

Newsletter n°4

Association Tea Grown in Europe (EuT)
Authors: Nina Gruntkowski, Denis Mazerolle
Date: September 2018



<http://tea-grown-in-europe.eu>

Words from the President

The interest for growing tea in Europe is increasing rapidly: our Association is actively working to foster and anticipate the growth of the sector, and also to meet the practical needs of our Members. As examples, over the past months, we have set-up dialogue with many acknowledged tea players worldwide, e.g. in China and Georgia, and have also organised the importation of machines for tea leaves processing. Also, it is important that our sector is made visible to and supported by the local, national and European Authorities: our Association will indeed serve this purpose.

Let our dream become a reality!



We publish this newsletter one year after the previous issue: this delay is only due to an increase of activity and workload at the Association, leaving very little time for preparing the Newsletter. We will endeavour in the future to publish two newsletters per year so that the tea community has regular access to the information from our Association.

On behalf of the Association Members, I wish you a pleasant and fruitful reading!

Denis Mazerolle, PhD

President "Tea Grown in Europe"

Newsletter contents

- ✔ Professor Zeno Apostolides becomes our first Honorary Member
- ✔ New Members: EuT now counts 15 Members from 8 different countries
- ✔ Event: article and talk delivered at the International Camellia Society Congress 2018
- ✔ Trip to Georgia in May 2018
- ✔ Importation of tea processing machines
- ✔ EuT General Assembly meeting
- ✔ Networking between Members

Professor Zeno Apostolides becomes our first Honorary Member

Professor Zeno Apostolides, Professor at the University of Pretoria, becomes our first Honorary Member.

Co-editor of the famous reference book "Global Tea Breeding" (2012 - Springer), Pr Apostolides started the Tea Research Laboratory in the Department of Biochemistry, at the University of Pretoria in 1980. The main object was to do quality control tests for teas produced in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Kenya. He has visited tea plantations and factories in these countries plus, Sri Lanka and Japan. Together with his students, he has published over 50 scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals. His current research is focused on helping tea breeders to develop new tea cultivars for higher yield and quality.



He is willing to support us. We all feel very honoured, and look forward to learning from him!

See the following links:

Google scholar: <http://scholar.google.co.za/citations?user=dOEClOUEAAAAJ>

ELSEVIER Scopus Preview: <http://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=24516855300>

"Global Tea Breeding" (2012 - Springer): <https://www.springer.com/gb/book/9783642318771>

New Members: EuT now counts 15 Members from 8 different countries

One year ago, at the time we published our previous Newsletter, EuT had five Members; since then, one Honorary Member (see above section) and nine other Members have been elected, as shown in the table hereunder. A short description of each of these nine Members follows.

Name	Country	Type of Member	Status
Ms Linda Cebrian-Rampen, representative of Het ZuyderBlad, Theeplantage Soerendonk	The Netherlands	Active Member	Legal person
Dr Tobias DENZLER, representative of Casa del Tè, Monte Verità	Switzerland	Active Member	Legal Person
Mr Bernard PICAL, representative of Camélias de la Prairie	France	Active Member	Legal person
MM. Shota & Giorgi BITADZE, representative of GOTPA	Georgia	Active Member	Legal person
Ms Stéphanie CHANFREAU	France	Active Member	Natural person
Mr Alain GUERDER	France	Subscribing Member	Natural person
Mr Daniel PINA CABRAL	Portugal	Subscribing Member	Natural person
Mr Michel THEVOT	France	Active Member	Natural person
Mr Paolo ZACCHERA	Italy	Active Member	Natural person



Ms Linda Cebrian-Rampen, representative of “Het ZuyderBlad, Theeplantage Soerendonk”. Tea came into Linda’s life when travelling to China some years ago, and became an important part of her life when she took over the farm from her parents, with the project to transform a traditional farm into a tea plantation. This is a transition that started about 4 years ago with a lot of research work. A first trial was carried out with seeds coming



from Italy, then, Linda created an experimental garden with 120 tea plants from Switzerland. Last year, she established a bigger garden of around about 0.5 hectare and plans to extend it every year by 0.5 hectare.

