

## healthy connections

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KRISTIN MRAZ, Interactive Marketing and Media Specialist  
Homer, Saratoga Springs



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WRITTEN BY CARRIE ROWLANDS JOHNSON, PHOTOS BY ALICE COREY

**A**s I sit in the cozy cafe on route 67 on the outskirts of Ballston Spa, delicious aromas waft past my nose—floral, spicy, earthy, vegetal. Curious, I walk over to the source of the pleasant smell and browse—Green, Black, White, Oolong, Pu-erh, Herbal, Matcha, Tisane. More than fifty-five varieties of organic tea in gorgeously-designed compact cylindrical-shaped tins stand in a line, tiny sample jars carefully placed in front, inviting customers to use their senses to analyze each and every one as they decide which to try.





I am at Route 67 Cafe', enjoying a generous sampling of about a dozen varieties, part of what (in the tea world) is called a cupping. It's like a wine or beer tasting, but with tea. Among others, I notice the vegetal flavor of the greens, the rich astringency of the blacks, the nuances of the oolongs and the delicate nature of the whites.

Eva Lamiano and Eran Wasserman are my hosts, and owners of Route 67 Cafe'. They generously share their teas and their story while educating me on the art of drinking tea and on their freshly-released brand, Ada's Artisan Tea. Every pot of tea served is brewed by hand with fresh, cold water and steeped at just the right temperature for the exact amount of time recommended.

Route 67 Cafe' is Eran's baby. He opened its doors about seven years ago, while it was still a functioning gas station. A year later, Eva joined him. With her help and a vision crafted in part from experiences Eran brought with him from New York City, the pumps are gone and the space has been transformed into an eclectic, contemporary country store and European-style cafe'. Walk inside and you'll discover a funky beer alley stocked with more than three hundred

craft beers; a counter-service cafe offering a menu filled with a plethora of breakfast and lunch items; baked goods and homemade specialty food items like sauces, salsas, chocolates and maple syrup; a full espresso bar; and now, a full line of Ada's Artisan Teas, an organic tea line the couple nurtured from a mere concept into full-blown reality.

Eva says adding the tea line is a natural fit. She had been studying tea and was anxious to share her research and passion with others. They felt it appropriate to name the line after Eran's mother, Ada, who taught her son to observe greatness in the simple pleasures in life.

"Tea has culture behind it. It's been brewed for thousands of years. It's used for ceremony and healing... Tea is 'come on over, let's sit down, have a cup of tea and enjoy,'" says Eva.

Eva and Eran got to work launching their tea brand about a year ago, immediately diving into the lengthy and expensive process of obtaining their USDA Organic certification. They also researched and located artisans from which they source their tea, came up with a name, and designed the logo, label and packaging—tasks they tackled with great thought and precision.



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"We went with tins that have a unique inner seal so you don't get light, moisture or air that hits the tea and makes it deteriorate. When you put these in your cabinet, they won't take up oodles of space, so you can have a variety of teas in your tea cabinet... and be able to keep them fresh," says Eva.

When selecting their teas, the couple says they consider a wide variety of palates, as everyone's is unique. They say some of the teas they feature are popular while others are quite unique and rare.

"Black teas and green teas are the best-selling in the US, so we are going to bring in a large variety of black and green. You want a different tea depending on your mood, the weather, the seasons, whether you want it to pump you up and keep you going with mental alertness or have a Tisane, which is a naturally caffeine-free," says Eran.

To further expand their offerings, Eva delves into blending, using only natural flavors and ingredients and creating such lovely varieties as chai and orange creamsicle. Nothing is artificial. "The organic certification is important to them, as is obtaining organic products. 95% of their teas are organic. The others are produced organically and maintain sustainable practices. Eva plans to educate people about the quality of their teas and build their reputation around it.

"The last thing you want to do is think you're healthy and then have pesticide residue coming off in your cup. That defeats the purpose."

Even with the prestigious organic label, the couple determined to keep Ada's Artisan Teas affordable, ensuring their treasured tea experience is accessible to all of their customers.

*Ada's Artisan Teas are available to order by the pot for sipping at the cafe' or in take-home tins. They plan to take it nationwide in the near future. Meantime, they maintain a calendar of in-cafe' events like "Paint and Sips" and beer and tea tastings. You can find more information, including their hours, on their website, [rt67cafe.com](http://rt67cafe.com).*

My mother Aida always said, "Be present in the moment, and peace from within, and observe greatness in the small, simple pleasures in life". We believe in the simple pleasures of exceptional teas. To that end, we work closely with tea gardens and specialists to ensure that our distinctive blends are rich in inspiring aromas and exquisite flavors which bring bliss to your day, and peace to your life — one sip at a time.



Photo by Matt McDonald