Afternoon Tea

Vegetarian Menu

SAVOURIES

Summer pea and asparagus soup... (GF)
Heirloom tomato and bocconcini on crisp baguette... (GL, D, ALL)
Smoked carrot lox, with cream cheese spread
on Cape seed loaf... (GL, E, D, ALL, SS)
Marinated roasted red pepper, with gherkin and mustard
on sourdough... (GL, MU, E)
Herbed hummus with dukkha on cucumber... (GF, ALL, SS)
Grilled corn, avocado and red onion taco... (ALL, GF)

FINGER SANDWICHES

Marinated courgette and fior di latte on brown bread... (GL, D)
Cucumber with fennel cream cheese on white bread... (GL, D)
Farmer Angus egg mayonnaise on brown bread... (GL, E)

SCONES

Classic scones, cheese and herb scones... (GL, D, E, ALL)
Whipped vanilla cream, grated cheddar, homemade strawberry jam... (D)
Herbed mushroom vol-au-vent... (GL, D, E)

SWEETS

Pistachio and raspberry... (GL, D, E, N)
Chocolate and passionfruit financier... (GF, D, E, N)
Lemon tart... (GL, D, E)
Strawberry and apricot choux bun... (GL, D, E)

VEGETARIAN AFTERNOON TEA *R650 per person*
with a glass of our Tea Sommelier's choice iced tea or L'Ormarins Cap Classique

CHAMPAGNE AFTERNOON TEA
· Elevate your Afternoon Tea ·
with a glass of Veuve Clicquot Brut, additional R1 250 per person
or with a glass of Veuve Clicquot Rosé, additional R1 250 per person

FOOD & BEVERAGE ALLERGY INFORMATION
SS - Sesame Seed, C - Celery, GL - Gluten, E - Eggs, F - Fish, L - Lupin, MU - Mustard,
M - Molluscs, S - Soya, SD - Sulphur Dioxide, G - Garlic , N - Nuts, D - Dairy
SF - Shellfish/Crustacean, VG - Vegan, V - Vegetarian, GF - Gluten Free, ALL - Allium/Onion

- CHAPTER I -

Where it all began

In 1842, Anna Russell, the 7th Duchess of Bedford, while visiting at Belvoir Castle, asked that a tray of tea, bread and butter, and cake be brought to her room at around 4pm, as dinner was served so late. She took to inviting friends to join her and by the 1880s, Afternoon Tea had become a fashionable way to entertain.

At the time, there were no fine hotels in Cape Town, and Sir Donald Currie, owner of the Union Castle Shipping Line, set out to rectify the situation for his First-Class passengers. The Mount Nelson opened on the 6th of March 1899, meeting Sir Donald's dream of being as stylish and elegant as the most fashionable hotels in London.

The Afternoon Tea service was first introduced at the Nellie in November 1989, and served in the lounge from the majestic Windsor Table.

With more than 60 carefully chosen fine, loose-leaf teas from across the globe, a unique coffee experience, and a sumptuous array of sweet and savoury delicacies, "tea at the Nellie" has become a much-loved Cape Town tradition.