Linda has also carried out an experiment, using part of her tea garden as hen yard; the success of this experiment offers interesting perspectives for the future. Besides the agricultural part, Linda is also actively exploring the marketing and branding of her future production. See: <https://hetzuyderblad.nl/>

Dr Tobias Denzler, representative of “Casa del Tè, Monte Verità”, graduated from the University of Bern as a veterinary surgeon in 1984, was promoted with a doctoral thesis in 1989. Then, in 1996, he received a post graduate diploma for development and co-operation (NADEL) from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich. Tobias has 32 years of professional experience as a veterinary surgeon/doctor, and also as a technical advisor and project manager in related domains: he has served in different cooperation programmes in many countries, such as Bhutan, India, Philippines and Laos.



In 2016, he has taken over, as one of the associates, the “Casa del Té” located in Ascona and Bern, which also supervises the Monte Verità tea garden, a Japanese style tea garden created in 2006 by Peter Oppliger which also includes a Zen garden and a pavilion. It serves as a demonstration and schooling site for a broad public in and around Switzerland. The young tea leaves from the plantation are regularly harvested in spring and processed with the help of Japanese Temomi specialists to hand-rolled Sencha green tea (Temomicha). In 2016, there were approximately 6’000 visitors registered in the tea house. See: <https://casa-del-te.ch/de/home/>





Mr Bernard Pical, the representative of “Camélias de la Prairie”, is graduated in water and forest techniques, in enterprise Management (Montpellier University), and in landscape design (Institut du Paysage Mercurius).

After starting a career at the French Ministry of Water and Forests, he has worked from 1967 to 1979 at the Lambertin nursery, where he became the director. The, he has launched different businesses in the domain of nurseries/garden centres: he co-established in 1999 the Truffaut garden centre located in Nîmes.

In 2005, Bernard acquired the domain “Camélias de la Prairie” situated in Alès, Gard Department, Occitanie region, a garden opened to the public, including a nursery. Bernard has introduced Camellia sinensis in his garden more than 10 years ago: the current plantation includes 150 plants; he intends to extend it and set up a rational plantation of around 1 hectare.

See: <http://www.camellia.fr/>



MM. Shota & Giorgi BITADZE, representatives of the “Georgian Organic Tea Producers Association” (GOTPA). Shota, is graduated from the Technical University of Tbilisi in Engineering; from the year 2000, he started a tea business in China and Georgia, then, in 2006, started renewing and restoring tea manufacturing in Georgia; he is the founder of GOTPA and of the Georgian-Chinese Tea Cluster. His son Giorgi, graduated from Tbilisi Technical University in international

relations in 2016, studied tea manufacturing in China at Zhangzhou University of Science and Technology. He also attended various international training courses for ecologically clean tea production. He joined his father’s company in 2016 and represented Georgia at the occasion of the “Tea Masters cup International” in 2016 in Seoul, where he demonstrated new brewing methods.



The purpose of GOTPA is to link organic tea producing companies, cooperatives or families together, create new kinds of tea products, share each other’s experience, provide guidance to produce high-quality organic tea. The association monitors production quality and purchases all the production



from its members. Recently, the association became a member of TIPI - the Technology Innovation Platform of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements).

In 2006, GOTPA started developing tea cultivars and species with desirable properties and characteristics. From searching all around Georgia, a special tea cultivar was selected that had a visually high amount of anthocyanin red pigment on the leaves. A first plantation was set up in 2018, providing the



opportunity to produce “Georgian purple tea”. The association also continues to develop new tea cultivars for producing black, green and white teas. It also produces high-grade tea from wild bushes growing in mountain forests of the Imeretia and Guria regions.

GOTPA has also created a Georgian tea house/museum, where different objects relating to Georgian tea are displayed, such as old historical books, notes, 40-60 years old teas, packages from the Soviet Union. Guests also can attend tea degustation and tea master classes (brewing, pairing, testing etc.).



