

Shmanners 350: Tea and Coffee Connoisseurs

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette.

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear!

Travis: Happy Max Fun Drive.

Teresa: Happy MFD!

Travis: Happy MFD! Well, MFD to me still is, like, that compressed wood that we—

Teresa: That's MDF.

Travis: Oh! You're right! Happy Max Drive Fun, everybody!

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: So excited. So, before we get started we're doing another Sommelier episode.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Which we're very excited about.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: But first we're going to tell you about MaxFunDrive. What MaxFunDrive is two weeks out of every year we come to you and say "Hey, maybe consider becoming a supporter of Max Fun and, by extension, of *Shmanners*." And you go to Maximumfun.org/join and you see if there is a monthly support level that works for you. It starts as low as \$5.00 a month.

And when you do, it asks you which shows you listen to and part of your support goes to Max Fun so that they can support the shows you love, but the majority of it goes to the shows you love. It's split between them, whichever Max Fun shows you listen to. And it helps us do this. It helps us do it as a job, and to make it a priority, and to try to improve it, and make it a focus, and all that stuff. And we couldn't do that without your support.

We'll tell you more about the reward levels and all that stuff, but right now, if it sounds good to you, whether it's becoming a new supporter or upgrading the support you already give, please consider going to Maximumfun.org/join. Now, Teresa.

Teresa: [singing to the tune of "Magic to Do"] Join us. Leave your fields to flower. Join us.

Travis: Oh, bring it that Pippen E. Yeah, babe.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: Keep going. Now—

Teresa: [singing] Come and spend an hour or two. [normally] I'm sorry.

Travis: [singing] Did-dle-ee-do.

Teresa: I was an alto, so I don't think I know the melody. [laughs softly]

Travis: That's fair.

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: Now, we did a Sommelier Episode already.

Teresa: No, we did.

Travis: So, what is this?

Teresa: Well, okay. We mentioned in Part One. Part *un*, since sommelier is French.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: We mentioned that there are lots of different beverages that one can become a connoisseur of, right?

Travis: Sure. Yeah.

Teresa: And we focused *mostly* on wine, but I did mention that you could really do it for anything that were multiple varietals of, right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: So, like, if you don't want to, you know, spend 3,000— \$30,000 or want to cry over amounts of France for three years—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: ... you could enjoy, like, a masterful knowledge of something else, right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: So, we're going to through four different beverages. Two today and two next week.

Travis: Okay. I can't wait. I'm excited! I don't know about any other beverages.

Teresa: You don't?

Travis: Well, water is—

Teresa: Water.

Travis: Is water on the list?

Teresa: Water is not on our list today.

Travis: I— I— It's very biblical for me. It's water and wine. That's all I've got.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: It's two options, baby.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Hydration and party! Or sad crying.

Teresa: Sad crying. [laughing softly] Um, we're going to do two non-alcoholic and two alcoholic.

Travis: Okay. So, this week nonalcoholic.

Teresa: Nonalcoholic this week.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And next week alcoholic.

Travis: Okay, what are we doing this week?

Teresa: We are doing coffee and tea.

Travis: I've had both of those!

Teresa: You have, and we have done a little bit of, like, a “how-to” tea, right?

Travis: How— how, uh, HTT.

Teresa: How to tea. [laughing] As long as we’re using acronyms, right?

Travis: HTT.

Teresa: HTT. But this is going to be, you know, a little more about, um...

Travis: The connoisseur-ness of it.

Teresa: The connoisseur-ness.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Exactly. Exactly. So, like, we are going to be using the word sommelier, right? Because it has come to denote someone who has a mastering of whatever beverage, right? Although, for beer, most people nowadays would say brewmaster.

Travis: Yeah, but when I hear brewmaster I think of somebody who makes it.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: You know, like— I think, sommelier is good because it more— to me denotes a difference between, like if you said, “Wine expert,” right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Versus sommelier. A wine expert might know a lot about wine, right? Sommelier feels like they know about the specifics of like— they know more about the specifics of it, right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: That's the difference to me. Now, listen, I'm talking out of my butt here.

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: I'm trying to justify it, but I just know in my gut—

Teresa: I think, for me, it's a little different. Where a wine expert maybe is about the wine, and a sommelier is about the pairing and the experience around it.

Travis: Mm, yeah!

Teresa: I think that that's—

Travis: A wine guide.

Teresa: Yeah. Maybe that's the difference between a brewmaster and a beer sommelier.

Travis: Yeah! Like a- like a wine doula.

Teresa: [laughing] Oh, boy. We are really mincing terms today. Um, okay. So, coffee. You drink it. I drink it.

Travis: I love it. Yeah, I made you drink it. I got you into it.

