

SIPS

G'Day, Maté

Move over coffee, here comes something better.

BY CHERYL MEYERS



Duane Primozich and T.J. McIntyre

THE CONCEPT FOR Pixie Maté (pronounced mah-tay) came to Duane Primozich and T.J. McIntyre two years ago, when they were over-worked marketing execs at White Wave, a Boulder soy food company. They'd worked long hours to reverse the nation's stigma of soymilk from "Eww, what's that?" to "I'll have a grande soy latte." After successfully placing White Wave's Silk soymilk in every Starbucks in the country, they set their sights on finding the next big natural-food trend. One day, after downing cup after cup of coffee to sustain a buzz, the idea hit them: What they wouldn't do for crash-free caffeine. "You know how it is," says McIntyre. "Nobody's going to tell you they feel great after three cups of



coffee. We didn't either."

They traded their coffee for yerba maté, a caffeine-packed, tealike beverage introduced to them by a friend. Argentinians have sipped maté for more than 600 years, but the drink hadn't quite made inroads into America's taste consciousness. Primozich and McIntyre knew that if Americans discovered maté's benefits—a sustained, crash-free buzz, plus a healthy dose of antioxidants—they just might have a winner.

Primozich and McIntyre left White Wave to start Pixie in 2004. They tracked down a third-generation organic farm in Argentina to grow and process the tea leaves. With the marketing skills they learned at White Wave, the duo soon placed Pixie Maté in most grocery

stores nationwide (both in tea bags and maté latte concentrate) and in more than 2,000 coffee shops across the country—including

Boulder's Pekoe Sip House (owned by McIntyre), Fluid Coffee Bar, and the Tattered Cover Book Store. Last year Pixie Maté's revenue grew by 200 percent. "Our ultimate goal is to take over the coffee industry with maté,"

says McIntyre, only half joking. And maybe they're onto something: The Center for Culinary Development, a food-trend study group, listed yerba maté as one of the top five culinary ingredients of 2006—for the record, now-ubiquitous chai tea was one of the CCD's former winners. Still, it's up to Americans to decide if they're ready to forgo their java for a new kind of jolt.