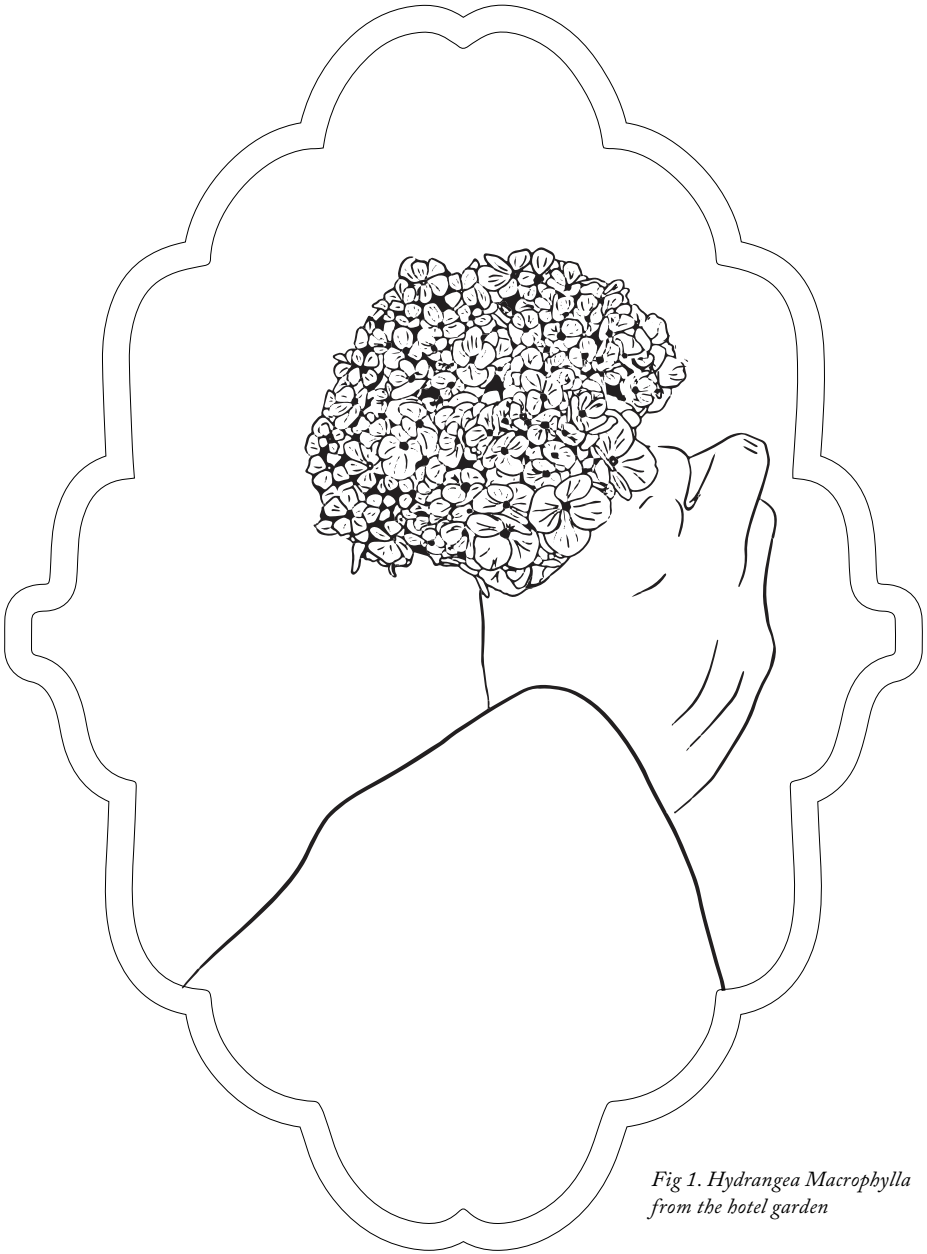


Fig 1. Hydrangea Macrophylla from the hotel garden

- CHAPTER II -

Through the ages

The layout of the Mount Nelson Hotel gardens can be traced back almost 180 years to when Hamilton Ross, a prosperous financier, acquired the property. John Ross, his nephew, was a keen landscape gardener, who transformed the surrounding farmland into an elegant estate with trees, an orchard, vineyard, aviary and even a deer park.

The meandering paths are sheltered by the dappled shade of heritage trees, some of which have stood guard for centuries. The ancient oak, for example, was planted by Willem F. van Reede van Oudtshoorn, a Dutch aristocrat who owned this tract of land in 1795. The sinuous wild olive is also around 200 years old. Marching up the grand entrance are Canary palms that were planted in 1925, in honour of a visit from the then Prince of Wales.

These trees have borne silent witness to the many guests who have found peace in the Nellie gardens, including John Lennon, who loved to meditate here.

A special Mount Nelson rose has been bred and is planted throughout the gardens. It is, of course, pink, the colour that is now synonymous with the hotel, thanks to a grand gesture by one of the former general managers.

In 1918, Aldo Renata Tagliavia wished to mark the end of the First World War in a memorable way. He discovered that pink was symbolic of peace, and painted the hotel in that colour to welcome home returning soldiers. The Mount Nelson has remained pink ever since, and even has its own Pantone shade.