Teresa: You made me. I did not start drinking coffee until I had my first child.

Travis: Yeah, and I couldn't stand it. 'Cause, you'd be like, "All right, uh." And I'm like, "What?"

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: "But then how do you *feel* in the morning?"

Teresa: And I started out half coffee, half hot chocolate.

Travis: Yeah. It's called mocha, sorta.

Teresa: Sort of. I mean, a poor man's mocha, I suppose.

Travis: Yeah. A faux-cha.

Teresa: [through laughter] Is drip coffee and a hot chocolate packet.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [laughing] But, so like, I remember, um, going to Justin's house. Justin and Syd. And explaining to him that I don't really drink coffee because up until then I had mostly relied on sugar for my ups.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Didn't need that caffeine. I had sugar.

Travis: Sugar is *my* anti-drug.

Teresa: [laughing] And he was like, "That's— I really envy you because I really wish that I could go back to that day where I actually felt something drinking coffee—"

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: "... instead of the continual maintenance that now I require."
[chuckles]

Travis: That is exactly it. That is exactly it, where coffee is no longer— now it's, if I don't drink coffee I'm in the red. You know what I mean? And it's not like, "Whoa! I feel up." But now it is also true because this is a thing that I

know which is coffee often— I'm not a doctor. But it has a different effect on people, uh, who's, like, neurochemical stuff is whatever with ADHD.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Where instead of being that like, "I'm super awake!" It's more of that like, "I'm able to focus more. I am able to, like, feel more in control of my energy instead of feeling dispersed everywhere." So, I've never had coffee to wake up in the morning. I have coffee because it's just, like, okay, this is— now I'm in it. You know what I mean? Like, I'm— this is part of the experience for me.

Teresa: You once had to turn of phrase about it being like a magic potion.

Travis: Yes. I often feel that way about— I— I bemoan the fact that there are few things in life like there are in, like, a Zelda game for example. Where it's, like, I'm gonna drink this and it's like, "Whoa! My health bar refilled! My magic's back!"

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: And, like, coffee *was* that for me for a while, when I was, like, in my 20s.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And now it's like if Zelda woke up and was like, "I can't." Or I guess it'd be Link. Don't at me.

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: Either one of 'em. Frankly, they're all drinking max potions. But if they woke up and they were like, "Oh, I can't slink in until I drink some. [slurping noise] Okay! What was it? Don't talk to me until I have had my magic potion."

Teresa: [continues laughing] And now, there have been days where the only hydration in my life has been a cup of coffee. Which is terrible. Don't do that. Um, but it is mostly water, so don't at me.

Travis: It's not— Okay.

Teresa: Don't at me.

Travis: Oh, my God. It's— but it's another ADHD thing where it's just like I routinely have going a coffee and a water and sometimes some kind of third beverage. Does my routine say something?

Teresa: Your beverage shopping.

Travis: Well, I have— you can't say, though, when you said I don't drink water. I'm saying I have everything going. I have *everything* going. It's all in. [laughing]

Teresa: Listen, I'm back on that water train. It was—

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It was a very specific time in raising children where it was just—

Travis: A dry time.

Teresa: [through laughter] A dry time.

Travis: A very dried-out time.

Teresa: Um, okay. So, there are, right? Coffee sommeliers. Which are also, sometimes called coffee connoisseurs. And they often call themselves coffee snobs, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And they have a very intense, kind of like, learning experience, right? In the same way, as people would with like a wine sommelier, right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And so, here's a few things that you should know even if you aren't a coffee connoisseur.

Travis: It comes from beans!

Teresa: It does come from beans. You should—

Travis: Guinea bean!

Teresa: No.

Travis: Oh. So, Guinea bean and water! It'll make coffee.

Teresa: [laughing] You should learn about the beans, the roasts, the popular drinks, and the brewing methods.

Travis: I mean, in many ways beans are a magical fruit is what I've heard.

Teresa: [giggling] Oh, yeah? What happens to you?

Travis: Uh, you can grind 'em up and, uh—

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: ... force hot water through them.

Teresa: Okay. So, four main types of beans, right?

Travis: Big, small— [laughing]

Teresa: [through laughter] Are you gonna let me get through any of this?

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: Arabica.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Right? A softer sweeter taste because they are the least acidic of the coffee bean.

Travis: Okay. I'm trying to think if I can think of any other ones, and I simply cannot.

Teresa: They grow in high elevations with lots of rain like Brazil or rainforests.

Travis: Sure. Yeah.

Teresa: Robusta.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: As the name implies—

Travis: Bold.

Teresa: Yes, they are strong and robust. They have a reputation for tasting a little burnt.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Which some people enjoy. Not me.

