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Caleb Stipkovits
Seattle University

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Bubbling to the Top: New Boba Shop Reinvents Cap Hill Tea

Caleb Stipkovits, Volunteer Reporter

Although it has been weeks since its grand opening, Capitol Hill’s newest boba shop is still packed every day. Comebuytea, located on the corner of Broadway and Pike, is growing in popularity due to its luxurious interior and colorful “Teaspresso” machines. Above all reasons, the fresh drink menu is what keeps attracting customers.

Although new to Seattle, Comebuytea has made a name in the boba business by operating several Taipei and Hong Kong locations. The Capitol Hill location is only the second Comebuytea in the United States.



Adeline Ong

Founded in 2002, the company makes its tea using the 5-step Kung Fu method in a Teaspresso machine, which is similar to an espresso machine, but for tea. The Kung Fu method includes warming, rinsing, immersing, “waking up” and steeping the tea. Although the tactic is usually very time-consuming, the Teaspresso can complete the entire process in just 60 seconds.

Seattle University Second-Year and Political Science mMajor Ahmed Osman is one of the many new fans of the store. Following his first visit, Osman has returned to the store several times since.

“It looked really nice in there, I felt at peace, it was aesthetically pleasing. The price is amazing, \$6, \$5 plus tax is actually really good... I don’t mind paying that much compared to other places,” Osman said.

The appealing interior has even attracted people who are just passing through Capitol Hill. KJ Lee, a visitor from San Diego, was in the neighborhood with some friends when they stumbled upon Comebuytea.

“We were just walking around, it’s kind of nice inside so we stayed for the vibes,” Lee said. “I got the sun moon lake black tea. I got it hot because it’s kind of cold outside. It was a really nice sweet tea, but it [also] felt healthy in a sense.”

The opening of Washington’s first Comebuytea is thanks to Brandon Ting and Seung Lee, two business partners who believe that Washington has a great market for fresh tea. Ting is the Master Franchisor of Comebuytea USA, and it was his decision to bring a store to Seattle.

“I always thought the US market needed [a] good bubble tea brand to come to Seattle,” Ting said. “When I went back to Taiwan, I saw Comebuytea. Comebuytea is one of the five [boba] brands in Taiwan with the longest history, and it is very admirable in Taiwan because of how competitive the market is.”

Lee joined the project at Ting’s request, and after a long construction period, the Capitol Hill location was opened.

One of the key pieces to the store’s early success has been marketing technique. Lee, who is in charge of several day-to-day operations including developing promotions, detailed some of the methods the store has used to gain customers.

“Initially, we started with 100 free drinks to the first customers, we also launched a first hundred drinks to social media followers [promotion].”

The business flow has been so good that Lee has hardly gotten a break these past few weeks.

“I haven’t had a real good meal since I started this a week ago,” he joked. “Since the grand opening, I’ve been eating behind the bar, just a waffle or some snacks... [it’s been busy] every single day except there was a day that it snowed... it was slow during the snow, but it picked up right again as soon as the snow stopped.”

Although Comebuytea hasn’t been open long, Ting and Lee hope to make an impact in the Capitol Hill community as soon as possible. The store is located on a street corner that has seen some of the most brutal parts of Seattle’s homelessness and addiction crises. Lee hopes that the opening of the shop can help strengthen the community.



Adeline Ong

“I’m [hoping] to bring this community together,” he said. “I see a lot of badness [in] Capitol Hill, but I think we can make it better. There are a lot of unwanted activities on the street, [so] I hope that we can make a difference together and clean up the mess that we caused.”

While the grand opening craze will most likely slow down as time goes on, many Seattle U students like Osman will continue to buy from Comebuytea.

“The boba scene here is strong, you can’t go in Capitol Hill and not see someone drinking boba,” Osman said. “I have never been to a boba store consecutively like that... [It’s my favorite boba store] by a wide margin.”

Whether you are someone who loves boba or someone who has never tried it, Ting encourages anyone to try what Comebuytea has to offer.

“Enjoy the show, this experience is not only educational and cultural... but fun. We hope you like our products, we [hope] to see you often!”