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## **Somerset Inn Steps Into Spring With Tea**

Troy, MI – When Troy’s Somerset Inn opened its doors in 1973, one of its amenities was Afternoon Tea. The phrase, “What’s old is new” is fitting and relevant when it comes to tea, because now – twenty some years after the amenity was discontinued – tea time is hot once again at the upscale hotel.

With the resurgence of tea, Duane Swanson, Director of Operations at Somerset Inn and tea specialist, Phyllis Barkey, joined forces to discuss ways new life could be breathed into this favorite universal beverage at the hotel establishment.

While tea has been a vital part of global culture for centuries, it’s just been within the last few years that this beverage, which is second only to water in worldwide consumption, has been experiencing a rejuvenating comeback in the United States. Tea sales have risen from \$1.8 billion in 1990 to \$6.2 billion in 2005.

The first in a series of steps at Somerset Inn was upgrading tea selections in the hotel’s restaurant, *Crumpets*. In February Ms. Barkey conducted basic tea training for staff members which concluded with an afternoon tea party that Swanson said left the staff in a flurry of enthusiastic conversation. Hotel guests who are tea enthusiasts are now enjoying fine teas from Harney & Sons Master Tea Blenders with the option of having tea steeped in individual teapots and decanted before being brought to the table.

Somerset Inn hosts many conferences. Swanson came up with the innovative concept of offering clients a conference tea break to keep step with today’s current tea trends. The first group to enjoy the newly instituted tea break was Upledger Institute, a group of health professionals who are big tea drinkers. Two teas, a flavored Green Sencha and Rooibos herbal were pre-brewed from loose leaf-teas and tisanes and poured into urns ready for consumption as soon as the conference break began. Feedback was enthusiastic and positive. Other additions to the hotel’s tea service are being considered for fall.

Barkey states tea is finally getting the recognition it deserves for a number of reasons. Fine teas offer taste complexities and flavors that only fine wines can rival. Black, oolong, green, and white teas provide the perfect beverage for every occasion and mood, and are a sophisticated yet affordable luxury beverage for discriminating tastes.

What makes tea such hot commodity? Health is one of the biggest driving forces due to tea’s antioxidant properties that boost the body’s immune system. Baby boomers have also fueled the growth since a cup of tea possesses significantly less caffeine than a cup of coffee but its stimulating effects are gentler and longer lasting. Tea is multi-generational and young people are discovering tea is not just their grandparent’s beverage. Tea is a great connector and equalizer, and lends itself to relaxation and tranquility – at least until the cup is finished!

Somerset Inn is a luxury hotel and conference center located just off I-75 on Big Beaver Road in Troy, MI. The Inn offers 250 elegant guestrooms and suites, as well as 13 meeting and event rooms, including the Grand Ballroom. It was founded in 1973 and has since won several Best of Troy Awards for their continual growth and success. For more information about Somerset Inn and its services, please contact Pam Holland at [pholland@somersetinn.com](mailto:pholland@somersetinn.com) or visit [www.somersetinn.com](http://www.somersetinn.com).