

Local Chefs Win National Competition

Two Norman Love pastry pros prove Fort Myers produces some of the tastiest treats in the U.S.

by Sharon Arnold
Community contributor

Pastry Chef Chocolatiers Maura Metheny and Dan Forgey, of Norman Love Confections, were named this year's National Showpiece Champions, along with being awarded Best Chocolate Showpiece at the Pastry Live 2013 National Showpiece Championship in Atlanta.

Seven teams of two chefs competed for six hours, utilizing a unique trio of pedestal bases to construct showpieces based on the theme "The Art of Illusion." Each team chose from either chocolate or sugar to create their innovation and talent while competing for the title of National Showpiece Champions.

Metheny and Forgey's winning showpiece, titled "The Hurwitz Hypnotist," was a magician's-themed chocolate 3-D sculpture inspired by the illusion sculptures of Jonty Hurwitz and the works of Harry Houdini.

"Maura and Dan worked hundreds of hours during the last six months perfecting their showpiece," says Love.

One of NLC's original employees, Metheny is the chef chocolatier in charge of design and innovation, and Forgey is chef chocolatier overseeing the production of the company's numerous product lines.

During the three-day event, Metheny also garnered second place as Chocolatier of the Year with only a few points separating her from the first-place winner. This competition offers chocolatiers national recognition for their skills and the opportunity for the artisans to display their talents in a competitor-friendly environment. Fifteen pastry chefs were selected for their expertise and abilities; each competitor was required to produce two different chocolates sold in their shops. Both taste and appearance were



Pastry Chef Chocolatier Maura Metheny.
Photo courtesy of Norman Love Confections



The winning showpiece was inspired by the works of Jonty Hurwitz and Harry Houdini.
Photo courtesy of Norman Love Confections

key criteria evaluated, so each chocolatier had to meticulously handcraft their creations to obtain the title of Chocolatier of the Year.

The goal of the Pastry Live Showpiece Championship is to raise the artistic and competition skills of more top-level chefs, while enriching the whole pastry community. It is organized to overcome the time constraints and resource requirements chefs experience in other competitions, making it possible for skilled chefs to participate at the highest level competition.

Norman Love Confections creates and distributes handcrafted artisanal chocolates from the Fort Myers corporate headquarters that encompasses both production and retail operations. The Fort Myers and Naples chocolate salons are stylish retail shops with an intimate ambience in which customers may purchase chocolates or linger over house-made pastries, gourmet coffees, lattes and smoothies.

The award-winning Fort Myers-based chocolatier has been lauded 12 times by a leading consumer ratings magazine including recognition six times for producing the best ultra-premium



Pastry Chef Chocolatier Dan Forgey.
Photo courtesy of Norman Love Confections

chocolates, and most recently as a Best Buy for Special Treats for Valentine's Day 2013.

The Fort Myers Chocolate Salon, at 11380 Lindbergh Blvd., is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and Saturday from 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Artisan Gelato by Norman Love, at 11300 Lindbergh Blvd., Suite 112, off Daniels Parkway, east of I-75, is open Monday through Saturday from 11:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. For more information, visit normanloveconfections.com.