Ms Stéphanie Chanfreau is graduated from Montpellier Sup Agro School of Montpellier; passionate about tea, she has undertaken training in the Chinese Language in the Sichuan province in 2014, followed by a global training on Tea at the Sichuan Institute of Agriculture, and practical training in a tea farm in Ya'An. Back to France, she enthusiastically continues to work on her tea project named Txlupa. This project has already received two awards, Graine d'Espoir in 2016, Prix Initiative Mosson in 2017, and the Nuffield grant in 2017.

Stéphanie has already identified a land in Urrugne (Basque country) and planned the plantation of around 2 hectares in different batches in 2018-2019 to experiment different cultivars and different cultivation methods, such as agro-forestry, combining tea with local trees. Organic production is targeted.

Mr Alain Guerder studied agriculture in 1989-1990, was graduated as an agriculture technician and has worked in an equestrian centre. Later, he studied psychology and is currently working as a psychologist. Since 1994, he is established in the Tarn department (Occitanie region) where he owns a domain of 7ha. Passionate by plants and agriculture, he conducts experiments on the acclimation of different plants on his land situated in middle altitude where winter is very cold.

Alain is currently in an experimental phase: he grows different varieties of *Camellia sinensis* on a dedicated piece of land and intends to obtain hybrids that can withstand frost and low temperature in winter. Then, he intends to develop a tea production. See Alain's experiments on the blog <http://forumdesamateursdethe.fr/> under the name “essai prems”.

Mr Daniel Pina Cabral is graduated in Chemical Engineering from the University of Porto. From 2005, when he has worked as Co-CEO of Bracing, a consulting company. He contributed to the founding of "Confraria Atlântica do Chá" (Atlantic Guild of Tea), where he served as the first president of its Fiscal Council and later as "Master of the Rites". In 2012, he founded the first Portuguese School of Tea, "Escola do Chá®", his vehicle for sharing the knowledge of the "things" of the tea, its provenance, its types, its presentation, its aromas, botany, chemistry, history, aesthetics, summed up, the Personality of Tea. Since then has delivered several workshops and courses on tea directed at several targets, including the Azores, where there is one of the oldest tea plantations in Europe.

Daniel has a specific relationship with tea and has conducted for many years a fascinating and independent 'journey' of research on tea, thus entering the fascinating world of tea's History, Aesthetics, Aromas and Palates. He regards life as a sequence of events that should be appreciated for its own uniqueness and interest, of which the "art of tea" is a sublime example.

Mr Michel Thévot, graduated in boiler making and welding, was a professional football player; wounded at the age of 26, he had to give up his career as a player; he became a referee, and has

worked for the French Championship pro league during 11 years, becoming Principal Delegate for League 1 in 2002. In 2018, he was nominated as a delegate for the French Cup final. He is actively engaged in associations promoting ethics and non-violence in football.

Michel is passionate about botanic and has worked on the introduction of new plants with several nurseries. He acquired in 2005 an old mill situated in the Guillec valley, Sibiril, department of Finistère (Brittany region). He has undertaken to restore the buildings and, in parallel, to create a garden with a collection of

rare plants from various regions of the world (around 2000 different species); his collection includes many varieties of rhododendrons, magnolias, camellias, including *Camellia sinensis* and *Camellia taliensis* which appeared to adapt very well to local soil and climate conditions.



Mr Paolo Zacchera currently leads the *Compania del Lago Maggiore*, situated in Verbania, a nursery producing *Camellia japonica*, *sasanqua* and *sinensis*. He has been growing *Camellia sinensis* for 30 years: originally 2.000/3.000 plants each year for garden centres among a large production of *japonica* and *sasanqua*. He provided Peter Oppliger with the small plants for the Monte Verità and Brissago Island tea gardens in 1999-2001.



