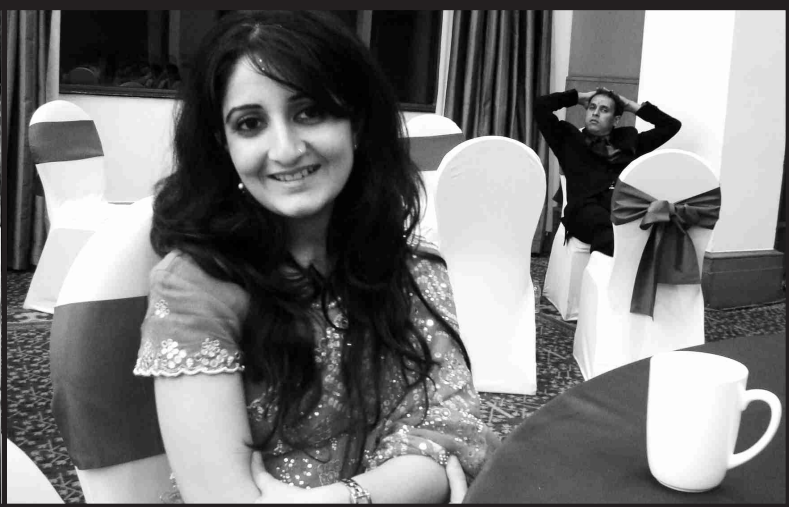
Cover Story



post graduate student from JNU gave a candid reply, "I have stuck to tea primarily because my parents have always been tea-drinkers. My love for

the drink started at home. Even at fancy coffee retail chains, I always stick to iced tea."

Promona Sengupta a fellow post graduate student of JNU has intellectual reasons to opt for tea. "I have always seen tea as an intellectually stimulating drink which has served as the nerve centre for meetings that have seen massive exchange of ideas through history. So apart from its lovely flavour, I have always associated tea with its history."



Sujaan Das, a Doctoral scholar from London, on a recent visit to India said, "I have always been a tea drinker. For me flavour is the most important component. I have forever associated coffee with merely taste, while tea has been all about flavour that I don't get in coffee. Tea in my opinion tends to the soul, while coffee only plays to the stomach."

Back in Kolkata, Indranil Duttagupta, a research scholar of Chemical Sciences says, "I like the muted aroma of tea that can be enjoyed only when you are drinking it. It gives me a feeling of nearness to the flavour in my cup. I prefer tea with milk and a little sugar. Light liquor tea always tastes wonderful but everyone can't brew it and there is the risk of it becoming too strong and bitter. That is why I opt for milk tea. When I brew my own tea at home, I have plain liquor tea with a dash of lime. I usually keep Tata Tea or Brooke Bond Taj Mahal tea bags at home to make quick cups. We also keep blended tea mixed by the local tea retailer for a leisurely cup. I began drinking tea at a very early age, when I was in standard seven, thanks to my aunt, though tea at that time was not supposed to be good for young children. As a Chemistry scholar I now know about the health

benefits of tea. Most of the medicines prescribed for cardiac ailments are aromatic compounds. Since tea also has aroma, many scientists opine that tea can reduce risks of cardiac diseases. The anti oxidants in tea are also beneficial to health."

Sagnik Bose, a budding young chef, completing his graduation in hotel management is fond of strong black tea – that they lovingly call *lal cha* because of the red colour – with a touch of sugar. "There is nothing like a strong cuppa to release the tension of a particularly long and strenuous working shift. A cup in the morning just out of bed is a must. Adda sessions with friends are not complete without regular supplies of tea. I am also conscious about the harmful effects of caffeine in coffee and the beneficial effects of having black tea. At home we have a mixture with Fannings, blended by the local tea retailer."

While the coffees and the colas fight for space in the Indian milieu, let tea continue to remain in our cups and close to our hearts.

Reporting : INKPOT with inputs from Reeti Sinha and Aishee Sengupta (Mumbai), Kolika Mitra (Hyderabad), Bedatri Datta Choudhury and Promona Sengupta (New Delhi)



NAMSANG TEA ESTATE

River Buridehing

Namsang is located in Upper Assam and in the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh. The big river Buridehing which originates from Dirak flows across the garden and finally joins the mighty Brahmaputra River. The garden is surrounded by thick reserve forest and known for its rich timber.



Subodh Paul

Nestled in beautiful forested area teeming with exotic flora and fauna, this estate in Assam is like a gift of nature

During the British rule all communication and transportation connected to tea and coal were carried out with the help of the river and there were no proper roads. Teas packed in chests were sent in wooden boats upto a place called Nagaghat from where it was transported by road.

This is probably one of the few estates in Assam that has forests comprising of trees and different kinds of herbs, ferns and creepers over 100 years old. The 40 minute drive along the estate highway through these rain forests are most exciting and



Small Bungalow



beautiful. The abundant wildlife consists of elephants, leopards, deer, black panthers, foxes, and birds. The road from the forest leads to the plantation, which starts from a slightly higher elevation and extends right upto the factory. As a matter of fact, the entire plantation thereafter is on a higher altitude what is commonly known as *tilla* plantation. The eco system here is ideal for extracting highgrown character particularly suitable for Orthodox producing gardens in Assam and similar to highgrown estates of Sri Lanka.

