

# THE CHOCOLATE CREATORS

They have a passion for chocolate in common. And create edible magic. RUMA SINGH talks to three of the city's chocolate makers who have the power to make you go mmmmm.

M D Asad



Chandanna Shaa

## The flavour of divinity

Chandanna Shaa

Ever since her early days in the hospitality industry wrapping chocolates for the Taj confectionery, Chandanna wanted to know more about chocolates. She soon decided that she didn't like working in shifts, she also knew that she loved chocolates. Starting up a chocolate-making business seemed the natural thing to do. Moving to Bangalore two years ago, Chandanna started Jus' Trufs, a brand which has quickly picked up in popularity as a premium brand in the city.

"I like giving a personal touch to my chocolates. People ring up and ask for specific orders, flavours, wrappings and boxes. I enjoy personalising the chocolates to their needs."

Chandanna loves truffles and very dark chocolates herself. "I

appreciate good chocolates, especially After Eights and Lindt," she smiles.

"The flavour and the smell of chocolate is the first thing I love. Then comes the smooth touch and feel. The melt-in-your-mouth taste follows, and that's what tells you if a chocolate is fresh. It'll taste powdery if it's not fresh." Finally, the divine aftertaste. "A dark, bitter smooth taste is the best."

## Passionate about dark magic

Rahila Rauf

She's brimming with little chocolate factoids, and her love for chocolate is evident. Even Bangaloreans who haven't met Rahila are familiar with her extensive range of goodies from cakes, tarts to brownies and chocolates. A product of the New York School of Catering, Rahila has clear memories of her introduction to chocolates. "As a child, my dad took me to the Cadbury's factory where an ad film was being shot. I almost fell into the chocolate. I was fascinated." The fascination for

Amalanath Benedict Kumar



Rahila Rauf



Dudley Barker

chocolate was restricted to just eating it, she says, "Until I discovered I could make the stuff!"

Rahila's Delicatessan has been getting the city's taste buds going since 1999, and she's a hands-on businesswoman, ensuring that every product emerging from her kitchen is perfect. "I love the colour, feel and smells of chocolate. It's a tricky medium till you learn to handle it, then it's a dream," she smiles.

Rahila enjoys imported brands like Lindt, Baker, Godiva and Nestle. "Godiva used to be my favourite haunt in New York. You could smell the shop a mile away." Her personal favourite among her large repertoire are her brownies, and her chocoholic fans will vouch for this.

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## MBA clone turned chocoholic

Dudley Barker

Seven years ago, Dudley Barker put aside his MBA qualifications and took to creating chocolate delights when he realised he couldn't get the

# The divinity of chocolates

You eat it when you're down, and even to feel better. Lovers crave it, kids adore it and it's the ultimate rich, luxury gift since time immemorial. Bangalore Times explores the mystique that is chocolate

## Is chocolate an aphrodisiac?

On romantic occasions, often the most popular choice for gift giving among star-struck lovers is a box of chocolates - but have you ever wondered why?

For so long, chocolates have been the popular as the ideal gift for lovers for seemingly no apparent reason. Even the ancient Aztecs and Mayans (circa 600 AD) of South America relished it much until the collapse of their culture.

In recent times, however, chocolate connoisseurs are beginning to understand the secret behind the amorous inclination we have for these magical sweet delights.

### FUNDAS OF CHOCOLATE

Two doctors from the New York State Psychiatric Institute, Donald Klein and Michael Leibowitz, theorised that chocolate contains a particular chemical called phenylethylamine (better known as the "love chemical"), which is also present in the brain.

Phenylethylamine, an amphetamine-like substance, is a chemical produced in the brain of people who are evidently in the state of love. Love struck persons produce more of this chemical than people who are not.

In nature, however, phenylethylamine is a naturally occurring trace chemical known to release a certain kind of hormone in the "pleasure-centers" of the brain. Interestingly, one of the metabolites phenylethylamine

produces also causes a person to become unusually restive.

Moreover, further studies showed that chocolate was naturally sedative due mainly to its caffeine content. Chocolate also has a substantial amount of tryptophan, an important amino acid that controls the production of the mood-modulating serotonin.

Probably the most distinctive "side-effect" of eating chocolate is that it releases endorphines, the body's own endogenous opiates. The production of endorphins consequently give chocolate addicts that co-called "inner glow" about them.

## The history of chocolate

Chocolate got its start in North and Central America. Columbus actually carried some cocoa beans back to Spain. It wasn't really known what to do with those beans until Cortez conquered the Aztec Indians of Mexico. He learned about a special drink that acted as an aphrodisiac. The Aztecs called it "cacahuatl" or gift from the gods. Cortez garnered the process. Large pods from cacao trees were harvested twice a year. The cocoa beans were extracted from these pods. Then the beans were fermented, dried and roasted. Once roasted, they were ground into a fine powder. This powder was then mixed with hot water to make the drink.

When Cortez returned to Spain, he brought back cocoa beans and the cooking process. The chocolate drink the Aztecs drank was bitter and peppery. The Spaniards experimented with the process. They added the cream and sugar, which made it more like what we drink today. The Spaniards kept the drink a national secret for almost 100 years. The drink spread to France when King Louis married a Spanish royal. Part of the bride's trousseau were some cocoa beans to make her favourite breakfast drink.

Chocolate houses opened all over France. From France, the drink spread to England and then to back to North America. The drink became very popular after the Boston Tea Party when tea was being boycotted.