Paolo has been growing 30.000/40.000 tea plants per year for the last 3 years, in view of launching a



tea plantation start in Parco della Valgrande, Premosello Chiovenda, a beautiful protected area between Simplon Pass and Lago Maggiore. The soil and water conditions are perfect, but the winter can be very cold. He is trying to install the plantation it in the flat part of the valley with frozen soil and very little sun in winter. Up to now, plants have grown fine; Paolo intends to set up a tea business, using machines that he saw in Japan.

Event: article and talk delivered at the International Camellia Society Congress 2018

This year, the International Camellia Society (ICS) Congress took place in Nantes, from 25th to 29th March 2018. The congress was organised extremely well by the City of Nantes, it included different conference sessions at the Congress Centre, a poster session and visits of gardens and nurseries.



Nantes is famous for the quality and diversity of its gardens. The city's horticultural heritage has become a way of life and unifies Nantes' history with its geography. The reign of Louis XIV marked the start of horticultural enterprise in Nantes. Then, in 1726, in order to enhance France's botanical collections, Louis XV ordered ships' captains to bring back plants and seeds from all around the world. The mild climate and Nantes' position

as a main harbour provided ideal conditions to develop botanical collections. Moreover, the acid soil which prevails around Nantes was particularly favourable to the growth of camellias, which became the emblematic flower of Nantes.

Among the visited gardens, the "Parc du Grand Blottereau" displays around an elegant manor house different natural landscapes inspired from various places around the world. A Korean garden was installed in 2006, reproducing a piece of the countryside of the Suncheon region, with an orchard, a paddy field and tea garden of around one thousand bushes coming from Korea, harvested each year in April-May.



Conclusions and perspectives



- Growing and manufacturing tea in Europe is highly innovative in terms of business model and techniques;
- To meet success and reach a significant scale, learning from the existing practices is important, but adaptation to the European environment and specificities through INNOVATION is KEY, e.g.:
 - Agro-forestry techniques involving tea and local trees;
 - Use of tea plantations to the benefit of the environment (e.g. reducing carbon footprint, limiting erosion etc.);
 - Robotised plucking, etc.
- The EuT association will foster these key innovations in close cooperation with the different stakeholders, including European farmers, tea distributors, European industry players and public authorities.

Our hope is to provide in the following years worldwide tea lovers with the quintessence of the various European "terroirs" in the healthiest stimulating beverage.

Our presentation "Tea cultivation in Europe" was delivered on 28th March within the "Tea and Aromas" session on 28th March. It has raised a very high level of interest among the Camellia community. The full text (English and French versions) is published in the proceedings of the Conference (accessible to the ICS Members). Worth noting that

during the wrap-up session, the new President Pr Guan Kaiyun, mentioned the possibility to give more room to topics in relation with tea in the future ICS Conferences. The next conference will take place in Goto (Japan) in March 2020. We are indeed willing to participate in this conference... and to discover the beautiful Goto islands.

Trip to Georgia in May 2018

Tea has been cultivated in Georgia since 1847, following the decision of Prince Mikhail Vorontsov, Viceroy of Transcaucasia, to acclimate Chinese tea plants from Sochi botanical garden in the area of Ozurgeti. Then, the tea industry has undergone a fast development in the years 1890s, and later in the years 1930's under the ruling of the Soviet Union. Georgia became one of main Tea producing countries with probably around 100,000 hectares of tea plantations in the 1970s. Around the Georgian tea industry, a comprehensive supply chain was established from the research on cultivars to the development of machines for plucking and processing.



From that brilliant past, where quantity and yield was the main driver, remain only a few plantations and factories, and the impressive "Institute of Tea, Subtropical Crops and Tea Industry". This institute, located in Anaseuli, near Ozurgeti, centralised all research on the culture and manufacture of tea; it is the origin of the cultivar "Kolkhida" which has achieved a record yield of 2 tons of dry tea per hectare. It is worth noting that this cultivar was imported a few decades ago to France, where it grows very nicely. We were received

by its current director Temur Revishvili, as well as the former director, now over 80 years old; a photo shows him alongside the leaders Gorbachev and Chevarnadze in the 80s. They told us about a cooperation programme with China in the 70s-80s and the introduction in Georgia of the cultivar "Qimen", from Anhui province. Part of the plantations and factories which initially belonged to the Institute is now in the hands of private entrepreneurs (such as the Anaseuli Tea Factory). We could taste an excellent green tea produced locally.

