

Learning the art of the chocolatier

How lucky are we? Our own Cabrillo College has a fun, educational, and valuable culinary arts and hospitality management program that anyone can sign up for. Yes, it's mostly for those who want to start a career in food service or hospitality. But it's also for people like us, who want to learn kitchen basics and how to refine the skills we already have.



DONNA MAURILLO

Food for Thought

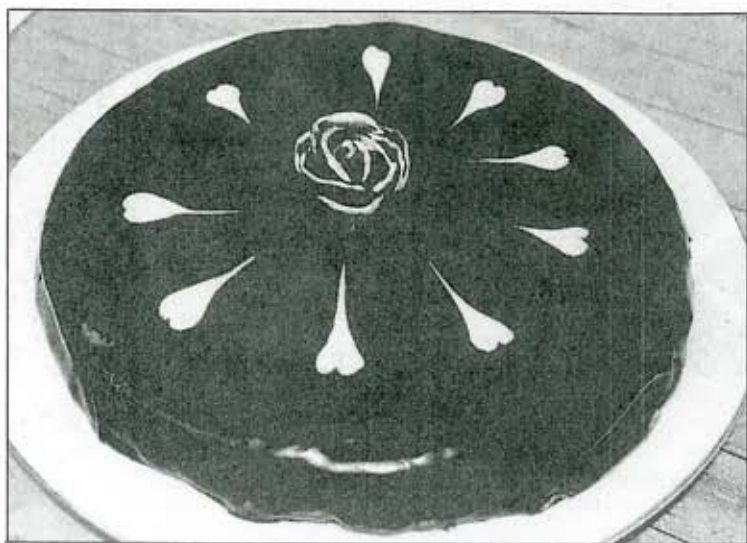
TIP OF THE WEEK: Do not allow steam or water to contact melted chocolate or it will seize up. There's no way to save it after that.

We started with a rolled chocolate soufflé, went on to a variety of truffles, a peanut butter and jelly cake, several versions of a flourless chocolate imperiale cake, chocolate mousse in chocolate cups, chocolate fondue, and much more. Not only were the flavors rich and deep, but the decorations and the presentation were equally impressive.

But live and learn. We all know you can make chocolate cups by dipping balloons in melted chocolate. But two students learned not to use the thinner water balloons. When they hit the warm chocolate, they burst, splashing chocolate all over!

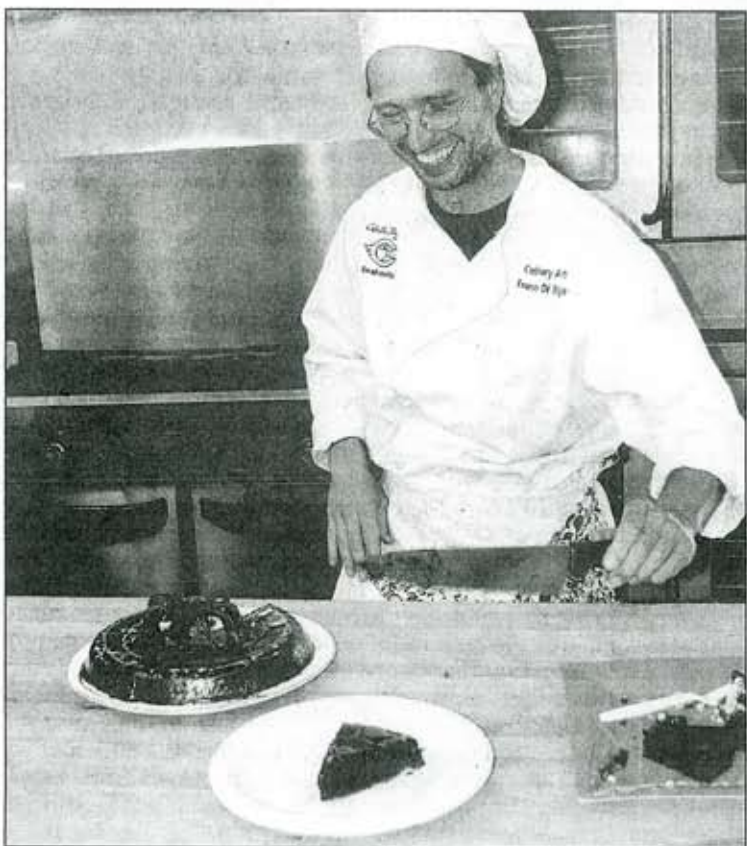
Another student was a little heavy on the large-crystal salt for her salted caramel chocolate cake, but it was still delicious — and one of my favorites. Several students put their own signatures on the chocolate imperiale, using ground hazelnuts and Frangelico liqueur, for example. They also learned that presentation was important. Perhaps the prettiest was for the peanut butter and jelly chocolate torte, which included a setup of a porcelain tea service and a vase of homegrown roses.

"Each class begins with a lecture on theory, a demonstration, and of course tasting. Lots of tasting," Baldzikowski said. "My assistant and I are available for guidance throughout. It's really a group effort. Since we are a community college, all levels of learners are welcome. Some kitchen experience helps. We do review knife skills, basic scaling, and baking techniques. All students



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Chocolate Imperiale Cake with Ganache Glaze. The recipe for this cake is provided in the article.



