

Full of PROMISE

Norman Love relishes
future possibilities

Norman Love rarely stands still. You may find the internationally acclaimed chocolatier in his kitchen, elbow deep in gelato, a brown-rubber apron protecting his chef's whites while a well-worn Pittsburgh Penguins hat covers his head.

Love is a blur of motion, going from the blast chiller to the walk-in freezer; tasting and thinking and nodding and walking. Constantly on the move.

So too his business: Norman Love Confections is expanding.

"Gelato was the logical next step," Love says, sitting in the salon of his Fort Myers boutique next to a towering chocolate showpiece.

"It's actually how I began. My high school job was manufacturing

ice cream for a company called Swensen's in Hollywood. I would ride my bike there. Honestly, of all the sweets I make and am involved in every day, ice cream still is my weakness."

But this isn't just ice cream. Nor is it just gelato.

This is Norman Love's gelato, made with the same ultra-premium ingredients for which his hand-painted chocolates have become famous. ▶

Story by ANNABELLE TOMETICH | Photos by TODD STUBING

Norman Love, owner of Norman Love Confections, makes chocolates, pastries and gelato in his south Fort Myers shop. The gelato is only served in Naples, however.





Above, Norman Love, owner of Norman Love Confections, makes chocolates, pastries and gelato in his south Fort Myers shop. • Right, Some of the Norman Love Confections, chocolates are showcased here. In front is strawberry; at left is mango; second from right is key lime; and raspberry at right.



Norman LOVE

Chef, president and founder of Norman Love Confections

Age: 51

Family: Wife Mary, son Ryan, daughter Carly

Home: south Fort Myers

Career: After working and learning in Europe, including two years at a private pastry shop in the south of France, Love returned to the U.S. to work in country clubs, restaurants, on Carnival Cruise Lines ships and at the Beverly Hills Hotel. In 1990 he landed the executive pastry chef position at the St. Louis Ritz-Carlton. He served as corporate executive pastry chef for The Ritz-Carlton hotels in St. Louis, Naples, Beverly Hills and Boston, and he helped to establish pastry kitchens at the company's resort properties in Dubai and Bali. He founded Norman Love Confections in Fort Myers in 2001.

Accolades: Chocolatier and Pastry Art and Design magazines named Love among their top 10 pastry chefs in 1996 and 1997. In 2002 USA Today selected Love as one of the top 10 artisan chocolate producers in the country. In 2009 Dessert magazine named him one of its top 10 chocolatiers in North America. Among other accolades, Love received an honorary culinary arts doctorate from Johnson & Wales University.

“I have a great business here. We’re growing and moving along and I don’t want to change that. This is just something else to keep me busy.”
— LOVE

Hazelnuts from Piedmont, Italy; Sicilian pistachios grown in a valley known for its rich, volcanic soil. Berries from Alva, picked at peak ripeness and delivered the same day, ruby red and juicy, to Love’s kitchen door.

For a chef who has made beignets with Julia Child, who captained the USA’s 1999 World Cup of Pastry team to a bronze medal in Lyon, France, who spent 13 years working as the corporate executive pastry chef for Ritz-Carlton resorts, opening 30 pastry kitchens for them around the world, Love gets awfully excited talking about gelato.

Get him started on crepes or handmade root beer or warm Belgian waffles crisped in pearl sugar, all of which he soon plans to offer, and that excitement only grows.

“Who doesn’t like delicious, hot caramelized waffles? Serve it with fresh-spun gelato — so yummy!” Love gushes.

“Or fresh berries marinated in, I don’t know, Grand Marnier and syrup, and put those inside a crepe with gelato and fresh-whipped Chantilly. Where do you get that in Fort Myers? Nowhere. But you will get it here.”