

# Playful Pastime

A new teatime pastime both enlightens and enriches while bringing a bit of frivolity to the tea table.

BY ASHLEY COX

Taking tea can be a rather serious affair, but it is perfectly acceptable, even encouraged, to add a dash of whimsy and merriment to one's teatime ritual.

A board game may not seem like a typical teatime activity at first glance, but it is a unique and surprising way to educate players about all things tea while providing a bit of afternoon amusement. Native Texan Cheryl Dunbar believes her playful game Teago is the perfect blend of education and entertainment.

Cheryl embraced the idea of a playful tea party when she created her teatime game at a holiday tea she hosted for friends. Cheryl's spur-of-the-moment inaugural version was displayed on red construction paper and featured different tea varieties as the sole category.

Cheryl's professional background in hospitality and event planning had already instilled in her an appreciation for tea. She recalls working at the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas and observing the hotel's daily formal tea ceremony. "I was really just arrested by the charm of it all, and I never wanted to lose that feeling; I wanted to share it with other people," she says.

And share it she did. Her holiday tea companions loved the game so much they encouraged Cheryl to market it. She followed their advice, and Teago became available nationally in March 2004. It can now be found in tearooms and gift shops in 33 states, as well as a handful of tearooms in Canada.

Packaged in pretty white and blue reminiscent of old-fashioned china, Teago is based on the well-known game of Bingo and consists of five separate categories. The "T" category includes traditional dishware used when serving tea. "E" is where basic, popular types of teas can be found. "A" features traditional foods served at tea, such as scones and cucumber sandwiches. The "G" category is reserved for popular herbal teas. And the "O" category centers on traditional tea accompaniments, such as Devonshire cream.

Cheryl says Teago is not only intended for recreation during afternoon tea, but it can also be played at bridal and baby showers—or any other time when tea friends



are assembled. It is also popular among those who teach etiquette. By playing the game, students are able to apply the things they learn about teatime and its decorum in a fun, memorable way.

Cheryl hopes everyone can expand their knowledge of the teatime ritual and have a little fun at the same time. "My favorite thing about playing the game is how it tends to bring people together," she says.

Cheryl also is hopeful her creation is as inspiring as it is educational. "Personally, it warms my heart to receive the countless testimonies from tea enthusiasts sharing how much excitement and just flat-out fun they have with my creative endeavor and how I unknowingly inspired others to follow their dream of turning an idea into a reality. Sometimes it is truly overwhelming." ■