

# Press kit



Tea Gschwendner





## Facts and figures

Adress:	TeeGschwendner GmbH Heidestr. 26 D-53340 Meckenheim Tel.: +49 2225 – 9214-0 Fax: +49 2225 – 9214-20
Status:	Market leader in the German tea etail trade
Formation:	1978 by Albert Gschwendner
Management:	Thomas Holz, Birgit Rohn, Jonathan Gschwendner
Number of stores:	133 in total (updated February 2022) Germany: 126 Luxembourg: 2 Austria: 1 USA: 1 Kuwait: 3
Staff:	Headquarters: ca. 180 Group in total ca. 1.000
Tea varieties:	ca. 350 varieties
Awards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Franchise Award 2017, German Franchise Association</li> <li>• Best System 2016, 2013, 2009 &amp; 2005, International Centre for Franchising and Cooperation</li> <li>• Test winner Stiftung Warentest 11/2014: Black Tea "Darjeeling Himalaya First Flush" (215)</li> <li>• 1st place „North American Tea Championship“ 2013: „Bambus Pomelo“ (1296) and airfreighted tea „Darjeeling FTGFOP1 Soom First Flush BIO“ (233)</li> <li>• Test winner Ökotest 02/2012: South Korea Seogwang Sencha organic (591), Japan Shinya Shimoyama First Flush organic (2304)</li> <li>• Sustainable retailer (2011 Silver, 2009 Bronze), Federal Association Die Verbraucher Initiative e.V.</li> <li>• 1st place „World Tea Championship“ 2010: organic ice tea Pineapple Passionfruit (1822)</li> <li>• 1st place „World Tea Championship“ 2009: Pineapple-Mango (998) and Earl Grey No. 69 (922)</li> <li>• Test winner Ökotest 11/2008: Darjeeling TGFOP1 Jungpana First Flush (220) and Darjeeling Green GFOP1 Okayti (299)</li> </ul>



## The history of TeaGschwendner



- 1976 The Founding of the company and opening of the first teashop in Trier, Germany by Albert Gschwendner, his wife Gwendalina and his brother Karl. The idea was born out of the lack of possibilities to purchase high-quality loose leaf tea at affordable prices.
- 1977 Opening of a tea shop in Bonn, Germany with a new philosophy: offering tea as an experience. Features: a wide assortment of top quality products, optimal location, comprehensive product consultation and of course, great service.
- 1982 First steps into franchising and national expansion. All franchisees are independent entrepreneurs with a passion for tea and comprehensive consultancy expertise.
- 1985 Expansion of the market leadership in specialty tea retail with 25 franchise businesses and 3 own shops.
- 1989 51 shops and founding of the advertisement committee for planning and coordinating all general marketing measures.
- 1992 Assortment contains more than 300 varieties of loose leaf teas. Expansion to Luxembourg and Switzerland. The headquarters moves from Bornheim to Meckenheim.
- 1998 Thomas Holz joins the management.

- 1999 Implementation of a new marketing presence under the new motto “trade and drink tea” and the building of a future-oriented “world of tea experience” around tea products. To avoid confusion, the original franchise brand “der Teeladen” is renamed to “TeeGschwendner” (or English: “TeaGschwendner”). Launch of the first web shop for tea.

TeaGschwendner is represented at 80 locations.

- 2004 The shop fitting concept is adjusted to the flexible “City concept” to provide a consistent brand appearance despite varying circumstances and sizes. Together with the IHK Bonn/Rhein-Sieg (Bonn /Rhine-Sieg Chamber of Commerce and Industry) “Expert for Retail management” education is developed.
- 2005 Awarded “Franchisor of the year” from the economy magazine “Impulse” and the German franchise association as well as the award for “best franchise system” from the F&C partner satisfaction survey. Multilingual concept for the web shop is introduced.
- 2007 Together with the IHK Bonn/Rhein-Sieg, the TeaGschwendner academy offers the Tea Sommelier qualification program for the first time.
- 2009 At the World Tea Championship in Las Vegas, TeaGschwendner takes first place with two tea varieties. Gold award from the F&C for an extraordinary company network.
- 2010 In July 2010, company founder Albert Gschwendner dies at the age of 56 years.
- 2013 On the German market, 132 franchise businesses are active and 151 worldwide. The web shop is relaunched.

