



eco-cha
TEA CLUB
Light Roast Concubine Oolong Tea

Harvest: Hand-picked
Season: Spring 2018

Region: Taihe, Meishan, Taiwan
Elevation: 1000m

Oxidation: Medium
Roast: Light

Flavor: *Floral, honey aroma. Full-bodied, wild honey complexity. Heady, sweet/clean finish.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 9g

 300ml

 95°C

 3 minutes

GARDEN

This batch of tea comes from Taihe, in the northwestern corner of the Alishan tea growing region. It's mid-elevation micro-climate has proven ideal for producing consistent crops of bug-bitten tea. This plot of tea is naturally farmed, with no use of chemical farm products, and offers great crops of bug bitten tea - especially from the spring harvest!

TASTING NOTES

It's an especially exciting occasion when we are able to offer a batch of bug bitten tea with the Eco-Cha Tea Club. Namely because each batch of tea that has been affected by the Green Leafhopper is by definition unique. The extent to which this magical equation of the tea plants reacting to the bugs feeding on their young leaves results in endless variations from leaf to leaf. In other words, each leaf is affected to a different degree, and by the time it is harvested and processed, it is impossible to know how it will actually taste. And the truth is, not all bug bitten

batches of tea end up tasting delicious, but this one did!

Concubine Tea is a name that was coined by the Lugu Farmers' Association, following a major earthquake in 1999 in central Taiwan. Many farms were left untended for months afterwards, which resulted in a lot of "bug bitten tea" by the time tea farmers were able to harvest again. It's a name used to describe tea that is made from leaves that were affected by the Green Leafhopper, and processed in the fashion of Dong Ding Oolong Tea, but slightly less roasted. This month's batch of tea was only roasted once, and we just happened to taste it just after it came out of the oven for the first time, so we are calling it a light roast.

We were captivated by the flavor profile with the first sip when our mentor Lisa Lin brewed for us on an impromptu visit to her home. It's vibrant, fresh, complex, and also smooth and balanced. Its overall profile carries delicate floral aromatic notes, and a distinct honey-like flavor suspended in a thick, smooth composition. The most distinctive



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aspect of this batch is that it maintains a very fresh character while having no green vegetal or herbal qualities. It's an amazing balance of delicate floweriness and freshly baked scones. In sum, it's a proper tribute to the magic of bug bitten tea!

We feel that there is some authentic serendipity in the opportunity to share this month's batch of tea for a couple of reasons. First, we just happened to stop by after Lisa completed the initial roasting of the tea, and got to taste it, and ask if we could purchase it just as it is, without further roasting to bring it closer to the standard of Concubine Oolong. Secondly, Eco-Cha's Andy originally connected his mentor to this source of tea three years ago, and Lisa has been buying bug bitten tea from them ever since. She then proceeds to roast the leaves with a deep intuitive attention to their character that is batch specific. It's this mix of factors that we continue to find our inspiration from, not to mention that we can share it with our Tea Club members around the world!

THE STORY OF THIS TEA

On his visit to this farm in May 2016, Andy brought back samples from three different days of harvest, and tasted them with his mentor Lisa Lin. Lisa brewed the samples, tasted each of them, and immediately decided to purchase all 3 days of the harvest! This was because they were of good quality, but especially because the flavor profiles all had subtle indications of the leaves being bug bitten. In other words, this crop of tea had noticeably been affected by the Green Leafhopper — a tiny little insect that likes to feed on tender leaf buds, and is responsible for the making of both Oriental Beauty in northern Taiwan, and Concubine Oolong in central Taiwan. And when Lisa roasted these batches of tea, the honey character that results from the bug bitten effect became much more pronounced. This was the beginning of Eco-Cha sourcing Concubine Oolong Tea produced on this farm and masterfully roasted by Lisa!

This month's batch of tea being shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club was harvested in spring 2018. It just so happened that



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Andy visited Lisa the day after she opened and roasted one bulk bag (about 18kg) from this harvest. Normally, Concubine Tea is roasted at least twice, and sometimes several times before the desired character is achieved. But bug bitten tea is always an anomaly in that each batch is different. Andy took one sip of this tea after its first roasting, and knew that it was worth sharing just as it was. And so, we have it — a light roast Concubine Oolong Tea!