# Who Owns Twinings?

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **The short version:** Twinings ownership: ABF since 1964, longest single-owner stint among British tea brands, 10th-generation Stephen Twining still ambassador.

Twinings is one of the oldest tea brands in the world, under long corporate ownership. For the wider ownership picture, compare who owns Tetley.

*Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in March 2026.*

*Twinings ownership, as stated here, rests on public reporting to May 2026; it can change. Not financial advice.*

## Twinings ownership at a glance

| Detail | Fact |
|---|---|
| Current owner | Associated British Foods (ABF), FTSE-listed UK |
| Acquired | 1964 (62 years of ABF ownership as of 2026) |
| ABF other brands | Primark (clothing), Kingsmill (bread), Ovaltine, Twinings, Mazola, Jordans |
| ABF market cap | ~GBP 18bn (mid-2020s) |
| Twinings founded | 1706, Strand, London, by Thomas Twining |
| Strand shop status | Still trading at 216 Strand, London, since 1706 (320 years) |
| Royal warrant | Held continuously since 1837 (Queen Victoria's accession) |
| Family involvement | Stephen Twining (10th generation) remains brand ambassador |
| Manufacturing | Andover, Hampshire and other UK sites |
| Iconic blend | Earl Grey (brand identity-defining) |

## The current owner: ABF

Twinings is owned by Associated British Foods (ABF), the FTSE-listed UK conglomerate, which acquired it in 1964. At 62 years and counting, that is the longest single-owner stint among British heritage tea brands, and it sits behind a 320-year brand: Twinings has traded from the same 216 Strand address in London since 1706 and has held a royal warrant continuously since 1837. The combination of deep heritage and unusually stable ownership gives the brand a continuity its rivals lack. See the ownership map.

## Associated British Foods and the Weston family

ABF is a FTSE 100 multinational rooted in the Garfield Weston family business, founded in Canada in 1928 and expanded into the UK in the 1930s, with the Weston family still holding around 57% of the voting shares through Wittington Investments, so it is effectively family-controlled despite the public listing. Its portfolio runs from Primark, the UK's largest clothing retailer, to grocery brands (Kingsmill, Ovaltine, Twinings, Jordans) and ingredients. The family runs ABF on a multi-generational horizon, more like a European industrial dynasty than a typical listed company, which means patient capital and a tolerance for long-term brand investment, both of which have suited Twinings well across six decades.

## Is Twinings still British?

Twinings is British across every relevant sense, which sets it apart. Its heritage is a 1706 London origin with 320 years of continuous trading; its owner ABF is UK-listed and London-headquartered; its manufacturing is UK-based (Andover in Hampshire and other sites); its royal warrant has run since 1837; and a tenth-generation family member, Stephen Twining, is still the brand ambassador. PG Tips is Dutch and private-equity-owned, Tetley is Indian-owned, so among the majors Twinings is the most comprehensively British, with only the smaller family-run Yorkshire Tea offering comparable credentials.

## What ABF ownership means for the cup

ABF's patient, family-controlled ownership favours steady efficiency and margin growth over the dramatic restructuring of a private-equity owner, which supports consistent investment. Its scale has let Twinings fund plastic-free bags, organic certification and a wide range, growing the brand from a largely black-tea business to more than eighty varieties across black, green, white, oolong, herbal, fruit and functional categories. The pyramid format, the herbal expansion, the decaffeinated and wellbeing lines all arrived under ABF. For drinkers, the upshot is a stable product and an unusually broad shelf presence. See sector pressures.

## Premium positioning versus the mainstream

Twinings sits in a different commercial spot from PG Tips, Tetley and Yorkshire Tea. Those three compete at mid-tier prices on volume; Twinings competes a tier up on quality, range and heritage. That premium position is a better defence against supermarket own-brand, which bites hardest at the mid-tier, and the eighty-plus varieties create range loyalty: someone who likes Twinings Earl Grey tends to stay within the range for green, herbal and the rest. It is a structurally stronger position than the mid-tier rivals hold. See who owns PG Tips.

## The 10th-generation family ambassador

Stephen Twining, the tenth generation of the founding family, remains the brand's global ambassador despite 62 years of ABF ownership, which is unusual, since most brands lose family involvement within a generation or two of acquisition. He represents Twinings at industry events and hosts tours of the factory and the historic Strand shop, giving the brand an authentic heritage figurehead that Tata's Tetley or Lipton's PG Tips cannot easily match. The arrangement keeps family involvement without family corporate control. See Stephen Twining.

## What to buy

For the classical range buy Twinings English Breakfast, Twinings Earl Grey or Twinings Lady Grey. For speciality buy Twinings Darjeeling, Twinings Assam or Twinings Jasmine. For infusions buy Twinings peppermint or Twinings chamomile. For UK-owned alternatives buy Yorkshire Tea (Bettys & Taylors).

## Reference noted

- PubMed: Green tea catechins and human health

**FROM THE CURATOR**

*teas* · Begin with everyday Twinings and stay there until something pushes you on. Most rich teas reward patience, not budget.

## More tea reading

For the founder see Thomas Twining, and for the modern ambassador Stephen Twining. For comparable brand ownership see who owns PG Tips, who owns Tetley and who owns Typhoo now. For Earl Grey's origin see the Earl Grey origin. For the broader picture see the UK tea brand ownership map.

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