

MARCH 7, 2018

Meet Amanda Vermillion of The Tea Mistress



VOYAGEHOUSTON STAFF

Today we'd like to introduce you to Amanda Vermillion.

Amanda, a.k.a. The Tea Mistress has had a lifelong interest in teas and herbs. Amanda's French mother introduced her to "tisanes" (herbal teas) as a child. In college, Amanda took an herbal medicine course and learned about the healing properties of herbs.

From 1990 to 1994, Amanda volunteered at various music industry conferences in New York. She also worked as Volunteer Coordinator and Associate Panels Coordinator of the first Philadelphia Music Conference in 1993. From 1996 to the present time, Amanda has led social groups and Meetup groups in both New York and Texas and has organized hundreds (if not thousands) of events, meetings and social activities. She has served on the planning committee of four national conventions.

In 2011, Amanda founded the Tea and Conversation with Friends Meetup Group in Houston, Texas. A tragic event inspired Amanda to explore the world of tea more seriously. In December 2012, Amanda had made plans to take her Tea Meetup group to The Path of Tea in Houston, a tea shop owned by Thia McKann, the first ATMA-Certified Tea Master in the state of Texas. Thia's sudden passing on Christmas Day 2012 was a shock to the

Houston tea community. It was from reading Thia's obituary that Amanda learned about the American Tea Masters Association where Thai had earned her Tea Master Certification.

As fate would have it, there was a Tea Master certification class starting in January 2013! Amanda knew in her heart that this was the direction she wanted her path to take. A few days before her first class, Amanda was chatting with some friends about the Tea Master certification. A friend suggested that Amanda call herself "The Tea Mistress", and thus The Tea Mistress, LLC came to be! The Tea Mistress, LLC combines Amanda's passion for, and knowledge of, teas and tisanes with her extensive event-planning experience.

When the company was founded in 2013, Amanda focused on event planning, talks, classes and presentations. Very quickly, she began receiving customer requests for quality teas. The focus of the business soon expanded to include retail sales of specialty teas, herbs, tea accessories and teaware at vendor markets, farmers' markets, fairs and festivals as well as private parties.

From October 2016 to October 2017, The Tea Mistress, LLC operated a retail store in Houston/Clear Lake. The product line expanded to include gourmet coffee, local honey, tea-related gifts, books and jewelry as well as gifts and local art. Amanda has been invited to do tea talks, presentations and tastings all over the Houston-Galveston metro area as well as Fort Worth and the Texas Hill Country. Amanda currently serves as Director of Lone Star Houston Tea Festival, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. She has been the driving force behind the Lone Star Iced Tea Festival and the Houston Tea Festival.

Great, so let's dig a little deeper into the story – has it been an easy path overall and if not, what were the challenges you've had to overcome?

There have definitely been some bumps and potholes in the road! The old adage “It takes money to make money” is true. Our most recent setback involved the retail store, which we had to close in October 2017 due to a combination of slow post-Harvey sales and broken promises and contract violations by our new landlords. Finding a new location that is affordable, a suitable size, and in a high-visibility area has proven to be a challenge.

Please tell us about The Tea Mistress, LLC.

I believe I already answered the first three questions earlier. I am one of only a few Certified Tea Masters in Houston, and I have one of the very few tea businesses in the Houston area that has both a wide variety of teas and herbs AND who also offers education and entertainment in the form of events, talks and tastings.

Do you look back particularly fondly on any memories from childhood?

Taking nature walks with my mother and father. My dad was an environmentalist and would always pick up trash while we walked and carry it back to the house. My mother would tell me the names of plants in French and English.

Pricing:

- Most of our loose teas and herbs are affordably priced at \$3 to \$5 per ounce. Teabags are also reasonably priced.
- Speaker fees start at \$100, with an additional fee if a tasting is requested.

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Getting in touch: VoyageHouston is built on recommendations from the community; it's how we uncover hidden gems, so if you know someone who deserves recognition please let us know [here](#).