

Tea in 20 Flavours

by *Sophie Tolias Alexea*

I'm not the tea-room type. Even as a child, I wasn't one to put on a frilly dress with a big hat and a faux-pearl necklace and sip make-believe tea from toy cups with my dolls. You can usually find me in a bustling coffee shop with my laptop, nurturing my large moccacino with skim milk and a dollop of whipped cream, watching people rush in and out. But on this particular Saturday afternoon, with my husband in tow, I headed to the Rosemary and Thyme Tea Room on Kingston Road.

This is not your traditional tea room when it comes to décor – no frills here. Diners enter through an inviting white wood-and-glass front door into a small, cozy room with mostly-hardwood floors and celery-green walls accented with various-sized paintings of roses. Various spotlights and a modest chandelier adorn the ceiling. Music plays softly in the background – the finishing touch in this relaxing atmosphere where time seems to freeze.

A large quote is printed on the back wall in dark block letters. It reads: Every journey begins with a single step.

Rosemary McIntosh, the owner, recently left her job in a dental office to open this tea room and says the quote is “just a little reminder to me. Everything starts off with a single step.”

Having lived in the neighborhood for almost 23 years, McIntosh felt there was much need for a place like this.

“When my kids were little and I'd be out walking, I would look for a place to go for tea or coffee and there was nowhere in the area,” she explains.

And apparently lots of people agree. Her customers constantly tell her “we really needed something like this in our neighborhood.”

The two-month old tea room attracts a lot of neighborhood women even though it is not too frilly for a man. Weekly mother-daughter get-togethers are extremely popular here which is very fitting since

McIntosh runs the place with the help of her mother and her two daughters.

“It's a family affair,” she says. “Three generations are working together right now.”

Overcrowding is not a problem here. There are four tables with white tablecloths under glass tops and wooden straight chairs. All the tables have charming, mismatched teacups sitting on saucers ready to be filled with tea. By the large front window there is a low, wooden table with two grand, comfy Victorian armchairs. This is where we sat.

We ordered our tea first. They offer over 20 types of tea – loose leaf and tea bag (\$2.50 a pot). And if there is a special tea you are craving that they don't offer, the owner will order it for you. They also offer coffee, hot chocolate, juice and pop. My husband had the Jasmine with Flowers Green Tea (loose leaf) and as described in the tea menu, it had a captivating floral taste. I took the English Breakfast Tea (loose leaf) – a robust tea I



could add my sugar and milk to. We were each brought our own little strainers on little round plates and our tea was served right away, each in its own teapot with the leaves left inside.

Everything on the menu sounded delicious. There's a

nice selection of sandwiches served with mixed green salad or cranberry coleslaw (ranging from \$5.95 to \$6.95). Some unique choices include the Cheddar and Apple on Raisin Walnut Bread (a favorite) and the Salmon Salad Sandwich.

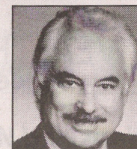
They also offer a selection of sweets (starting at \$1.75) and fresh baked scones with your choice of fruit preserve and a pot of tea (\$4.95). They also try and offer a special every day such as quiche or smoked salmon.

see page 10



JO CALABRETTA
Sales Representative

Brian's
Seniors
Moments



TORONTO
Brian

ROSEMARY & THYME TEA ROOM

from page 7

Unlike traditional tea rooms, they do not offer "afternoon tea" or "high tea" where finger sandwiches, scones, bite-sized cakes and pastries, and such are served on a tiered stand. "I've asked people, 'would you like me to do it?'" explains McIntosh. "But they said, 'no just do what you are doing. We like what you are doing.'"

After some contemplation we placed our order and our full-sized sandwiches arrived, in a timely manner, on large plates accompanied with a hefty serving of mixed green salad. My husband ordered the Ham and Cheddar Cheese on Whole Grain (\$6.95) and though it sounds so simple it was surprising delicious. I chose the Cream Cheese and Cucumber on Whole Grain (\$5.95). It was light but filling and the dill sprinkled on the cream cheese was a delightful

surprise that gave it some extra pizzazz. The mixed green salad accompanying our sandwiches was refreshing and had just the right amount of the tasty house dressing.

Just before we left I skimmed through the guestbook that was sitting at the end of our table.

"I loved every minute of my visit; a nice change to the neighbourhood; a sensational atmosphere; wonderful, soothing energy; great food; quaint place." These are just a few of the comments left by patrons that caught my attention.

My comment: I can't wait to go back to my seat by the window, with a good book or a chatty girlfriend, and enjoy a nice cup of tea.

Rosemary & Thyme Tea Room at 1555 Kingston Road (just east of Warden) is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 416-916-0233.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| • SCARBOROUGH | • PICKERING |
| 2611 Eglinton Ave | 1794 Liverpool Rd. |
| 416-269-7110 | 905-837-0317 |

Benjamin Moore
Paint Experts

