



Market

Tea, like many other crops around the world – bananas, coffee, soya beans and cotton, for example – represents both a consumable product and an industry. Like any other industry, it commands an infrastructure, a vast pool of human resources, a trading system and a culture. The companies that compete for a share of the market do so on many fronts. If the four Ps of marketing were to be a guide, product, price, promotion and packaging make this competitive environment extremely volatile.

The trading price of tea can determine the brand value and share price of a company. And the distribution and global reach of a brand of tea – determined by a country's trade relations, the cost of shipping, regional wars, and more recently, the health factor – can turn a small company into a leading light.

Sri Lankan tea, better known throughout the tea world as Ceylon Tea, has a reputation that goes back many decades. Like Swiss chocolates or Australian butter, Ceylon Tea has become synonymous with quality and character, with the least amount of promotion. Sri Lanka ranks as the third-largest tea producer in the world, with a market share of approximately 10% of global tea production. It is the largest single exporter in the world. It cultivates 190,000 hectares of tea, producing around 300 million kilogrammes annually. Tea is Sri Lanka's largest agricultural export crop, accounting for 15% of the nation's income and providing employment to over half a million people. Ceylon Tea brands which carry the special Lion logo (a registered logo representing quality, by the Tea Board of Sri Lanka) stand for quality.

Ever since James Taylor, a Scottish planter, introduced tea to what was then Ceylon in 1867, this most natural beverage is also considered to be the most consumed – after water – in the world.

The story of tea goes back to its discovery in China. This dates as far back as 2737 B.C., during the reign of Emperor Chen Nung, who was referred to as the divine healer. Emperor Nung was responsible for the discovery of medical properties of many herbs during his reign. It is said that one day, while on a journey, he stopped for a drink of water. While he boiled the water to purify it, a few dry leaves from a tea tree nearby fell into the imperial pot. The scent and flavour infused into the water was much to the emperor's liking. Moreover, he found that it was both delicious and refreshing. This amazing discovery is what brought the world the tea that we know and drink today.

Today, the market is dominated by black tea, but it was preceded by green tea which came from China. Whilst there are now many teas in a highly sophisticated market, green tea has

once again become popular. It's a market that changes rapidly and it has taken a smart company like Mlesna to keep abreast of these changes.

Achievements

Mlesna offers some of the finest blends in the world to satisfy the connoisseur. Skilled tea tasters, with some 37 years experience in tasting and blending, taste and select the best teas to process Mlesna's blends. The company has, as a result, won a total of 72 awards in a little over two decades.

Mlesna's hygienic production and packing facilities ensure quality and consistency. Mlesna is known for its innovative packaging in a wide array of consumer and gift packs, making it the widest range of tea available under one brand name. It has been consistently recognised for excellence in packaging and superior quality.

History

Euro-Scan Exports was established in 1983 as a professional organisation dedicated to the export of quality teas. Mlesna's products have been exported to 55 countries within a period of a little over 20 years. Euro-Scan Exports created the famous branded product that is Mlesna, by packaging exclusive quality teas in the most innovative forms imaginable.

It all began when, in 1983, a young team of tea experts with a passion for quality set about creating quality teas in specially designed packages. They created a new brand of superior tea and called it Mlesna. Their goal was not merely to sell packaged teas, but offer consumers quality teas in highly attractive packages. Despite its humble beginnings, the team found new and creative ways to attract

connoisseurs. In doing so, Mlesna carved its own niche and established what are known today as value-added teas.

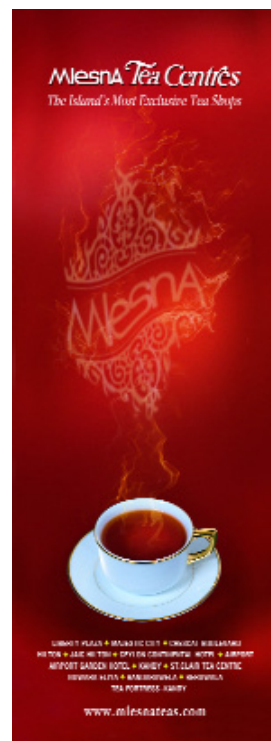
With over two decades of experience, more than 3,000 products and a permanent staff of more than 350 people, Mlesna strives to offer customers – or connoisseurs – the quality they demand. Superior quality tea in exquisite packaging is the signature of brand Mlesna.