Initially the estate belonged to Janjee Tea Co. managed by an Englishman and the first planting was done as early as 1908. The property was purchased by Dhunseri Petrochem & Tea Ltd. group in the year 1973. Namsang covers 310 hectares under tea now and produces 7.5 lakh kg of Orthodox teas. The plantation has various types of clones including P126/ S3A3/Teenali etc and covers all areas with shade trees. The labour comprises *adivasis* mostly from Orissa.

Orthodox teas produced from this estate has a distinct highgrown liquor character due to the location, ecosystem, rain forest, and river. The factory is built on a higher elevation and well equipped with modern machineries and a skillfull team of workers. Namsang has the potential to become one of the good Orthodox producing gardens in Upper Assam, suitable for overseas markets. The estate is undergoing several changes and development work in the plantation and factory and will produce quality Orthodox teas in the future.



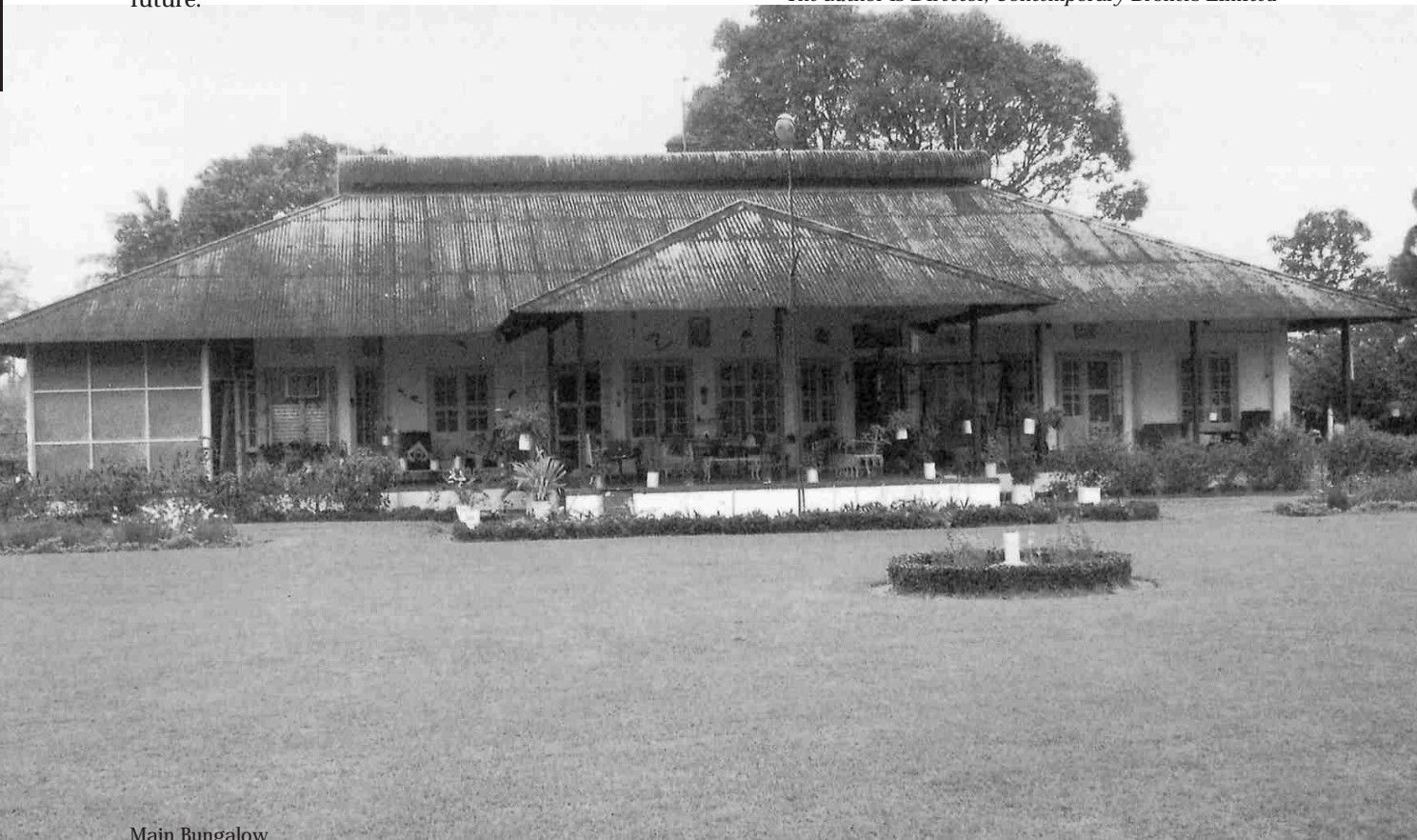
Road through forest

This area is quite popular in Upper Assam as quite a number of planters visit the forest and river and recently one of the early English managers visited the estate .

The bungalow is built next to the flowing Buridehing River on one side and plantation on the other side.

We are proud to be associated with Dhunseri Petrochem & Tea Ltd. for the last several years and shall containe to extend all our expertise in promoting and marketing of Namsang Orthodox teas in the global market in the long years to come.

The author is Director, Contemporary Brokers Limited



Main Bungalow