

CONDO CONFIDENTIAL: INTRIGUE INSIDE A PLUSH NAPLES HIGH RISE

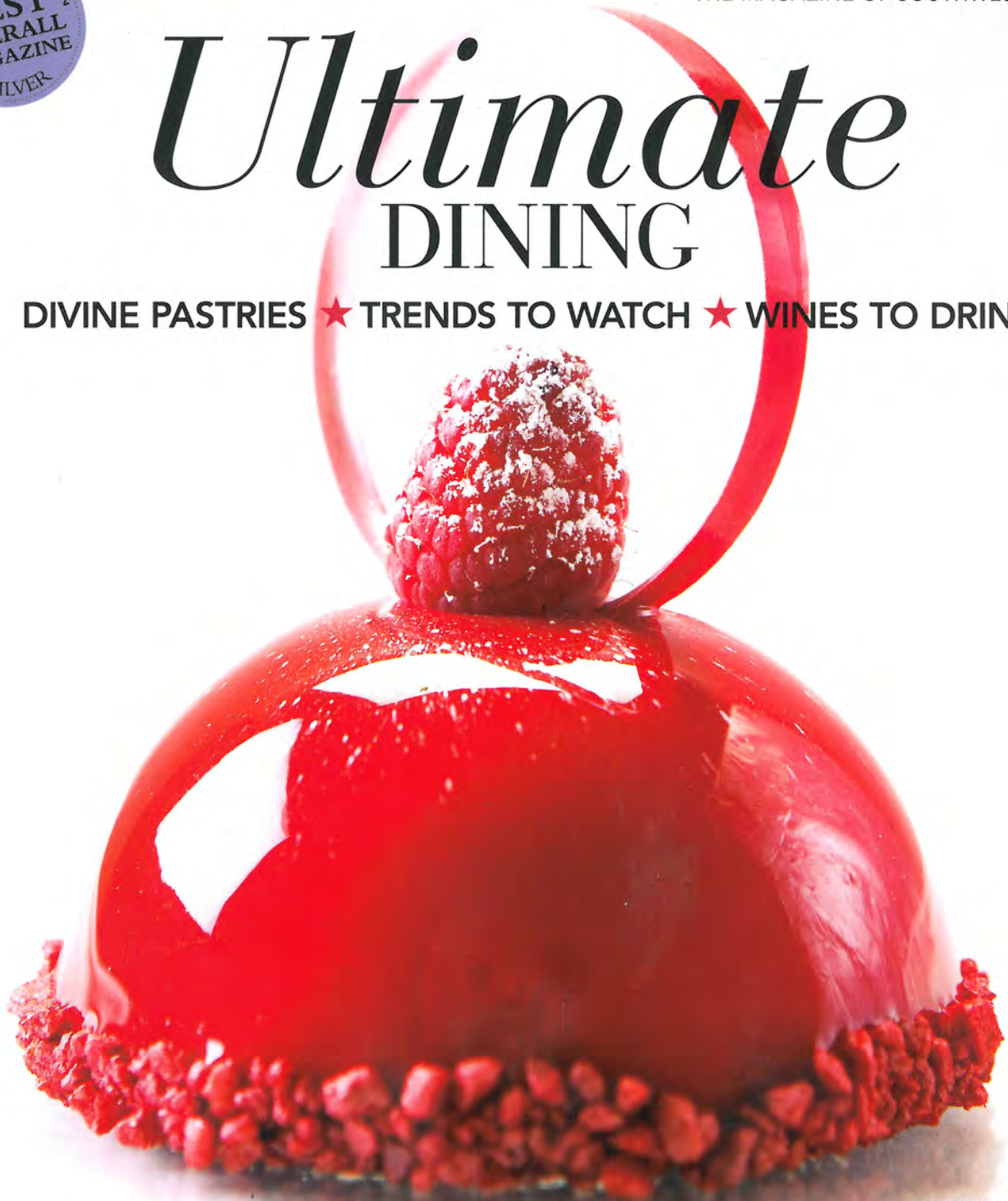
# Gulfshore Life

THE MAGAZINE OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA



## *Ultimate* DINING

DIVINE PASTRIES ★ TRENDS TO WATCH ★ WINES TO DRINK



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# From the Editor

## *For Love of Pastry*

**Y**OU CANNOT EVEN SNIFF ABOUT FOR “Divine Pastries” (see p. 86) in Southwest Florida without running across The Love Factor (as in Norman Love). He’s got us (chocolate) covered in ways celebrated around the world and he’s not stopping now. “Yes,” he says, “I am driven. I have the passion to be the best.” So this chef/entrepreneur, already flush with his original place in Fort Myers and a second spot in Naples, keeps on building. His newest enterprise: an ice cream parlor in Fort Myers, serving up freshly made artisanal gelato plus crepes and waffles from Liège, Belgium, and much, much more.

The man with the rugged look of the hockey player he’s been and the soul of the artist he will always be has developed some very strong convictions on what it takes to reach the top of his craft. These beliefs built in him during the many years he labored to master his art. And, not surprisingly, he got started very early on his career path. “In second grade,” he says, “I bought *Betty Crocker’s Boys and Girls Cookbook*.” As a youngster, he spent long hours in the kitchen with his mother and grandmother. “I always had the desire to create art and could relate art with food,” he says. “Of course, my favorite ingredient was chocolate.”

The Norman Love bio is dazzling. He says pastries and cuisine were not in vogue in the ’70s when he set out to be the best in his field. “I was hungry to learn and tireless,” he says and sought out the European chefs in Miami for knowledge and experience. “I worked two years for free, six days a week, eight hours a day,” he recalls. He put in two years of work and study at a pastry shop in southern France.

It all started to pay off with, first, his executive pastry chef job at the swank Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles and, then, in St. Louis and Naples with



