

THE RADAR FOOD

BY KATIE KELLY BELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAIN BAGWELL

THE ULTIMATE HIGH *Sweet sensations don't get better than this.*

Ask any chocolate connoisseur and they'll tell you eating the creamy confection is, at its heart, a sensual experience. Our favorites, shown here, are not only complex and delectable, they're bold and beautiful, too. **A**



Each piece of the Vintages Collection from Texas-based **NOKA Chocolate** comes from a single cacao estate in Venezuela, Ecuador, Trinidad or the Côte d'Ivoire. The NoKa Grand Cru Collection truffles are equally rich and serious—we love the Carmenago's touch of coffee and dark berry fruit. Eight-piece Grand Cru Collection, \$70; 24-piece Encore Box, The Vintages Collection, \$59. 877.270.8209 or www.nokachocolates.com.

Norman Love, the former executive pastry chef for the Ritz-Carlton Corporation, creates hand-painted truffles almost too beautiful to eat. We did anyway and discovered they're infused with the perfect amount of flavor (think lime, passion fruit and coconut) to complement the rich chocolate. But it was the Palet d'Or that we found hardest to resist. 36-piece box, \$63. 239.561.7215 or www.normanloveconfections.com.

Exotic, hand-ground spices and boutique chocolate are the hallmarks of **Sensual's** silky truffles. Based in central Mexico, Sensual chocolatier Michael McKenna makes the most of the local resources. Our favorite, the San Miguel, is agave-glazed toasted coconut, and has a dark chocolate ganache dusted with a hint of Mexican sweet chilies. Prices start at \$1.50 per truffle. 800.585.1885 or www.sensualchocolatiers.com.

The lust chocolate from **Chocolat Moderne** tastes as good as it looks: The Kinoro Collection's truffles are glazed with vintage kimono patterns and feature dark ganache and traditional Japanese ingredients. Equally beautiful and tasty are the bites in the Miso Caramel collection. The exotic Snake Charmer left us hypnotized. 24-piece Miso Caramel luxury gift box, \$57; 15-piece Kinoro Collection, \$32. 212.229.478 or www.chocolatmoderne.com.

MarieBelle's chocolates are miniature masterpieces with delicate, colorful prints screened on each one. But what captivated us most was MarieBelle's gourmet line of chocolate for mixing the ultimate wintertime beverage. It's made from ground Colombian cacao beans, and infused with exotic spices. 25-piece box, \$47; 20-ounce hot and load chocolate firs, \$22. 212.925.6999 or www.mariebelle.com.

The colorful, hand-decorated mosaic tile collection from **Joseph Schmidt** is full of complex bites of Belgian chocolate layered with caramel, nuts, nougat or biscotti crunch. Coffee lovers will appreciate the dark chocolate cappuccino caramel tile—it features soft nutty caramel atop a layer of smooth cappuccino ganache encased in a Belgian chocolate shell. 12-piece Mosaic pack, \$44. 866.237.0152 or www.jsc.com.