Once again, TeaGschwendner is presented with the Gold award as the best franchise system.

- 2014 The new flagship store in Hamburg at Bergstraße implements the future shop concept and opens a large Tea Lounge.
- 2016 The first sustainability report is published.
- 2017 Awarded with the “Green Franchise Award” as a company that acts sustainable.
- 2019 Jonathan Gschwendner becomes general manager and from now on runs the company together with Thomas Holz.
- 2021 Birgit Rohn becomes general manager. There are now three people at the top of the system headquarters.





# Albert Gschwendner

## Company founder and visionary

Albert Gschwendner was a visionary. People who met him immediately felt that charisma that special people have who are sure of their passion and goals. And his passion was tea!



With a lot of creativity, Albert Gschwendner built up a company empire at the age of 22 and in 1976, according to the motto: "Trade and drink tea", he laid the foundation of today's business success together with his brothers and his wife. By trading, however, is meant not only the trade in tea, but also getting involved and making things happen - and doing so with a dose of calm and restraint. Two qualities that are also associated with the product tea.

Family always played a major role for Albert Gschwendner. However, the first tea shop called "Der Teeladen", which he opened with his wife Gwendalina in Trier, initially flopped because of the location. While his older brother Karl tried again with the business idea in Trier at a better location, Albert Gschwendner and his wife decided to make a second attempt - this time in Bonn and with success. "What started out small like a tea plant has grown organically and is in beautiful bloom today," Albert Gschwendner once said in an interview.

Today, Gschwendner's "World of Tea" convinces tea drinkers in the most diverse corners of the world: from Latin America and the Arab region to the USA. "Accompanying this process of growth in our organisation, helping to determine the direction and dealing with the most beautiful and noblest trade product on earth anew every year, that's what makes it exciting to me" says Albert Gschwendner.

What once began with a passion of Albert Gschwendner is now a whole world of experience around tea. Via franchising, the small tea shop in Trier became the market leader in specialised tea retail - thanks to the extraordinary founder Albert Gschwendner.

In July 2010, Albert Gschwendner died at the age of 56. But his spirit and visionary attitude to life are firmly anchored in the company. The founder himself had once put it this way: "We have tea in our souls. This wonderful luxury food connects us with each other in a special way."



## Passion for tea

These three are united by their passion for tea! Together they run the company in the spirit of the company founder Albert Gschwendner, who died in 2010: to bring the love of tea to the people and let them share in the unique pleasure of a good cup.

### Thomas Holz

Thomas Holz (born 1957) was born in Hamburg, where he worked as a merchant and authorised representative for tea import and export in Hamburg's Speicherstadt after completing his schooling and training, and later as co-managing director and partner of HTH Hamburger Teehandel GmbH. In 1994, his friend Albert Gschwendner brought him to the Rhineland, where he first took over the management of tea purchasing at TeaGschwendner and then joined the management in 1998. Today, his responsibilities here are primarily in the areas of franchise, sales, finance and personnel.

Chef Tea Taster Thomas Holz has been travelling regularly to all tea-origin countries since 1983 and maintains long-standing friendships and business relationships with the tea gardens. His heart beats for Nepal, to which he has travelled annually since his first visit in 1984 in order to support the smallholder Sunderpani project initiated together with GIZ with his know-how. Holz is a member of the Ooty Club (Nilgiri, South India), the German-Asian Business Circle (Frankfurt), a founding member of the NABU Entrepreneur Initiative and a member of the German-Nepalese Society (Cologne). Holz is also known from various press publications, including Stern, Brigitte, Bonner Generalanzeiger, Fit for Fun, Essen & Trinken, Kölner Stadtanzeiger and FAZ, as well as appearances on ZDF, WDR, SWR3 and Deutschlandradio. Thomas Holz is married, has 2 grown-up children and lives in the Eifel.