Whether it is black or green, consumed plain or with milk, Mlesna continues to serve the world with quality teas that few can match. Mlesna has, not surprisingly, spread its wings to serve a clientele in over 55 countries around the world.

Ceylon Tea has had a colourful history. Ceylon was originally a large coffee-producing country; and until the early nineteenth century, it was known to be the largest coffee producer in the world!

However, at the end of the 1860s, a coffee-leaf disease forced owners of plantations to switch to the cultivation and production of tea, by which time experimental planting of tea had already begun in the botanical gardens of Peradeniya, close to the royal city of Kandy. These plants had arrived from Assam and Calcutta through the East India Company, which was established by the British. As the coffee trade slumped, tea gained in popularity – and soon, the commercial cultivation of tea in Ceylon began. In 1867, the pioneer planter James Taylor commenced cultivation on the tea estate Looolecondera.

Five years later, in 1872, the first shipment of Ceylon Tea reached England. It comprised two packages that contained 23 pounds of tea, valued at Rs. 58! The first registered shipment, however, was five years later. By the early 1880s, almost all coffee planters had turned to cultivating tea. Much of the knowledge about cultivating tea was handed down to the British planters by their predecessors who were attached to the East India Company and the Assam Company, both in India. Soon, estates took it upon themselves to build new factories



– and so an industry was born. It followed that factories needed additional mechanisation, so machinery was brought down from England.

Initially, much of the tea exported from Ceylon was sent to England; but as word of its quality spread and the demand for Ceylon Tea grew, the need to monitor the sale of tea became imperative. British rulers of the time implemented an auction system through which tea was sold. The first public sale of tea in Ceylon was held on 30th July 1883. Soon, the responsibility for conducting auctions fell on the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce – and by 1894, the Ceylon Tea Traders Association was formed. It is under the patronage of these two organisations that almost all the tea produced in Sri Lanka is still sold.

From its humble beginnings, tea has had a special place in history. From its imperial discovery to being identified for its herbal and medicinal characteristics, tea has been enjoyed by people around the world. It is considered to be a healthy beverage – and the cup that cheers!

Product

Mlesna offers the widest array of gift teas in the most exquisite range of packaging. The gourmet tea range includes speciality Ceylon teas from Uva, Dimbula, Nuwara Eliya, Ruhuna, Matale and Kandy – with exclusive Darjeeling teas from India; Oolong from Taiwan; and Jasmine and connoisseurs' teas from China.

The naturally flavoured teas from Mlesna feature Earl Grey, Lemon, Apple, Strawberry, Mango, Pineapple, Caramel, Mint, Honey and a host of other teas, counting over 100 flavour mixes. They come in Paradise, Tropical and Fruit Collections, and a range of green teas as well. The products are packaged in attractively designed cartons, wooden boxes, porcelain containers, tea pots and a very special range of gold and platinum-plated porcelain products of exquisite international standards.

Recent Developments

Mlesna innovated the Tea Centre and Tea Kiosk concepts in Sri Lanka, with 16 outlets throughout the country. This concept has been carried over Russia, Japan, Taiwan, Australia, Greece and India.

Mlesna's most recent development includes exotic new flavours in black and green teas, with the special concept of pyramid tea bags for large-leaf tea.

Mlesna offers the widest array of gift teas in the most innovative range of packaging offered by one producer in one brand.

Promotion

Media advertising includes inflight magazines of airlines and numerous publications of hotels, the travel trade and gourmet food. Mlesna participates in international in-store promotions and tasting tests, and at international tea seminars.

Mlesna's CSR activities have involved craft training for gift supplies. It is also involved with in-house retail training programmes and sales seminars. And it has organised bank financing and assistance with funding for self-employed suppliers. Mlesna employs differently-abled people in its workforce.

Brand Values

Brand Mlesna stands for superior quality, excellent packaging and an exquisite range of gift products. Its exclusively decorated tea shops create an ambience that is unique and offer an experience that defines the very essence of its product quality. Its promise is to provide the world with tea that is Naturally The Best.

www.mlesnateas.com



THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

Mlesna

- › The brand's name, Mlesna, is the mirror image of the first name of the founder of the company – Anselm.
- › Mlesna was the first brand to win a World Star Packaging Award for Sri Lanka in 1990.
- › In a little over two decades since commencing operations, Mlesna teas are sold in 55 countries.
- › It maintains an international presence in 74 exclusive Mlesna Tea Shops around the world.
- › The company has won 72 awards since it was incorporated in 1983.
- › Mlesna markets in excess of 3,000 products under its brand name.