

Tempt your tastebuds at Castlemaine tea shop

By R.I. Nagy

A typical cup of tea, or “cuppa”, is warming on a cold day, refreshing in its own unique manner, and a popular social beverage in most circles.

These days, however, there are a myriad different tea blends and flavours out in the world, just waiting to be discovered.

The next time you are in Castlemaine, why not tempt your tastebuds with a new tea experience by visiting The Tea Dispensary?

Founded in October 2020 by Lisa Candy, the Tea Dispensary offers a high quality range of organic, loose-leaf tea blends carefully selected from the best suppliers all over the world.

The shop occupies one half of a Victorian-era building which once housed a music shop (hence the unique front door handle).

Ms Candy came up with the idea for the shop during the first round of lockdowns in 2020.

“I was drinking a lot of herbal teas with my family at night time and found that I started to have a bit of a reaction to chamomile tea,” she said.

“I was looking for teas without chamomile that would also help us relax and sleep, and I found it near impossible to find any.”

Unable to work gigs as a musician due to the lockdowns, Ms Candy started researching chamomile-free herbal teas.

This then led to her establishing her own tea shop, where she could create her own blends.

She began with a variety of herbal teas, including naturopath-approved specialty blends, and individual herbs and spices to use for custom blends.

The range then expanded to include black teas, green teas, oolong teas, rooibos teas, white teas, chai teas and fruit blends.

The Tea Dispensary’s shop design combines a clean, modern industrial look with the warmth of a small-town apothecary, and draws inspiration from tea shops Ms Candy saw in Santa Monica while on a family trip in America a few years ago.

Polished concrete flooring, white walls, unobtrusive black metal fixtures, and light wooden shelving all ensure that the tea, displayed in large glass jars, remains the star of the show.

“I wanted to create a shop where you could see the teas, and it was aesthetically pleasing, and wasn’t just about buying a box of tea and taking a chance,” Ms Candy said.

“I wanted people to be able to see the quality of the tea, the size of the leaf, the mixtures, the blends.

“And also, when we don’t have COVID, to be able to smell the teas, too.

“You can just about tell which tea you’d like by the way it smells.”

Most of the teas in the shop are sourced from coun-

tries such as India, China, and Sri Lanka.

She does currently sell some teas grown in Australia, as well as Roogenic Tea, which uses native Australian bush plants.

Two of The Tea Dispensary’s signature teas – the Castlemaine Gold Rush and Harcourt Apple – pay tribute to Castlemaine’s gold rush history and the apple orchards of the Harcourt area.

If choosing a new tea to try seems daunting then Ms Candy can recommend the perfect tea for any time of day, based on personal preferences.

The shop sells its teas in 60g and 120g food-grade paper bags and 120g amber glass jars, both chosen to keep the tea fresh.

The amber jars are also sold separately for people wishing to transfer their bagged teas or get creative with labelling.

To provide ‘the perfect experience in every cup’ the shop also offers a range of unique and beautiful tea accessories such as cups, tea pots, infusers, milk jugs, thermal travel mugs, and tea caddies.

Packaged treats from local Castlemaine business Michel’s Fine Biscuit Co. are also available for sale, along with shop gift vouchers.

Opening a tea shop during a pandemic may have seemed like an unusual move, but with support from both Castlemaine locals and those in surrounding towns it has managed to thrive.

“Everybody’s in here for some sort of tea,” Ms Candy said.

“I love hearing people’s stories about tea, and the way it brings back memories to people all the time.”

Unsurprisingly, the health-supporting teas were the most popular purchases during the lockdowns, followed closely by black teas.

Like many businesses, the shop shifted to online ordering and local delivery during the lockdowns of 2021 to stay afloat.

Joining forces with other businesses and marketing on social media platforms also increased the shop’s reach, to the point that it now has a large number of interstate customers.

Further validation arrived in early October with The Tea Dispensary receiving nominations for the Mount Alexander Business Awards 2021 in two categories – Microbusiness and Retail and Hospitality.

“That’s beyond my wildest dreams,” Ms Candy said with a smile.

While COVID-19 has restricted activities such as being able to smell the teas and host tastings, Ms Candy has some interesting ideas brewing for the future directions of the shop.

To learn more about what these may be, keep an eye on The Tea Dispensary’s social media pages in the coming months.

The Tea Dispensary is located at 2/12 Templeton Street, around the corner from the main business district and



Lisa Candy, founder of The Tea Dispensary in Castlemaine.

just a short stroll from Castlemaine Station.

To view the range of tea and accessories and make your orders, visit their website at: <https://theteadispenary.castlemaine.com.au/>

For tea inspiration, serving suggestions, and to see what’s happening at the shop, visit their Instagram account: www.instagram.com/theteadispenary_castlemaine/



Tea is stored in large glass jars so customers can see the leaf quality, colour, and texture of each variety.



Health-supporting herbal tea blends were very popular with customers during the lockdowns.

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