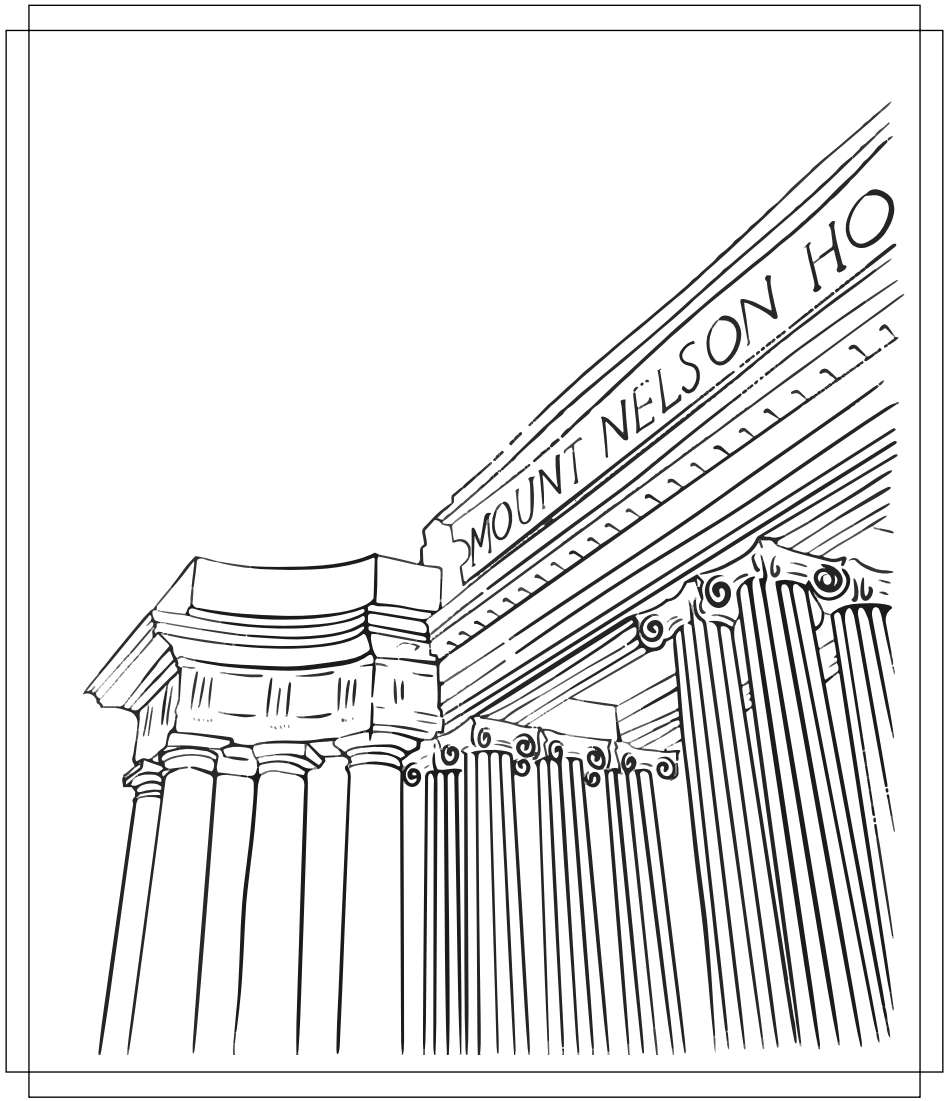


Fig 2. Prince of Wales Gate

- CHAPTER III -

The perfect pairing with Craig Cupido

Mount Nelson is home to South Africa's first expert-trained tea sommelier. Head Sommelier Craig Cupido is passionate about tea and has an abiding appreciation of this time-honoured tradition.

"I have always felt that tea is about connections; to the people you are enjoying it with and the places it comes from," he says. "I love sharing its many positive properties with the guests and helping them choose the ideal tea to pair with a chosen dish. Many are surprised to find how well tea complements fine dining."

Craig is committed to sharing his knowledge and skilling his peers about the art of tea sommeliering so that every guest receives a curated Afternoon Tea experience.

Craig and Vicky, the Mount Nelson Executive Pastry Chef, have curated a menu that presents delicious delicacies from the tea service, with a perfectly matched global tea pairing.



