



# tea paradise

Tea ... it's a beverage much-loved by millions around the world. In fact, its story began in the Chinese Empire more than 2000 years BC.

SINCE THEN IT has travelled from the courts of the Far East to the mugs of missionaries and traders and eventually to the dainty teacups of 16th century western Europe.

Over the centuries, it has been imbibed by prince and pauper, sovereign and sailor, baron and beggar.

Recently, tea has not enjoyed as much acclaim as it once held and can often be perceived as a granny's beverage or perhaps simply a cute excuse to hold your 'pinky' in the air.

However, a New York based company is changing the way the world looks at tea. Appealing to a new generation of tea lovers and an older generation looking to revive their love for this simple, yet elegant, beverage, Tavalon Tea is the exclusive brand about to hit Australian shores.

Founded in New York City in 2005 by businessman and entrepreneur, John-Paul Lee, Tavalon Tea is filling a void in the market for quality tea products with strong branding.

"Tavalon Tea is a lifestyle company that happens to be selling tea. We appeal to not only the brand and image conscious, but also to the health conscious."

The product has proved so successful the company now operates global offices in Dubai, Cairo, Hong Kong, Phnom Penh, Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai, New York City and Beijing, and this month (August) launches its operations in Australia with offices based in Sydney and on the Gold Coast.

Mr Lee said bringing the luxury brand to Australia was all about finding the right partner and he has found that with health-conscious and luxury-oriented Australian businessman, Matthew Youn.

Matthew is so passionate about his new venture for change that he sacrificed his role as Chief Executive of a few well-established finance firms as well as his decent remunerations, to invest his time and passion into Tavalon Australia and New Zealand.

"Sometimes in life you have to give up something great, to gain something even greater," Mr Youn said.

Mr Youn, an alumnus of London Business School, currently holds eight directorships in both public and private companies in Australia, including his new role as Managing Director of Tavalon Australia and New Zealand.

As an avid tea drinker, Mr Youn is well aware of its health benefits but realised the popularity of coffee meant these advantages were being thrown away.

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He believes his new role will allow him to educate others to begin a new tradition that will help them physically, mentally and emotionally.

His clear wealth of experience and education have equipped him with the courage and confidence to take on this challenge and make a positive difference to one person, one cup of tea at a time, until it reaches the world.



Making its debut in Brisbane, in partnership with Queensland Sotheby's International Realty, the company is already fielding plenty of interest in Australia including that of five-star hotels, fine dining restaurants, and showcase events.

Mr Youn said the business had been well received and was now strategically collaborating with renowned brands in the market.

Queensland Sotheby's International Realty Managing Director, Paul Arthur, said he felt Tavalon represented the same values as the renowned real estate brand and was excited to be serving the exclusive tea at its open homes in the future.

"Tavalon Tea is seen as a luxury lifestyle product and it complements the Sotheby's brand perfectly. We are proud to be aligned with them," Mr Arthur said.

Tavalon is derived from Avalon, the mythical paradise island where the mortally wounded King Arthur was taken by nine fairy queens.

The "T" is taken from the word 'tea' and combined Tavalon equals 'a tea paradise'.

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Tavalon's exclusive range of teas are procured and blended by its tea sommelier Chris Cason, who collects the finest ingredients from select tea farms around the world. Mr Cason also creates customised blends for the exclusivity of certain establishments.

The company has partnered with more than 8000 clients worldwide. These include Google, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Formula 1, The Plaza Hotel, Langham Place, Park Hyatt, International Emmy Awards, Tiffany & Co, Magnolia Bakery and MTV Awards, just to name a few.

And while tea might seem a misfit at such champagne events as the Grammys and Emmys, Tavalon have that taken care of with their range of tea-infused cocktails.

These include clever rebranding of traditional cocktails, such as TEAquila Sunrise, MoTEAjo, SmarTEAni, Chai MarTEAni, Tea Mimosa, Rooibos MarTEAni and plenty more.

"You have people who talk about their social beverage of choice being tea or coffee and others who say their social beverage of choice is alcohol so we like to think we've covered all bases," Mr Lee said.