

Tea Tasting Terminology

TERMS DESCRIBING DRY LEAF

BLOOM	A sign of good manufacture and sorting (where the reduction of leaf has mainly taken place before firing). A "sheen" which has not been removed by over-handling or over-sorting.	FLAKY	Flat, open and often light in texture.
BLACK	A black appearance is desirable, preferably with "bloom": This term is used with Orthodox or Rotorvane manufacture.	GREY	Caused by too much abrasion during sorting.
BLACKISH	This is a satisfactory appearance for CTC and LTP manufacture teas, and denotes careful sorting.	LEAFY	Orthodox manufacture leaf tending to be on the large or long side.
BROWN	A brown appearance, with CTC and LTP manufacture, normally reflects too hard treatment of the leaf.	LIGHT	A tea light in weight and of poor density. Sometimes flaky.
BOLD	Particles of leaf which are too large for the particular grade.	MAKE	Well made (or not) and must be true to the grade.
CLEAN	Leaf which is free from fibre, dust or any extraneous matter.	NEAT	A grade having good "make" and size.
STOCK & FIBRE	Should be minimal in primary or top grades, but generally unavoidable in the lower grades at an assortment.	NOSE	Smell of the dry leaf.
GRAINY	Describes well made CTC or LTP primary grades, more particularly Dusts.	CHOPPY	Orthodox (or Rotorvane) manufacture leaf which has to be cut by a "breaker" during sorting.
EVEN	True to the grade and consisting of pieces of leaf of quite even size.	CHESTY	Inferior or unseasoned packing materials cause this taint.
UNEVEN & MIXED	"Uneven" pieces of leaf usually indicative of poor sorting and not true to the particular grade.	POWDERY	Fine light dust.
		TIP	A sign of fine plucking and apparent in the top grades' of Orthodox manufacture.
		WELL TWISTED	Applicable to Orthodox manufacture. Often referred to as "well made" or "rolled" and used for describing whole leaf grades.

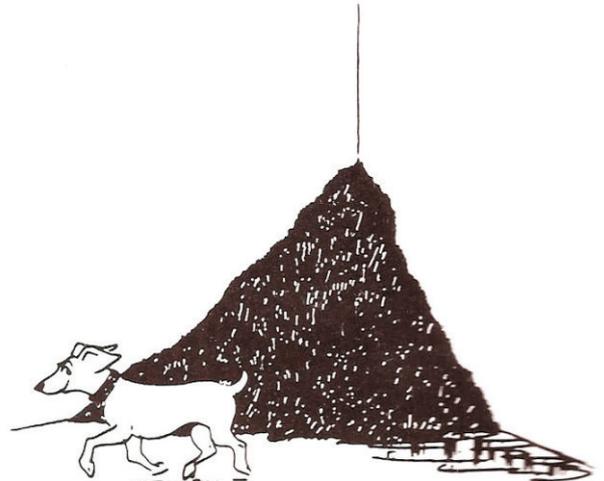


TERMS DESCRIBING INFUSED LEAF

BRIGHT	A lively bright appearance. Usually indicates bright liquors	MIXED OR UNEVEN	Leaf of varying colour
DULL	Lacks brightness and usually denotes a poor tea. Can be due to faulty manufacture and firing, or a high moisture content.	AROMA	Smell or scent denoting "inherent character"; usually at high elevations.
GREEN	Caused by under-fermentation, or characteristic of leaf from immature bushes (liquors often raw or light)		



'Individual tasters have their own expressions, not necessarily widely used.'



'Tea left lying about'

TERMS DESCRIBING LIQUORS

BRISK	The most "live" characteristic. Results from good manufacture.	EARTHY	Normally caused by damp storage. A taste which can at times be "climatically inherent" in leaf from certain origins.
BRIGHT	Denotes a lively fresh tea with good keeping quality.	GONE OFF	A flat or old tea. Often denotes a high moisture content.
COLOURY	Indicates useful depth of colour and strength.	HARSH	A taste generally related to under-withered leaf.
CHARACTER	An attractive taste when describing better high elevation growth, and peculiar to origin.	LIGHT	Lacking strength and any depth of colour.
FLAVOUR	A most desirable extension of "character" caused by slow growth at high elevations and comparatively rare.	GREEN (or RAW)	An immature character. Often due to underfermentation (and sometimes under-wither).
STRENGTH	Substance in cup.	PLAIN	A liquor which is "clean" but lacking in the desirable characteristics.
QUALITY	Refers to "cup quality" and denotes a combination of the most desirable liquoring properties.	COARSE	Fibre content.
CREAM	A precipitate obtained after cooling.	BAGGY	A taint normally resulting from unlined hessian bags.
FULL	A good combination of strength and colour.	FLAT	Unfresh, (usually due to age).
PUNGENT	Astringent with a good combination of briskness brightness and strength. (More related to best quality North Indian teas).	SMOKY	Mainly caused by leaks around the dryer heating tubes.
DRY	Indicates slight over-firing.	SOFT	The opposite of briskness and lacking any "live" characteristic. Caused by inefficient fermentation and/or firing.
HIGH-FIRED	Over-fired but not bakey (or burnt).	STEWED	A soft liquor with an undesirable taste Caused by faulty firing at low temperatures and often insufficient air flow.
BAKEY	An over-fired liquor.	THIN	An insipid light liquor which lacks any desirable characteristics.
BURNT	Extreme over-firing.	WEEDY	A grass or hay taste related to under-withering.
DULL	Not clear, and lacking any brightness or briskness.	TAINTS (in general)	A character or taste which is "foreign" to tea.
FRUITY	Can be due to over-fermentation and/or bacterial infection before firing. An over-ripe taste.		

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