
Best Tea Sommelier for Custom Tea Blends & Unique Tea Experiences 2025 – Netherlands

Theesommelier Benita

It was during COVID-19 that Benita Roetman-van IJzendoorn started Theesommelier Benita – She had been working in the healthcare sector for 26 years, and in the last few years as a trainer for people with intellectual disabilities, but that ended due to the pandemic; thus, she was ready for a new challenge. What started as a bit of fun to learn more about tea quickly grew into her profession. Now, four years later, Benita crafts personalised tea blends for corporate gifts that tell stories and strengthen connection. Following Benita's success within the Food and Drink Awards 2025, we are keen to learn more about her business.

Benita could have continued working in healthcare as a nurse, but she doubted whether she still wanted that after having worked in the healthcare sector for 26 years. Her journey in the world of tea began one night when she was listening to a podcast by a tea sommelier. Benita tells us, "This podcast touched me deeply; there was so much to discover in the world of tea. That night caused a turning point in my life. I enrolled in the training to become a tea sommelier, initially with the idea that it would simply be fun to gain more knowledge about tea. However, soon, I knew that I wanted to make this my profession."

Today, Benita creates bespoke tea blends for an array of clientele, including photographers, accountants, yoga teachers, coaches, hospitals, yacht owners and their crew, electricians, elderly care institutions, daycare centres, mayors and aldermen, hairdressers, beauty salons, and many more. She stands out to these clients not only because she creates exceptional tea blends, but also because of her focus on the connection between people, an ability she honed during her time in the healthcare sector. Benita says, "Flavour plays an important role, but my focus is also on the communal aspect of drinking tea, the contact, the feeling of togetherness, and truly connecting. To make something unique and special out of an everyday product. A product you want to talk about at a party, something that lingers in memory and feeling."

Each of her tea blends is designed to symbolise something regarding the company's identity, mission, and vision – for example, a blend featuring rosemary reflects focus, concentration, and the desire to keep learning and improving. Or she can visually match their logo, where blue flowers might be used to represent their brand colour. Another example would be for a business providing treatments for clients, thus calming herbs such

as chamomile or lavender would be suitable to promote relaxation.



"Sometimes it is about a flavourful tea blend that conveys a certain feeling or taste experience," says Benita. "For example, an au-pair agency that wants their South African employees to feel at home in the Netherlands, where rooibos is therefore the main ingredient in the tea blend."

Once the blend is ready, it is packaged in original, personalised packaging,

with or without print. If the client wishes, Benita can provide the packaging with a QR code with a personal video message or text, all to strengthen the connection between the giver and recipient.

"Tea is a sensory product that brings gentleness and warmth, a moment of calm and relaxation. By letting tea tell a story, I want to further strengthen the connection between the giver and recipient."

Not only does Benita provide professional and creative tea blending services, but she also organises workshops for groups, both private and corporate. She says, "At my own location, I have a pleasant, cosy workshop space (the Garden Room of Theesommelier Benita), where I can host a maximum of 12 people. I also give workshops to larger groups, for example, I organise a Tea Battle, in which departments of a company compete to create the tastiest tea blend. This blend can later be given as a gift to clients, perhaps during the holidays or as an anniversary gift."

She continues, "I also give intuitive tea workshops, in which participants discover their own unique taste, stimulate their senses, and create a tea that really fits them, therefore, not a standard blend that can be bought in a tea shop. I give workshops at various external locations such as hospitality venues, artisan events, neighbourhood and clubhouses, and office buildings."

Looking ahead, Theesommelier Benita has several workshops scheduled in, where teams or clients will jointly create a unique tea blend for their department or company. Previously, the workshops were mainly focused on creating a personal tea blend by each participant individually, however it is now on collaboration: multiple people creating one blend together, which requires a different approach, with the challenge of giving everyone a voice in the composition of the final blend.

Ultimately, Benita is truly on own path, as she concludes, "My creativity, intuition, and feeling guide what is right to do. My goal is to bring more gentleness back into the world to help people reconnect with themselves (relaxing over a cup of tea) and with each other (having a good conversation over a cup of tea). But also, to convey the tangible appreciation from an employer who has made an effort to create a unique gift for their staff."

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