

THE EDGY VEGGIE

Hot drinks with cool new tastes



Bombilla Gourd Pure Green Tea and Green Jasmine Tea. JOHN VANBEEKUM / MIAMI HERALD STAFF

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Everybody loves a makeover, even, apparently, coffee, tea and cocoa. Our three favorite hot beverages have cultivated a new look and a new taste (sort of).

Cabaret Brewed Chocolate (\$14.95, 6 ounces) rethinks cocoa as we know it. A whole pound of raw cacao beans goes into every jar. Those precious beans are brewed, then blended with cane syrup. Mix a teaspoon of the dark, cocoa-rich syrup with half a cup of boiling water for a treat that's more like chocolate tea than creamy cocoa. It's satisfying thanks to theobromine, cocoa's happy-making compound. Kin to caffeine, theobromine doesn't jolt you, but provides a light lift, a sense of well-being. One teaspoon of Cabaret has 24 calories, a mere trace of fat and all the goodness of cocoa's antioxidants. Craving chocolate's luscious taste as well as its mood-boosting properties? Cabaret may not be your kind of good time.

When is coffee not coffee? When it's **O.N.E.'s Coffee Berry** (\$2.49, 11 ounces). Made with coffee berries, not beans, it's juice, not java. It's not caffeine-saturated, isn't coffee-flavored and you drink it chilled. O.N.E. (One Natural Experience) preserves all coffee's phenolic acids (antioxidants), which get lost in the brewing process. One pack contains 107 calories, yet only as much caffeine as a cup of green tea. Blended with strawberry and acerola, O.N.E.'s coffee berry has a refreshing tart zing but may be a hard sell for java junkies.

Bombilla Gourd Pure Teas (\$1.79, 16.9 ounces) taste, happily enough, like tea. They're organic with no sugar, no preservatives, no additives, no calories, no carbs, just a pure, clean tea taste. The secret weapon is EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate), green tea's awesome antioxidant believed to knock out more free radicals than vitamins C and E. It's in all four of Bombilla Gourd's teas, including a minimally processed white tea, a mildly fermented green tea, an assertively oolongy black dragon and a well-balanced, just-perfumed-enough jasmine.

Cabaret brewed chocolate is available only online at www.brewedchocolate.com. O.N.E. Coffee Berry and Bombilla Gourd Pure teas can be found at Wild Oats and other natural food stores. Cheers.

Ellen Kanner writes biweekly about vegetarian concerns.