STEFAN ANDREEV

The Ritz-Carlton, where he rose to corporate chef status and traveled 42 weeks a year all over the globe. That included setting up pastry kitchens in places as various as Dubai, Boston and Bali. With his wife, Mary, he founded Norman Love Confections in 2001 and the devotees, honors and celebrity have multiplied.

He has created lines for Godiva and Fannie May and cooked with Julia Child, Thomas Keller, Emeril Lagasse and Wolfgang Puck, among other noted chefs. He has made numerous TV

appearances, including NBC’s *Today* show, the Food Network and The Discovery Channel’s *Great Chefs* series, has been to the White House for an Easter Egg Roll and has won such designations as one of North America’s top 10 chocolatiers from *Desserts Magazine*.

And here, distilled, are some of those beliefs emerging from the days in hot kitchens everywhere:

- No preservative ingredients ever. Put fresh cream, butter and eggs into all your products. In Europe, people come in for fresh bread every day. That’s the way our goods should be—pure and fresh.

- We’re back to classic concepts ... with a creative twist added. Examples? How about a chocolate mousse dome filled with raspberry crème brûlée? Or a cream puff with caramelized apples and custard inside?

- Americans eat with their eyes. Use color and keep things elegant.

- Do not sacrifice any standards, but do listen to your customers.

Asked what trends in pastry he sees ahead, Norman replied, “I’m a trendsetter.” As if we didn’t know. So keep your eyes open and your taste buds at the ready for him. Mouth-watering something is sure to follow.

—David Sandler ♣



**Nathaniel Reid,**  
Norman Love Confections

## *Ruby*

INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PASTRY Chef Nathaniel Reid of Norman Love Confections is respected for the timeless elegance of his jewel box-like confections. Chef Reid's contemporary creations have a refreshing aromatic and visual European flair, favoring seasonal flavors and fruits. He notes that, "My dessert's named Ruby, a fitting name to describe the simple beauty of the cake and its raspberry tea-flavored chocolate mousse."

