

## Mlesna Tea Centre: A Soiree of Flavors



As a brand with the tenacity and a vision to step out of traditional boundaries of tea making, Mlesna drove a fresh discernment for the beverage by giving an ingenious twist to the legacy of Ceylon Tea.

The Mlesna Tea Centre reopened at Crescat Boulevard reflects that contemporary makeover, offering a display of colorful gift teas of assorted flavors packaged as loose-leaf tea and tea bags.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane. Photography Menaka Aravinda.

Tea is one of the most beloved and frequently consumed beverages in the world. Its warmth lifts the mood and sets the tone for the day. For Sri Lankans, tea is their daily dose of elixir, the comfort booster, fabulously enjoyed at any time of the day. Even in the harshest of summers, tea keeps us hydrated and snug on cold days. The quintessential Ceylon Tea is an identity steeped in history and full of character. Over the years, the masters of the golden brew infused it with new ingredients and recipes, making tea an exhilarating beverage of flavors. And the exciting journey of transforming the nonflavored, regular and age-old tea took shape when Anselm Perera started Mlesna in 1983. He created a unique connection to the consumer through a spectacular branding ethos that made tea preparation an art. In fact, Anselm Perera navigated the transformation so cleverly that the brand retains a very Sri Lankan identity, a natively brewed beverage, a standalone name constantly innovating its range. Breaking traditional boundaries and challenging the modern palate, Mlesna retains the old-world charm of Ceylon Tea while bringing with it a sense of sophistication and exclusive appeal even among a new generation of users.

The Mlesna Tea Centre at Crescat Boulevard is the typical kiosk, small but significant in variety. There's tea everywhere. The sheer magnitude of tea options was overwhelming. In tea terms, the store was filled to the brim. What strikes the eye are the pictorial depictions of fruits and flowers on beautifully packed tea gift boxes. One could hardly miss the array of teapots and tea sets in glittering gold and platinum, the proverbial best of the best of the exclusive gift items that have elevated the beverage into a discerning product. The store is so full of tea varieties that the visitor is lost for choice because every flavor and variety, be it fruits, herbs, or blossoms or the finest black tea in different names, for the amateur, sounds very Greek. A little help from the sales assistant, especially when choosing a gift for friends overseas, goes a long way and certainly puts you at ease. In fact, the little souk that is the Mlesna Tea Centre is efficiently managed by staff members who know their teas!

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The Mlesna Tea Centre with a contemporary makeover carries the legacy of Ceylon Tea.



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Exclusive gift item - sparkling gold tea pots.



A classic gift option with a spectacular choice of the native brew.

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Silver Tip Tea is a limited production that is carefully handpicked to offer a delicate brew.



The best-seller Ice Wine is a specialty brew.

If tea has been made into a statement beverage, one ought to be a tad unsparing in splashing a little extra to taste the very best of the range. It'll make the experience of tea drinking more enjoyable and delicious. The English Breakfast tea and Earl Grey are the quintessential black teas owning their distinct origin, unique taste, and story. English Breakfast and Earl Grey teas are still the ones with taste, color, and character. Endless flavors ranging between sweet, zesty, spicy, vanilla, fruity, sour, citrusy, creamy, and earthy can smell light, fresh, bright, and clean. Recommended off the shelves of the Mlesna Tea Centre is Silver Tip Tea. This rare tea is limited in production because it's made from unopened tender buds. Described as the imperial pluck that is handpicked at dawn into a special pouch, dried in filtered sunlight, and processed entirely by hand, the light and delicate brew will tingle the palate to heights of ephemeral profundity. These are beautiful narratives around a traditional beverage that has amassed a legacy and possesses a history that has been told and retold to make the drink intensely alluring.

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The description of the Mlesna store continues with the Book of Tea - a tad deceptive at first sight but ingeniously creative with tea leaves packed in the shape of a book. Rightly so, because the rise and reign and prestige of Ceylon Tea in itself is a fascinating story of time and toil. The pack is so eye-catching that one wouldn't hesitate to pick it up instantly for a gift. Among the specialty varieties that come highly recommended are Ice Wine, Soursop, and Cream Earl Grey tea. Ice Wine incidentally happens to be a best-seller, a deliciously fresh and zesty grape flavor with hints of exotic fruit. The teaware range is suited to the different situations in modern life, in cartons, porcelainware, caddies, wooden chests and cloth bags. The most refined gourmet teas derived from the eight tea-producing regions of Sri Lanka and to the subtle undertones of delicate mint, lemon, jasmine, rose, maple, peach, and apricot, and pineapple, the aroma enlivens the taste of this traditional brew. For day-to-day use, the store sells single estate teas in loose-leaf packs. Green tea, as well as flavored tea, are also available in loose form. The first Mlesna Tea Centre at Liberty Plaza is still one of the brand's popular outlets with many teas and collectibles. The famous Mlesna Tea Fortress and the Tea Castle outlets along the busy A1 and A7 highways are statement buildings with period décor, exuding the vibes of the tea industry in its burgeoning years. In making its marketing proposition anew, Mlesna has positioned Ceylon Tea in a refreshingly new light. It has created compelling new content to build a community of followers who take time to enjoy meaningful moments over a cup of tea. The Mlesna Tea Centre is a testament

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to the attention paid to the recreation of an old brand, evolving through the hands of tea masters.

Mlesna Tea Centre  
Crescat Boulevard, L-12  
Galle Road, Colombo 3;  
(+94 11) 553 6654;  
Opening hours: 9.30am-5.30pm daily



Attractive range of fruit and flower Ceylon Tea flavors with aromatic fragrance to suit your taste.

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An excellent assortment of tea in attractive tins.





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One-of-a-kind 'Book of Tea' presents tea leaves packed in the shape of a book.