

TeaWayfarer

Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you, in order to help you get to know more people in this growing international community. It's also to pay homage to the many manifestations that all this wonderful spirit and Tea are becoming as the Tea is drunk and becomes human. The energy of Tea fuels some great work in this world, and we are so honored to share glimpses of such beautiful people and their Tea. This month, we would like to introduce Lee Ann Hilbrich.

In 2016, I rediscovered Tea. It was a pivotal year for me, as I started my own business as a holistic psychotherapist and creative artist. I turned to Tea to help me learn to take breaks and care for myself while I was dealing with the stressors of being a new entrepreneur. It became a special self-care ritual for me to use an expensive cast iron tea set I purchased many years ago but never used, along with my old supply of loose-leaf tea. It turns out that Tea was always waiting for me, but it took me slowing down to remember its value and importance. I also began an unexpected journey of listening to, reconnecting with, and feeding my soul. Even though I was clueless as to the history and spirit of Tea that has been moving people throughout history, my wise soul knew just what it was doing as it was calling me to move closer to Tea.

The story of how I found Global Tea Hut, or it found me, is interesting. I follow Rich Roll on social media, and was very inspired by his morning ritual of tea and meditation. When Rich shared in his weekly newsletter that he gets his tea from Living Tea, I knew immediately where I would be ordering tea from when I finished up my current supply. I went to the Living Tea website and while I was ordering, I discovered a link to tea art for sale and an online tea magazine. I was inspired and moved by the soulful and wise images I saw and words I read. I used a quote from someone named Wu De for my own weekly newsletter, as I happened to be preparing an email on tea and meditation as part of a meditation mindfulness series. I also tried to purchase a piece of his art, only to find out, with his kind reply, that I was on an old site and all of the art there was sold. My order from Living Tea arrived shortly, and in it was a card and note about the Global Tea Hut. I was intrigued. I love discovering things (I even named my business "Daring Discoveries"), and I have tried several other monthly box subscriptions, so I knew I wanted to try this Global Tea Hut. What I didn't know was that this wasn't an ordinary monthly subscription. I was so inspired by the artistic quality of the magazine and the articles, poems and information shared in it. I felt connected and thankful for all the sensitive souls in the Hut who supported those taking care of the world with fair-trade, chemical-free tea. I was so grateful for the warm and welcoming environment of the Global Tea Hut. I felt inspired to learn more and grow in my experience of the way of Tea, but in no way felt that I had to have all the right equipment or knowledge. I sensed so much permission to begin exactly where I was, which was the beginning, as I was about to experience my first-ever bowl tea. Nothing would ever be the same again.



 **Lee Ann Hilbrich**

I worried at first when making the bowl tea if the water was hot enough or if I had too many or too few leaves. But then I recalled Wu De had recommended in the magazine using your intuition for brewing Elevation, and I felt a sense of relief come over me. And as soon as I had that first bowl, I knew it was all going to be alright. This experience was not about being perfect or having the right things, it was about being open to what the tea has to give you. This was another way that I could pay more attention in my life and create beauty. I still don't have a gongfu or side-handle pot, and the only runner I have is the one sent with my December shipment, but that is okay. In time, I will add equipment and I will not rush this adventure with Tea. I feel lucky to be on the path and I will trust in the timing and look forward to where Her spirit leads me. Being a part of this Global Tea Hut is truly an experience, and I've had so much fun creating art to go along with each monthly shipment. I'm sure seeing Wu De's art subconsciously inspired me to create my own tea art, even though I hadn't planned on doing it. I'm just listening to my soul, and letting tea work Her magic in my life.