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Infusing knowledge

by [K. PICA KAHN](#) on JANUARY 30, 2016 | filed under: [FEATURES](#), [FRONTPAGE](#) | [3 Comments](#)

Seabrook ‘Mistress of Tea’ masters an art steeped in warmth and rituals

Amanda Vermillion has always had a relationship with tea. The daughter of a French mother, Vermillion at a young age was introduced to “tisanes,” which are herbal teas. After taking a class in college, where she learned about the healing properties of herbs,

her love affair with tea continued.

But it was when Vermillion read the obituary of Thia McCann, owner of The Path of Tea in Houston, that her interest in tea became serious.

“I learned that Thia was a Certified Tea Master,” Vermillion said. “I then knew this was what I wanted to do.”

Vermillion, a Seabrook resident, discovered the Certified Tea Sommelier program in January 2013, and began her pursuit. At a friend’s suggestion, she became “The Tea Mistress,” and founded a company with the same name.

To become a tea master, Vermillion spent three, eight-hour days in class in San Diego, Calif., and then 14 weeks studying online, before becoming certified. She worked from a book and online assignments while mastering her craft.

“We took what we learned in San Diego, went home, studied and applied the knowledge,” Vermillion said. “We practiced with different teas and emailed evaluations to the instructor.”



AMANDA VERMILLION, A CERTIFIED TEA MASTER KNOWN AS THE TEA MISTRESS, HOLDS A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE BOWL WITH GOLD FLAKE MATCHA TEA. PHOTO BY JENNIFER REYNOLDS



Different teas need different temperatures with varying steeping times. White and green teas need to steep generally two to three minutes, no longer than five. Herbal teas need five to 10 minutes, she said.

Vermillion's favorites are Indian chai and oolong tea with their many spices. She believes tea is a drink that helps one become alert while relaxed at the same time, she said.

"The ritual of tea can put you in a good mood," she said. "People often have their own personal tea rituals, maybe a favorite cup or pot. I collect tea pots now, there are so many beautiful ones old and new."

Vermillion holds tea parties at which time the teas are often accompanied by foods, such as varieties of chocolates. She matches the depth of the tea with chocolates that complement the drink.

"I knew a woman who, as a child, spent many summers in France and other European countries," Vermillion said. "When she went to Turkey with her parents on a bus tour, she told me she was for some reason afraid to get off the bus. She said the Turkish bus driver brought her a cup of peppermint tea in a tiny demitasse cup with lots of sugar. She told me she has been trying to duplicate that taste since then. I hope I helped her."

Vermillion sells her teas at festivals and farmers markets, as well as a variety of specialty social and private events. Serving as the director of the Lone Star Houston Tea Festival, she holds a number of certifications from several tea associations.



AMANDA VERMILLION USES HER MOROCCAN TEA SET TO SERVE A MOROCCAN MINT TEA.
PHOTO BY JENNIFER REYNOLDS

Coming from a background in banking and securities compliance, her work days are now very different. She works for herself with her own schedule, and on good days, she feels very satisfied and accomplished in her new life, she said.

No matter how well her work day went, she always looks forward to returning home and having a nice cup of tea.

Comments



SUE ANNE *says:*

February 4, 2016 at 11:00 PM

Great article! I am a tea drinker and a customer of The Tea Mistress. Thanks for the informative piece!

[Reply](#)



AINEE BELAND *says:*

February 5, 2016 at 9:45 AM

Lovely, you make your certification process all seem so easy. I enjoy a good cup of tea daily when I can. Thank you for sharing.

[Reply](#)



JEANNE *says:*

February 5, 2016 at 11:05 AM

Love Amabda's tea! Looking forward to the Tea Festival.
Great article,

[Reply](#)

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