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The 5th Boseong World Tea Forum Strives to Promote Local Premium Teas

Held in Gwangju, South Korea, 14–17 September, the 5th Boseong World Tea Forum aimed to bring locally-grown teas to the world tea stage. With around 200 exhibitors, the booths ranged from highly traditional Buddhist ways to state-of-the-art technology and modern packaging design.

The Republic of Korea produces just below 5,000 metric tonnes of tea, mainly for domestic consumption. This tonnage is shared out between more industrial teas from the island of Jeju at 40 percent and premium small estate teas from the South of the peninsula, the counties of Boseong and Hadong, at 60 percent, according to Professor Keun-Hyung Park, head of the Korean Tea Academy and chief tea judge. Owner of the Chunpa Tea Garden, a five hectare (ha) tea estate in Boseong, he is aware of the constraints weighing on the producers, and explained that the first spring harvest is usually picked by hand, for ultimate quality, whilst the second and third flush are harvested by mechanical tools.

Although treasuring the tea's

deep roots in Buddhist traditions, there is keen awareness of the need for marketing to millennials and for more transparent communication, both for attracting young consumers and foreign buyers. This explains the close affiliation of the monastic world, with several monks actively involved in the tea market's business strategies, such as the Tea Venerable Yeo Yeon, who is part of the Tea Forum's Organizing Committee.

The Boseong tea gardens were granted a PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) in 2005 by the Korean Ministry of Agriculture and there is a plan to have them all named, charted and localised, following the concept of the famous Darjeeling Tea Estates in India. Rating, ranking and award-giving is carried out regularly during the formal evaluation and tasting sessions that are scheduled at the various tea conventions and the awards are highly treasured by the estate owners. Pyeong Sik, also known as Charles Moon, owner of the Cheonbo tea garden, whose fragrant black teas have been reaping gold medals for the past several years, organized Boseong tea's first

booth at the 2017 World Tea Expo in June in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Following the WTE, they all felt that bringing their teas to the outside world may be even more rewarding than inviting the foreign visitors to their country. Aware of the ever-growing coffee consumption by the young generation, and observing the

same trends in Japan, the tea producers acknowledge the need for more proactive promotion. They also invest in RTD teas and plan to diversify strongly into tea and herbal blends, underlining the many established health benefits of such cups. Professor Min a Choo, CEO and driving force of the Boseong Tea Fair, has more projects focusing on the enhancement of the premium teas from Korea.

Next year's fair will take place in October 2018.



Judges at the 5th Boseong Tea Forum

Nobletree Opens Red Hook Tasting Room Within Its Roastery

Nobletree Coffee has been roasting in its Red Hook, Brooklyn facility since early 2016. The space is a total retrofit of a pier warehouse built in 1896 as the main point of entry for grain, including coffee, into the US. The historical location has now been fully converted into Nobletree's multi-faceted headquarters. One half of the facility is dedicated to production while the other half is designed for coffee education and café service open to the public.

In Brazil, Nobletree's coffee production operations are vertically integrated from the farm through export. In New York, the newly completed space similarly integrates a range of coffee operations. Green storage, roasting, packing and cold brew production are accessible via loading bays while the cupping area, training lab and café-tasting room are accessible by entrance steps from the New York water taxi stop, inviting locals and visitors to

experience coffee "from soil to sip," as Nobletree describes its involvement in the full coffee supply chain.

The Red Hook tasting room is in the process of certifying as a Specialty Coffee Association educational campus to offer classes to coffee professionals.

Nobletree's roasting and cold brew production facility is also SQF-certified (Safe Quality Food). Though it's not common for roasters to undergo certification, Nobletree, an FAL Coffee Company, felt it was important to put a rigorous food safety system in place, particularly in light of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

"We are directly connected to the farms our product comes from," said a Nobletree spokesperson. "We strive for full compliance to all customer, statutory, and regulatory requirements. We have designed, implemented and maintain an SQF Management System to effective-

ly ensure food safety throughout the organization. We continually improve the SQF System, and in doing so we involve our employees in all aspects of food safety management."



The SQF certification comes from the Safe Quality Food Institute, which is the recognized source for global food safety and certification among retailers and foodservice providers. It's the universal standard for food safety from 'farm to fork' for producers, manufacturers and distributors. "Since traceability and sustainability are so critical to Nobletree's mission, it was important to the team to undergo certification," said the spokesperson.

Rachel Northrop