

Chocolates get spicy

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THERE'S nothing sacred or sweet about it anymore. A new trend in gourmet chocolates is adding spice to palates of chocaholics the world over. A Chicago-based Cordon Bleu chocolatier has come out with an exclusive range of chocolate truffles filled with chilli, curry and other savoury delights.

It has caused quite a stir in chocolate-loving circles everywhere. But owner Katrina Markoff is marketing her exclusive ware online and at exclusive outlets around the world. The exquisitely packaged hampers are being sold out faster than they are being handmade. Even at a range starting at \$25 (for a handpicked selection of nine truffles) to \$ 900 a throw, these delicacies are finding buyers.

For this price buyers can take their pick from truffles filled with Hungarian paprika, ginger and wasabi with sesame seeds, black and pink peppercorn and

coconut-and-chilli, to name a few. Each truffle is given a name (the chilli-coconut one is named Naga after the North-Eastern tribe) and beautifully finished. But would Bangaloreans bite at these chocolatey innovations? "Chocolate is God's gift. Adding flavours

to chocolates is a sin," says chocolatier Dudley Barker.

"It's a very niche market.

However, people like *mithai* here, and always go back to it, no matter how

much they like chocolates."

Bangaloreans still prefer traditional nut truffles—almond and cashew. "It works anywhere in the world," he adds. Chocolatier Chandanna Shaa finds the idea of contrasting flavours interesting. She's recently been asked to create a chilli-filled chocolate, a concept she's exploring. "With people aware of the possibilities of gifting chocolates one has to think of new ideas and innovative products all the time," she says.

HOT STUFF

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