

<< INTERVIEW TEJINI KARIAPPA

JAVA JOY

When we savour a good cup of joe, we believe we should know the story behind it. So, Pearl Mathias talks to co-founder Tejini Kariappa about what makes a good cup of Halli Berri coffee

If you're an enthusiastic coffee drinker, we're sure you've tried or heard of Halli Berri, a full bodied coffee made with fresh, 100% Arabica beans. If you're wondering about the name, the word 'Halli' means village and 'Berri' means coffee (in Kannada), so it's just a happy co-incidence that it sounds a little bit like it's paying homage to a famous Hollywood actress. This all-women run coffee concern based in Chikmangalur, Karnataka, has a support team in Mumbai and Bangalore as well. A little back story about the brand: 29-year-old Tejini Kariappa, the co-founder of Halli Berri, is a double graduate in banking and finance from Melbourne. After her father passed away, she moved back to India to be closer to her mother, Nalima Kariappa (co-founder). The family was left with a coffee estate, which had been part of their legacy since the 1900s. Together, they started a little coffee shop called Coffee Barn Café, where they would give away packets of complimentary coffee to customers, soon realising that it was getting very popular when people came back asking for more. That's when the idea to retail it struck. We spoke to Tejini, who currently lives between three cities (Mumbai, Bangalore and Calcutta) and runs two companies in parallel — Estrada, a fashion and lifestyle PR and brand consultancy, and of course, Halli Berri. If the brand has been around for a while, what's new, you ask? Well, Halli Berri kickstarted 2017 with attractive new packaging — read a little more about that story in our box alongside. Tejini, who dove headfirst into the coffee industry, tells us what the experience was like for her in snippets from our conversation below:

■ With a background in banking and finance, what made you dive into the coffee industry?



'Education is your biggest asset.' Invest in yourself, because no one can take that away from you. That's what I did! Even though I didn't pursue a career in finance, I believe that it all adds up when you look at the bigger picture. I got into the coffee industry as it was my family's heritage and we have been in the business for over four generations. It was a natural step for me, as a coffee addict who loves to meet new people. This was a great avenue to incorporate my passion into a working business. So, I decided to come back from Australia after my graduation and attempt to make an element of our core family business my own. My mother is my business partner, my core strength and driving force. I think we make a great 'dream team'.

■ Tell us a little about your experience running the Coffee Barn Café. My mother runs the daily operations of our 'blink and you miss it café' in Chikmagalur that many travellers call a secret getaway. My role is more strategic and marketing oriented, and together we try very hard to maintain our five-star Trip Advisor rating. We are a homemade café and want to continue to help our customers enjoy good food, great

coffee and most importantly, a relaxing sense of tranquility when they visit us.

■ What inspired you to start retailing your coffee?

Most of our customers would ask us to sell our coffee because they were addicted to the taste. At the time, my eldest sister was visiting from Manhattan for the summer and she began retailing it by sticking hand written notes on each packet. One thing led to another and before we knew it, we were in business! From there, we developed and continue to develop ourselves through various positioning mediums. The new packaging that we launched is another effort towards keeping up with the global trends and having some fun within the niche we have successfully created for ourselves.

■ Halli Berri is not only a coffee estate, but also a homestay for nature lovers. What can visitors experience during their stay here?

Mornings at the estate are the best. The natural sounds of the plantation wake you up with the calls of the koyal (cuckoo) and the barks of happy dogs. Visitors will experience wildlife sightings, breathe in pure air and get a taste of heaven! Well, at least my version of it. The moment I set foot on the estate, I am carefree about the world and I get immersed in the working of estate life. From discussing new water conservation projects to deciding whether we should have strawberry milkshake on the menu; every day is beautiful and magical. Once you get there, you can experience it for yourself. At the cottages, you will feel at peace with the simplistic pleasure of just being one amidst nature.

>> Tejini's love for coffee inspired her to start Halli Berri



PACKAGING COUNTS



>> Halli Berri's new packaging highlights its bold and robust elements

We asked Tejini to tell us more about what inspired the new packaging for the Halli Berri products. She explained...

My team is probably going to pop open a bottle of champagne now that it is finally done. Surabhi, my head of marketing and I have worked relentlessly on this for almost a year, trying to incorporate components that would help us get a good end result. I'm painstakingly particular, which is a trait I get from my late artistic father, and I've made sure we learn everything we can on the job and about any task at hand. I always say that success needs to be earned and you need to put in the time. We are still learning about the management of FMCG goods in the luxury segment and we think that it's this daily intake of new knowledge that keeps things fun and challenging. The new packaging highlights the key elements of our coffee. Young, bold, fresh, robust and strong! Just like my dynamic, all-girl team at Halli Berri.

Price ₹299 for 200g
Contact 9483523003/ www.halliberri.com



>> The Halli Berri coffee estate is the perfect place for coffee lovers to spend some time unwinding amidst nature