

# At a NYC celebration, Norman Love is the first to be inducted into the Chocolatier Hall of Fame.



Norman Love discusses Valentine's Day, new seasonal flavors, and his passion for creating unique confections. Video by Ricardo Rolon/news-press.com

Amy Sowder, Special to The News-Press 5:09 p.m. EST January 28, 2016



(Photo: Amy Sowder/special to news-press.com)

You could smell the sweet, buttery cocoa richness before you could see it.

The heady aroma of the finest, silkiest chocolate in the U.S. displayed like gleaming jewels bewitched many of the guests — some exhilarated to the brink of chocolate inebriation — about 100 yards from the [World Trade Center](#) in New York City.

Once the initial feeding frenzy abated on Wednesday night, [Fort Myers](#) chocolatier Norman Love smiled and ducked from the onslaught of accolades delivered by his pastry chef peers, as well as the leaders of [Dessert Professional Magazine](#), gathered for the 7th annual Top Ten Chocolatiers in North America celebration.

Love is the first-ever chocolatier to be inducted into the national magazine's Chocolatier Hall of Fame. This honor highlights [Southwest Florida's](#) prestige in the burgeoning trend toward high-end and artisanal chocolate, Love said.

He accepted the honor from editor Matthew Stevens among the crowd squeezed into a fragrant wing, past meandering halls where student chefs studied their craft behind glassed-in kitchen classrooms at the [Institute of Culinary Education](#).

"There's a single individual who, for two and a half decades, has single-handedly been responsible for the chocolate revolution in North America," Stevens said. "Most of the fine chocolate industry owes what it knows to Norman — from quality, to techniques, to packaging. Most people have never been able to scale up their production and maintain quality like he does."

Before founding Norman Love Confections in 2001, Love created the groundbreaking G collection for [Godiva](#). In 1999, he led Team USA to a bronze medal at the [Coupe du Monde de la Patisserie](#) competition, the World Cup of Pastry, in [Lyon, France](#). As the corporate executive pastry chef for the Ritz-Carlton chain of hotels, he oversaw global pastry and baking operations and opened 30 international and domestic resort and hotel pastry kitchens.

Love credited his team of 75 professionals at his [Fort Myers](#), [Estero](#) and Naples locations for his ongoing success. And what's the distinction anyway between being a Hall of Fame inductee and a top 10 North American chocolatier? "Age," Love said with a laugh.

After the brief speeches, Love hugged his wife, Mary. "As much as he makes light of it, this is a big deal," she said. "It's the best kind of recognition when it comes from his peers, people he's grown up with in the industry."

In two other overflowing rooms, the 10 chocolatiers showcased their award-winning delicacies. Hailing from [Carlsbad, California](#), Chuao Chocolatier Chef Michael Antonorsi tempted tasters with his Firecracker Truffle. Its chipotle caramel fudge, sea salt and popping candy evoked childlike delight as guests reveled in the sparkly explosions.

"The multi-sensory experience you can't control is where it's at," Antonorsi said. "Just enjoy the ride."

Nearby, Norman Love's father, Jules Love, popped into his mouth a shiny raspberry-Champagne truffle encased in a dark chocolate shell crafted by [Kohler, Wisconsin](#), chocolatier Anette Righi DeFendi.

"He's very caring," the elder Love said about his son. "That's the main thing, what I'm most proud of, besides his chocolates, which are outstanding."



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**Norman Love of [Southwest Florida](#)-based Norman Love Confections is the inaugural inductee into Dessert Professional Magazine's Chocolatier Hall of Fame of North America. Editor Matthew Stevens (left) and publisher Jeffrey Dryfoos (right) honored Love (center) at the crowded celebration at the [Institute of Culinary Education](#) in downtown Manhattan Wednesday night. Stevens called Love's decades of work "revolutionary" to the U.S. chocolate industry. (Photo: Amy Sowder/special to news-press.com)**

A promotional banner for Wilson Lighting. On the left, a stylized red house icon is next to the text 'JANUARY LIGHT SALE'. In the center, the text reads 'Save 30% - 70% on select lighting and accessories!' with 'Naples &amp; Bonita Springs' below it. On the right is the Wilson Lighting logo, which consists of the word 'WILSON' in a red oval with 'LIGHTING' underneath.