

Hou De Newsletter

January 2006

Happy New Year! Wish you have a wonderful, tea-rich 2006 ☺

Hou De is One-year Old

Our little tea dream is already one-year old! We started Hou De Asian Art & Fine Tea's website in January of 2005. We have tried hard to establish our tea shop as a true customer-oriented and professional-grade source of fine teas. As a sincere thank-you for your support to us in 2005, we are giving all our customers a whole month of FREE SHIPPING in January 2006! Please use the following coupon code when you check out: "houdejan06". This coupon code can be used an unlimited amount of times and is valid until 31/01/2006.

Hou De Reward Program for Reviews

Your tasting notes on our teas help people that visit our website better understand our teas, and in turn help us improve our service to you! It's so worthwhile that we decided to offer a \$1 credit for each review (good or bad!) you submit to us. Once we receive your review, we will send you a \$1 coupon code for your future orders.



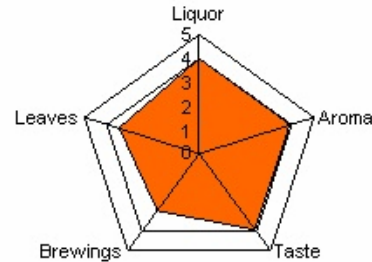
Hou De Tea Rating Diagram

A client has told us that we have the best descriptions for teas that he has ever seen! Being very proud of this, we still feel we lack an efficient and precise way, both qualitative and quantitative, to communicate our tasting impressions of our teas. That's why we will try to introduce the Hou De Tea Rating Diagram.

The Diagram analyzes the performance of a tea in five dimensions:

Liquor: Clarity and Color are the two key elements. A good tea has to have a good

appearance. A good Liquor quality brings you a truly enjoyable visual entertainment. We are going to discuss Liquor in detail in this newsletter.



2005 Meng Hai
"Golden Needle White Lotus"

Aroma: Be it light and refreshing or intense and full-bodied, we pursue only the non-adulterated and genuine aroma of teas.

Taste: The taste of tea has effects on at least our mouth, throat and overall body. The effect on mouth is the first-layer taste, and the effect on throat (that is, the "after-taste") is the second-layer. The third-layer taste reacts on our whole body: that's why sometimes a tea makes us feel soothing, sometimes energetic, sometimes concentrated, and sometimes, which may be called the *Qi* reaction, we feel warmed up.

Brewing: We focus on the durability of the tea: how many good brews can it produce. This also helps determine how "juicy" the tea is.

Leaves: The appearance of tea leaves before and after brewing. The Leaves tell us important information like how the tea was harvested (hand vs. machine), what grade/quality are the leaves, how skilled was the tea processed, etc.

The Liquor, Aroma and Taste jointly constitute the Tea as a complete and multi-dimensional form of Art. Rating a tea according to the five dimensions helps us have a thorough understanding and appreciation of our teas. Each dimension is rated on a 0~5 scale.

In our future newsletters, we will discuss each dimension one at a time and in great detail!

On "Liquor"

I was told when I was a little boy: "A good tea must be like a good painting". I have been

using this as one of my buying guidelines for good teas and it has never failed!!

A good Clarity has a direct link to a good taste and aroma. The clarity is mostly affected by the raw leaves' quality and the withering (or kill-green) step.

Also, nowadays, the clarity plays a very important role as a safety indicator. Tea has been "adulterated" for centuries, and the trend only seems to have gotten more popular. Even worse, there have been several news outbreaks of how teas were "dyed" to have a greener or fresher look to them. All these adulterations or dyeing reduce the clarity.

A good tea needs to have a proper and sufficient withering (or, for green tea, kill-green step) step to initiate the following processing steps. Sometimes the tea producers were under a "deadline" pressure that they could not wait for good sunny weather or they simply rushed to finish the processing. As a result, the tea they produced normally did not have good clarity.

For pu-erhs, clarity is important as it can affect the aging potential. Although the clarity might be improved after several years of good storage, the potential risk is that without skilled and proper storage, the no-good-clarity pu-erhs might develop an unwanted sour or musty taste. Even if all cares were being taken, it just unnecessarily delays the aging. It is vital to select a young/new pu-erh that has a good clarity to start a collection with.

We have seen a tea that had a greener color in the first brew, and became a pale yellow from the second brew. A warning sign for dyeing! So use the Color as a safety indicator, too.

A good tea must be like a good painting. Share with you.

What's New

We introduced the following oolongs and pu-erhs:



2005 Winter-Harvested Li-Shan "Wu Chu" section soft-stem oolong, Hand-Harvested



2005 Winter Shan-Lin-Shi Da-An Jinxuan, Hand-Harvested



1993 Da Li Nan-Jian Phoenix Toucha, Uncooked



1998 Meng Hai "Peacock" Toucha, Uncooked



2005 MengHai Golden-Award "Golden Needle White Lotus", Cooked



2005 MengHai "Meng Song Gu Cha Shan Peacock", Green

A new tea accessory to refresh your stale teas, or roast it to improve the taste/aroma:



Mini Tea Roaster/Refresher

So [visit us online](#) to see all these amazing new arrivals and enjoy a whole month of free shipping worldwide!

Sincerely,
Irene & Guang