

by Bonnie Carroll

setting the scene



A NEW CHIC FOR HEALTHY TEA & TONICS THE TEA GARDEN & HERBAL EMPORIUM

Visiting with Mark Ukra, owner of the new *Tea Garden & Herbal Emporium* was a fun, informative adventure into the world of tea, tonics, herbs and philosophy behind the creation of his *Tea Garden*. I had the opportunity to share the enthusiasm of Ukra, his staff, while enjoying the peaceful ambiance. I also sampled the contemporary macrobiotic cuisine provided by *M Cafe de Chaya*, served on the Zen patio.

Ukra's menu is based on their philosophy of peace and mindful existence. It comes together in an elegant and simple cuisine, seasonally

appropriate, relying on whole/natural foods chosen & cooked according to the needs and desires of each individual.

M Cafe MENU: Breakfast pastries; hearts of romaine, tuna tataki, chopped salad, seafood sushi combinations; muffaletta sandwich, hummus wrap and dilled tofu salad sandwich on multi-grain bread.

Desserts are outstanding—chocolate tart, banana chocolate millefeuille, apple kanten and a selection of delicious cookies, and amazing truffles. There is a divine tea to pair with all of the scrumptious, healthy bites, and a pot of *GT tea* or a glass of iced tea is a perfect compliment. I loved the dilled tofu

salad, with avocado, carrot, cucumber, sprouts, & soy-mayonnaise. If you associate healthy food with boring tastes, you'll be amazed by the menu. Plans are under way to include a raw food line of specialties this year.

TG's tea menu is a rare and extensive collection with a charming collection for kids.

Tea time—enjoyed by the English is a pause in the day to refresh body & spirit. In Japan, the pleasure of a tea ceremony played an important role in history. Zen monks developed tea rituals to for meditation and in China, tea is served with a refinement reminiscent of wine tasting in America. During my visit with Ukra, I enjoyed 'tea tasting' and was amazed at the smooth tasting difference of tea that had been washed several times. Like a fine wine—its taste enriches with its age. Tea prices vary from \$6.00 to \$11.00.

The Tea Garden herbal tonic bar pampers your spirit and body.

According to Ukra, the new TG is the premier purveyor of high-potency herbal products. Tonic is considered by health aficionados as the path to radiant health, and this is a bee hive of activity, as patrons stop to enjoy their favorite herbal drinks. As with Taoist tradition, herbal tonics are important to cultivate and nourish the inner wellspring of vitality. It's believed that in the process of life, the energetic wellspring becomes depleted; poor health and aging are the result.

Herbal teas have stood the test of time as remarkable life-enhancing tonics. Treat yourself to this magical oasis of art, books & fine gift items. Come and enjoy health tonics and healing herbs, along with experts that are on

hand to help you in your quest for health and inner peace. For further information or for a list of scheduled activities available

www.teagarden.com or 310-205-0104.

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