

serendipiTEA



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Linda Villano Co-founder, SerendipiTea

Linda Villano co-founded SerendipiTea in 1995 with Tomislav Podreka. As with many successful ventures, SerendipiTea was an outgrowth of another endeavor, in this case a projected import-export business involving products from Australia. Although she grew up in a family of restaurateurs and chefs, and had an intimate knowledge of the food and beverage businesses, Linda admits that she knew very little about tea at the beginning. Soon, however, tea became a passion and now she oversees all aspects of the business, including client consulting, concept and design, staff training, sourcing and product development. She considers her role as a purveyor of premium loose-leaf teas a natural continuation of family tradition, and her expertise in the restaurant business is a great strength in developing products for, and relationships with, clients.

Prior to founding SerendipiTea, Linda worked extensively in the nonprofit sector in arts and social services. Her experience in the not-for-profit world carries over into SerendipiTea's numerous philanthropic endeavors (on behalf of City Harvest, Island Harvest, WaterAid, National Peace Corps Assn./NPCA, Green America and a myriad of local organizations), its commitment to social and environmental stewardship and the company's philosophy that a business must benefit everyone involved at all levels.

Linda is a published illustrator and writer. Her illustrations appear in Tomislav Podreka's book, *SerendipiTea: a guide to the varieties, origins and rituals of tea*, and she writes articles about tea for trade publications.