



Kingfish daikon green strawberry, served with Gyokuro tea

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Each tea is freshly brewed and is poured as the dish comes to the table, and to ensure the Clooney experience is superlative, Anna conducted a masterclass with Anita and her team to coach them in the correct leaf-to-water ratio, temperature, steep time and the right teaware in which to serve the tea.

Anna was excited to include a New Zealand tea, too. Zealong Black, grown in the Waikato, accompanied Clooney's cheese course. "It's a black tea with a unique flavour, like cape gooseberries. The quality is comparable with the best."

For so many of us, drinking tea involves slinging a teabag into a mug and gulping it down. But just like really appreciating a glass of wine, taking time to prepare and taste tea properly reveals more complex flavours.

Anna recommends using a teapot or glass with an infuser so that you can steep the leaves for just the right time and remove them before they get bitter. Then measure out

the leaves – about 1 heaped teaspoon to 150ml of water.

Smell is crucial to appreciating the flavour: smell the dried leaves, swirl the liquid around the cup then smell the freshly brewed liquor, smell the aroma of the wet leaves in the pot.

Then sip your tea. Take a sip while breathing in to get the taste buds on your tongue working then, holding the liquor in your mouth, breathe out to draw the scent up to your olfactory gland, where the aromas are processed.

To introduce New Zealanders to top-quality tea, and to teach us how best to enjoy the distinct flavours, Anna has launched a monthly tea subscription service. Carefully selected artisan tea is delivered every month along with tasting notes to encourage drinkers to experiment and learn about different flavours.

Anna has worked with *Cuisine* to suggest tea pairings for Emma Galloway's recipes on page 64. [theteacurator.co.nz/](http://theteacurator.co.nz/)

TRACY WHITMEY



ARTISAN WATCH

Hogarth Craft Chocolate

IF YOU HAVEN'T yet tried a chocolate bar from Nelson's Hogarth Craft Chocolate then their new Alto Beni 'dark milk' bar would be a great place to start. As with all of Hogarth's chocolate, they make this bar from scratch – from the bean – in a complex process that involves roasting the beans, grinding and 'conching' the cacao, ageing the chocolate and then tempering and moulding the bars. As you can tell, they haven't taken the easy route to chocolate making.

This new limited-release bar is made with organic Trinitario cacao beans from the Alto Beni region of Bolivia. These beans are collected from small-scale farms by the Alto Beni Cacao Company, who pay a premium price at the farm gate for high-quality cacao. The beans are then meticulously fermented and dried, before being distributed internationally to craft chocolate makers who are

willing to pay over the odds for such rare and specialist cacao.

'Dark milk' might sound like a contradiction in terms to some chocolate lovers, but it's a style that has grown in popularity over the past few years. It indicates a higher percentage of cacao content (usually over 55%) but with a small amount of milk added for seasoning. This is the first bar of this style to be made in New Zealand, and it wasn't the initial intention of chocolatemaker, Karl Hogarth. "This particular cocoa reminded me of buttered malt biscuits as I was roasting it, and the initial test batches were even brownie-ish. So I tried to get that malt-biscuit flavour. I tried a little milk powder to tame the strength of the cocoa and mellow it out, and it worked a treat."

Alongside that distinctive malty flavour you can taste a strong hint of coconut, all of which comes from a combination of just cacao, sugar and milk. If you haven't experienced these kinds of flavour notes in chocolate before then you'll be in for a treat. Don't leave it too long before trying this chocolate though – Karl was only able to purchase 3kg of these beans so it's strictly a limited release. Welcome to the world of small-batch chocolate. [hogarthchocolate.co.nz/](http://hogarthchocolate.co.nz/) / LUKE OWEN SMITH (thechocolatebar.nz)

GIN GIN

Kudos to Taranaki's Juno Gin for taking out a Double Gold medal at the prestigious San Francisco World Spirits Competition for their label design. Winners of a double gold are considered among the finest products in the world – a big achievement for a New Zealand brand that launched just last year. Jo James, co-owner of Juno Gin along with her husband Dave James says, "Congratulations to Craig Jones of Strategy Collective who designed the label." / [junogin.co.nz](http://junogin.co.nz)



TEA MATCH, ANNA KIDMAN