## Jonathan Gschwendner



Jonathan Gschwendner (born 1983) is the son of the company founders Albert and Gwendalina Gschwendner. He imbibed tea with his mother's milk and discovered the wide world of tea from an early age. Even at a young age, he often travelled to tea gardens around the world: to India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, Japan and China. This set the course for his later career: He learned the trades of retail and wholesale and foreign trade in various tea companies and lived in the transshipment centres in northern Germany and England until 2008, when he joined the family business as the next generation, where he is still responsible for global tea purchasing as Tea Taster.

Since May 2019, he has shared the management with Thomas Holz and mainly takes on tasks in the areas of purchasing, operations and quality management and assurance. Since 2021, the top management has also been strengthened by Birgit Rohn. Press publications

about and with Jonathan Gschwendner include reports in the FAZ, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Wirtschaftswoche and GEO as well as in Manager Magazin and Bonner General-Anzeiger.

Jonathan Gschwendner is married, has 2 children and lives with his family in his native Bonn. In his free time, the passionate tennis and football player is very active in sports and is also particularly involved in company sports and participation in sporting company events such as the Bonn Marathon, the Bonn company run and other regional sporting events.





## Birgit Rohn

Birgit Rohn, who has been Head of Communications & Marketing and a member of the Executive Board for many years, can already look back on more than 25 years with the system and knows what matters. Since October 2021, she has been at the helm of the system headquarters together with Thomas Holz and Jonathan Gschwendner.

Birgit Rohn has been a permanent member of the head office staff since 1995, initially as assistant to company founder Albert Gschwendner. Her major fields of study China and economics complemented each other for this task, especially as she had come into intensive contact with Asian culture - including tea culture! - during her longer stay in Taiwan and travels all alone through China in the 1980s. Back then - when advertising still worked a little differently and people in Germany actually had breakfast at half past nine in the morning - they worked closely together to define strategies, create products, fine-tune concepts...

Birgit Rohn was always energetic and full of ideas to realise the common ideas, e.g. the "crazy" idea of an own online shop in 1998! She always found her balance as a player and trainer in handball. Almost 10 years later, the marketing department was formed with Birgit Rohn as its head. A short time later, she became head of the "Communication & Marketing" department with the webshop and IT departments. Since 2010, she has been an authorised signatory and a permanent member of the management team. Her area of responsibility covers: Corporate Design, Webshop, Internet, Marketing, Franchise Advisory Board, Public Relations, Brand Management, Payback - and much more.



## This is what we stand for



The enduring success of TeaGschwendner is guaranteed by a companywide commitment to excellence. We demand that our tea products be of the highest quality and that, as our teas travel from the garden to the cup, this quality is assured by certified, transparent processes. TeaGschwendner stands for premium quality, safety, value, expertise and independence.

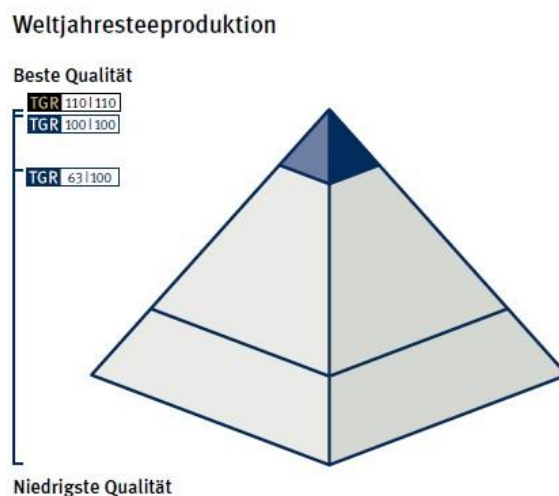
As we grow, we make certain that our suppliers have the opportunity to grow and succeed along with us. We cultivate relationships with producers and share with them their daily challenges, making mutual commitments to the environmentally sustainable cultivation of tea. We actively concern ourselves with the living and working conditions of the people who grow and produce the tea that we purchase. We demand that our suppliers share our vision of social responsibility.

And, naturally, it is just as important to us to create an equitable workplace at home. We invest heavily in education and training of our teams, keeping them abreast of developments in our industry. Our franchise partners and store managers have an integral voice in shaping our policy, strategy and product offering. And you, as the customer, have a voice too. Your ideas and suggestions are passed regularly from the store level up to the team at headquarters.

