



eco-cha

TEA CLUB

Alishan Late Spring Oolong Tea

Harvest: Hand-picked, med. batch
Season: Spring 2019

Region: Taihe, Meishan, Taiwan
Elevation: 1100m

Oxidation: Light
Roast: Unroasted

Flavor: *Delicate, floral/pastry aroma. Fresh, balanced, vegetal with honey/floral notes. Lasting nose, refreshing finish.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 8g

 300ml

 95°C

 3 minutes

GARDEN

This batch of tea is from the same source as our Concubine High Mountain Oolong Tea. This crop was harvested 3-4 weeks later than spring crops in the area. We're pretty sure the crop was also affected by the Green Leafhopper, like our Concubine Tea, but it's only subtly present in the flavor and aroma of the brewed tea.

TASTING NOTES

This month's batch of tea being shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club was harvested in mid-May. Spring rains finally arrived at the very end of April, and there were a few days of clear weather in the middle of May, allowing for this late spring harvest in the rural community of Taihe, in Meishan Township. This is the northernmost corner of the Alishan tea growing region.

In our experience, more mature leaves are a plus, because they have a more substantial constitution, which results in a heartier brew. Tea makers are more challenged in processing more mature leaves, because they are basically a bit

more stubborn in the dehydration and oxidation process. However, the appearance of the brewed leaves shows uniformity and smooth gradient of coloration in the oxidation, indicating that they were skillfully processed. The leaves are thick, yet supple, just how we like them!

The complex aroma of the brewed tea leaves has subtle hints of a bug bitten character, but not very obvious. The sufficient oxidation offers a fresh scone scent, with a touch of honey, making us think that there is some influence from the Green Leafhopper. It is very likely that this note is subtle due to the fact that it had rained very near harvest time, which is said to dilute or dissipate the chemical compounds that are responsible for this character of flavor. The texture is smooth and balanced, with delicate complexity. The flavor profile is light, but balanced and refreshing.

Every once in a while, a batch of High Mountain Oolong will have just the right combination of factors, including seasonal weather, Green Leafhoppers,



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and proficiency and luck in the curing of the leaves that result in a character of tea like this one. We love finding this type of tea, because its flavor cannot not be fully intended. It's special character is subtle, and not something that is easily pinpointed. This is where our fulfillment comes from in offering this month's edition of the Eco-Cha Tea Club.

THE STORY OF THIS TEA

Well, here we are again, happily sharing another batch of tea with the Eco-Cha Tea Club sourced from Mr. Ye. So we are posting some new and some old photos dating back to 2016, and that we shared with our March batch of tea from the same source. This batch of tea was harvested on May 14, from his friend and neighbor's farm. This harvest was about 2 weeks after the spring harvest was generally completed in this area. Only the highest elevations were still harvesting at this point. This is why we chose to call this batch "late spring". For some farms in this area, there was little or no harvest due to the fact that there was virtually no rain until mid-late April this year. Mr. Ye's home factory also processes tea harvested from

other farms in his community. And Mr. Ye also helps a few of his friends sell their tea by offering samples to customers like us.

We discovered this batch of tea through our mentor, Lisa Lin, who had already purchased a significant amount of this day's harvest. We introduced Lisa to Mr. Ye a few years ago, and she has been sourcing batches of bug bitten spring tea from him every year since. About a month ago, we were sitting at Lisa's tea table, and just happened to ask if she had bought any spring tea from Mr. Ye. She said yes, and promptly brewed some for us to try. We were impressed, and called Mr. Ye the next day to see if any of this day's harvest was still available. He said yes. So we went back to Lisa's home the following day to taste the tea again, in a more focused and decisive manner. It was even better than our first experience of it! So we called Mr. Ye again to reserve the remainder of this crop to share with the Eco-Cha Tea Club.

Instead of asking Mr. Ye to send us the tea in the mail, we decided it was time for Lisa and Mr. Ye to meet in person. Lisa had expressed interest in going out to the farm



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for the last couple years, but it just hadn't happened yet. So we drove out to the factory together to pick up our tea we reserved for the Tea Club. The above photo is the general vicinity of the plot of tea from which this edition of the Eco-Cha Tea Club was harvested,

Mr. Ye is a prime example of Taiwanese country folk. He is a bit shy, and a man of few words, but so real and humble. When we asked if we could go see the farm that this batch was harvested from, Mr. Ye said that it was about a 30 minute ride on a farm road from the factory. The road we had just driven on to the factory was already very narrow, and we could tell that it would only get more "farm roadish" from there. So we didn't impose upon him to drive us there in his mini farm truck. And it was only Mr. Ye's shyness that prevented us from demanding a group photo to commemorate an occasion that was meaningful for us, but just another day for him. So, we followed local etiquette, sat down and drank tea, talked about simple things, waited for a farm hand to deliver a big box of tomatoes as a gift to us. And went on our way. Strictly roots.

Given the fact that we have learned about Taiwanese tea from Lisa for more than 25 years, this visit was a momentous occasion. Now, we were taking our mentor to visit a farmer deep into the hills that we had discovered and introduced to her. In a word, it was an authentic and rewarding occasion. More than once, Lisa commented on our journey home that he is "a real tea farmer".