Travis: I drink my coffee black. I do— I was actually having this conversation with Alice today where my coffee's too sweet and I'm like, "Well, this must not be working!"

Teresa: This isn't it.

Travis: No, if it doesn't hurt it's not working!

Teresa: [giggling] Oftentimes they are blended with Arabica beans because of this—

Travis: El Robusto.

Teresa: Exactly. Because of this bitterness. And they grow mostly in Africa and Indonesia. And then there's Liberica beans— beans. Liberica beans.
[giggling]

Travis: Libera— one. Okay, Dom's.

Teresa: [continues laughing] Liberica *beans*. And they are relatively rare and have a bitter, again, but slightly woody flavor.

Travis: Ooh!

Teresa: They aren't very popular in the US or Europe, but in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia they are *extremely* popular.

Travis: Okay. I've never had them before.

Teresa: I haven't either.

Travis: The other two I recognized.

Teresa: The only kind of coffee I drink is the kind that you buy, so I haven't had them either.

Travis: It's Arabica. Most of the stuff you get is Arabica. Yeah.

Teresa: And then, Excelsa beans. They are even rarer—

Travis: I was gonna say, "Yeah."

Teresa: ... and have a tart but fruity flavor profile.

Travis: [gasps] I want it! Wait, are those the ones the monkeys eat?

Teresa: No.

Travis: And poop out and you make it out of the monkey poop?

Teresa: No.

Travis: No. That is a thing!

Teresa: That's a thing. I think there— aren't they lemurs?

Travis: Lemurs? Maybe?

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: Hey, but isn't a lemur basically a monkey? Don't @ me. [laughing]

Teresa: No. [bursts out laughing] Oh, no.

Travis: I feel like I don't use that enough. I'm not, like, on Twitter anymore. I feel like I should just say more things that I know are erroneous, but say it, like, bold. You know what I mean?

Teresa: They grow in Southeast Asia, and, like I said, are rare, so knowing about them will make you look very fancy.

Travis: I want them. I want an Excelsa bean.

Teresa: You'll look like a fancy boy.

Travis: Yeah, you know what else makes you look like a fancy boy?

Teresa: What is it?

Travis: Being a MaxFun supporter.

Teresa: [imitating announcing tune] Ba-ba-pa-pe-pe-be-boum.

Travis: You know why? Well, so first of all, let's start here. At \$5.00 a month, which is like a cup of coffee, I guess. I don't know.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: I make my coffee at home. Because here's the thing. Can I tell you a thing about when I order coffee? How do I order my coffee? I know it's black, but what else do I ask for?

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: I ask for a little bit of ice, so I can drink it right away.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: And you know what they call that? Child's temperature.

Teresa: [laughing loudly] I had this problem on the JoCo Cruise. Where I had to order coffee for myself.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Instead of just making it from my little, like, coffee bar that we have here at home. And I don't know what the words are for that. [chuckles]

Travis: She says coffee bar and she means, like, big container of, like, chocolate flavoring that she puts in there.

Teresa: [bursts out laughing] And oat milk.

Travis: There's nothing fancy about this chocolate bar. It's got, like, three pumpers. There's like, pump of chocolate, pump of hazelnut, a pump of vanilla, oat milk, oat milk, oat milk.

Teresa: Two scoops of ice. [laughing softly]

Travis: Yeah. And like, that's it. But when I order— when I think about it, a little bit of ice so I can drink it right away. And there I go, child's temperature, and I'm like, [disappointedly] "Okay. All right. You didn't—"

Teresa: Uh. Anyway. [giggles]

Travis: Anyways, \$5.00 a month, you get access to over 500 hours of bonus content across all MaxFun shows across every MaxFunDrive event we've ever done. This year the *Shmanners* bonus episode is we talk to the Meme librarian about the history of memes, um, the impact it's had on culture, all that stuff. It's— not only was it a really fun episode, incredibly fascinating to me. Also, 'cause it really clued me in on how little you know about memes.

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: It was really interesting. Me and the Meme Librarian would be like, "Oh, and this one and this one." And Teresa's like, "I like puppies. I like the ones with, like, puppy faces. And it says like, "Yeah, hang in there, bud" or whatever."

Teresa: [laughing] Some people surf the web. Other people just kind of float. [chuckles] That's me.

Travis: Yeah, that's true. That's a good way of putting it. Um, \$10.00 a month you're gonna get access to over 500 hours of bonus content. You're also going to get your choice of one of 37 stickers from across all MaxFun shows. The *Shmanners* one is super cute.

Teresa: Very cute.

