



Be Inspired Beyond the Ordinary with new Twinings Tea Deli
Oz Clarke leads campaign to expand our world of teas

November, 2008, London "For a nation of tea drinkers, we Brits are astonishingly unfussy. We get through more than 135 million cups of tea a day, yet most of us are yet to discover the huge variety and choice of teas available throughout the world. I want everyone, from the tea novice to the connoisseur, to know what authentic Indian tea tastes like, let alone an oolong or a silver tip," says wine guru Oz Clarke.

Fortunately, help is at hand for bewildered tea drinkers. Twinings is launching new **Tea Deli**, an exceptional range of loose leaf teas, rooted in rituals from around the world; rich strong blacks from Africa and Sri Lanka; warm smooth 'malty' teas from Assam; second flush teas from Darjeeling; sweet, velvety greens from China; and white teas with their silvery, limpid appearance and delicate fragrance.

Largely credited for making wine more accessible and inspiring to Brits, Oz Clarke has joined forces with Twinings to encourage us to be more discerning when selecting tea and has developed some tasting notes and food matches to mark the launch of **Twinings Tea Deli**.

"This is an exciting time for tea and tea lovers. Twinings new **Tea Deli** range shows that fine tea is just as interesting and complex as fine wine – with its colourful past and fascinating traditions. Like wine, tea provides a rich variety and refined tastes, from very floral to very fruity, from sharp to sweet, there's really a tea for every occasion and mood. Flavour and quality of tea is hugely influenced by local conditions and the final result rests on the magical touch of the tea blender – just as wine relies on the expertise of the wine maker," says Oz Clarke.

Twinings' Master Blender Jeremy Sturges has travelled the world in search of the best ingredients and centuries old processes to create a wide variety of blends in **Tea Deli** that suit every palate. Jeremy says:

[More/...](#)

“With this new range of speciality teas Twinings want to inspire customers to open up to the extraordinary diversity that the world of tea has to offer. There is a lot of mythology about tea – I love that in China, teas are brewed in glasses, geywans or teapots. In Russia, tea is traditionally brewed with a samovar, and in Morocco, green tea, fresh mint and sugar is measured into a tall silver pot with hot water, and poured from a great height into little glasses on a tray and served with dried apricots, figs and nuts.”

Just like wine connoisseurs, tea connoisseurs enjoy the fact that the flavour and quality of different teas vary from year to year and from season to season because of inevitable changes in the weather or slight differences in the blending process.

“I’m hoping that the supermarkets will embrace tea in the same way that they did with wine in 1980s and that we start seeing sign posting on the shop shelves to help us in our tea selection. It would be fantastic to see maps, evocative language and tips on how to serve and what to serve blends with in the tea section of our shops in the way that we now take for granted with wine. Twinings’ drive to revolutionise tea drinking in the same way that I’ve tried to get everyone appreciate wine is a fantastic idea!” says Oz.

The **Twinings Tea Deli** range is available exclusively in Waitrose, from mid October 2008 and will comprise of eight blends, which have been divided into three categories: ‘Boutique’, ‘Rare’ and ‘Limited Picking Season’ - in the same way that wines are categorised and priced based on their appellation, rarity and age.

Boutique teas, priced £3.50 for a 75g pack, includes ‘Amaya Brazil’ (available seasonally as of April 2009 and will alternate with First Flush Darjeeling), ‘Gunpowder with Mint’ and ‘Orange Pekoe’; Limited Picking Season teas, priced £5.50 (75g pack) includes ‘Russian Caravan’ and ‘High Mountain Oolong’; and Rare teas, priced £7.50 (75g) includes ‘Silver Tips’, ‘First Flush Darjeeling’ (available seasonally) and ‘Second Flush Assam’.

-Ends-

For further information on Twinings Tea Deli or visuals, please contact

Jemma Holliday – jemma.holliday@talkpr.com

020 7543 4528



Jeremy Sturges – profile of a master blender

How did you come to work as a buyer and blender for Twinings?