At TeaGschwendner, we encourage open dialogue. We would be delighted to exchange views on the principles which guide our enterprise.

## Our guiding principles

- 1. Premium Quality:** TeaGschwendner aspires to the highest standards of product quality and freshness. Only a tiny, elite fraction of the annual world tea harvest – a mere 0.5% – is considered for purchase by our Master Tea Tasters. Our close personal relationships with small, self-employed growers ensure a level of quality and rarity that cannot be found elsewhere in the market.
- 2. Safety:** Buying tea is a matter of trust. We thoroughly test every tea – before and after purchase – for pesticide and heavy metal residues. Our scientists perform our tests at our own in-house laboratory according to reliable and verified methods far stricter than the law requires.
- 3. Price and Value:** From the very beginning, TeaGschwendner has been committed to the concepts governing environmentally sustainable tea cultivation. Fair trade and organically grown tea are of special importance to us. Teas of excellent quality and freshness have their price. We understand value, and we pledge to our customers that, at TeaGschwendner, each gram of tea is worth its price!
- 4. Expertise:** TeaGschwendner possesses expertise at every level of tea production. Our experts advise tea makers across the world on cultivation and processing techniques. Our tea tasters ensure that we select only the highest quality products, while our team of scientists and technicians guarantees their purity and consistency.
- 5. Resource conservation:** Resource conservation is of trend-setting importance for our actions and the future of our company, our country, the earth and the entire population of the world. Together with our franchise partners and all people and companies involved in the value creation process, we have formulated the goal of permanently working on improving resource-saving production and environmental management, as well as using renewable, responsibly produced raw materials wherever possible.



*Quality shares of the worldwide tea production per annum. Our assortment contains only tea of the "Best Quality" category.*



## From the country of origin to the cup



TeaGschwendner stands for highest product quality and excellent product safety. Even the purchase of our teas is carried out according to defined quality criteria. Tea from organic cultivation is preferred, while tea from conventional cultivation is exclusively sourced from tea gardens that know the high quality standards of TeaGschwendner and take them seriously.

TeaGschwendner employees regularly visit the tea gardens on site to discuss quality-relevant criteria with the producers. All tea samples are tested for traditional quality criteria as well as for unwanted residues and contaminants. Traditional quality assessments (examination of the processed leaf, smell of the dry tea, taste of the brewed tea, examination of the infusion, i.e. the brewed tea leaves) are carried out by our tea tasters.

To ensure the flawless quality of our products with regard to possible residues or impurities, our quality assurance is based on a close-meshed concept. Our tea varieties are tested on the basis of a "Code of Practice" in which quality assurance strategies are defined at all product stages.

As an essential element of our quality assurance, we have established our own laboratory under scientific management. Here all types of tea are constantly checked for residues and impurities. A prompt preliminary examination of offer and purchase samples enables us to make purchase decisions on the basis of a comprehensive quality assessment and to offer a high-quality, clean and healthy product together with our producers.

Our laboratory team takes into account the growing link between the idea of quality and factors such as residue control and food safety on a daily basis - over 1000 teas are tested here for various residues and contaminants every year. In the laboratory areas Preparation & Extraction, Weighing Room, Purification / Concentration and Identification / Determination, the 5-member team around quality manager and nutritionist Dr.-Ing. Sophia Dohlen already examines the samples on offer in order to be able to make purchasing decisions on the basis of a comprehensive quality assessment.

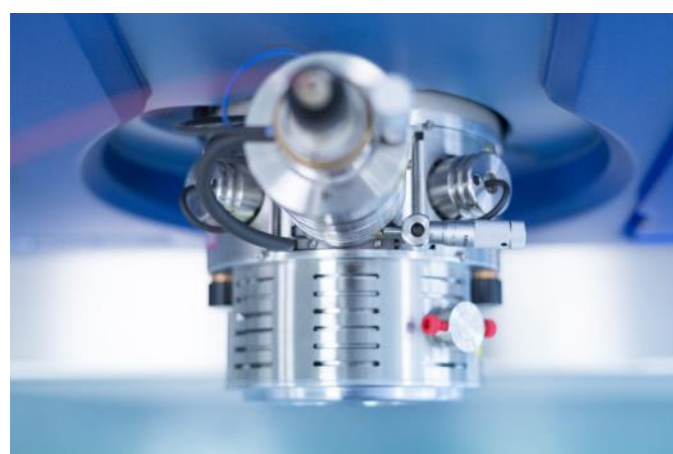
Re-checking the incoming samples of the products actually purchased, routine spot checks and an additional inspection of the tea varieties by independent sworn experts round off the inspection concept for each individual tea variety.