Fig 3. The Mount Nelson Rose

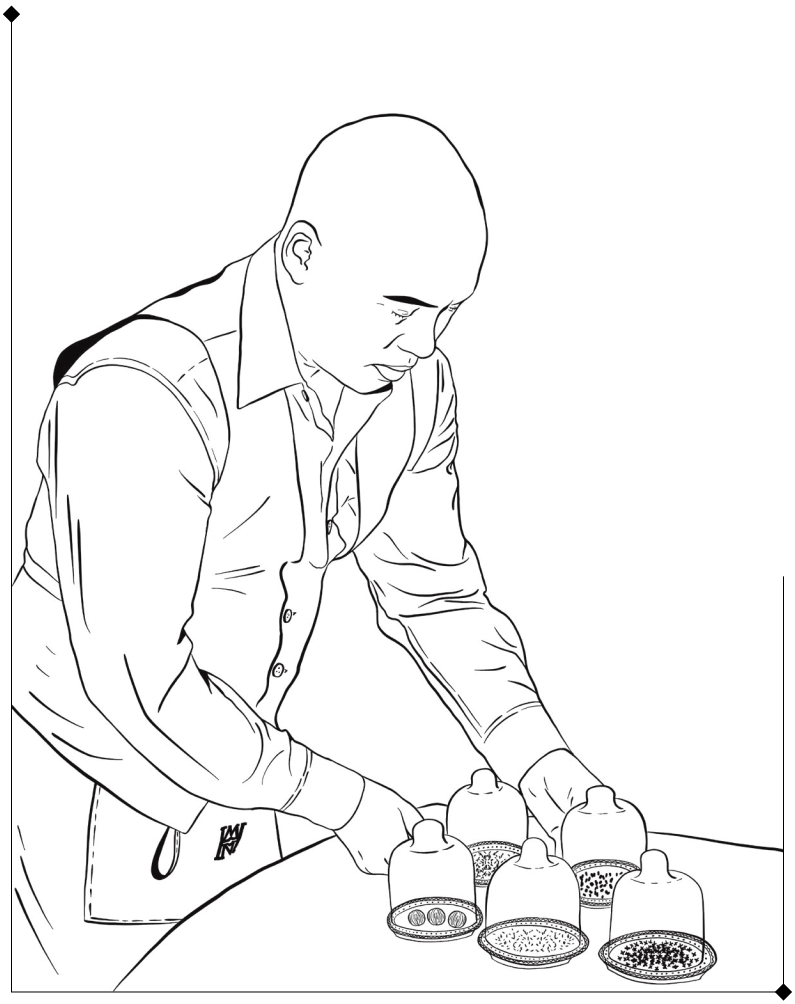


Fig 4. Craig Cupido, Head Tea Sommelier

- CHAPTER IV -

South African teas

South Africa has a number of indigenous teas, notably rooibos, honeybush and buchu. All three derive from the distinctive, endemic vegetation known as fynbos, and all are noted for their health-giving properties. The most famous, globally, is the fragrant, vermilion rooibos tea, which has been made and enjoyed for aeons by the people of the Cape. The Afrikaans name translates as "red bush" and references the colour of the mature leaves. Green rooibos comes from the same plant, but the leaves are dried directly after harvesting.

MOUNT NELSON 125 YEAR BLEND

Playful, caffeine-free and invigorating, it is a blend of Rooibos, Honeybush, Mesquite and Apple, a skilful homage to South African infusions. Baked mesquite sourced from the Great Karoo gives the tea its creamy taste, and the grassiness is thanks to the green rooibos from the Western Cape and green honeybush from the Eastern Cape. Apples from the Cederberg mountain range add a touch of sweetness to the blend. And of course, there are the ubiquitous pink rose petals, offering a floral fragrance that exudes the elegant energy of the hotel.

AFRICAN PRIDE HONEYBUSH

Honeybush tea flavoured with marula and caramel, it is well rounded, sweet and full-bodied.

BLOOD ORANGE ROOIBOS

Rich, brilliant and brightly coloured, with the subtle sweetness of blood orange essence. The citrus note is a wonderful complement to the rooibos base.

BUCHU

Buchu was used by the San (the first people of Southern Africa). It is mildly minty with blackcurrant notes and offers medicinal properties for a healthy body and mind.

COCOA ROOIBOS

Rooibos blended with roasted cocoa husks. A comforting combination of the essence of Ethiopia and South Africa that ends on a high creamy note.

GREEN ROOIBOS
Ultra-high-grade, pure highland rooibos is dried to perfection before full fermentation to produce a greener cup of rooibos, with an interesting combination of grassiness and sweetness.

HONEY BUSH
Indigenous to the fynbos kingdom of the Western and Eastern Cape, honeybush has woody floral notes, with the fruitiness of lemon and oranges, and the nutty sweetness of honey and caramel.

LAVENDER MORINGA
An energising, vibrant, creamy and grassy tisane.

