



Tony Tellin

Tony Tellin stepped off the train in Portland, Oregon on a summer evening in 1998. The next morning, he chanced to pedal by the loading dock at Tazo. Determined to make something of himself in life, he wound up making tea for 20 years. First at Tazo, where he rose quickly to craft test batches for tea shaman Steve Smith. Then, in 2009, as a founding member of his mentor's newly-formed specialty company, Steven Smith Teamaker.

From Smith, Tony acquired a classic, old school tea education. Extensive visits to India, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Nepal added a thorough understanding of production practices, product qualities and supply chain factors. In due time, he was voted to the advisory board for the Specialty Tea Institute, crafted curriculum for the International Culinary Institute, and judged World Tea competitions. Today, as the head teamaker at Smith, his highlight reel includes pioneering the concept of tea on tap. Rolling out wine- and whiskey-barrel-aged teas. Arbequina olive oil oolong. The ricotta cheese Lover's Leap latte. And his latest, greatest hit: Maker's Series No. 006 3-Finger Black, a mashup with Grammy-winner Béla Fleck. The son of a seamstress, Tony embodies what it means to be a maker in every aspect of life. He says Steve Smith would say, 'If you want to be different, don't act the same. Look to makers outside your craft.'