



Celebrating Cape Cod's Finest Chocolatiers

by Nicola Burnell



When you ask a woman what she REALLY wants for the Holidays her response is usually simple: Peace, Love and Chocolate!

Not just any chocolate – locally made and personally packaged chocolate. This is chocolate the way the gods intended it to be – not mass produced or tasting like plastic, but divinely inspired, melt-in-your-mouth chocolate that will never get re-gifted.

The commercial aspect of the Holidays can be overwhelming, especially if you have family overseas, as I do. The cost of mailing gifts is often greater than the gifts themselves. So this year I decided to try a new approach to gift giving.

My mother gave me the idea when she raved about a box of handmade chocolates she recently received from a friend. She couldn't stop talking about them. That's when I decided to give everyone a box of locally made, hand dipped chocolates for Christmas. It didn't take much research to learn that Cape Cod has its own exquisite selection of Chocolatiers, whose labors of love for all things chocolate contribute more than just confectionary to their local communities.

I discovered, for example, that these local business owners are extremely supportive of one another, and quick to recommend each other's stores as if referring a long time friend. They also share a passion for preserving the artistry of chocolate making and a strong sense of social responsibility in their communities.

It is in their Cape Cod candy kitchens that these Chocolatiers devote their lives to making the best chocolate they can create, perfecting family recipes that have been used for generations. Naomi Louise Turner, who founded The Chatham Candy Manor in 1955, made all her chocolate according to old family recipes. Ghelfi's, with stores in Falmouth and Mashpee, have been refining their time-honored recipes for three generations.

As Marjorie Sparrow, owner of the Hot Chocolate Sparrow, in Orleans explains; "We small folk on the Cape rely on our state and national organizations to care about chocolate sourcing. They blend the beans to get a product that I do believe tastes better than a single source bean." Cape Cod cocoa bean sources include Merckens Chocolate, (admccocoa@admworld.com) in Mansfield, MA and Retail Confectioners International. (www.retailconfectioners.org)

There's much more to great chocolate than good cacao beans; every step in this sacred process affects the finished product. Carol and Rob Cronin, owners of the Cape Cod Chocolatier in Sandwich and Centerville, slowly cook their chocolate in a copper kettle and hand stir it with wooden paddles. The kettle provides an even distribution of heat and the paddles ensure consistency and quality. Another secret ingredient may be their level of passion for their confectionary.

While it's important to honor the traditions of chocolate making, Ray Hebert is also turning to state of the art techniques and high yield production methods to produce affordable handmade chocolates in his kitchen at Stage Stop Candy, LTD. He recently developed a new GOLD COACH Artisan line of chocolates that he can sell for half the price of his online competitors.

Ray has also embraced the opportunity to green up his business by installing solar panels that will meet 75% of his store's energy needs. (This story will be featured in a future issue of this magazine.)

Cape Cod's Chocolatiers are not just for the tourists – they're in business to serve their neighbors and their communities. After all, there is nothing comparable to locally produced chocolate – it simply tastes better because it's made in small batches and handcrafted for the seasons.

The next time you pass your local Chocolatier's store, take a minute to pop in and say hello. Not only will the owners be happy to share their story with you as they show you around their kitchen, they may even offer you a sample or two – and what's not to love about that?

Editor's note: If your favorite Cape Cod Chocolatier is not listed here, please let us know. We'd be happy to give them the CWO taste test.



Stage Stop Candy, LTD's Fall Candy
Artisan whimsical



Stage Stop Candy, LTD's
Leaf Pop Box



The Candy Manor's hand dipped chocolates



The Candy Manor's Chocolate Bark



Ghelfi's Regal Collection



The Candy Manor's Shells & Lobsters



Ghelfi's Candies of Cape Cod
<http://shipchocolates.net>



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