Henrietta Lovell: The Rare Tea Lady

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **The short version:** Henrietta Lovell, the Rare Tea Lady, built a single-estate specialty business and brought rare teas to top restaurants.

Henrietta Lovell turned single-estate tea into a fine-dining ingredient. This profile sits with the tea people pages, beside Jane Pettigrew.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in May 2026.

Public information and Henrietta Lovell's own published work are the sources here, and everything is accurate as of May 2026. We keep to roles and reputation: no private detail, no invented quotes, no gossip.

Henrietta Lovell at a glance

Aspect	The read
Who she is	Founder of a single-estate rare-tea company
Known for	Direct sourcing, restaurant tea programmes, writing
Contribution	Raised the profile of provenance and quality
The caveat	A founder who sells the tea: weigh the commercial overlap
Who it suits	Drinkers curious about single-estate provenance

Who she is

Henrietta Lovell is the founder of the Rare Tea Company, widely known as the Rare Tea Lady, and the author of the well-received book Infused: Adventures in Tea. She built her reputation sourcing distinctive single-origin teas directly from growers, championing transparency and farmer relationships, and putting serious tea on the menus of acclaimed restaurants and hotels. The contribution is specific rather than generic celebrity: she helped move single-estate tea from a niche obsession toward a wider audience.

Tea in restaurants

The clearest part of her work is in hospitality. By placing single-estate teas on the menus of serious, often Michelin-level restaurants, and treating tea pairing with the seriousness usually reserved for a wine list, she helped shift tea from an afterthought poured at the end of a meal toward something chosen, described and

matched. That materially raised expectations about what tea in a restaurant could be. See tea sommelier.

Her writing and why she matters

Her book Infused works as both travel narrative and tea education, focused on growers, place and craft rather than health claims, which makes it a good entry point for understanding why origin matters. More broadly, her business is a real-world model of provenance-led, transparent sourcing, the exact opposite of the provenance fraud documented elsewhere on this wiki. See the best tea books and ethical sourcing.

The educator-who-sells caveat

There is one caveat, and it is structural rather than personal: she is an educator who also sells the tea she champions, so the advocacy and the commercial interest overlap. The right response is separation, not cynicism: take the durable lesson, that provenance and quality deserve real attention and that single estate character is something you can really taste, while keeping your own judgement about what and where to buy, and trust the parts of the message that hold up when you source elsewhere. That separate-the-lesson-from-the-sell habit generalises to every brand ambassador, influencer or shop recommendation you will meet.

Want to actually buy a good one?

If her approach appeals, the next step is a single estate tea judged on how it tastes in the cup. The teas shown here were picked to suit this profile's theme, so they are the place to begin. To see the wider range, browse tea and herbal infusions at teas.co.uk or the full tea shop. As with every page on the wiki, the cup and its description lead, the cost of a cup follows, and an order over £35 gets free UK delivery.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · If one of her single estate teas appeals, just try a cup. One cup of a good single estate tea says more than twenty articles.

More tea reading

- Don Mei (Mei Leaf)
- Ethical tea sourcing
- Black tea
- White tea

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag

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