With this elaborate and rewarding quality assurance strategy, we succeed, together with our producers, in offering a high-quality, clean and healthy product.

Upon request, the residue analysis of "their tea" is sent to each customer.

You can find out more about quality assurance at

[www.teegschwendner.de/en/about/quality/](http://www.teegschwendner.de/en/about/quality/)



*Pictures: Mirène Schmitz*

## Guarantee of Quality

### Quality tea from tea experts

From tea garden to cup, we ensure that all teas comply with our rigorous quality control standards.

### The pleasure of pure tea

Prior to purchase, the fresh harvest samples undergo stringent sensorial and scientific testing for residues and impurities in TeaGschwendner's high-tech in-house laboratories.

# Premium Assortments

## Our tea assortments



### Loose Tea

In the core assortment, customers can choose from around 400 varieties of loose teas. These include classic black and green teas, white tea, the flavoured edition with creations for every taste, rooibos, honeybush, fruit teas and herbal teas from predominantly organic cultivation.

### Organic assortment

A wide range of around 200 certified organic teas in accordance with EU regulations extends across the entire range.

### Matcha

Our high-quality Matcha range includes three exclusive organic Matchas as well as selected accessories for Japanese tea preparation.

### Edmon's

The "Edmon's sophisticated tea selection" offers an exclusive selection of top tea qualities and rarities. The small harvest quantities allow only a limited availability in terms of time and quantity.

### Ayurveda

TeaGschwendner's Ayurvedic herbal spice blends were designed on the basis of the 3-Dosha teachings and naturally contain only the best ingredients from organic cultivation.



### Tea projects

Drink tea and do good - this is the motto of our project teas, with which we support social and environmental projects at the origin of the tea.



### Nature lovers

Nature holds the greatest treasures: our 6 organic tea blends of the nature lovers series carry the power of nature within them. Great ingredients for targeted enjoyment, all in the spirit of balancing body and mind.



### Trend Teas

At regular intervals, new teas are created for a mostly limited period of time, the so-called "trend teas". These often include unconventional creations such as peach turmeric, rice pudding or mate ginger lemon.

### Family & Co.

An assortment for families, flat-sharing communities, large-scale consumers or anyone who needs a lot of tea and does not want to do without quality. A cross-section through the whole world of tea - already packed in larger containers and therefore particularly inexpensive!

### MasterBag

High-quality premium tea for the best tea enjoyment in practical portions for 0.25 - 0.4 litres. The range includes a cross-section of top-selling loose teas as well as six seasonal varieties. The MasterBag range is also aimed at the catering and hotel trade.

### Eistee

Our iced teas contain freshly brewed, real tea and pure fruit juices. Four delicious varieties in organic quality that offer a natural refreshment experience in a practical 0.5 l Tetrapak thanks to natural ingredients and no added sugar or preservatives.



### Seasonal Tea

Some teas are only offered seasonally and can be purchased within a time frame of 2 to 6 months, which depends, among other things, on the season and the availability of the tea, such as in the case of first flush or second flush airfreighted teas.

### Tea Accessories

An extensive range of tea accessories such as pots, cups, glasses and utensils for tea preparation complete the offer for the tea connoisseur.



## Acting sustainably



Since Albert Gschwendner founded the company, acting responsibly towards humans and nature is an existential part of the company's culture. Being sustainable has become our fundamental attitude to combine entrepreneurial actions with moral values.

Our history shows the constant development from a traditional tea trade to a value-oriented tea trading company with complex business ideas / -fields and a huge diversity of cooperation partners.

