Tsara Teas The Perfect Blend

Posted on
The tea nursery at the Galaboda tea factory

The aroma of freshly brewed tea spread through the Tea Boutique and we inched closer to take in the fragrance and the wholesome goodness of Tsara Teas, a name that is synonymous with organicand quality Ceylon tea…

Words Krishani Peiris **Photographs** Indika De Silva

First established in 1935 as a black tea factory, the Galaboda Group has a proud legacy that spans more than 75 years. The longest functioning tea plantation in the south, the group breathed with new life when Dr Nalin De Silva, Managing Partner of the Galaboda Group introduced organic tea production nearly seven years ago. Popularly known as Tsara Teas, meaning Russian Princess and inspired by Dr De Silva's children, the brand is now a household name not only in Sri Lanka but the world over.

"We have two factories, one that focuses on manufacturing organic green tea and the other which manufactures black tea," revealed Dr Nalin De Silva. "At the

organic plant we do not use chemicals or pesticides. Our production and teas have been certified by the IMO (Institute of Marketecology) in Switzerland. As such, even the fertiliser and the packaging for our teas aredone through IMO approved companies."

A narrow path leads to the two factories set across each other where workers buzz in and out busy with their daily chores. Inside each of the factories there was a hive of activity and noise with the 'whrrrr' of the machines being a constant companion as one is guided through the process of tea manufacturing. While the process at the black tea factory was less labour intensive, the organic green tea factory presented a different scenario.

Tsara Teas specialise in five special blends of green tea, namely Champagne green tea, Chaquong, Long Jing, Mao Jian and Silver Tips. The most exclusive and expensive of all, the Champagne green tea is made from the bud, which is enriched with nutrients. The tea is hand picked, sun dried and shaped, making the process a very labour intensive one. The other four varieties of tea are made using the tender two leaves and the bud, but follow a similar process of being mostly done by hand. "As such, we do only a small quantity of each variety, but the teas that we produce are of very high quality," affirms Dr De Silva.

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Each tea type has subtle flavours that are different from one another ranging from fruity to hazelnut to chestnut to fresh cut grass and are packed with a range of health benefits such as their ability to lower cholesterol, reduce blood pressure, heart attacks, risk of cancer, enhance immune functions and aid digestion just to name a few. The flavour of the tea may also vary depending on how long it is brewed. Those who require a stronger taste should brew the tea for a longer period of time while for a more lighter note, a shorter period is more ideal where the temperature should be kept around 80ºC.

Visitors to the Galaboda Group tea plantation are in for a treat as they are given a guided tour through the factory where the tea manufacturing process is explained and shown in detail. Those who are interested in hiking and exploring the luscious tea estate spread across 39 acres, can do so as well. Hikes of 20 mins, 40 mins and

an hour are available to choose from where you will be guided through winding pathways overlooking the green tea estates and in the morning you can see tea pluckers at work. After this excursion the visitors are led to the recently established Tea Boutique where a steaming cup of Tsara Tea along with a delicious piece of cake awaits their indulgence. Here, the guests can avail themselves to taste a sip of any tea they like and then purchase if need be, from the range of teas, which include, green, black and flavoured teas. If you wish to have lunch, the Tea Boutique will go the extra mile of arranging an authentic Sri Lankan buffet.

“The response has been very good, especially on our online store where there are many repeat customers. For an example one German visitor who was a coffee drinker said that after tasting our teas, he has been converted to a tea drinker. That was a very big complement,” said Dr De Silva proudly.

As we made our rounds through the tea estate, factory and the Tea Boutique we were enthralled by all we had learnt and experienced. Sitting down at the boutique for a moment’s respite we watched as several tourists went here and there, tasting tea and purchasing their goods to take the taste of Tsara Tea back home.

Galaboda Organic Green Tea Factory

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