Travis: It is a deer and a dove saying "Hello, Dear" and "Hello, my dove." And those stickers they're incredible because they will stick over and over again, but, like, aren't so sticky that they'll, like, damage whatever you're sticking them to.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Super-duper recommend.

Teresa: Perfect laptop stickers.

Travis: Perfect laptop stickers! Indeed. And then there's a bunch of other ones. Um, there's, you know, kits and cookbooks and all kinds of stuff, but what really matters is that you're supporting the shows that you care about. Literally, *Shmanners* wouldn't exist. None of our shows would exist really without your support. It's allowed us to make this our focus.

We've got two kids now, but we know that it is important to make sure these shows go out every week, and we've committed to it. It's allowed us to hire our researcher, Alex, who we wouldn't be able to pay without your support. Um, our editor, Rachel, wouldn't be able to pay without your support. And this is our job, you know. And this is the time of year we ask our boss for a raise, and you're our boss.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: Huh. You ever thought about that?

Teresa: I haven't thought about it that way.

Travis: Yeah, but it works. So, yeah, you get rewards. And yeah, it's amazing, but mostly this is our chance to come to you and say, "Hey, please consider supporting our show." Or if you're already a supporter, maybe this is the year you're like, "You know what? My circumstances have improved," or "I've listened to even more Max Fun shows. I'm ready to upgrade my support level." We appreciate that too.

It's a fun time of year. It's our chance to say, "Thank you." So, thank you for new supporters. Thank you to upgrading supporters. And people who are already supporters, "Thank you very much!" One more time, that's MaximumFun.org/join. I say one more time, we're going to talk about it again.

Teresa: We're— again, yeah.

Travis: Yeah. But MaximumFun.org/join if you're considering doing it, please do it now before you forget. Okay. Now, back to coffee.

Teresa: Back to coffee. Now, here's something that I really do think that *you* will be able to explain.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: What kinds of roasts are there for coffee beans?

Travis: There's, like, light or blond, right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: And then there's medium, there's dark, and there's espresso? Or is espresso one of them?

Teresa: No. No.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: So, you were very close. So, there is a light roast, which is sometimes called blond. It has the highest caffeine content—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: ... and also the highest acidity.

Travis: Yes. So, highest caffeine— the longer you roast a bean the more it, like, cracks and splits and the stuff that's in it evaporates out 'cause you're roasting it, right? So, a light roast doesn't have as much time to, like, dry out, so the natural caffeine is in it. And people would think, like, "Oh, a light roast." It's more caffeinated, bud!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And then there's medium, which has, like, a pretty medium level.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Then there's medium-dark, right? Which is where it starts to get kind of like heavy and full and spicy sometimes people say.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And then there's the dark roast, right? So, there's, like, the two sides of medium, and then light, and dark.

Travis: Yeah. Just like the force.

Teresa: Just like... the— the force?

Travis: Light and dark, there's them.

Teresa: Yeah, but there's no medium force.

Travis: There should be though. They don't talk about that enough. Where's the people who're like, "I can use it."

Teresa: [laughing lightly]

Travis: You know, sometimes, yeah, I use it to help people, but sometimes it's like, I don't want to pay taxes.

[deep voice] "You don't have to pay taxes."

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Oh, great. Okay, so after that comes the drinks, right? And so, coffee experts recommend that you learn how to make and identify, if you want to be a connoisseur, the following:

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: Espresso, which is an entirely different thing, right?

Travis: And espresso actually has a fairly low— so, the caffeine content of an espresso roasted bean, right, is so dark, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That it's actually lost a lot of it, but it's also *concentrated*.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So that's why actually if I'm, like, doing— when we're doing live shows and I order a drink, it's usually a red-eye, which is a shot of espresso in coffee.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: So, I'm getting that— that *long* caffeine and, oh, for a punch of caffeine 'cause I gotta be funny for the people. And Daddy needs his caffeine!

Teresa: And within those espresso drinks we have: Americano, Cappuccino, Macchiato, Latte, Mocha, and things like that, right? And then, coffee drinks: Cafe au Lait, Affogato—

Travis: Affogato is, like, basically like coffee and ice cream?

Teresa: Yep. That's what I like.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: ... Irish coffee, Ristretto, Flat White, Red Eye, again—

Travis: My favorite.

Teresa: ... Cortado, Lungo. You know, these are all the different types, right?

Travis: If you're traveling abroad, by the way, away from America I mean. Americano is more, uh— mostly what you'll find. And it's basically a shot of espresso plus water.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Cappuccino's different from— basically when we're talking about, uh, I was a Barista for a little bit. I was okay at it. I was better at that than I was as a bartender. It was a combination coffee and bar at night. It was too much.

Teresa: They were doing too much.

