

THE CHOCOLATE SPECIAL

FOOD

November 2009

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Bake my day

Try **Gail's** new collection of indulgent cakes, available in all four of the independent bakery's London stores. The dark chocolate tartlette (below) is particularly delicious with a crunchy pastry base topped with gooey dark chocolate ganache. Thankfully, a little goes a long way. £3.95; gailsbread.co.uk. If you're not London-based, **Waitrose's** new Simply Delicious range of naughty desserts includes a number of chocolate delights, but the *tarte au chocolat* is our favourite. Rich and creamy Belgian chocolate fills a pastry shell – it's elegant enough to serve at a dinner party; £3.49 for 450g. **More? The Artisan Bakery's** (moreartisan.co.uk) gluten-free muddees (choc brownies) were named Supreme Champion at the Great Taste Awards 2009, close on their tail were **Manna from Devon's** double chocolate brownies (pictured above). Awarded three gold stars these flour-free and Belgian chocolate-packed brownies are made by a husband and wife team in their South Devon home; £6 for a box of four. Their sticky chocolate and walnut pudding is rather special too; £3.50 for 300g. Available in local delis and via mail order at mannafromdevon.com. Luxury chocolate shop **Cocomaya** opens its own bakery on Connaught Street in London's Mayfair this October. Expect pretty handmade cakes, washed down with thick hot chocolate (020 7706 2770, cocomaya.co.uk). Cupcake emporium **The Hummingbird Bakery** is opening another store, this time in London's Soho. The Wardour Street branch launches in November – pop in for a slice of chocolate cake or to pick up a New York cheesecake for a Thanksgiving dinner.



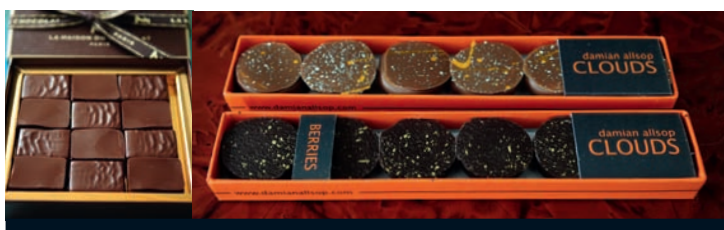
FOOD NEWS

Rachel Truman prepares for the deliciously indulgent National Chocolate Week, sponsored by *Food and Travel*



Sweet like chocolate

Demarquette Fine Chocolates is adding seven new cocoas to its single origin range. Beans from countries including Peru, Papua New Guinea, Mexico, Costa Rica and Uganda are now part of the range of 13 different cocoas. £25 for a 150g box. Somerset-based **James Chocolates'** new caramel vanilla with sea salt discs (above) scooped two gold stars at the Great Taste Awards 2009. £4.95; jameschocolates.co.uk. Marlow-based chocolatier **Damian Allsop Chocolates** is now available in London – hooray! His handmade chocolates, radically using water-based rather than cream-based ganaches, are now sold in Food Inc at Whiteleys, Bayswater. New autumnal flavours in his Clouds range (below) include blackberry and violet and festive mandarin and ginger; £4.50 for six. **La Maison du Chocolat's** Grand Cru collection features exotic Quito and Itzamná ganache. Blended from cocoa sourced in Venezuela, Trinidad and Ecuador and fleurette cream, it's a pricey gift befitting a serious chocoholic. Available at La Maison du Chocolat and Harrods; £16 for 12. **William Curley**, named Best British Chocolatier by the Academy of Chocolate for the last two years, is opening a second store on Ebury Street in London's Pimlico Green this autumn; williamcurley.co.uk. **Marks & Spencer** has launched more than 40 new choccie products. We think the boxes of cocoa-dusted spiced almonds and milk chocolate pistachios make great stocking fillers; £1.99. **Montezuma's** (above) has added dark milk chocolate laced with crunchy butterscotch and milk chocolate spiked with lime and chilli to its range. £2.29 for 100g; montezumas.co.uk.



