

Our Company History

In 1945, inspired by an early Colonial recipe and dissatisfied with the commodity tea that was commonplace in the 1940s, Ruth Campbell Bigelow focused her creative energies on formulating a better cup of tea in the kitchen of her New York City brownstone.

After weeks of trial and error, blending black tea with orange rind and sweet spices, she emerged with the first cup of specialty tea in the country. Ruth shared her tea with friends and received many comments—in fact, “constant comments.” Her new brew got its name, and the Bigelow Tea Company was born.

Ruth was joined in her endeavor by her husband David E. Bigelow, Sr. After the formation of the company and relying on his experience in the brokerage business, he oversaw all the finances, ensuring that he and Ruth watched their pennies so that the fledgling business could survive.

Ruth died in 1966. Until his own passing in 1970 at the age of 91, David Sr. came to the office every day, carrying the same strong work ethic and working side by side with their son, David Jr.

While the company can attribute its beginnings to Ruth and David Sr., and the advent of “Constant Comment” in 1945, it was David Jr. and wife Eunice who pioneered over the next many decades with the explosion in the variety of Bigelow teas that Americans enjoy today. David Jr., with the unwavering support of Eunice, lead the company with integrity, passion, intelligence, kindness and a spirit of determination to its current prominence as the country’s #1 specialty tea company.

Their idea to launch specialty tea to mass market through grocery channels in the 1970s changed the company’s direction in profound ways and paved the way for the future of tea in the U.S. Another notable milestone in their luminous careers was the development of the foil pouch that has become the accepted industry standard for protecting tea’s freshness and flavor from ambient influences. Today, as co-chairmen of the family-run company, they were recently honored for their decades-long contributions to the food industry and who continue to change tastes to this day.

They continue to personally taste and approve the blends for the 130 different teas the company now produces. And much to their credit, they made a considerable investment in the preservation of the Charleston Tea Plantation in South Carolina, saving it from the developer’s wrecking ball and restoring it to its former grandeur as America’s largest working tea farm. The

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farm's visitor center documents the tea growing, harvesting and withering processes, giving over 70,000 people who visit annually a new-found appreciation for this remarkable beverage.

At the helm today as the third generation president and CEO of family-owned Bigelow Tea, is Cindi Bigelow. Before assuming the role in 2005, she spent 20 years in virtually all areas of the company that her grandmother founded. Cindi is instrumental in expanding Bigelow Tea into new channels while building awareness and brand engagement across social media—all to ensure Bigelow Tea is accessible everywhere, 24/7.

As passionate as she is about producing the finest cup of tea, Cindi is equally concerned about community and sustainability issues. She initiated the Annual Bigelow Tea Community Challenge that has donated over \$1 million to local charities and participates in volunteer projects that include Habitat for Humanity's Adopt-a-Home program. Under her leadership, the company was one of the first in Connecticut to install solar panels to offset energy usage, and she has implemented other innovations that have earned Bigelow Tea the distinction of being a zero-waste-to-landfill company.

Cindi was, for a long time, joined by her sister Lori Bigelow. Growing up in a family whose passion is specialty tea, Lori learned to discern the nuances of tea flavors from the best and developed a keen sense for blending from a very early age. Countless hours of blending, sipping, tasting and tweaking culminated in the development of some of Bigelow's best loved teas including the seasonal favorite, Ginger Snappish®, just to name one. Lori was also instrumental in the purchase of the Charleston Tea Plantation, getting it up and running—preserving this American gem for generations to come.

Today, the company is based in Fairfield, CT and still 100% family owned. The three-generational company takes pride in its heritage and successful growth from a one-product, entrepreneurial venture into America's leading specialty tea company. Employing 350 workers and producing 1.7 billion tea bags annually, the Bigelow Tea line includes more than 130 varieties of Flavored, Traditional, Green, Organic, Herbal, Decaffeinated and Iced teas – including its flagship specialty tea flavor, “Constant Comment®,” an all-time American favorite.

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