Regarding the plantations, many of them have been abandoned in the 1990s. We could observe near Tkibuli a tea plantation covered by a luxuriant forest, reminding us that tea bushes were part of the forest understorey in their original environment somewhere in the south-east of the Tibetan plateau, just as if the rambling humankind had offered them a return to their life of origin! The Georgian Government has launched Programme to rehabilitate tea plantations. Rehabilitation of some plantations is underway, resulting in clear-cutting of trees that have been growing there for over 30 years.



Indeed, some tea producers, aware of the quality of the environment and soil, have decided to focus on high-end organic tea. This is the case of Mr Shota Bitadze, Director of the Georgian Organic Tea Producers Association (GOTPA), now Member of EuT. We were kindly received by Mr Shota Bitadze and his son Giorgi in his nice Tea Museum in Tbilisi and have attended a special method of tasting adapted to white tea, infusing the leaves in a wine carafe: it increases the surface of the liquid in contact with the air and accelerates its oxidation. For more details on GOTPA, please refer to the above section dedicated to the new Members of EuT.



We had the honour to be received by the Minister of Agriculture of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (South-West part of Georgia), Mr Avtandil Meskhidze; he has spent around 30 years of his career at the Institute of Tea mentioned here above. He

expressed a high motivation to restart a tea activity in his region: an ambitious programme consisting of setting-up a pilot plantation of 20 hectares and a factory producing high-end tea has already started under the supervision of his Ministry. This initiative also involves the tea department of the Shota Rustaveli State University of Batumi, working on various topics around tea, including the in-vitro propagation, and also on innovative tea based products, such as soluble instant tea, tea extracts, liquors etc.

The weakness of Georgian tea is obviously the obsolescence of the factories inherited from the USSR, oversized compared to the quantities currently produced and probably not adaptable for the manufacturing of high-end products. Such weakness is largely compensated by the quality of the environment and soil as well as the existing botanic resources and know-how on tea cultivation.



Acknowledgements: we are grateful to the French Embassy in Georgia who has helped us to link with the main tea institutions and plantations in Georgia.

Importation of tea processing machines

The association have received in August machines from China, altogether 12 wood boxes of various size and weight, it included:

- electric tea woks with temperature control (62.5 and 80 cm)
- manual rollers
- electric rollers
- a 60 cm heating tumbler
- dehydrating ovens

Although the tea season is over, we are eager to use them; indeed it will contribute to establish more stable processes as well as improve our efficiency!



EuT General Assembly meeting

This year the General Assembly meeting took was hosted by Ms Nina Gruntkowski, at the Chá Camélia facilities in Fornelo (Portugal) on 9th June 2018. Despite the surprising cold temperature (around 17°C), the meeting provided all Members with an excellent opportunity to warmly exchange about their tea project, share their tea samples and make decisions regarding the future of the Association. Votes were organised, resulting in the election of:



- Ms Nina Grundkowski as Secretary General of the Association.
- Mr Nicolas Guyomarc'h as Treasurer of the Association
- 7 new Members



A session was dedicated to the presentation of the tea project of each partner. Actions for future communication (internal and external) was discussed, the importance of internal communication between embers was emphasised. Also, the content of the future mission to China, to be scheduled in March 2019, was presented and debated.

Networking between Members



During the past months, many personal visits are taking place between the Members, contributing to the share of experience and knowledge.

To facilitate the exchanges, it was also decided to set-up a Facebook private group as one of the main channels of communication between the Members. Many Members are now part of this group and started posting questions and exchanging information. Most of

the discussions relate to tea cultivars, tea plantation management and tea fabrication. The Association also has a public page on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/tgieEut/> and an public internet website <http://tea-grown-in-europe.eu/>, which is regularly updated.