Travis: Too much. But, basically, with coffee— coffee drinks, espresso drinks it is what is the combination of milk, coffee, and steamed milk, right? And wa—

Teresa: And water.

Travis: Like, what is the combination of those things basically.

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah. You know, and there's tutorials *all* over YouTube for those. So, if you want to branch out into different coffee drinks, YouTube is a great place to find that stuff. And then, okay. So, brewing methods, again. So, each technique has their different pro and con, right? So, there's the Pour-Over. There's the Press. You have a French Press.

Travis: I think I do.

Teresa: That you've used occasionally.

Travis: Not anymore. Not with kids. It's— there's a difference between fast and, like, the *artistry* of the pull-over, the French press—

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: Versus, like, I need the— if I could get it in an IV, that would be—

Teresa: Just press the button. The vacuumers siphon. There's percolator. There's cold brew, which you have made.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: I really like the cold brew.

Travis: You gotta plan ahead. You gotta plan ahead on a cold brew, though. You're making that *before* you need it.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Not when you need it. As the name might imply, it takes a while. [chuckles]

Teresa: But cold brew for me is the *easiest* to drink.

Travis: Well, sure, but it doesn't hurt so it's not real. It's not real.

Teresa: [laughs lightly] That's it! That's it. You don't feel it.

Travis: Coffee isn't something you do for fun.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: It's something you *need*. [chuckles]

Teresa: And, of course, the espresso method. All right. That's a lot, right? But it's not a requirement that you know every single one of these things, okay? Will Frith, who is a coffee generalist. He's a buyer, roaster, and founder, and product Director of Building Coffee, told USA Today, "The rabbit hole of coffee geekery can get really deep." But he has a couple of great tips. Make sure that your coffee is *fresh*, right?

Travis: Oh, yeah.

Teresa: A well-roasted coffee from a good roasting company that is less than one month out from its roast date.

Travis: That's another thing. You want to make sure that you have, uh, airtight containers for it as well.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: If you can— If you, oh, care enough. Let me put it that way. You don't have to, but getting a grinder and a whole-bean coffee—

Teresa: Right.

Travis: ... can make a world of difference as far as the freshness of the taste.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. That's what Frith recommends, grinding it.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And when in doubt, medium grind is usually good for everything.

Travis: Yeah. And keep it in an airtight container when you're not using it because it can lose a lot of flavor to the air.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So, use, you know, good water. Filtered water is often preferred by like he said, coffee snobs.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Instead of tap water. Also, there is a train of thought that includes *blooming* the coffee. You can't really do this in, like, a machine, right? But you could do it for a pour-over, or French press, or, mm, I don't think you could for a percolator. Anyway, Dan McLaughlin, who owns the Cleveland-based Golden Triangle Coffee, recommends blooming it.

So, what you do is you run a little hot water from the machine onto the grounds, stop the machine, and then resume brewing 30 seconds later. Brewing.

Travis: Okay. Uh.

Teresa: Brewing [chuckles] 30 seconds later. It's— he says, "Starting it again you open up the microscopic pores of the coffee and allow more water to flow freely between them. It increases the total dissolved solid rate and allows for a stronger cup. Thinking about it like you take a hot steamy shower before you exfoliate."

Travis: Can I jump back to the filtered water versus the plain?

Teresa: Oh, sure!

Travis: Because here's the thing, for me, it ain't about the taste, it's about the machine. Of like, especially if you have hard water. If you have a water that has a lot of like, uh, you know min— uh, calcium or whatever in it—

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And running through this machine over and over again you can get the calcium buildup and everything.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That is why I think using filtered water is better. It has nothing to do with, "Uh, the taste."

Teresa: But you should also clean your machine regularly.

Travis: Oh, yeah. That's the other thing.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Pay attention to that.

Teresa: Pay attention to that.

Travis: We had a machine that no matter how many times I ran the cleaning cycle, it was like, "I don't know, man. Clean it again." I was like, "Machine, I think something's wrong!"

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: I just cleaned it three times with everything and it's like, "Oh, man I still feel dirty!" [chuckles lightly]

Teresa: Yeah. It got you blinking. The clean, like, I don't know. I don't know what that means for us. Um, okay. So, coffee was a lot, right? But just like we were talking about with wines, you know, you don't have to know everything to know what you like, right? And—

Travis: Can I give a spicy opinion?

Teresa: Oh, sure!

Travis: And this is very much thrown at me.

Teresa: Uh-oh.

Travis: If you care about this thing, I think that when it comes to when we talk about, like, notes and, like, the flavors and stuff—

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: ... I think it's more real in coffee than wine.

Teresa: Really?