LEMON MESQUITE
Lightly baked mesquite is blended with lemon pieces, lemongrass, honeybush and rooibos. This fruity connection with creamy mesquite is an absolute delicious cup of joy.

MORINGA MESQUITE
Dried roasted mesquite with natural coffee/ chocolate flavour notes daydream with green leafy moringa and sweet caramel. A playful cup of the wonders of Africa.

ORANGE AND SPICE
Rooibos flavoured with spicy cinnamon, warming cardamom, comforting cloves, vanilla and orange.

PURE WILD ROOIBOS
Rooibos grows wild on the high-altitude Cederberg mountains. “The red gold of South Africa” is prized for its hints of honey and orange.

STRAWBERRY AND VANILLA
Pure rooibos flavoured with sweet strawberry and vanilla, perfect for the young and young at heart.

VETIVER GINGER
When the woody and earthy vetiver roots from Eastern Cape join with dried ginger pieces from India, a fragrance both grounding and refreshing is manifested, and when honeybush is introduced, a balanced, warm sweet cup is initiated.

- CHAPTER V -

Loose leaf teas

The custom of drinking tea dates back to the third millennium BC in China when it was used as a medicinal beverage. By the third century AD, it had become a daily drink. The first consignment of China tea arrived in Europe in 1610. The British introduced tea into India and Ceylon in the mid-1800s.

White tea

BAI MU DAN (WHITE PEONY FLOWER)

A delicate orange-coloured infusion with a mild flavour – this tea from China's Fujian province is made from tea buds, collected and air-dried prior to opening.

WHITE MONKEY

Another great white tea produced in China's Fujian province (the origin of white tea). A delicate nutty, honey fragrance characterises this fascinating tea.

Showflower tea

CARNATION LOVE

Tea leaves tied into a ball with red carnation flower. Carnation flower represents love, respect, compassion and elegance.

CELEBRATION

At times, referred to as 'Garden in the Pot', these ultra-high-grade green and white tea leaves are rolled into balls and tied with jasmine and chrysanthemum flowers.

FLOWERGATE TEA

A beautiful archway of chrysanthemum and jasmine flowers unfurls from this tea ball made of top-quality green tea buds.

Green tea

BANCHA HOJICHA – JAPAN

A classic Japanese tea that is lower in caffeine. It is roasted at a high temperature until reddish brown. The flavour is aromatic with roasted, nutty notes.

BI LUO CHUN – TAIWAN
Translated, it means "green spiral leaves of spring". When infused, the tea boasts the delicate, recognisable aroma of Taiwan's finest tea.

FOUR SEASONS SPRING - TAIWAN
Crispy and sweet with hints of peach and grass feelings, fragrance and flavours are at their full potential. Tea leaves are tightly rolled into spherical ball.

GENMAICHA – JAPAN
Genmaicha means natural rice tea. Japanese sencha green tea is blended with roasted and popped rice, which gives it a pleasant, nutty flavour.

GUNPOWDER TEMPLE OF HEAVEN – CHINA
Gunpowder tea is dried slowly in rotating drums to a very tightly rolled ball. It has a slightly dry and fresh flavour.

GYOKURO – JAPAN
This is a premier Japanese sencha tea, which is also known as Dew of a Pearl or Most Exquisite Dew Drop. The tea plants grow in the shadow of broad-leaved trees.

KENYA PURPLE TEA - KENYA
Primarily grown by Kenya-based tea growers, purple tea is dark in colour but classified as a type of green tea because the leaves are not oxidized or fermented.

LONGJING (DRAGON WELL) - CHINA
Known for its unique distinct shape with flattened leaves, fine white hair and smooth appearance, this tea manifests nutty, sweet, buttery and creamy sensations just before its fresh and tender aftertastes come forward.

MATCHA - JAPAN
The top buds are hand-plucked and allowed to dry. Dried tea leaves are then stone-ground to reveal the ultra-greenness of the tea. Stone grinding is considered an art.

SENCHA FUKUJYU – JAPAN
Sencha grows on the slopes of Mount Fuji in Japan. The tea leaves are lightly steamed and dried to preserve their freshness. It has a distinct, strong green-tea aroma.

- CHAPTER V -

Loose leaf teas

Green tea (continued)

WENSHAN BAOZHONG - TAIWAN
A lightly fermented tea, with a striped appearance and natural crinkles. This tea is sweet in aroma with light floral notes. A long, smooth and lingering aftertaste accompanies every sip.