### **Interactive exchange with all participants along the value chain**

The structure of the TeaGschwendner franchise system, with its form of organization and integration of franchise partners in development processes is particularly important. What is unique, however, is the interactive exchange between the people in the countries of origin who make our tea, the people who buy the tea, and those who sell it enthusiastically in their tea shops. Numerous trips to the tea gardens around the world have given us insight into the challenges involved at the teas origin and vice versa. This insight allows us to successfully communicate the complex requirements of the western world in regards to food safety to the tea farmers in the countries of origin.

An important building block on the path to sustainability is the further development of our product range to include more products from organic cultivation and with our own projects, in producing countries, through which we can provide direct, concrete development assistance, in the best sense.

[Learn more about sustainability at TeaGschwendner](#)

## Green Franchise Award 2017



In 2017 we received the Green Franchise Award for our commitment as a particularly sustainable franchise system. The jury described TeaGschwendner as a role model for ecology, economy, culture and social issues that consistently implements the holistic sustainability approach throughout the company.

Learn more about the Green Franchise Award



## GLS KlimaProtect

Since October 2019, TeaGschwendner has been actively participating in the GLS KlimaProtect programme and thus handles its parcel shipping via General Logistics Systems Germany GmbH & Co. OHG in a climate-neutral manner. The CO2 emissions generated during parcel transport are offset by investments in an externally certified forest protection and reforestation project (VCS/CCB standard).

## Sustainable Packaging

When it comes to packaging, product protection for TeaGschwendner comes first. It is our aim to guarantee the highest product safety and best taste and to use environmentally friendly packaging materials as far as possible. It is a great challenge to reconcile these two approaches. Nevertheless, in order to find suitable packaging solutions in a dynamic market with constantly new possibilities and developments, we work together with renowned partners from the packaging industry.

For wood and paper products, we take care to use FSC-certified goods whenever possible. By using FSC-certified wood and paper products, we make a conscious decision to use forest resources sparingly. The aim of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is to promote environmentally friendly, socially beneficial and economically viable forestry worldwide.

In addition, we deliberately use the scope for the use of recycled and recyclable materials for products for which product protection requirements permit.

## Organic Tea as a sustainability factor

Tea – conventional or organic cultivation – is one of the cleanest foods in the world. About half of our tea assortment is of organic quality, due to our decision to change the production methods for the benefit of humans and nature.

With regard to quality, taste and cleanness many conventional teas still have a head start. Our fundamental maxim is valid for conventional as well as organic cultivation: fair, healthy & tasty!

The teas marked “organic cultivation” are regularly checked by the officially recognized control center DE-013 for compliance with the EU eco-regulation.





# Commitment to the environment and nature

## In harmony with man and nature



“When projects connect with our world of tea and we recognize that good work can be done, we have a vital interest in supporting them. Earning money is not the primary reason. Quite the contrary – we want to give back earned money. Economizing sustainably in accordance with nature is what we are aiming for. Without nature, tea cultivation is not possible. Our advantage: our tea tastes delicious and we are convinced that our customers value our social and environmental engagement.” *Albert Gschwendner, 2008*

### Education and social commitment

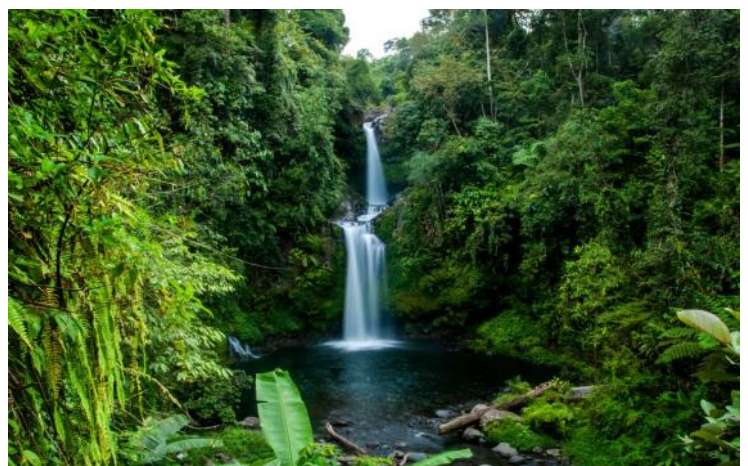
TeaGschwendner has been supporting the Ronald McDonald Foundation for the families of seriously ill children for many years. We also support numerous local activities such as the food banks, associations or kindergartens with products and give lectures at schools, adult education centres and universities.