Travis: Well, 'cause I think there's a lot more of a scent. Like, you don't have to get deep in there—

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: ... to smell coffee. You can smell it when somebody opens a bag of Folgers and you're like, "Well, we're getting ready for the day! Hot damn. I'm ready for my dance recital or whatever."

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: And it's like I think that—

Teresa: That's an old commercial.

Travis: It is, man.

Teresa: Really old.

Travis: But I think that there's a difference just in, like, the scent because frankly, my thing is like, coffee to me always tastes the same no matter how it smells.

Teresa: Oh, really?

Travis: Well, you'll get this flavored coffee and you're like, "Oh, this smells like a blueberry muffin." And I taste and I'm like, "That's coffee." [laughing]

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: We just got one, there's, uh, place here, Coffee Emporium, that I really like in Cincinnati. And they, like, you can buy the whole beans from them. And I wanted some flavored coffee called Mackinac Island Fudge. And the thing I liked most about it, 'cause I don't normally like flavored coffee because I think it ends up tasting weird— smelling great, tasting weird. The Mackinac Island Fudge smells so good!

Teresa: Mackinaw.

Travis: Mackinaw?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Sure. It smells so good. Tastes exactly like coffee. And I'm like, "Ah, perfect. Doesn't have a weird taste to it but smells great."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Smells so good!

Teresa: It does smell good.

Travis: And it tastes like coffee.

Teresa: And then I put chocolate sauce in it.

Travis: Yeah, you do.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: Yeah, you do.

Teresa: Okay. And then the other beverage that we're gonna talk about, again, this is a little more briefly because we have a whole episode on tea.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: We're going to talk about *tea*.

Travis: Note tea, once again, the variety of it is ridiculous.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: What's that place in T—uh, Churchills?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: There's a place that I'll never forget. We went there and it was like a tea that was like— Oh, I'm trying to remember what it was. But it was, like, for kids or whatever. It was Bubblegum tea.

Teresa: Oh, it had the little pearls!

Travis: And in the tea was like bubblegum, like, balls. And I was like, "Guys! Come on." But it was, like, we bought it for, like, Dot and Bebe, so it was, like, completely caffeine free, and use this for them. But I was like, "You just put [through laughter] bubble gum in it!"

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It's not flavored like bubblegum. It contains bubble gum!

Teresa: Bubble gum. So, here are a few tips about tea from Elmwood Inn Fine Teas, owners Bruce and Shelley Richardson.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: They recommend that you— once you find a tea that you like, learn about the growing history of the region, right? A lot of the tea in the US comes from Argentina because, fun fact, most of the tea in Argentina is harvested with a mechanical harvester—

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: ... that produces the lighter leaf that Americans use in *iced* tea.

Travis: Oh! Okay.

Teresa: You know, so, this is like the— you know, the supermarket tea, right? Lipton or whatever.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: That is how most people in the US consume their tea.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Although the margins are changing.

Travis: Oh?

Teresa: It was— it was a long time coming, I think.

Travis: What's your favorite kind of tea?

Teresa: Oh, man. [sighs]

Travis: Oh, I didn't know it was such a tough—

Teresa: I think that, um... I like an Earl Grey, but I always put sugar and milk in it.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But if I'm not gonna do sugar and milk, I like, like, a sleepy time Chamomile type tea. Which isn't really tea.

Travis: I like a Gunpowder green high-caffeine, but, like, that smooth green kind of flavor. Now, don't get me wrong. I like a black tea, right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I enjoy it. Oh, especially if— Oh! I get me a— what was the one? There was, like, a dark spiced chai that I really enjoy. But there's something about that Gunpowder green that is— I like it! I just bumped the— I bumped the microphone with my nose 'cause I was so in the moment.

Teresa: Like I said, but if it comes from the tea plant, and all types of tea come from the plant, that's what makes it tea. If it doesn't come from the specific plant then it's not tea.

Travis: Yeah, we talked about that in our tea episode. It was, like, when the leaves are harvested, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That determines...

Teresa: Yeah. And how much they are left to dry and whether or not (quote) “bruised,” right?

Travis: Yeah. If you’re nice— like if you say nice things to them while they’re growing or if you kind of ignore ‘em.

Teresa: [laughing] So, white tea, green tea, um, and then—

Travis: Blue tea.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Purple.

Teresa: Oolong tea.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: And then black tea, right? Have to do— so, white tea is the earliest harvest and the least processed. And then you can go all the way down to the later harvest with the, um, the black leaves, and those are dried.

Travis: And that’s like, “Oh, I forgot you were here.”

Teresa: [laughs lightly]

Travis: Oh, my God. How long has this been here? It’s turning black. Let’s brew it.

Teresa: They are— and the reason that *are* darker— they are black because they are oxidized for about four hours before they’re also dried.