YUNNAN GREEN – CHINA
This tea has a beautifully earthy sweetness and a clean lightness with notes of spiciness.

Flavoured green tea

ORANGE AND BERRIES – CHINA
A cleansing and sweetly uplifting, fruit-flavoured sencha tea.

PANDAN GREEN
When paired with Tango, a grounding green sencha tea, the sweet vanilla pandan leaves and green tea stay true to their words to reveal the abundance in flavours and aromas of a lifetime.

SAKURA - JAPAN
Sakura means “Japanese Cherry Blossom”. This green sencha tea is flavoured with Japanese sour cherries and has the purest, most harmonious fragrance.

Oolong

ALI HIGH MOUNTAIN OOLONG
Ali Mountain is famous for superior high-mountain tea cultivation in Taiwan. Its aromas and flavours gradually unlock, making it ideal for multiple infusions.

DONG DING OOLONG - TAIWAN
‘Dong Ding’ stands for ‘Frozen Peaks’, indicating the high-altitude tea plantations. Hand-plucked, this tea is well-known for its exceptional fragrance, and reminiscence of a peach.

GABA OOLONG - TAIWAN
This tea was introduced and developed in Taiwan following Japanese research on the GABA molecule during the 1980s. It is known for lowering stress and anxiety.

ORIENTAL BEAUTY
This is the finest oolong from Taiwan. Locals also call it “you must be joking” tea, after an interesting tea making accident. The highly oxidised tea has a sweet, smooth taste with a slightly baked, floral aroma and a lightly fruity, honied scent.

TE GUAN YIN - TAIWAN
Also known as ‘Iron Goddess of Mercy’, is traditionally grown in Fujian Province. With fine, dark leaves that produce infusions with long aftertastes of earthy flavours similar to roasted nuts.

Scented Oolong and black tea

JASMINE DRAGON PHOENIX PEARLS – CHINA
A limited production of top-quality jasmine tea from the Fujian province in China. This famous tea is made from tender and healthy green tea shoots, hand-rolled in spring. Long leaf tips are scented with freshly cut jasmine blossoms and are then rolled into small pearls, locking in the flavour and aroma.

JASMINE PEACH – CHINA
Floral jasmine and creamy peach flavours combine to create this full-bodied tea. Simple yet filled with aromatic and flavourful memories.

Black tea

ASSAM BUKHIAL – INDIA
Assam full-leaf second-flush tea has a typically strong and earthy flavour.

CEYLON PETTIAGALLA – SRI LANKA
This fine Ceylon comes from the Dimbula area in the Balangoda District. It has a dark red colour and is highly aromatic with a mild taste.

DARJEELING PUTTABONG FIRST FLUSH - INDIA
Puttabong is one of Darjeeling’s most prestigious estates. This tea is a typical first-flush tea, with its carefully rolled leaves producing a light, aromatic and flowery infusion.

DARJEELING SECOND FLUSH BLEND – INDIA
This single origin Indian tea is highly aromatic with a beautifully lingering flavour.

- CHAPTER V -

Loose leaf teas

Black tea (continued)

ENGLISH BREAKFAST – UNITED KINGDOM
A full-bodied, aromatic tea with sweet, fruity notes. A wonderful tea to start the day.

KENYA MARINYN – KENYA
Neatly twisted, gold-tipped leaves steep to produce a robust, medium-bodied tea with a slightly fruity-floral taste.

MALAWI OP1 - AFRICA
A black tea bred and developed in tea estates more than a thousand metres above sea level in Thyolo, Malawi. Fruity and sweet notes.

MOUNT NELSON HOTEL BLEND
A contemporary classic – our exclusive blend of six international teas from Africa and Asia, flavoured with the buds and petals of our signature Mount Nelson pink roses.

RUSSIAN BLEND – GLOBAL
Based on a classic Russian blend, this tea is highly aromatic with influences from India and China.

SUN MOON LAKE BLACK - TAIWAN
One of the most treasured teas in Asia, this thick and large fully fermented tea is grown near one of the most beautiful lakes in the world to present a sweet, wholesome cup.

YUNNAN BLACK GOLD – CHINA
Produced from 300 to 400 year old trees growing in the birthplace of tea itself. The leaves carry a sweet maltiness and a touch of smoke and pepper.

