

Few scents in life are as recognizable as the fragrance of chocolate, and very few have the effect that it has. Just a whiff of chocolate from a bakery, and you know what it is and you want it. The smell triggers your thoughts and will linger in your head until you satisfy that irresistible request. Its versatility is incredible: rich chocolate pralines or Ferran Adrià's delicate frozen chocolate wind, as long as there's chocolate it's yummy!



A Spanish proverb states "[las cosas claras pero el chocolate espeso], ideas should be clear but chocolate must be thick." We've seen chocolate bars just about anywhere nowadays, but are all those bars really chocolate? Is it the same to bite into a 'chocolate flavoured candy bar' with a shiny wrapper or a dark chocolate truffle at a chocolaterie? The answer is NO! For anything food related it is always wise to consult the authority, the 'world's greatest chef' Ferran Adrià. However when we learn that Adrià has sought out a certain Francisco Torreblanca from Alicante, our curiosity rapidly increases. They have collaborated closely for many years, however his expertise lies in pastries. According to Torreblanca chocolate is "my baby" he states, "the bonbon is a gem, you grab it and you look at it then you eat it. They are the crown jewels." And if his extensive curriculum does not impress, let's just say that this man trained in France, has been awarded the Best Master Artisan Pastry Chef of Europe and Spain, has created chocolate dresses for La Casita de Wendy and most recently prepared the wedding cake for the Spanish royal

prince. He is a true artisan, moulding chocolates into art pieces, or as he calls it creating 'ephemeral art.'

For any great chocolatier the origin of the cocoa is of vital importance.

(.....)

Cecilia Tessieri explains the importance of this process, "each passage has its time, its antique and precise methods that, together with originality and creativity of recipes, transform the cocoa into a chocolate that satisfies even the most demanding palates." Cecilia Tessieri is perhaps better known by her chocolates' name, Amedei, yet another 'bean to bar' chocolatier. This Tuscan based chocolate is the result of the hardwork and dedication of the Tessieri brother and sister couple, according to whom "the culture of chocolate is the continuous research of pleasures in which technique is bound to creativity and experimentation derived from passion for our work. This is a passion that leads us to continuously move the balance of aromas, perfumes, and tastes." Chua, Amedei's signature piece is said to have been called 'the world's greatest chocolate' by Adrià

When it comes to 'bean to bar' chocolate we must also consider Mademoiselle Chloé from Chloé Chocolat "I wanted to bring something new, unique and exquisite from what already exists... I hope my few products and the pairings I introduce will bring pleasure to many of you." Chloé's chocolates are produced with passion to all aspects of the chocolate making process and combined with Chloé's nose and creativity the results are simply yummy! Like Marcolini, Valrhona and Amedei, true chocolatiers don't just purchase chocolate and make truffles, they oversee the cocoa plantations, rigorously supervise the cocoa and purchase the beans, only then making chocolate. And tasting this chocolate will certainly offer anyone a unique experience. For Valrhona, tasting chocolate is a sensorial experience involving the sight of the chocolate, the smell, the sound of the bar breaking and of course its taste: "let the chocolate melt slowly and delicately on your tongue to unveil its flavours and its aromas." Cecilia Tessieri best describes this as "when a maitre chocolatier succeeds in making people smile by eating chocolate, he or she has reached the goal." Therefore, we strongly recommend, drop that candy bar and take the next step and try real chocolate. For the best-ever chocolate experience we strongly advise a Chocolate Tasting in any of these places. Having said this, we leave you to the wise words of Charles M. Schulz, "All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt," especially when it's the absolute best!