

Sample designer chocolates from Dallas and nearby

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The tour starts at **Chocolate Secrets** (3926 Oak Lawn Ave., 214-252-9801, chocolatesecrets.net), where you can get a primer on cocoa percentages with expert Pam Eudarc-Amiri, sign up for wine and chocolate pairings or create your own custom mold. Visit with the two staff chocolatiers, who hand-swirl many of the shop's smaller, European-style bonbons, including confections infused with Earl Grey tea (14) or, yes, olive oil (28). You'll also find bonbons from French lines Michel Cluizel, Marquise de Sévigné and Fauchon, as well as Italy's Amadei.

Among the delights at **The Cultured Cup** (8312 Preston Center Plaza Drive, 972-960-1521, theculturedcup.com) are artisanal chocolates from two local companies, Carrollton-based Redstone and Design District confectioner Nib. There, independent crafter Steve Smith custom-molds unique truffles such as Fruits Noir (31) and Moroccan Mint Tea (27). Bonus: Cultured Cup owners Phil Krampetz and Kyle Stewart teach classes at Southern Methodist University and are always happy to talk sweets.

No surprise that Belgium's Neuhaus chocolates are the standard-bearer at Preston Hollow ladies-who-lunch hotspot **Neuhaus Cafe** (626 Preston Royal Shopping Center, 214-739-4600, neuhauscafe.com). But owner Mervyn Sacher has also scored the Dallas exclusive on chocolates by Florida-based Norman Love, an award-winning Ritz-Carlton pastry chef turned chocolatier. Colorful, sculptural chocolates are Love's signature, but he also plays with flavors including Peanut Butter and Jelly (42), Pistachio Cherry (24) and Key Lime Shell (3). Locavores won't want to miss the cafe's nutty almond bark and turtles from family-owned East Texas outpost Sweet Shop USA.

Oak Cliff chocolatier Katherine Clapner recently opened a Bishop Arts storefront for her **Dude, Sweet Chocolate** (408 W. 8th St., Ste. 102, 214-943-5943, dudesweetchocolate.com). Or head much farther south, about 100 miles, to **Wiseman House Chocolates** (406 Grubbs St., Hico, Texas, 254-796-2565, wisemanhousechocolates.com), where visitors can watch chocolatiers at work behind glass in the back kitchen of clothing shop Bliss Living (106 S. Pecan St., 254-796-2499). Want to step in the kitchen? Call to schedule an appointment. Or head to Wiseman's Grubbs Street retail location to sample Love Potion (1), a South American chipotle spice-infused dark chocolate, or Wild Woman (7), a creamy dark chocolate truffle.

Vosges, Mariebelle, La Maison du Chocolat and Dallas' own Noka are among the designer chocolates at **Neiman Marcus** (neimanmarcus.com). Less pedigreed, perhaps, but too delicious to ignore: NM Epicure's own creamy-crunchy, salty-sweet, milk, dark or white chocolate-covered potato chips. Can you say Super Bowl party?

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Complete chocolate credits:

Wiseman House: Love Potion (1), Wild Woman (7), Southern Hospitality (15), Snooky (22), Campfire Coffee (26), Gran Saman (29)

Chocolate Secrets: Cranberry and Sweet Pepper (2), Espeline (4), Red Wine (6), Palet Noir (10), Palet Passion (12), Earl Grey Tea (14), Palet Au Miel (19), Crème Brûlée (25), Olive Oil (28)

The Cultured Cup: Moroccan Mint Tea (27), Fruits Noir (31), Chestnut (40), Coffee (41)

Neuhaus Cafe/ Norman Love: Key Lime Shell (3), Champagne (5), Passion Fruit (8), Strawberry (9), Passion Panna Cotta (11), New York Cheesecake (13), Strawberry Banana (16), Tahitian Caramel (17), Raspberry (18), Mint Chocolate Chip (20), Millionaire White (21), Butter Pecan (23), Pistachio Cherry (24), Java Fudge (30), Cookies 'n' Cream (32), Astrid (33), Vanilla Cupcake (34), 70 Percent Dark Complexite (35), White Chocolate Raspberry (36), Vanilla Latte (37), Florida Orange (38), Cinnamon Roll (39), Peanut Butter and Jelly (42)



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Chocolates are numbered from left to right from 1 to 42. Click the photo for details.