Flavoured black tea

BLOOD ORANGE BLACK
Black tea flavoured with the slight sweetness and subtle flavour of blood orange essence.

EARL GREY BLUE FLOWER
A classic tea flavoured with uplifting bergamot oil, embellished with striking blue cornflowers.

LAPSANG SOUZHONG – CHINA
This is a classic scented Chinese black tea. The larger souchong leaves are plucked and, after fermentation, they are roasted on a hot iron plate.

MESQUITE BREAKFAST
African black tea leaves with roasted mesquite from Karoo, when mesquite is harvested in the heated summer of South Africa, it is further roasted to have the natural oil release to reveal coffee, chocolate and vanilla aroma.

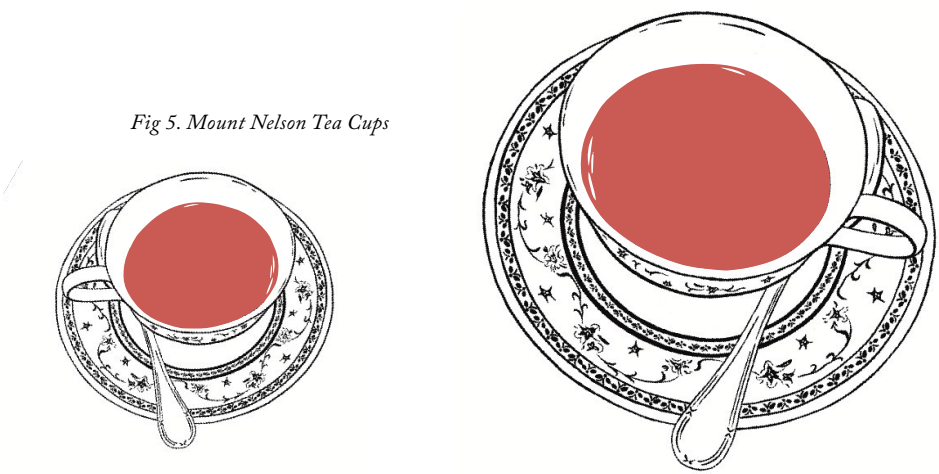
ORIENTAL SPICE
A classic flavoured black tea with a touch of oriental spice.

VANILLA
This rich, velvety black tea is flavoured with vanilla pieces, the perfect accompaniment to chocolate.

Red tea

PU-ERH ROYAL 2009
This tea is grown in the Chinese province of Yunnan. The young leaves and buds from old trees are hand harvested and carefully selected in the early months of the year, between February and March, to capture the most tender part of Pu-erh.

Fig 5. Mount Nelson Tea Cups



- CHAPTER VI -

Delectable confectionery with Vicky Gurovich

The cake table at Mount Nelson offers a delightful variety of freshly baked cakes, tempting tarts, and luscious loaves. The selection highlights the creative expertise of our pastry chefs, led by Vicky Gurovich. A celebrated and award-winning pastry chef, Vicky ensures that Afternoon Tea at Mount Nelson fulfils its legendary status as the most celebrated and sumptuous tea service in Africa.

She once told "Eat Out", one of South Africa's top food guides, why she finds pastry rewarding: "It's very scientific, meticulous, and you still have great freedom with flavours. All fresh ingredients are fair game." And the secret to her exquisite confections? "I think if I can recreate a happy moment from childhood, then I've done my job. My top tips for home bakers are that butter and eggs must be room temperature for baking, and always put alcohol in the malva pudding!"

Fairly recently, Vicky chose to come back to the stunning Cape and rejoin the renowned Mount Nelson establishment. This provided the skilled pastry chef with the opportunity to craft a delightfully light, vibrant, and utterly irresistible Afternoon Tea menu.



Fig 6. Vicky Gurovich, Executive Sous Chef, the Pastry Queen

- CHAPTER VII -

Infusions

Herbal infusions

APPLE CINNAMON LAPACHO
The inner bark of the Tecoma-lapacho tree produces an infusion reminiscent of caramel or vanilla but with less tannic acid and no caffeine. The flavour of the lapacho is enhanced with apple and cinnamon in this infusion.

BUTTERFLY PEA FLOWER
It is well-known for its beautiful bright blue colour. Due to its sensitivity to acidity such as lemon juice, it is used in cocktails and special tea blends. Flavours of this bright blue flower taste like green tea but with some earthy and woody notes.