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Franco DiMajo, a student from Italy, serves his Chocolate Imperiale.

work in groups, so the levels of experience usually even out."

Baldzikowski provides all kinds of insight about what makes a perfect result. Sometimes it's the small details that make a big difference. I learned that my ganache never turned out perfectly shiny because I was letting it cool too much, making the butterfat crystals re-form.

Quality ingredients also make a better product.

"I guide people toward quality chocolate that doesn't cost a fortune," Baldzikowski said. "The Pound Plus bars at Trader Joe's are \$5, and the first ingredient in the bar is cocoa mass. Any bar that has cocoa mass or chocolate liquor as the first ingredient

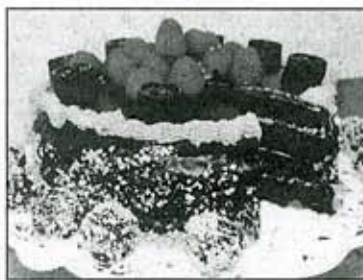
should be a good chocolate bar to work with."

Anne says that tempering is also important. Cocoa butter contains several different fats that melt at different temperatures. Tempering is basically evening out the cocoa butter crystal structure by melting the chocolate to liquify all the crystals, cooling it to attract the correct crystal structure, then re-warming it to stabilize the structure. Tempering gives the chocolate a shine, snap, long shelf life, and easy release from molds.

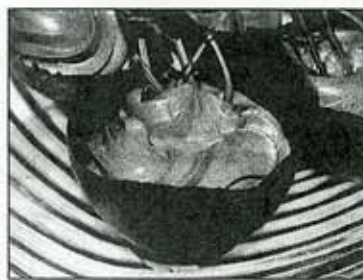
"We teach two types of tempering in the course," Baldzikowski said. "The students often practice at home because



DONNA MAURILLO/SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL
Student Mariko Caster cuts into her cake for her final grade.



DONNA MAURILLO/SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL
Peanut Butter and Jelly Chocolate Cake with truffles and berries, all by itself.



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Chocolate Mousse in Chocolate Cups. The cups were made by dipping balloons into melted chocolate and letting it cool.

they are so enthusiastic about learning."

Students also learn what flavors they like in a good chocolate bar, how to bake with chocolate, make chocolate mousse, use a tempering machine, temper chocolate by hand, mold chocolates, present a dessert, make savory dishes with chocolate, and understand the science of chocolate."

Anne will be teaching a one-day chocolate class, From Bean to Bar, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 22. She'll also teach an eight-week class on Fridays during the spring semester. If you want to learn more or sign up for a Cabrillo College culinary class, either as a regular student or through the one-day extension classes, visit www.cabrillo.edu.

Contact Donna Maurillo at sentinelfood@maurillo.com.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

You will love this gorgeous and easy cake from Anne Baldzikowski's chocolate class.

CHOCOLATE IMPERIALE

Makes an 8-inch cake; double recipe for 10-inch cake

- 4 ounces semisweet chocolate
- 4 ounces unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2/3 cup sugar
- Zest from 1 orange
- 1 tablespoon Grand Marnier or orange liqueur
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 6 ounces almond meal, available at Trader Joe's

1. Line the bottom of an 8 x 1 1/2-inch cake pan with parchment paper. Spray with nonstick spray. Set aside. Preheat oven to 350 degrees for conventional or 325 degrees for convection.
2. Melt chocolate and butter in the top of a double boiler over simmering, not boiling, water. Or melt in the microwave 30-40 seconds. Remove and stir to complete melting.
3. Remove from heat and stir in sugar. Add the zest and then the liqueur. Then add the eggs one at a time, stirring well. Stir in the almond meal, and pour into the prepared pan.
4. Bake 30-35 minutes at 350 degrees, or 20-25 minutes at 325 degrees convection. The cake is done when it releases from the sides, there's a slight cracking along the edges, and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few crumbs attached.
5. Let cool for 15 minutes, then run a knife around the edges and invert onto an 8-inch cardboard round.
6. Glaze with ganache. Place the cake on a wire rack over a large bowl. Pour ganache over the cake, allowing excess to drip into the bowl. Decorate with piped white chocolate.

GANACHE

- 8 ounces semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 8 ounces heavy cream, heated to just below a boil

1. Pour the hot cream over the chocolate. Let sit one minute, then slowly stir until creamy. Don't stir too fast or you will create bubbles. The ganache should be smooth and shiny.
2. When it is the consistency of heavy cream, pour ganache over cake.

WHITE CHOCOLATE DECORATION

- 2 ounces white chocolate, melted

1. Place the melted chocolate in a piping bag with the smallest tip. Or place in a Ziplock bag and cut a tiny corner to make a piping bag.
2. Pipe the chocolate in vertical stripes about 1 inch apart on top of the cake while the ganache is still fluid.
3. Drag a toothpick through the warm white chocolate stripes across the cake and through the lines, creating a wavy pattern.