Coursework by Keya Modessa. Books for cooks by Neela Cleary. Photography by Angela Dukas



Take the biscuit

Duchy Originals (right, top) has got classy chocolate biscuits covered. The milk chocolate-coated toffee and sultana with honey dipped in dark chocolate are our favourites. £2.39 for 100g; from Waitrose. Chocolate-dipped stem ginger cookies from **Teoni's Cookies** (above) are seriously man sized, perfect for when a craving hits. £2.25 for 300g; for stockists, visit teoniscookies.co.uk. Handmade on the Isle of Mull, **Island Bakery Organics'** dainty white chocolate lemon melts really do melt in the mouth. £2.97 for 150g from delis. We're hard pressed to find a more addictive bite than **Bonne Maman's** chocolate-covered galettes (right, bottom). Chocolatey and buttery equals bliss. 99p for 90g; from Sainsbury's and other supermarkets.



Choc-full of events

Join us at **Chocolate Unwrapped** from 10-11 October to sample creations from Chococo, Melt, L'Artisan du Chocolat and Sir Hans Sloane, among others. It's not all eat, eat, eat, however, with talks and a sculpture exhibition made from, yes you guessed it, chocolate. Held at London's The May Fair Hotel, tickets are £12.50 in advance or £15 on the door. Visit chocolate-unwrapped.co.uk or call 0844 338 8000. The hotel will also be hosting a chocolate-themed six-course dinner (9-10 October) during the **London Restaurant Festival**. Three top chefs team up with three top chocolatiers; dishes include halibut with a cocoa nib and herb crust by Paul A Young; see visitlondon.com/londonrestaurantfestival. Throw a **chocolate tea party** to raise money for the Sick Children's Trust. Visit sickchildrenstrust.org for a fundraising pack and recipe ideas, such as Heston Blumenthal's caraway truffles.

epicures' treats

CourseWORK

In the heart of London's Belgravia lies a treasure trove of chocolate delights – Rococo's Motcomb Street store and Chocolate School. Regular classes take place downstairs and are run by 'chocolate professor' Laurent Couchaux. Trained as a pastry chef in France, he openly admits to having a life-long love affair with the alluring cocoa bean. Offering both group and one-on-one classes, my visit sees pupils perfecting the 'science' of chocolate mousse in which, as Laurent explains, temperature, timing and precision are key. After a demonstration we split into two groups to tackle the recipe for ourselves. Laurent's good advice meant things went smoothly, in fact, the only difficulty I had was resisting the urge to dip my fingers into the velvety dark chocolate. Leaving the mousse to set, we head upstairs to taste Rococo's signature chocs, washed down with a glass of champagne and finishing up with a helping of our hand-crafted mousse. Half-day cooking classes, including chocolate mousse and truffle-making, cost £100. To book, call 020 7245 0993 or visit rococochocolates.com



Bean to bar
Bertil Akesson knows a thing or two about fine chocolate, supplying top chefs and chocolatiers with quality cacao from

his Madagascar and Brazil plantations. Now he has launched his own single plantation range of bars using 75 per cent cacao: taste the difference between the criollo bar from Madagascar (note the citrus and red fruit flavours) and the earthier Brazilian forastero, £5 for 60g. Visit akessons-organic.com for UK stockists.

Books for cooks

Experimenting with unusual flavours is the inspiration behind Paul A Young's successful cacao-fuelled career. In his first book, the chocolatier recounts his *Adventures with Chocolate*, from the practical (what types to buy, how to make truffles) to the weird and wonderful with a mouth-watering array of recipes. Paul has a keen palate and creates taste bud-tingling flavour combinations. With tips on how to pair chocolate varieties and ingredients, his recipes range from chocolate-drenched cocoa nib cookies and chocolate Martinis, to chocolate and almond tortellini with blood oranges, encouraging us to raise the bar when it comes to our cacao culinary habits. Kyle Cathie Ltd, £17.99

