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CoffeeTalk

Chocolate sensation wins honors

The chocolate wizards in Fort Myers have put the city on top of the culinary world again.

Pastry Chef **John Cook** of **Norman Love Confections** in Fort Myers recently captured second place in the 26th annual U.S. Pastry Competition in New York City. Cook was one of 13 finalists selected nationwide to compete in the event, which allows pastry chefs to showcase their talents by creating advanced desserts, bonbons and sugar- and chocolate-sculpted pieces. This year's theme was "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend — Ladies' Luxuries."

Cook's cake creation included milk-chocolate almond mousse with raspberry gelee, chocolate sponge and almond crème and crunch on top of almond streusel. His showpiece was an ornate chocolate arc with a chocolate high-heeled shoe supporting the cake base. Other whimsical touches included a Mercedes-Benz emblem; a chocolate jewelry box with a drawer that opened; and a red-and-white sugar-sculpted flower with branches that stretched outward and a large white,



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sculpted diamond at the very top.

Paris Gourmet, an importer of gourmet and pastry ingredients, founded and sponsored the competition. Board members of the **Société Culinare Philanthropique**, one of the oldest chef associations in the world, presided over the judging.