

Tea Wayfarer

Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you in these magazines 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 the 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 Frederic Ballario:

My first taste of real Tea was offered to me by my special friend, Roch, a few years ago somewhere in California. It was not a life-changing experience, as I was not ready yet to have my life changed. But a seed was planted...

Later, after going through my badly needed mid-life crisis, and starting my healing and “spiritual” journey, the seed of Tea sprouted when I found my way to the Tea Sage Hut in Miao Li, Taiwan. There, I found a home. I found brothers and sisters. I found a Teacher. I found inspiration.

I have to share that I was born and raised in France and moved to California in my late twenties. It so happens that my passion and gift in this world is through wine. I speak its language. I know how to serve it, and how to pair it with food. I know how to grow the fruit and turn them into wine. I just love wine (even though I don't “drink” it anymore). Wine, speaks to me like Tea does to the residents of the Hut. When I arrived at the Hut for the first time, though, I was questioning that gift. I doubted everything in my life. I had lost the sacred connection.

I sat in the meditation hall, and around the table where Tea is offered daily from the Heart. The silence that filled the room allowed for some deep journeys and realizations. I listened to the teachings and it became clear that what was to be doubted was not my passion, but my relationship to it. I had to go deeper. I had to let go. I had to go beyond the visible and accept the intangible—bypass the mind and let the soul hear and speak. For a French-manufactured mind, that was not such an easy task. Descartes' “I think therefore I am” is what has defined French philosophy for centuries. But the fact that this truth could be smelled, put in your mouth and swallowed was an advantage for a French-raised being!

Tea and wine have so much in common. They both are the result of the fermentation of parts of a plant. They express a unique sense of place and time. They can, when produced with the utmost ecological respect, translate the perfection of Nature. And, when the perfection of your body and soul get in touch with such medicine, veils are lifted and realizations made.

The way Tea and this tradition are revered, practiced and transmitted at the Hut is such an inspiration



for anyone who gets to experience it. I am so grateful to have found a new friend and teacher through the Leaf. I am also thankful to have come upon the Tea Sage Hut where Truth can be drunk everyday in such deep and loving company.

Brothers and sisters, I cannot invite you to my home to share a bowl as I don't have a permanent roof over my head. I have chosen the life of a gypsy, going from vineyard to vineyard, season after season. But I know I will meet you, either at the Hut or on the road somewhere. I look forward to dancing with you all in the bowl soon...

Roch, thank you my friend.