### Nature and species conservation in the tea origin

With your tea enjoyment you support the nature and environmental protection projects of NABU: For every 250g package of the project teas "Black Oothu\*", "Green Manjolai\*" and "Assam Kaziranga" sold, 1.00 Euro goes into the projects of NABU. For each 100g package of our "Rainforest Rescue Tea" sold, 0.40 Euro will be donated to NABU for the benefit of the rainforest project. [www.en.nabu.de](http://www.en.nabu.de)

### Myanmar Project

Together with GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), TeaGschwendner has educated tea farmers in Myanmar, trained them in organic cultivation, built the first tea factory and made processing methods with new machines possible. The tea from the Myanmar Green Pindaya project (No. 595) is available exclusively at our stores and at our online-shop. [Learn more](#)



### Project to protect the rainforest

TeaGschwendner and NABU are committed to preserving the Indonesian rainforests! NABU has been working with several project partners for several years to protect and restore the highly endangered lowland rainforests in Indonesia. The Rainforest Rescue Tea was developed especially for this project. For every 100g package of our Rainforest Rescue Tea sold, € 0.40 is donated to NABU. [Learn more](#)

## The Nepal Project

Under the motto "Those who move, get things moving", TeaGschwender, together with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Gorkha Tea Estate, supports 200 smallholder families of the Shree Sunderpani Cooperative in the tea district of Ilam in Nepal. Since 2009, a new tea factory has been processing the tea leaves of the smallholders. Tea processing machines were purchased and experts advise the factory to guarantee optimal processing and transport of the leaves. The smallholders were taught

how to produce organic compost and the households were given cows as key elements of organic farming, and biogas plants were also provided. In July 2011, the organic certification took place. The steadily improving results of the smallholder initiatives are now reflected in a pioneering way in our orthodox range, culminating in the project tea "Aktion Nepal" (No. 392/394). [Further information on the project](#)



## Regional herbs

Together with the bio innovation park Rheinland in the Meckenheim and Rheinbach region (close to the headquarters of TeaGschwender), a unique presentation space is being created around the green technologies of the agro-food industry for fruit and horticulture. Here, research, development and application will be closely interrelated. The first result of this close exchange of experience between science and industry has already found its way into our portfolio: The first "Meckenheim Apple Mint" (No. 1119), which is grown and processed in the Rhineland region. [Learn More](#)

## DKMS

The DKMS has taken on the vital role of finding suitable stem cell donors for leukaemia patients. In order to continue to give as many leukaemia patients as possible a chance of a cure, the main concern of the DKMS is the continuous expansion of the donor file. In 2010 and 2013, a large part of the TeaGschwender staff in Meckenheim had themselves typed - and just a few months later, a colleague was able to save the life of a leukaemia patient as a genetic twin. For further information, please visit the DKMS website: [www.dkms.de](http://www.dkms.de)



## Bee Project with Stadtbienen e.V.

Together with the non-profit association Stadtbienen, TeaGschwender is actively involved in bee protection and the preservation of local biodiversity. For this purpose, two bee boxes were set up on the company premises in the in-house biotope, giving two bee colonies a new, safe home. Learn more: [www.stadtbienen.org](http://www.stadtbienen.org)

## You want to learn more?

More information on these and other projects, travel diaries, videos and photos can be found on [our homepage](#).



## Treasure hunters of good taste



Tea tasters at TeeGschwendner need 3 things above all: highly sensitive senses, extensive knowledge and an excellent memory for taste. The training is more than extensive: only after about 7 years can a Tea Taster name and evaluate all tea varieties.

Their job is as versatile as it is responsible: they select only the best teas from around 10,000 samples every year and ensure consistently high quality. Because nothing escapes their fine sense of taste! In addition, they are responsible for the blending and composition of hundreds of tea varieties and ensure that our customers receive tea that remains constant in appearance and taste, despite the different tea qualities each year.

All over the world, there are thousands of tea varieties that differ depending on the growing region, plant, climate, cultivation, picking, harvesting and processing methods. From February to November, hundreds of samples arrive in Meckenheim every day. Each sample is judged on a whole range of criteria: Taste, smell, leaf texture and colour of the infusion - and put in context with the country of origin. This is the only way to objectively assess the quality and the purchase price.