Travis: Mm.

Teresa: And it is— it’s also said that these are the tea leaves that you kind of bruise or, like— like slap into life.

Travis: Yeah. I love that.

Teresa: [laughing softly]

Travis: Wake up!

Teresa: [through laughter] Before— before you process it.

Travis: Now, get in this hot water!

“What? Huh?”

Teresa: Yeah. It’s— it is described as a similar process to cutting into an apple. When the apple is peeled or sliced, what happens to the apple after it’s left out in the air, is where it turns brown. And that’s the same process with tea.

Travis: Gotta slap it.

Teresa: Did you know, sidebar, they have engineered these (quote) “Artic” brands of apples that don’t turn brown?

Travis: I don’t know how I feel about that. As a parent, I love it.

Teresa: I love it as a parent! As, like, someone who the children demand a whole apple they call it.

Travis: They will then eat a ring around the middle. Like a reverse Saturn, if you will.

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: They’ll eat a ring out of the middle. So, it’s just, like, look at the apple, right? And then just around the middle part— the widest part of the apple, just went, “Chomp. Chomp, chomp, chomp.”

Teresa: And then it turns brown, and they don’t want it anymore.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And then, I have to cut the brown parts off, and pretend that it's a new apple for them.

Travis: But I also think— is it— are we one step closer to, "And also, the apple will do your laundry for you?"

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: Which now, in retrospect, I said that. Yeah! [chuckles] Cool, man!

Teresa: So—

Travis: It's a *real* Apple phone.

Teresa: Uh, ha ha.

Travis: Sorry. If I had said that faster, you might have laughed.

Teresa: Maybe.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Maybe if it was before the laundry stuff.

Travis: I know! But sometimes you gotta take a couple of runs at a joke to find the right one.

Teresa: [laughing] So, black teas in general are punchier and have more, like, differing and indulgent flavor notes. Things like smoky, spicy, nutty—

Travis: Chocolate.

Teresa: ... metallic, sweet, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: All that kind of stuff. So, for your own reference, listeners, if you are in the USA or in Europe, you have probably had black tea before, right? And like I said, this is what we use for iced tea in America, but this is where you get Earl Grey, as English Breakfast, and Irish Breakfast, and Darjeeling—

Travis: Lady Grey.

Teresa: ... and Lady Grey, and, you know, all that kind of stuff. So, if you've had a cup of tea, like a commercially served cup of tea in the US or Europe, it's probably black tea.

Travis: Yeah, unless you specifically said, like, green tea, it's probably black tea.

Teresa: Right. And again, chamomile, mint tea, Sleepytime, all that stuff, lemon tea, hibiscus, not teas. Technically *infusions*.

Travis: Hmm. Yeah.

Teresa: I really like the ones—the flowers that you get.

Travis: Oh, yeah.

Teresa: And, like, uh, I feel like the prettiest is when you get it at, like, a Sushi restaurant, and they have, like, a beautiful—

Travis: And they have it in a glass, yeah.

Teresa: ... glass teacup— uh, teapot and it's, like, the flower that blooms. So pretty.

Travis: Yeah. You know, I was like, in theory, our daughters.

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: Once again, much like an apple they're like, "Yeah, do it." And then you pour it and they're like, "This doesn't taste like sugar."

Teresa: This isn't— this isn't right.

Travis: And you're like, "Man, yeah. Most tea doesn't." And they're like, "I actually just want lemonade." And I'm like, "Yeah, I bet you do."

Teresa: Um, basically, as far as tea goes, the important part is how hot the water is and how long you leave it in the water.

Travis: Yeah. The steep.

Teresa: The steep, indeed. So, with white tea and green tea, don't even have the water boiling, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And just a couple of minutes will do it. With the Oolong tea, it's the middle child, right? And so—

Travis: What does it set like, 160? Yeah?

Teresa: Just under 200 Fahrenheit.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: And then only for probably like three or four minutes. And you can always just boil the water and then put in a few ice cubes. And that'll be just about right.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Black tea should be brewed in boiling water and steeped for, uh, at least three minutes, but never more than five.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And herbal teas you can't really mess up, right? These infusions, they need to have boiling water, and the longer, actually, the stronger.

Travis: Yeah, but because they're not caffeinated, like, it won't get bitter in the same way.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Like, if you brew black tea for too long, like, it will become undrinkable. If you steep it too long, I mean. Whereas like, a mint tea— 'cause it's mintier.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: It's fine.

Teresa: Other than that, if you want to begin your journey as a tea sommelier, there's a few things that you should know.

Travis: Don't eat it.

