

JETCALA

LIFE BEYOND FIRST CLASS



WIDEBODY VIP JETS

PIPERJET ALTAIRE | EMBRAER'S JOSE COSTAS
AIR FORCE ONE | SMALL OVER OF EXECUTIVE
WILLY MESSERSCHMITZ | DORNIER SEASTAR

TOP DUBAI SUITES

LATEST BASELWORLD WATCHES | LAUCALA ISLAND
BÖSENDORFER PIANOS | INTERVIEW: LANG LANG
EUROPE'S GIANT MOTORBIKES | RIVA HERITAGE YACHTS

06

May-June 2011



PAUL WAYNE GREGORY

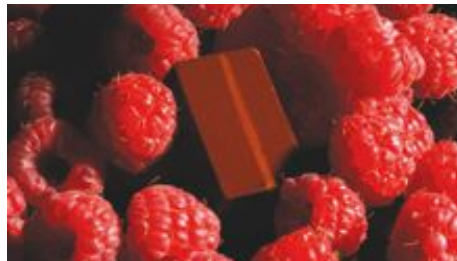
by Roger Norum



This face sculpture was chocolate artist Paul Wayne Gregory's entry to the World Chocolate Masters in 2005

EPICUREAN ART

THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF THE PERFECT PRALINE



Gregory's goods delight and surprise, from a mini sculpture to the Pure Indulgence box of 12 chocolates that includes three Academy of Chocolate Gold Award winners: coconut, raspberry and passion fruit bonbon

GREGORY SUPPLIED CHOCOLATES FOR THE QUEEN'S 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Sitting in his small South London office, Paul Wayne Gregory reflects on his life's quest: "Ice is great, but it will melt. Sugar is great, but you can't really eat it. But chocolate... people will always eat and love chocolate." Gregory oversees a modest team of five part-timers in what has quickly become one of the leading houses for chocolate artistry in the UK. "Interest in high-end chocolate is really growing now," Gregory continues. "It's a bit like caviar. Once you've had the good stuff, it's hard to go back."

Gregory designs and constructs bespoke sculptures handcrafted entirely out of chocolate. He is speaking not just of the quality of chocolate today, but of the ways it is being used. While chocolate sculpture has been around as a niche field for a number of years now, it is rapidly becoming a more popular art form.

Gregory worked as a chef for twenty years, having trained in Spain and France under renowned chefs like Oriol Balaguer, Spain's celebrated pastry master. "I was a baker, then I became a pastry chef when I fell in love with pastries and croissants," Gregory says. "Over time, my taste got more refined. Once I really tasted good quality chocolate while working in France, there was no going back."

Gregory now considers himself first an artist — a calling that lies in a very different realm than a chocolatier, he is quick to point out. "While a chocolatier will strive towards

perfection in a creation — clean lines and smooth shapes, say — I think that a piece of art is something you do once. It retains real character if it's not perfect; almost by definition art is not perfect.

"For me, the whole excitement comes from doing something a hundred times in your mind, and not knowing whether it's going to actually work once you make it in real life. I really enjoy the challenge of trying something new and getting it right the first — and only — time."

Word must have reached the ears of members of the British Royal Family that Gregory was getting it right. Within his first year as a full-time chocolate artist, his company supplied chocolates for the Queen's 80th birthday celebration. He was commissioned for display pieces at Selfridges, Fortnum & Mason and the Royal Opera House, as well as leading restaurants and hotels in the UK. His award-winning chocolates include unique flavours such as salted caramel, dark rum, passion fruit, lemon and lime, and mixed spices. They're all tastes that have garnered dozens of awards, including Best Filled Milk Chocolate (2009), Best Filled Praline (2008) and Outstanding Achievement as an Individual (2007). Gregory's new collection, Pure Indulgence, has been tested in five-star hotels for four years now; he hopes to be the first to bring out a box of chocolates wherein each individual chocolate has won an award. >>




Chocolate artist Gregory's motto says it all: "Indulgence is everything"

IT'S A BIT LIKE CAVIAR. ONCE YOU'VE HAD THE GOOD STUFF, IT'S HARD TO GO BACK

Gregory has spent years researching and honing his chocolate mix, giving it the bare minimum of sugar and the occasional pinch of salt to enhance the natural flavour of the cocoa bean. Other ingredients include vanilla pods from Tahiti, passion fruit purée imported from South America and Jamaican coffee. Gregory estimates that he eats roughly five kilograms of chocolate a month, which leaves one wondering how he is able to keep the weight off.

"I work hard, for one," he says. "But the chocolate I work with doesn't actually make you fat. Remember, the cocoa bean is fundamentally a fruit." Whereas most commercial, lower-grade chocolates contain 85–90 per cent sugar, Gregory's chocolate has less than 45 per cent sugar content.

Some of Gregory's clients are strict about preserving the exclusivity and secrecy of their commissioned pieces, meaning that he can't speak about everything he has worked on. But the artist discloses that some of his upcoming projects include a series of wall tiles made out of chocolate, and a chocolate arch in a garden under which one client will get married. The pièce de résistance is a life-size sculpture of a horse for a racing event. The hand-moulded horse, which costs approximately USD35,176, will require half a ton of chocolate. Most of his staff will work over two weeks casting, moulding, sculpting and assembling the horse, then transporting it to the event and recreating the kitchen environment in situ so that the chocolate can set.

These days, Gregory needs to do little advertising; his clients find him through word of mouth. "Though we've been open for four years, we haven't really needed to push our bespoke chocolate pieces," he says. The works themselves depend entirely on the client's wishes. Gregory will sit down with a client, listen to their ideas, then formulate a commission together with them. "A client will often say to me, 'I don't know what I want'. In actuality, they do know what they want; they just need help expressing it." 



The *Roller Coaster* is a fine example of Gregory's attention to detail and eye for design

CHOCOLATE CHOICE

Paul Wayne Gregory has created hundreds of sculptures during his time working with chocolate, but his favourites remain two of his first: *Roller Coaster* and *Man's Face*. "The face changed everything," Paul says, proudly. "There was one face before that — an African mask." *Roller Coaster* is a functional sculpture where golf balls (chocolate ones, naturally) pass through the tubes and arches of what looks like a 3-D Escher painting. "Sometimes the inspiration for my art comes from nowhere at all," he says. But then he adds with a chuckle, "At least those are my favourite pieces today. I'm an artist. My opinion might change tomorrow."