GREEN MATE
The national drink of Argentina, mate's stimulating effect lasts longer than that of coffee. It comes from a species of the holly family.

HIBISCUS FLOWER
Made popular in Egypt and North Africa, this infusion can be enjoyed hot or cold, with or without sugar. It has a tart, fruity tang and a striking crimson colour.

IMMENSELY BEAUTIFUL
A herbal infusion with hibiscus, rosehip, blackberry leaves, lemongrass, hibiscus and peppermint. Lemon and minty notes create a delicious and refreshing herbal cup with a sense of roundness and completion.

KAROO ROASTED MESQUITE PURE
Farmlands situated at the banks of the mighty Orange River, are visibly overtaken by thousands of invasive thorn trees, known as Mesquite (Prosopis glandulosa) trees. It has a natural flavour and aroma of coffee and vanilla.

MORINGA BUCHU HIBISCUS
Creamy and chocolaty sensation of baked and roasted mesquite dreamily blend with relaxing and sweet dreamlike herbs like peppermint, lemongrass, lavender, chamomile and roses.

NINE LIFE SPICES BLEND
Nine different spices in harmony, including cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, cloves, aniseed, rosemary and thyme.

PANDAN LEAVES
Pandan (Pandanus) is an aromatic plant prized for its sweet floral fragrance and versatility. Its taste is described as a grassy vanilla with a hint of coconut, it is referred to as the "Vanilla of the East".

PEPPERMINT LEAVES
Pure peppermint leaves imbue this infusion with refreshing and aromatic properties.

PURE CHAMOMILE FLOWER
A mild infusion, known for its sleep-inducing properties and sunshine-yellow colour.

SNOW MOUNTAIN CHRYSANTHEMUM
One of the most popular flowers in Asia for scenting teas, chrysanthemums grow wild in the high mountains near Tibet. Round and sweet, the leaves are ideal for multiple steeping.

Fruit infusions

BLUE ABYSS
Rosehips, blueberries, strawberries and apple are blended with butterfly pea flowers to create a bright blue tea.

FOREST BERRIES
An intensely fruity, pink infusion of elderberries, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries.

LEMON
A soothing blend of apple, rosehip, lemongrass and lemon.

MANGO
A fruity infusion of hibiscus, apple, mango and lemongrass.

MARULA PEACH
A pleasant infusion of hibiscus, apple, peach, rosehip and marula.

- CHAPTER VIII -

Coffee

Coffees are individually prepared using the pour-over, Clever Dripper or syphon method to extract the perfect brew. The baristas only use the best single-origin beans from sustainable sources in Africa.

Cold coffee

AFFOGATO
Single shot of the house blend served with vanilla ice cream.

COLD BREW COFFEE
24-hour slow-brewed, African single-origin coffee, served over ice.

FRAPPÉ
Single shot of the house blend with milk and sugar, served over ice and then blended.

ICED COFFEE (UNSWEETENED)
Single shot of the house blend, topped up with milk and poured over ice.

ICED COFFEE (SWEETENED)
Single shot of the house blend, topped with milk and condensed milked, then poured over ice.

COFFEE TONIC
Cold brew and tonic water served over ice.

RED ICED ESPRESSO
Red espresso, lemon, ginger and orange blended with ice.

Hot coffee

AMERICANO
Single shot of Mount Nelson's house blend, topped with hot water.

CAPPUCCINO
Espresso topped with equal parts steamed milk and milk foam.

ESPRESSO
Single or double shot of the house blend.

FLAT WHITE
Espresso, topped with steamed milk.

LATTE
Single shot of house blend, topped with steamed milk and served in a long glass.

LONG BLACK
Double espresso, topped up with hot water.

MOCHA
Single shot of the house blend, topped with steamed milk and flavoured with chocolate.

RISTRETTO, ALSO KNOWN AS "SHORT SHOT'
Double shot of the house blend, poured as a single shot.

MACCHIATO
Espresso topped with a touch of steamed milk.

CORTADO
Espresso topped with an equal amount of steamed milk.

FILTER COFFEE OF THE DAY
Signature Mount Nelson filter blend.

Other hot beverages

ROOIBOS CAPPUCCINO
Ultra-high-grade, pure highland rooibos, served, cappuccino-style with frothed milk. A fragrant, caffeine-free brew.

HOT CHOCOLATE