

Seeking new tea at the source

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Seeking new tea at the source

By DYLAN CHAFFIN for the Missoulian
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When it comes to tea, quality makes all the difference.

Sometimes, ensuring such a high standard means you have to travel halfway across the globe to find it, and that's just what the owners of Lake Missoula Tea Company did.

In January, husband-and-wife team Jake and Heather Kreilick flew to the island of Java, Indonesia, in search of something new to bring back to their Missoula customers.

The search began long before then, Jake Kreilick said. As attendees at the **Seeking new tea at the source** International Tea Exposition in Las Vegas, connections were made far before travel plans were. SHARE THIS

The trip was also their first time traveling internationally to a tea farm.

There, the Kreilicks paired up with the operators of Harandong farm, a small property in the southwestern part of Java that has mastered black, oolong and green teas.

As a small-scale operation tended by four Indonesian owners, a Taiwanese tea master, and 110 employees from neighboring towns, Harandong farm creates a quality that drinkers are unable to find in

mass produced teas, Kreilick said.

But the benefits for the Indonesian island go far beyond being able to produce a good taste.

“They’ve found a sustainable, organic way to farm that’s really helping the local population,” Kreilick said.

For example, the income coming in from the farm is funding the education of an employee's son, which would not have been possible otherwise. **Seeking new tea at the source** SHARE THIS

It's another reason that Kreilick feels good about being able to promote the teas on Lake Missoula Tea Company shelves.

The Kreilicks returned with three new teas from their travels – Mammoth Red, Halimun Mountain Green and Java Oolong – all named after their special properties, or landmarks.

The finest black teas generally have a copper color to them, Kreilick said.

There will be a presentation of the trip and tea tasting on Friday, March 7, at the Lake Missoula Tea Company, upstairs in the historic Masonic Hall at 126 E. Broadway in Missoula.

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