

## MOOD OF FOOD



FROM LEFT: Sea urchin teapot (\$250) and Cirque Chinois tea cup (\$1,200, with saucer), **Tiffany & Co.**, 53 Main St., East Hampton, 324-1700; [tiffany.com](http://tiffany.com). Parchment check mug, **MacKenzie-Childs** (\$115), 31 Main St., Southampton, 283-1880; [mackenzie-childs.com](http://mackenzie-childs.com). Greek key cup, **Jonthan Adler** (\$10), [lordandtaylor.com](http://lordandtaylor.com). Arabesque gold combi pot, **Versace Home** (\$1,040), [versacehome.com](http://versacehome.com). Farmhouse Touch teapot (\$101.25), **Villeroy & Boch**, [villeroy-boch.com](http://villeroy-boch.com)

# turning over a new leaf

TEATIME GOES FROM TRADITIONAL TO TRENDY AS TEAHOUSES OPEN ACROSS MANHATTAN AND CREATE NEW BLENDS NATIVE TO NEW YORK. BY SYLVIE BIGAR

Have you heard? Tea is no longer just a drink. Tea is a lifestyle, a health kick, a vibe, and nowhere is it more obvious than in the myriad tea salons, bars, and “parlors” that have recently opened all over New York—many offering unique blends exclusive to Manhattan.

“We let customers taste, experience, and create their own blend,” says Laura McCarthy, New York City-area manager of David’s Tea, who readily explains the difference between Chinese pan-fried and Japanese steamed green tea. Cofounded by Canadian David Segal, who owns

74 stores in Canada and two in Manhattan, David’s Tea opened a location on Bleecker Street this past Thanksgiving. Inside, the sleek counters and shelves are lined with stainless steel tins bearing color-coded labels and offering the latest seasonal offerings, the tea of the month, and the classics—around 150 options in all. Whether it’s the Bravissimo to fight a sore throat or Le Digestif to aid in digestion, Segal wants to make tea an integral part of your life. “Every culture has an infusion of herbs and water,” he says, “We want to find the ones for you.”

Kiley Holliday, co-owner of Bosie Tea Parlor on Morton Street, which opened last year, offers tea aficionados 100 different high-end blends. Holliday came to the world of teas as a historian fascinated by the British Empire. Now a Tea Master, certified by the American Tea Masters Association, this stunning perfectionist couldn’t open her own fantasy tea parlor without including one of New York’s best French pastry chefs, Damien Herrgott, who after stints with Pierre Hermé and at Bouley Bakery, now makes buttery *continued on page 84*



Bistro The Tea Set tea tray with Champagne and savories

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madeleines and tender macarons as well as a whole list of savories, including the not-to-be missed mushroom black tea soup. “The caffeine in tea acts very differently than in coffee,” says Holliday. “With tea, there is no craving, no crashing. There’s calm or energy, taste, and cleansing.”

“You have to realize that there are 160 milligrams of caffeine in a cup of coffee but only 30 in a cup of green tea, and many customers want less caffeine in their lives,” says David Wong, owner of McNulty’s Tea & Coffee on Christopher Street. Perhaps New York’s oldest tea shop, opened in 1895, McNulty’s hasn’t changed its décor since the early 1930s—burlap sacks of coffee pile up on the rustic wood floor, ancient gas lines still pop out of the tin ceiling, and no one has thought to remove the upper berth where the past owner slept. “In the last five years, we’ve seen a tremendous increase in tea sales,” says Wong.

Brother-and-sister act Mark and Jen Greenberg encountered the same trend when they opened what they thought would be an organic, fair-trade coffee house, Grounded, on Jane Street, in 2004. But demand for tea has increased to such a degree (tea accounted for 30 percent of their sales last year), that the duo recently opened Sullivan Street Tea & Spice Company. Loose wellness tea blends, organic herbal brews, collector’s salts, and even spices have made this emporium a destination. “Our chai tea brewed from scratch is a top seller,” said Mark Greenberg, “but in winter, ginger root beats it all. I’m now completely hooked into the tea culture.”

Those equally captivated with tea culture have expanded into other sorts of potables. At Bistro The Tea Set, a hip salon and restaurant in the West Village, Champagne and wine flow as easily as tea. To the sound of the Beatles, funky bohemians sip the custom organic blends, picking among West Village Breakfast or Sexy Detox/Weight Loss teas. Owner Jacques Doassans traveled throughout India and Asia to select his favorite handpicked leaves and has fashioned a line of organic blends only available at the bistro. Most recently, he launched a new cocktail list based on house-made tea syrups. His favorite? The Summer Village Martini with red peach vanilla tea syrup, Grey Goose vodka, mint leaves, and soda. **G**

Cherry blossom tea from Sullivan Street Tea & Spice Company



## INSIGHT

**Traditional:** Tea & Sympathy posts owner Nicky Perry’s rules. 108 Greenwich Ave., 212-989-9735; teaandsympathynewyork.com

**Trendsetter:** Bistro The Tea Set serves tea cocktails until 1 AM. 235 W. 12th St., 646-476-8731; the-tea-set.com

## STEEPED IN HISTORY

Manhattan’s most iconic salons for a spot of tea

### BERGDORF GOODMAN

BG Restaurant’s recently appointed executive chef Marybeth Boller creates the scrumptious seasonal tea service menu of sandwiches and scones. Michael Perricone, director of food service, counts the chicken with dried cranberries on brioche as a sandwich favorite, to which the delicate blend of Jardin Bleu tea with rhubarb and wild strawberries offers the perfect complement. *Fifth Ave. at 58th St., 212-872-8977; bergdorfgoodman.com*

### THE PIERRE

High tea, which is served daily in the contemporary space designed by Alexandra Champalimaud, features two custom blends from Harney & Sons. “The Pierre blend is a mixture of several black tea leaves and black currant, with notes of vanilla and lemony bergamot,” says Ryan Drushel, lounge manager of Two E Bar/Lounge. Another Pierre signature, raisin scones, are made by the in-house bakery team in the traditional English style. *2 E. 61st St., 212-838-8000; tajhotels.com/pierre*

### THE PLAZA

The Plaza offers four distinct tea services: The Classic, The New Yorker, Chocolate Tea, and of course, Eloise Tea, named after the hotel’s most famous resident. Each service offers a variety of scones, pastries, and sweets, as well as an exclusive selection of loose leaf tea blends and herbal infusions. *Fifth Ave. at Central Park South, 212-759-3000; theplaza.com*



BG Restaurant at Bergdorf Goodman