But their job only begins with the tasting of the samples. Our tea tasters always have the complete TeeGschwendner range in mind. Their fine palate immediately finds out which teas are suitable to adequately complement the assortment or to be used for new creations. This also requires well-founded knowledge of consumer buying habits as well as a feel for trends, which is continually expanded and extended through market observations. The highly sensitive taste buds of our tea tasters are an invaluable asset of TeeGschwendner.



## The procedure of a Tea Tasting

The process of a tasting is highly standardised to ensure the comparability of the samples and is carried out in the following steps:

### 1. Set-up and preparation

First, the various tea samples of the day are lined up on a long special table. Using a brass hand scale, the Tea Taster then weighs out exactly 2.86 grams from each sample - which traditionally corresponds to the weight of an English sixpence coin - and fills each into a porcelain cup with a lid.

### 2. Brewing and assessment

The weighed tea is brewed with freshly boiled water and allowed to steep for exactly 5 minutes. The prepared infusions ("batches") are poured into a porcelain bowl, then the brewed tea leaves ("infusion") are first examined for colour and texture and the smell is tested.

### 3. Tasting and slurping

The Tea Taster now moves from sample to sample and sucks in the infusion while slurping noisily. However, slurping has nothing to do with bad table manners, but serves to increase the absorption of oxygen, which ensures greater taste sensitivity in the mouth. In this way, the Tea Taster can better "taste" the different nuances.

The fact that the tea is spat back into a copper "spittoon" after testing is not due to poor quality, but simply because drinking hundreds of tea samples per day is too much even for a Tea Taster. In addition, some teas are very strong due to the long infusion time of 5 minutes and often not really enjoyable for a sensitive and trained palate.

### 4. Negotiation and control

If the verdict is positive, the Tea Taster negotiates with the supplier and orders the required quantity. After delivery, the goods are compared again with the sample and chemically tested in the in-house laboratory.



## Our tea experience guides



An unusual word: tea experience guide. But it hits the job, or rather the vocation, of our specialist sellers on the head. Our specialized shop assistants are highly competent, service-oriented and simply love tea. They assist the customer in exploring the world of tea. No matter how experienced or knowledgeable about the product of tea the customer is, the main objective of our consultants is to take them from their personal “tea point” and to start the journey from there.

Many new customers have been surprised how easily the consultants have found the right tea out of the wide array offered. Once you have found your favorite variety, you will never want to be without it. By accurate consulting and a free-of-charge sample for each purchase, the customer develops his or her own tea taste, little by little. In other words: daily life fills up with more and more moments for tea and for some special days, they may treat themselves to a special cup of tea. Lower quality teas will no longer have a place in the cupboard once the palate has been pampered with premium loose leaf teas sold at an affordable price.

## Excellent tea, excellent franchise



More than 30 years ago, the TeaGschwendner GmbH was one of the first companies to take on a form of distribution that was previously unknown in Germany: franchising. Since then, TeaGschwendner has developed into the undisputed market leader in tea retailing through continuous expansion. Today, we have over 130 partner shops in Germany and abroad. Our partners offer around 400 types of tea in their shops, which have an average size of 55 square metres.



"The assortment combined with a well-organised franchise system is the basis of our success. The establishment of our own distribution channel gives us all the entrepreneurial freedom we need, which in its exhaustion ensures our unique appearance. We buy according to our own quality and quality assurance criteria, which are uncompromising in every respect. Our prices are fair and our customers recognize the added value of quality." (Company founder Albert Gschwendner)



In the F & C partner satisfaction survey conducted since June 2004, TeaGschwendner was named best franchise system for the first time in 2005. This excellent result was confirmed by our partners in subsequent surveys in 2009 and 2013. In 2009, 2013 and 2016, TeaGschwendner was awarded the Gold Award as an outstandingly good business network by the renowned Institute for Franchising and Cooperation. In 2017, we received the Green Franchise Award for sustainable and environmentally friendly business practices.

[You can find more information about franchising here](#)





Tea Gschwendner