Teresa: Don't— don't eat it. [giggles] Uh, use these—

Travis: Hey, I say, that I bet there are teas, like, where it's just like, and when you're done with it, like, you could put green tea in cookies. Or you could make like—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: ... green tea cookies. And so, maybe you *should* eat it. You know, I take it back. As a sommelier, eat your tea.

Teresa: [laughing softly]

Travis: That's why you, like, take the letters from tea. Rearrange them. What have you got? Eat. Right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: So, you know what that means. Eat your tea! Eat your tea!

Teresa: All right. You should use leaves because tea bags, um, although convenient, right? Are not going to give you the best experience because it's often, like, dust, right? And I think that as, you know, I love sweet tea. I think tea bags are fine for that because mostly what you're drinking is sugar. [chuckles]

Travis: Well, I'll tell you this. Our researcher, Alex, used to work in a tea shop.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And she clued me in to basically you can get, like, basically tea bags that are, like, open on top. And you can get loose-leaf tea and then scoop it out, put it in the tea bag, and use it like a tea bag so you don't have to brew a whole pot.

Teresa: Yeah. Then you don't have to worry about it. And instead of using a tea ball or a small steeper, it's recommended that you have a larger steeping device, so if you— actually, if you don't have that but you do have a teapot and a sieve—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: ... that is, like, the oldest way of doing it, right? So, you put the actual tea leaves in the teapot to steep, and then you pour it through the sieve into your cup.

Travis: Perfect.

Teresa: That will be perfect. So, we'll be back next week with our alcoholic options to help you look extra cool. Next week we'll be doing wine tasting, right?

Travis: Ooh! Okay.

Teresa: And whiskey sampling.

Travis: Oh, I *love* that. I like both of those things. I like tasting wine and I like, well, drinking whiskey, but it's like a big sample.

Teresa: Because we already did some really great episodes on beer.

Travis: That's true.

Teresa: So, we have an episode on lagers and an episode on ales also.

Travis: That is true. Now, I do want to say one last time before we let you go. We're doing the MaxFunDrive, folks! If you love our show and you're glad that it exists, might I recommend going to Maximumfun.org/join and see if there is a support level that works for you? It goes up to I think 200, but, frankly, five dollars a month— if everybody gave five dollars a month, it would mean the world to us.

And so, if you haven't been a supporter— yeah, we've been going for a while now. We've been doing this show for many years. If you haven't become a supporter yet and you've always meant to or you're like, "You know what? I listen to every episode of *Shmanners*," or "Man, I've learned so much," maybe this is the year to consider going to MaximumFun.org/join. See if there's a level that works for you. Um—

Teresa: And tell your friends that you joined.

Travis: Yeah. Tell your friends that you joined. If you know somebody— maybe you've introduced people to the show. And you're like, "Hey, did you know MaxFunDrive is going on? Are you a supporter?" Right? That would really help us out as well. And, frankly, thank you for listening. Thank you for supporting in whatever way you do support. It means the world to us no matter what.

I joke every episode that we could do the show without you but why. It's not true. We wouldn't do the show without you. We might be able to, but at a certain point, I think it would be a lot harder to justify doing the show—

Teresa: [laughing softly]

Travis: ... for free for no one. [chuckles]

Teresa: [bursts out laughing]

Travis: Like, recording it and then immediately deleting the file I think would feel really weird. So, thank you for your support. Maximumfun.org/join. It's only for more or less two weeks, but really it ends up being, like, 11 days or something. So, don't miss your chance to be part of it. Maximumfun.org/join. Go now. Don't forget. Maximumfun.org/join.

Speaking of thank you's we want to say thank you to our researcher, Alex, without whom we would not be able to make this show. And without you, we wouldn't be able to pay. So, thank you so much. And we want to say thank you to our editor, Rachel. We couldn't make this show without Rachel, and we couldn't have Rachel without your support. So, thank you for that as well. Teresa, thank you for another great episode.

Teresa: Thank you, Travis.

Travis: You're so welcome. [laughing lightly] And, uh, thank you for listening. And what else? Who else do we thank, Teresa?

Teresa: Well, we always, thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today.

Always, thank you to you, our listeners, for your topic submissions. And, I mean, we could put together another idiom show right now, but we're waiting on *your* idioms, listeners. So, email us ShmannerScast@gmail.com. Say "Hi" to Alex because she reads every one.

Travis: Oh, I should also say, if you do become a supporter, over at the McElroy family Instagram account, uh, we are trying to post there every day of the MaxFunDrive. If you become a supporter, please go comment on one of those posts and say, "Hey, I became a supporter. Hello, *Shmanners!* Hello, Travis." Or whatever. So, we can say thank you. Thank you so much.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: And that's going to do it for us, so join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it.

[theme music plays]

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