

eco-cha

TEA CLUB

Charcoal Roasted Honey Oolong Tea

Harvest: Singular batch
Season: Summer 2017

Region: Zhushan, Taiwan
Elevation: 200m

Oxidation: Heavy
Roast:

Flavor: *Fruity/floral aroma. Stone fruit, mineral, and honey notes. Clean fruitwood/plum powder aftertaste.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 8g

 300ml

 95°C

 3 minutes

GARDEN

This batch of tea was affected by the Green Leafhopper, and oxidized extensively in the fashion of a traditionally made Oolong Tea. It then set for one year before being lightly roasted, using Longan charcoal. After roasting, it set for another year. It now has a unique complexity that embodies its intricate origins!

TASTING NOTES

Starting off year five of the Eco-Cha Tea Club with a true southern Nantou County local specialty! The flavor profile of this tea reflects its unique amalgamation of growing conditions and processing methods. In a word, it's got character! And if we may say so, in our perception it has a character that is reminiscent of a Dancong Oolong from mainland China. Something about the well cured and moderately aged factors bring it outside the normal spectrum of Taiwanese Oolongs.

This summer 2017 crop of naturally cultivated and well bug bitten and matured leaves were processed as a

traditional Oolong, which mainly means that they were well oxidized. The work that went into oxidizing these leaves was considerable as well as skillful. The leaves needed to be worked, and they got worked well! The result is a full-bodied, substantial brew that offers a very satisfying balance that starts with a mild smokiness, leading into a fruity body with mineral notes, and finishing with something reminiscent of old school Charms lollipops. It really does have a distinct plum powder/confectioner's sugar finishing note that is cushioned by that smoky mineral base. It's a mouthful!

This is not a subtle or refined character of tea, but it certainly has a broad spectrum of aromatic and flavor notes that vary with different brewing methods, leaf to water ratios, as well as the temperature of the brewed tea. In other words, the flavor really transforms as the tea cools. So we encourage our Tea Club members to explore these parameters to see what different notes can be discovered with variations of brewing methods and temperature of the already brewed tea.

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The brewed leaves reveal their ruddy character, and in the final analysis are testimony to the skill and painstaking, time consuming processing they have undergone. Not only did they need to be thoroughly manipulated to achieve the level of oxidation, but they were aged, charcoal roasted, and aged again (albeit for only two years, but those two years are quite significant!).

We look forward to hearing about your experience of batch #49 of the Eco-Cha Tea Club.

THE STORY OF THIS TEA

This month's edition of the Eco-Cha Tea Club is from a crop of naturally cultivated Jin Xuan harvested in the summer of 2017. The leaves were significantly affected by the Green Leafhopper and other pests, so they were stunted and gnarled and far from the standard of quality that is commonly followed. But as our friend who sourced the raw leaves and processed them using traditional Oolong Tea making methods once told us "I'm more interested in odd and unusual tea!" (我現在比較喜歡奇奇怪怪的茶!). We tasted

this batch of tea before it was aged a year and then Longan charcoal roasted, and aged again. We recognized the "bug bitten flavor", but found it a bit too "odd" to be suitable for sharing. Mr. Zhuang said that he planned to let it set, roast it, and let it set again. That was the last we heard about it... until recently.

A sample of this batch was offered to us a few months ago, when we asked if there was any remainder of the batch we shared in May of this year. Our May 2019 edition was procured and roasted by our friend who we met at our local swimming pool in Zhushan, Taiwan. Mr. Zhuang passed away suddenly in March, and we thought our May batch was the last available batch that he had charcoal roasted the previous winter.

We tasted the sample and found it to be very different than what we remembered tasting originally. It was mellowed, balanced, and much more complex. The appearance of the overly mature, heavily oxidized and tattered brewed leaves was hard to get past at first. But after brewing it several times, we finally accepted the fact that true beauty is not about

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appearances! So here it is, another memoir from our friend to be shared with our Tea Club members to begin our fifth year of the Eco-Cha Tea Club.

Let us know what you think about this batch of Charcoal Roasted Honey Oolong Tea, and also please post any questions you may have about this month's edition of the Eco-Cha Tea Club!