I developed an interest in the trading and production of commodities during my time at University, with a particular focus on coffee, tobacco and tea. Through a friend, I knew a tea planter who had worked in India and Africa and I think that is how my interest in tea really took off. I joined Twinings as a trainee in 1990 in a scheme that was, and still is, just like the old-fashioned apprenticeships of 300 years ago, when Twinings started up.

What does your role involve?

There are nine people responsible for the buying, blending and quality control of all Twinings products. No matter where you buy or drink Twinings tea in the world, it has come from us. All that experience is handed on from one expert to the next generation, and then we all work side by side for years – it explains a lot about the strength of the business. Twinings has a very special continuity in its buying and blending expertise for this reason.

I was trained by a master blender who worked for the company for 40 years and I've subsequently trained blenders at Twinings myself. This continuity ensures that our experience and expertise strengthens the team over time, while we continually seek improved new methods of working in maintaining the quality of our products throughout the year, despite all the agro-climatic variations that challenge us...

We also split the tea world up between us at Twinings! Our role is quite unusual in that we each take responsibility for the whole journey of particular origins of tea, from producer country to the finished product. I've spent ten years buying and blending from India, four years from China, while also buying teas from Kenya, Sri Lanka and South America among others.

What makes tea blending such an art?

Each product is produced from a blend which has its own unique blend formulation or recipe, known only to the Tea Blenders, some of which have been in use since Thomas Twinings' day back in 1706. A blend can include as many as 40 different teas from different tea estates.

We follow the same blend recipe to keep the quality consistent. The teas we use are different from blend to blend but the quality remains the same.

More/...

Agro-climatic conditions can affect the quality of tea produced on an hourly or daily basis. One ingredient may not be available, or might be ever so slightly different in composition, so the art of blending is to analyse teas in minute detail so that each element of the blend is of consistently high quality.

What's the best thing about your job?

Regular tea breaks! Believe it or not, we do drink tea during our breaks and in reality, we taste about 700 cups a day!

One of the best things about the tea trade is the atmosphere. It has managed to maintain quite traditional values in a fast moving world, but it makes for a nice way of working. All the different parties are good at coming together to solve trade issues and working towards common goals – it's quite unusual in this day and age.

After a time tea gets in your blood, it really becomes part of you. The training process to acquire the knowledge to become commercially effective is long, intensive and very specialised. It involves lengthy periods of time spent abroad, attending tea auctions, meeting our agents and brokers and travelling to the tea estates to understand the agro climatic influences that affect quality. This experience is essential in understanding the tea manufacturing and supply chain and also facilitates fascinating insights into the intrinsic cultural influences involved in the supply of tea. But most of all, it's about building good working relations with our agents and suppliers in order that the business can develop and be sustainable for the future.

Oz CLARKE

Biography

Oz Clarke is one of the world's leading wine experts, whose formidable reputation is based on his extensive wine knowledge and accessible, no-nonsense approach. His passion for the subject dates from his student days at Oxford University, where he won tasting competitions at a precociously early age. Since then his tasting skills have won him an international reputation and he is acknowledged as having one of the finest palates of anyone writing about wine today.

He brings a refreshingly unorthodox wit and directness to the subject and has won all the major wine writing awards both in the UK and the USA, including the Glenfiddich (three times), André Simon, Wine Guild (three times), James Beard, Julia Child, World Food Media and Lanson (five times) awards; in 2006 he won the prestigious International Wine & Spirit Competition International Drinks Communicator of the Year Award. In 1999 he won the Lanson Special Millennium Award for his outstanding contribution to wine communication and education. In 2001 he was the keynote speaker at the Boston Wine Expo, the world's largest consumer wine event, and has been the keynote speaker at both the Wine Experience in New York and the California Wine Experience in San Francisco, where he was voted best keynote speaker by those attending. Oz's frequent BBC TV and radio appearances are broadcast around the world. Oz's latest TV series, 'Oz and James's Big Wine Adventure' is back on BBC this autumn, this time the pair taking on California.

Before wine took over his life in 1984, Oz was a fulltime actor and singer, appearing in West End hit shows such as Evita, Sweeney Todd and The Mitford Girls, and touring with the Royal Shakespeare Company.